



young cities

Jordan & Lebanon

Empowering Youth.
Strengthening Communities.



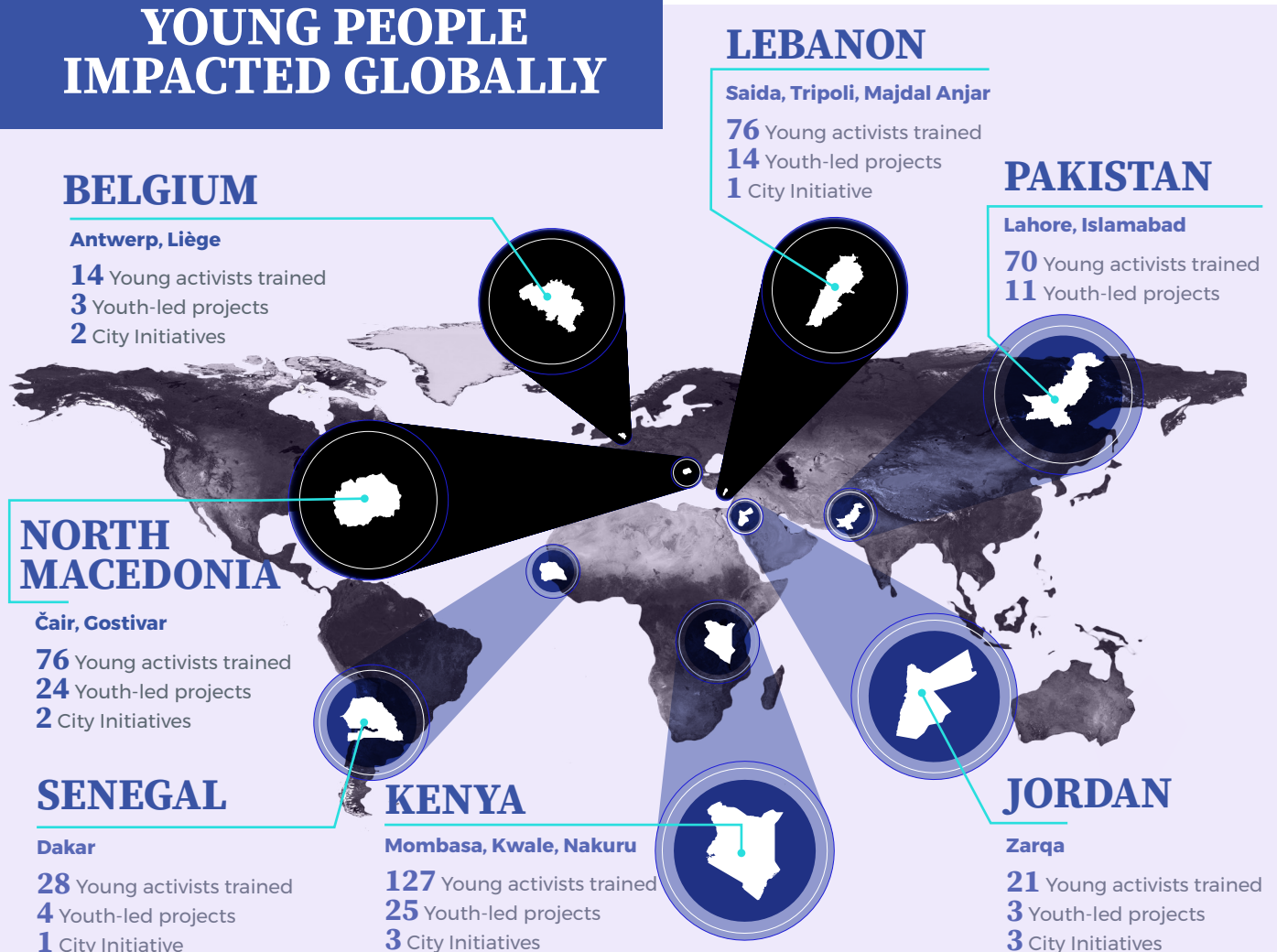
**young
cities**

Young Cities is a global, pioneering capacity-building programme that connects young people to local governments, enabling the development of shared solutions to the challenges of hate, polarisation, and extremism around the world. Our work builds mutual trust and creates opportunities to address the most pressing issues facing the communities in which we work.

As the youth pillar of the **The Strong Cities Network (SCN)**, Young Cities is furthering the role that young people play in building city and community resilience to hate and polarisation at local level. It is leveraging the insights and experience of SCN's collaboration with municipalities around the world to drive impactful, locally-led policy that includes and represents the needs of all young people.

With the generous support of our donors and our partners, including local organisations and municipal officials, we have empowered young people in ten cities across Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, North Macedonia and Senegal to thrive as peacebuilders in their communities. In 2022, Young Cities launched in the cities of Antwerp and Liège with the support of the United States Embassy in Belgium.

**14.5 MILLION+
YOUNG PEOPLE
IMPACTED GLOBALLY**





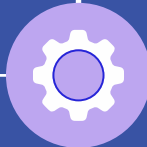
Scoping & Research

Our work is evidence-led. Before launching in a new city, we spend six months scoping to understand the local context and challenges facing different communities. We conduct original research, identify key stakeholders and map existing programmes and policy so we can tailor our delivery to meet real needs.



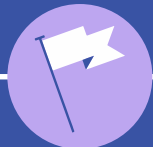
Collaboration & Partnerships

Social challenges require a multi-faceted response. We therefore connect key actors in civil society, municipal governance, and youth activism - creating opportunities to exchange ideas and build trust. We partner with civil society organisations for our own delivery and connect young people with relevant organisations. We also facilitate ongoing collaboration between youth and cities.



Workshops

Youth Innovation Labs combine learning and doing to guide young activists through a process of planning social impact projects and provide an opportunity to transform ideas into actionable plans. Simultaneously, our city workshops help build best practice at the municipal level.



Youth-Led Projects

Youth groups can apply for up to £5,000 in funding - with ongoing training and support - to deliver their projects to their community. By enabling young people to lead their own projects, we are offering them the chance to gain experience and deepen their understanding of project management. It also harnesses youth insight, contributing original projects that have real impact and fostering meaningful cooperation between youth and other stakeholders.



City Initiatives

City Grants support new municipal initiatives to engage with young people in their city. Young Cities offers funding and ongoing support to help our city partners conduct research and deliver activities that enhance their youth engagement strategies and policy. The programme gives them the opportunity to engage with youth directly to enhance youth inclusion and build trust.



Sustainability

We provide our young activists ongoing support year-on-year with additional funding (**Ambassador Grants**), peer mentoring, networking, and opportunities for local and international representation. **Showcase Events** help to demonstrate the impact young people and municipalities have had, while **City Exchanges** enable the sharing of best practice.

Shared Challenges, Shared Solutions

Young Cities takes a whole-of-community approach. We involve young people from different backgrounds – activists, entrepreneurs, artists and creatives – and connect them to municipal government and civil society to jointly develop solutions to community challenges. Moreover, we facilitate cross-city collaboration, strengthening their communities' ability to tackle issues together by sharing best practices.



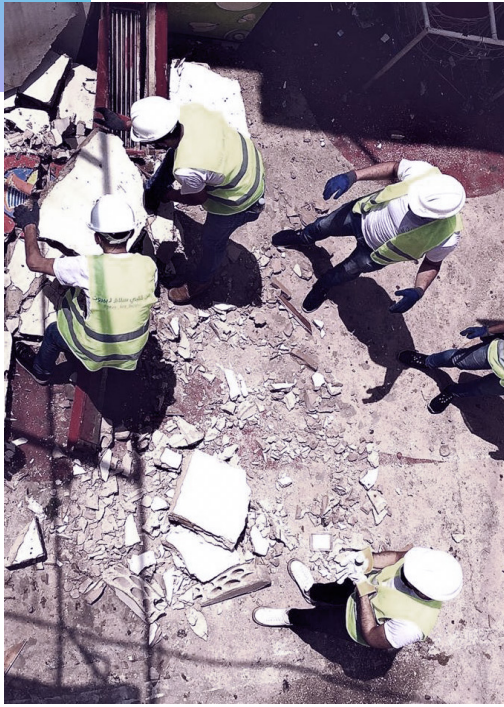
Youth-Led Initiatives

Connecting young activists to city leadership to advance their communities' interests together.

Youth-led initiatives can offer authentic outlets to address different challenges and galvanise youth participation. While Young Cities provides guidance and support to make their projects more impactful, our youth teams define their focus, plot their strategies, create their own outputs, and manage every element of their project's delivery. This youth-driven model creates a space for young people to build critical experience while delivering content that meaningfully engages young people throughout their community. It also recognizes that effective capacity-building requires dismantling barriers to funding for young people and supporting sustainable initiatives.

To maximise the impact of their initiatives and the buy-in of the communities, we connect the young activists with their municipal representatives, creating opportunities for collaboration. Municipal governments are an essential component in the implementation of youth initiatives - granting young activists access to crucial locations, amplifying campaign messaging in different community spaces, and providing direct guidance and collaboration. Many of the municipal representatives from Lebanon and Jordan have participated directly in the initiatives themselves, taking part in dialogue sessions, organising meetings with community elders and leaders, attending events and more.

Young Cities also creates opportunities for young people understand and engage with the ecosystem of prevention actors in their communities, forging valuable relationships with civil society organisations, creative groups, and other youth-led initiatives. We further facilitate dialogue with municipal government through webinars, public forums, and closed-door policy evaluation events.



City Initiatives

Leveraging the potential of Local Prevention Networks to drive forward effective youth-inclusive policy and programming.

To develop effective solutions to violence, young people must be meaningfully included in their design and delivery. Through our City Initiatives, Young Cities offers our municipal partners small grants and ongoing support to create opportunities to pilot programmes that support young people in their municipality, fill critical gaps in understanding, or improve youth-facing policymaking.

Local Prevention Networks



In Lebanon and Jordan, our City Initiatives are implemented by the municipalities' Local Prevention Networks (LPNs). LPNs are prevention and resilience units composed of representatives from different municipal governmental departments – such as education, sports and youth – as well as community professionals, such as teachers, law enforcement officers, and social workers. Their tasks include identifying general and local causes of risk behaviours and concerns, raising community awareness of issues related to hate and extremism, sharing knowledge and best practice to better safeguard their communities, developing collaborative strategies to enhance whole-of-community prevention, and inspiring their colleagues and other professionals to work in proactive prevention rather than reactively.

The Local Prevention Network model is an initiative of the Strong Cities Network (SCN). In 2017, the SCN established LPNs in Tripoli, Saida and Majdal Anjar in Lebanon and Irbid, Karak and Zarqa in Jordan. Young Cities – launched in Lebanon in 2018 and later Jordan in 2021 – successfully leveraged their potential as effective local bodies to support our efforts.

Following the devastating blast in Beirut in August 2020, Young Cities diverted the funds intended for LPNs in Lebanon to support in relief efforts, collaborating with the LPNs and our young activists to distribute meals, provide aid, facilitate reconstruction and train first-line responders.

In Jordan, the LPNs have supported us in delivering three City Initiatives to improve youth-led policy, programming and practice in Irbid, Karak and Zarqa.



Young Cities in Lebanon

Across our three Lebanese cities – Tripoli, Saida and Majdal Anjar – we have supported young people and municipal governments to address many different challenges. Youth-led initiatives have worked to empower refugee populations; ease societal tensions; tackle stereotypes; encourage youth civic participation and volunteerism; spotlighted harmful practices and much more. Young Cities additionally diverted its City Initiative funding originally intended to support municipal authorities in our three cities, to aid in relief efforts in Beirut, following the blast that rocked the capital in 2020.

In Numbers



Youth Innovation
Labs Held:

4



Young Peacebuilders
Trained:

76



City Officials
Trained:

16



Youth-Led Projects Launched:

14



City Initiatives Supported:

1



Young People Directly Impacted:

957



Young People Reached Digitally:

1,417,718

TRIPOLI

A diverse and multicultural city located on Lebanon's lush northern coast. Despite the many communities that have called the city home, it has also experienced its share of interreligious tensions and hate, especially aimed at the minority Christian community. Many of the youth-led projects in Tripoli leverage talents in the creative arts and filmmaking to counter this inter-communal tension, as well as the normalisation of violence and to empower other young people.



MAJDAL ANJAR

The eastern city of Majdal Anjar, which borders Syria, experienced one of the highest rates of refugee immigration in the wake of its neighbour's civil war. Tensions run high between Lebanese and Syrian populations, especially among its young people, whose segregation creates fertile breeding ground for stereotypes and fear. The youth-led projects we supported touch on the issues of inter-communal tensions and discrimination, and provided opportunities for youth empowerment.

SAIDA

Saida, also known as Sidon, is a city south of Beirut along Lebanon's coast. Its proximity to both Syria and Israel has meant that the multiple influxes of refugees since 1948 has changed the city's makeup and affected how the various communities interact. Most of the young activists we have worked with from Saida are refugees themselves, and most youth-led projects we supported sought to reduce tensions between the refugee and Lebanese communities and counter marginalisation and discrimination of refugees.

BEIRUT

After the country's culturally vibrant capital was devastated by the blast that took place in August 2020, Young Cities and the SCN diverted funding and resources to reconstruction efforts in the city, training youth volunteers and distributing thousands of meals.



Youth-Led Initiatives in Lebanon

Since Young Cities launched its activities in Lebanon in May 2018, we have supported 76 young activists to create and launch 14 youth-led initiatives that meaningfully address issues that are important to their communities. Together, these initiatives have directly impacted 957 other young people through in-person activities and reached 1,417,718 more through online content.

Empowering Refugees in Saida and Bringing Communities Together

Home to Ein al-Hilweh, Lebanon's largest refugee camp, Saida has been a flash point for tensions between the city's Lebanese population and Syrian and Palestinian refugees. Refugees across Lebanon often face discrimination and xenophobia, as well as marginalisation and exclusion from education, the arts and the media. Our Young Cities activists in Saida understand these issues well. Most are refugees themselves and experienced first-hand the divisions that exist between the Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian populations. Their projects focused on improving relationships between Lebanese and refugee communities and highlighting the issue in crucial spaces such as national news, radio and social media.

Washwasha

📍 Saida | 📅 2018

Washwasha, meaning 'Whispers', was an online and offline project that drew from the team's own experiences as double refugees, having been displaced from their refugee camp in Syria and forced to flee to Lebanon. They wanted to give other refugees the opportunity to share their stories with the public in Lebanon and offer a humanising counter-narrative. They conducted a series of 10 vox pops – short-form video interviews – with refugees from the Ein al-Hilweh refugee camp. They were released on their Facebook page, gaining more than 200,000 views in just a few short weeks, alongside awareness-raising posters and infographics.

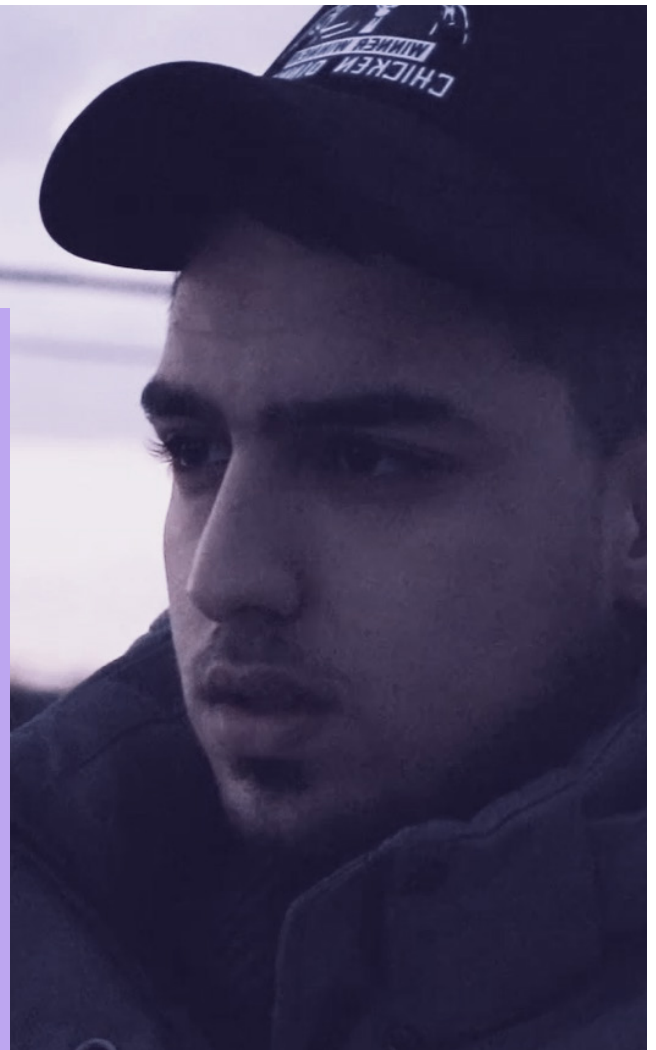


Alongside their social media campaign, the team collaborated with a dance troupe of young Palestinian refugees from Saida for a performance in the Saida mall. The campaign and dance generated a lot of local attention, and the team was invited to appear on 'Palestine Today'.

First Step

📍 Saida | 📅 2019

First Step were a team of rappers, producers and videographers who wanted to reduce the stigmatisation of refugees. Some of their members came from refugee communities and had experienced conflict, discrimination, and marginalisation personally. Hoping to use music to disseminate a message of tolerance, the team organised a song-writing workshop with local hip hop artist Bob Arja and a film workshop with an expert videographer. Using these skills, they produced an original song and music video accompanied by a documentary that highlighted the lived experiences of refugees in Saida and the local art scene.



Identity of Hope

📍 Saida | 📅 2019

Hawiyet al-Amal - 'The Identity of Hope' - wanted to shed light on stereotyping of refugees by sparking a discussion on identity within their community. The group included writers, poets, actors and spoken word artists. Over the course of ten workshops, they trained 17 local youth - some from the refugee community itself - in creative writing with a literature professor who guided them through confronting their own identities through prose and poetry. By the end of the workshops, each participant had each produced their own written pieces, which they compiled into a booklet and shared on Facebook reaching 136,000 young people and receiving thousands of likes and reactions.



Countering Stereotypes in and of Majdal Anjar

Majdal Anjar has been frequently cited in the news as a hotbed of violence and extremism. Residents of Majdal Anjar feel that they are stereotyped and mischaracterised in Lebanese media and by the broader Lebanese population, in part due to its proximity to Syria and in part due to the city's socio-economic deprivation. As a result, many young people from Majdal Anjar feel detached and disenfranchised from the wider Lebanese population. Two teams from the city wanted to break this cycle by addressing the city's negative stereotypes through art and share its wealth of culture and diversity.



Photos Speak

📍 Majdal Anjar | 📅 2019

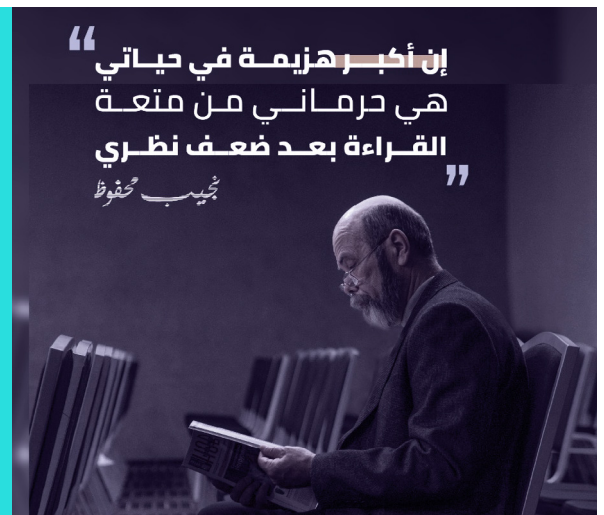
Photos Speak captured perspectives of the city which are usually not represented by photographing everyday life and sharing stories of its residents. The team hoped to encourage a sense of pride in the community by training 21 young people in photography and organising outings to capture the vibrant characters and characteristics that are the essence of Majdal Anjar.

Following 10 training sessions with a professional photographer, they spent days traversing the city and taking dozens of pictures. They visited bazaars and farms, sat in on meetings with elders and home-cooked meals to examine every aspect of life in the city. The photos were released as part of a campaign on Facebook, where they reached 441,000 people. The team also painted two murals on the walls of a school to reflect the city and its artistic values, showing the city by day and by night. They hoped to give the local area a sense of colour in which residents could take pride.

Chessbook

📍 Majdal Anjar | 📅 2020

Chessbook wanted to give young people from Majdal Anjar the opportunity to showcase the city's literary culture while galvanising a conversation on the value of culture as a societal good. The team began by launching a social media campaign with a series of posters spotlighting Lebanese literature and poetry, using them as conversation-starters to begin dialogue on the value of culture.



“إن أكبر هزيمة في حياتي
هي حرمانني من متعة
القراءة بعد ضعف نظري
بجيب محفوظ”

Diffusing Inter-Communal Tensions Across Lebanon

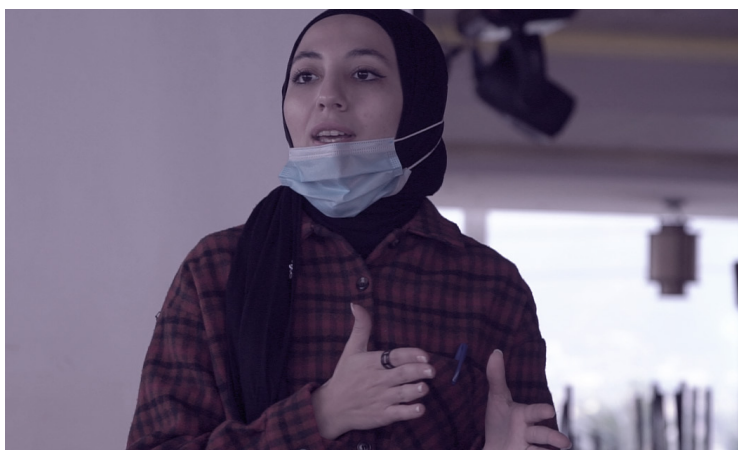
Lebanon is a country in which different ethnicities, religious groups and sects have co-existed for millennia. It also finds itself geographically placed such that it has been the point of entry for millions of refugees from Palestine and Syria, with whom much of its population has generously shared their country. Nonetheless, the country is also a hotbed of inter-communal tensions. In the three cities of Tripoli, Saida and Majdal Anjar, xenophobic attitudes are a constant challenge for refugees, and religious minorities – particularly the country's Christian community – are often the targets of hate and religious violence.



The Will of the Youth will Unite Us

📍 Majdal Anjar | 📅 2018

Syrian and Lebanese youth live parallel lives in Majdal Anjar. This segregation reinforces the division between the two communities by leaving space for stereotypes and fear to flourish. “The Will of the Youth will Unite Us” created opportunities for these different groups to interact and galvanise a passion among young people to bridge these divides. The team organised a variety of activities to engage with young people in a safe and relaxed environment. These included a sports day, six dialogue sessions, a film screening and a closing ceremony which brought 40 young Lebanese and Syrians together to discuss their experiences of inter-communal conflict, sectarianism, youth despondency and the role of religious and municipal authorities in tackling these issues.



True Bless

📍 Tripoli | 📅 2020

True Bless knew what religious hate meant for Tripoli. Many of their Christian neighbours had left because of the discrimination they faced. The team invited 14 young Lebanese participants to understand the two faiths better and equip them with the tools to foster and disseminate a message of tolerance among other young people. They held a workshop followed by visits to a church and mosque, meeting with religious and community leaders and enabling a safe space for the participants to ask questions. Participants were trained in peacebuilding principles and techniques so that they had the capacities to engage in difficult conversations with friends and colleagues later.



Youth For Peace

📍 Saida | 📅 2020

Youth for Peace identified one cause of inter-communal conflict as the social and economic deprivation faced by residents of Old Saida, regardless of the communities to which they belonged. While Old Saida is the historical, touristic part of town, it is also where the city's most marginalised live. The team organised several events for 24 young people from Old Saida and neighbouring communities including violence prevention trainings and a peacebuilding round table with Saida's municipality. The events generated a discussion about the role that Old Saida, its history and its communities play in the city and how the city can support through more comprehensive outreach.



SAWA

📍 Majdal Anjar | 📅 2020

Sawa, which means 'Together', wanted to provide young Lebanese and Syrians opportunities to foster social cohesion between the two communities and become advocates for peace. The team organised two trainings – one on peacebuilding and one on video production – for 11 participants from both communities. Across six days of training, the participants were given the tools and knowledge they needed to use video as a medium for conflict reduction and prevention.

The participants worked in groups to produce three videos that tell the stories of Syrian refugees living, working and thriving in Majdal Anjar. The videos featured a peanut-roasting entrepreneur, a gastronomist who specialises in Syrian and Yemeni cuisine and a headmaster of a night school for Syrian refugees. The videos sought to humanise the city's Syrian inhabitants, and were released on Facebook, reaching 176,803 profiles from Majdal Anjar.



Tackling the Normalisation of Gun Proliferation

The proliferation of small arms in Lebanon is extensive. As of 2017, the year before Farha Taysha launched their initiative, the global Small Arms Survey estimated that 1,927,000 civilians in Lebanon possessed firearms - almost one in three. And according to the Permanent Peace Movement, 90 people were killed in Lebanon in 2017 alone due to stray bullets which were fired in celebration at weddings and other events. Two of the members of Farha Taysha, a team of young activists already engaged on the issue of reducing the proliferation of small arms in the country, had lost loved ones due to stray bullets.



Farha Taysha

📍 Tripoli | 📅 2018

'Farha Taysha' translates roughly to 'Stray Bullets Kill Joy'. The team performed and filmed a street theatre piece on the streets of Tripoli, depicting the death of a guest at a wedding following celebratory gunfire. The crowd that gathered to watch the performance were given leaflets highlighting the issue. The resulting video of the performance became the centrepiece of an online advocacy campaign to reduce celebratory gunfire.



The video was viewed more than 200,000 times, received more than 5,000 reactions and shared nearly 400 times. It caught the attention of local and national media, and the team were invited to speak on two popular national news networks and two Tripoli-based radio stations. They appeared alongside experts on gun violence in Lebanon as well as national policymakers.

Empowering Young People as Proactive Citizens

In Lebanon, young people must overcome an intergenerational power gap between them and the older members of their community – parents, elders, community leaders and policymakers – to have their voices heard. Decisions are frequently made on their behalf with limited involvement, and without considering their interests. This gap can alienate young people who may seek alternative sources

of authority – religious, ideological, political – which in turn fuels community conflict and violence. Furthermore, many young people are not given enough support to be empowered and proactive citizens in their communities. These barriers can prevent them pursuing their passion and can lead to despondency and declines in young people's self-esteem and engagement in their communities.

Point of View

📍 Majdal Anjar | 📅 2019

Point of View from Majdal Anjar wanted to bridge the gap between elders and their youth by working with both groups to enable a more proactive role of young people in decision-making. The team trained 20 young people in public speaking and communication, followed by a series of dialogue sessions which brought them together with 15 community elders. In three workshops with 10 municipal representatives, they co-designed solutions for more youth-inclusionary city-level policymaking, which was compiled into an action plan. Because of the action plan, channels of communication remain open between the youth participants and the local municipality, and the Mayor and the Local Prevention Network continue to show their support.



Visualisations

📍 Tripoli | 📅 2019

'Visualisations' noticed that not all their peers had equal access to training or educational opportunities to become agents of change in their communities. They wanted to support other young people to develop their skills in public speaking, non-violent communication and volunteering to promote a culture of activism and empower them as a generation of future leaders and effective activists.



The team delivered three Train-the-Trainer workshops to 25 young people from different backgrounds and nationalities living in the Adweh suburb of Tripoli. These trainings included modules on social media, non-violent communication, proposal writing and project management. In turn, the participants applied their knowledge and skills by delivering trainings to members of the community, under the supervision of professional trainers. The group also launched a small online campaign on non-violent communications by launching four educational posts on Facebook and reaching 34,500 people.

موهبتك هي قوتك



Talents of the Shadow

📍 Tripoli | 📅 2020

'Talents of the Shadow' sought to foster self-confidence and kindle a passion for art as a form of self-expression among young refugees. The team organised a five-day workshop with 12 refugees from different communities in Tripoli to learn the basics of acting, screenplay writing, film production, singing and more. Together, the team and participants created a short video showcasing a collaborative performance, which they posted on their social media page with a series of posters encouraging others to get involved in the creative arts.



Web+

📍 Majdal Anjar | 📅 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has been associated with the rise of misinformation and disinformation and in Majdal Anjar, this content inflamed tensions between local communities and municipal and national government. Team Web+ identified that a significant factor in the proliferation of mis- and disinformation was that young people both lacked the necessary digital literacy skills to counter them, and many tended to spread it because it aligned with their own discriminatory biases.



The team conducted a digital citizenship training for 12 young people from Majdal Anjar, where they examined the causes of misinformation and disinformation, how these issues related to hate speech and xenophobia, and looked at their societal consequences. They were further trained on how to identify misinformation, which reporting mechanisms were available and how to engage other users online to construct counter narratives. The team launched an accompanying social media campaign with eight infographics on definitions of fake news, how to identify it and how to report it – reaching 89,462 people on Facebook.

Building Back Beirut

Beirut Relief Project

📍 Beirut | 📅 2020

On the 4th August 2020, a huge blast devastated much of the central port district of Beirut, killing hundreds, injuring thousands and destroying billions of dollars' worth of property. Young Cities worked closely with the Strong Cities Network's Local Prevention Networks to help support local relief efforts. We redirected over £20,000 from our budget to organise youth-led actions, including food distribution, medical aid, and reconstruction.

Over 12 days, in coordination with the Beirut Governorate, scores of Young Cities-trained youth volunteers distributed over 8000 hot meals for volunteers and families in need and delivered 100 food parcels directly to those not able to make it to the central kitchens. Simultaneously, coordinating with the Governorate of Mount Lebanon and their engineers, our partner INITIATE helped assess and select 15 houses for repairs and restoration where youth helped replace broken windows and doors and repair structural damage.

Finally, funded jointly by SCN and Young Cities, the three municipalities of Saida, Tripoli and Majdal Anjar equipped other youth volunteers, including the Saida Scout troop, with cleaning and safety equipment to help clear the streets of debris and rubble. Professional nurses were also brought from Majdal Anjar to set up aid stations to tend to the wounded. In total, the funding enabled over 50 youth volunteers to assist in the city's recovery.

With over 300,000 left homeless, it was important to help families find shelter and food, and we must extend our sincerest thanks and appreciation to all who contributed their resources for such a worthwhile effort.



“

It really felt like we were there for the people who needed us. Anybody we could not help, we were able to refer elsewhere, through a network of new relations and contacts. My sense of humanity and solidarity greatly increased as a result.

”

– Youth volunteer



Young Cities in Jordan

Young Cities launched its programming in Jordan in 2021. Our youth youth-empowerment efforts were focused on the city of Zarqa, the capital of Zarqa governorate on the outskirts of Amman. There we supported 21 young activists to launch three projects - two of which have gone to receive a second round of funding through the Young Cities Ambassadors programme - taking different approaches to tackle disinformation and discrimination.

Simultaneously, Young Cities supported three City Initiatives in the cities of Zarqa, Irbid and Karak, collaborating closely with the Strong Cities Network and leveraging their extensive relationships, which they have established in the more than five years they have worked in the country.

In Numbers



Youth Innovation
Labs Held:

1



Young Peacebuilders
Trained:

21



City Officials
Trained:

21



Youth-Led Projects Launched:

3



City Initiatives Supported:

3



Young People Directly Impacted:

110



Young People Reached Digitally:

189,870

IRBID

The country's second largest populated city after Amman, Irbid is located on the very north-western tip of the country, nearly bordering Syria, Israel and Palestinian territories. While Irbid is considered the cultural capital of Jordan, it is also notorious as a flashpoint for religious and nationalist violence. Through the Young Cities' City Initiative, the Local Prevention Network is researching youth grievances and endeavouring to understand how religious scriptures may be misinterpreted and used to perpetuate violent behaviours.

KARAK

The ancient city of Karak lies to the west of Jordan, near to the Dead Sea. Nearly a quarter of the city's population are Christian, making it the highest proportion per capita in any of Jordan's main cities. With Young Cities support, the city's LPN and municipality implemented a City Initiative to foster greater social cohesion and cultural acceptance between the religious communities that call the city home. The project included a theatre performance coordinated by the LPN's youth wing, which created a welcoming space for people from any culture, religion and background.

ZARQA

- A highly populated city located on the outskirts of Amman, Zarqa is a multicultural city where Muslim and Christian communities have peacefully co-existed since the 20th century. However, the city's high rate of unemployment has left many young people in Zarqa feeling despondent and disengaged. Young Cities expanded to Zarqa in 2021 to support 21 activists to deliver social change projects and worked alongside the municipality to launch a city initiative which empowered young people in seeking and securing employment.

Youth-Led Initiatives in Jordan

Young Cities expanded into Jordan in July 2021, where we trained 21 young activists from Zarqa and supported them to develop three youth-led initiatives that addressed cyber-bullying, misinformation and ableism. To date, the initiatives have directly impacted 110 other young people from Zarqa and reached 189,870 digitally. Two of the teams have gone on to secure Ambassador Grants to further develop their initiatives.



Zarki

📍 Zarqa | 📅 2021

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Zarki were concerned by the prevalence of misinformation and disinformation being shared in their communities, particularly conspiracy theories and vaccine-related disinformation. They wanted to ensure that other young people were well informed and reassured of the safety of vaccines, and proactively engaging in countering the spread of disinformation in the wider community.

They organised awareness-raising meetings where science-driven public health information was given to 76 participants to challenge any negative perceptions they held of the vaccine. They further used the meeting to go through several key conspiracy theories and disinformation trends to equip the participants with the skills to identify other mis- or disinformation. Finally, the team interviewed four well-respected community role models – doctors, municipal stakeholders, athletes – deploying them as credible messengers to help explain both the safety of the vaccine and benefits of countering misinformation and disinformation.

Having received a second round of funding, the group is now delving deeper into the behaviours which underpin the spread of disinformation and carrying out research amongst university students in Zarqa. These findings will help inform future iterations of this project and other efforts to curtail mis- and disinformation among young people in Jordan.



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We Are All Humans

Zarqa | 2021

'We Are All Humans' are a well-established and well-recognized youth collective in the Zarqa community. They are known for their advocacy work in promoting greater inclusion of people with disabilities, who are often face discrimination and marginalisation.

The team designed a training programme for 12 participants with motor impairments to become more confident in engaging in the civic space. The project centred on a puppet theatre performance that the participants helped organise in central community spaces. The show showcased examples of how people with motor impairments - often excluded and unseen - should be valued and included by everyone.

Leveraging their success in using the creative arts to build confidence and self-esteem, the team has been awarded an Ambassador Grant to continue training participants, this time as trainers themselves. They will use origami, storytelling and puppetry to reach to even more families whose members have motor disabilities.

Design

Zarqa | 2021

Cyber bullying is a growing concern amongst young people in Zarqa. Team 'Design' wanted to empower victims of cyber bullying and designed their own training on healthy coping mechanisms to build victim resilience. They also developed a series of resources victims can turn to for support and guidance to further develop their confidence and self-esteem.

They conducted trainings, led by a certified psychologist and theatre workshops where victims' stories of resilience were turned into theatre performances, allowing them to process and channel their painful experiences through art. This process was repeated three times in different community spaces across Zarqa, impacting a total of 177 young people. The local government of Zarqa was impressed with the team's initiative and have requested that the team liaise with its representatives to provide further insights on how their initiative can be replicated across the city in the future.



City Initiatives in Jordan

Local Prevention Networks (LPNs) were launched in Irbid and Karak in 2017 under the Strong Cities Network's municipal capacity building programme. They built on two years of engagement and partnership between local leaders and community members to establish effective prevention and resilience units at the city level. A third LPN was established in Zarqa in 2019. Since Young Cities expanded into Jordan in 2021, we have provided the LPNs in these three cities with financial resources and training as part of our City Initiatives programme. They have been given the opportunity to design three youth-facing and youth-inclusive projects to prevent hate, extremism and polarisation.

Reshaping violent religious narratives

📍 Irbid | 📅 2021

In Irbid, the LPN conducted research to understand youth grievances and how religious scriptures are intentionally misrepresented to perpetuate violent narratives. Young people led the research, while the LPN helped construct the questions and supported the analysis. A key finding was that the problem was in fact widely recognised by the community: 75% of respondents believe that misconceptions of scriptures were a key contributor of violence and that addressing gaps in understanding would lead to greater social cohesion and peace. Following the research, the group organised and performed a play dramatising the negative consequences of religious misinterpretation, which was attended by over 70 people.



Building Cohesion through Theatre

📍 Karak | 📅 2021

The Karak LPN wanted to use theatre as a medium to raise awareness of inter-communal tension and discrimination and foster better social cohesion and cultural acceptance. The LPN's shadow team of youth representatives designed a theatre performance, connecting schools and community centres to bring all demographics together for the performances. Just over 70 people attended the events, with 20 participants taking part in organising them.

Equipping Youth for their Future

📍 Zarqa | 📅 2021

Zarqa's LPN identified a lack of skills and confidence among young people as major barriers to them entering the labour market. They organised a series of activities for 30 young people from Zarqa on communication, outreach, networking and CV-writing, as well as a final Career Day where local private and public sector representatives met with young people and showcased the diversity of opportunities labour market can offer. Over 380 people attended the event and 200 young people were given support and advice on writing CVs and cover letters.



Partners

Local partner organizations are integral to the implementation of the Young Cities programme in the countries in which it works. They ensure that youth participants receive the continuous support and guidance they need to build their projects from the ground up, tackling real issues in relevant and impactful ways. Local partners help further tailor the programme to their context, connect it to key community actors, and play a vital role in fostering creative talent among young people.



INITIATE | LEBANON

INITIATE is a Lebanese non-governmental, non-political, and non-profit organization founded in 2011. The organisation aims at creating an environment in which women and youth live in dignity and develop joint acting platforms among communities in Lebanon. INITIATE's vision is to enhance social cohesion by empowering individuals to participate in decisions affecting their lives and respond to the collective needs of their communities. They have been instrumental in the implementation of all Young Cities and SCN activities in the country since 2017, working closely with the Local Prevention Networks and leveraging their expertise in building social cohesion.



WANA | JORDAN

The WANA Forum was established in 2009 as a thematic dialogue platform, designed to strengthen regional dialogue and development cooperation. In 2014, the initiative was re-launched by His Royal Highness, Prince El Hassan bin Talal, as the WANA Institute – a not-for-profit policy think tank based in Amman, Jordan. The Institute's goal is to promote a transition to evidence-based policy and programming to combat the development and humanitarian challenges facing the West Asia and North Africa region. The WANA Institute aspires to be a trusted source of knowledge, evidence and opinion, and to provide a forum for open debate for leading researchers and policy-makers in the region.



SAIDA



MAJDAL ANJAR



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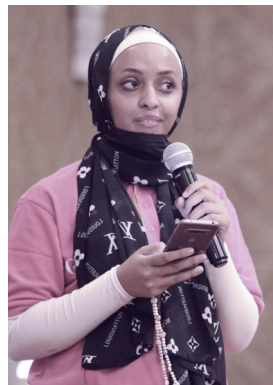
ZARQA



IRBID



KARAK





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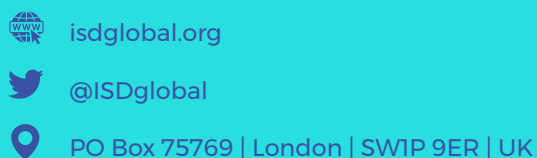
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