

PILOTING YOUTH PLATFORMS IN LEBANON & JORDAN

2-day Workshop: Introduction to Gender and Community Initiative Development

Eager to learn more, youth leaders in Search's Piloting Youth Platforms project participated in a two-day workshop that built youths' understanding of gender dynamics, and facilitated community initiative ideation.

On the first day of the workshop, Search's Senior Project Manager led a session designed to help participants better understand gender-related concepts and issues. By reflecting on socialization and its impact on individuals and communities, youth gained insight into the many gender-ascribed roles and identities active within their society. Specific activities during the training addressed: the differences between sex and gender, gender's impact on socialization, childhood development, gender roles, role models, and self identification. The workshop session also covered practical topics like integrating gender sensitivity and gender transformative management, which further prepared youth for the design, development, and implementation of their community projects. All modules were participatory and interactive, and provided safe space for youth to discuss, reflect, and engage with new content and one another.

The following day, participants attended a workshop to generate ideas for community initiatives that would address critical issues facing youth in Lebanon. To kick-start the ideation process, youth performed a collaborative conflict analysis of their communities. During the activity, participants worked together to create a conflict map that pinpointed the localized issues youth experience, traced problems to their roots, and identified their effects. As a geographically, socially, and economically representative sample of Lebanon's youth, project participants identified "the invisible barriers hindering youths' collaboration across dividing lines" as a core problem their communities face.

The introduction to gender training helped give me a wider vision about gender stereotypes and how we as individuals play a role in addressing these stereotypes in the community.

- 23-year-old Lebanese Male, Beirut Resident

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The sessions were extremely fruitful. We learned about the importance of separating gender from sex, and how to free ourselves from outdated social norms that usually produce societal violence between youth in general and women in particular. I realized the importance of protesting against these concepts that oppress us as individuals. I also learned that the path to intellectual freedom accepts the ‘other’ and is not biased towards another because of their gender and/or sex.
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- 22-year-old Lebanese Female, Qaa Resident

Following this process, youth suggested a number of ideas for initiatives that could address identified conflicts and create collaborative opportunities for young people across Lebanon. Some of new suggestions generated included: cultural celebrations of art, heritage, and cuisine, exchange visits where youth could travel to new locations and learn from their peers, and a traveling theater that could host short performances in diverse communities and facilitate discussion around youth-related issues like regional stereotypes. After deep and considerate discussion, participants voted to further develop two community initiatives—the traveling theater and compelling online content (e.g. podcasts, videos, photos, and stories) for the youth-facilitated discussion platform Aaber (Express).

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The introduction to gender training helped us understand the society we are living in and our surroundings in a different way – a more understanding way.
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- 23-year-old Syrian Male, Akkar Resident



Search is the world's largest dedicated peacebuilding organization and supports programming in 32 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe, South America, The Middle East, and the United States. Search's mission is to transform the way the world deals with conflict from adversarial means to shared solutions.

In Jordan, Search has worked since 2015 on leading programs to mitigate tensions between refugees and host communities, advance responsive and inclusive governance, and transform violent extremism.

In Lebanon, Search has worked since 1996 through a diverse array of programming, including social cohesion, peace education, and media production.