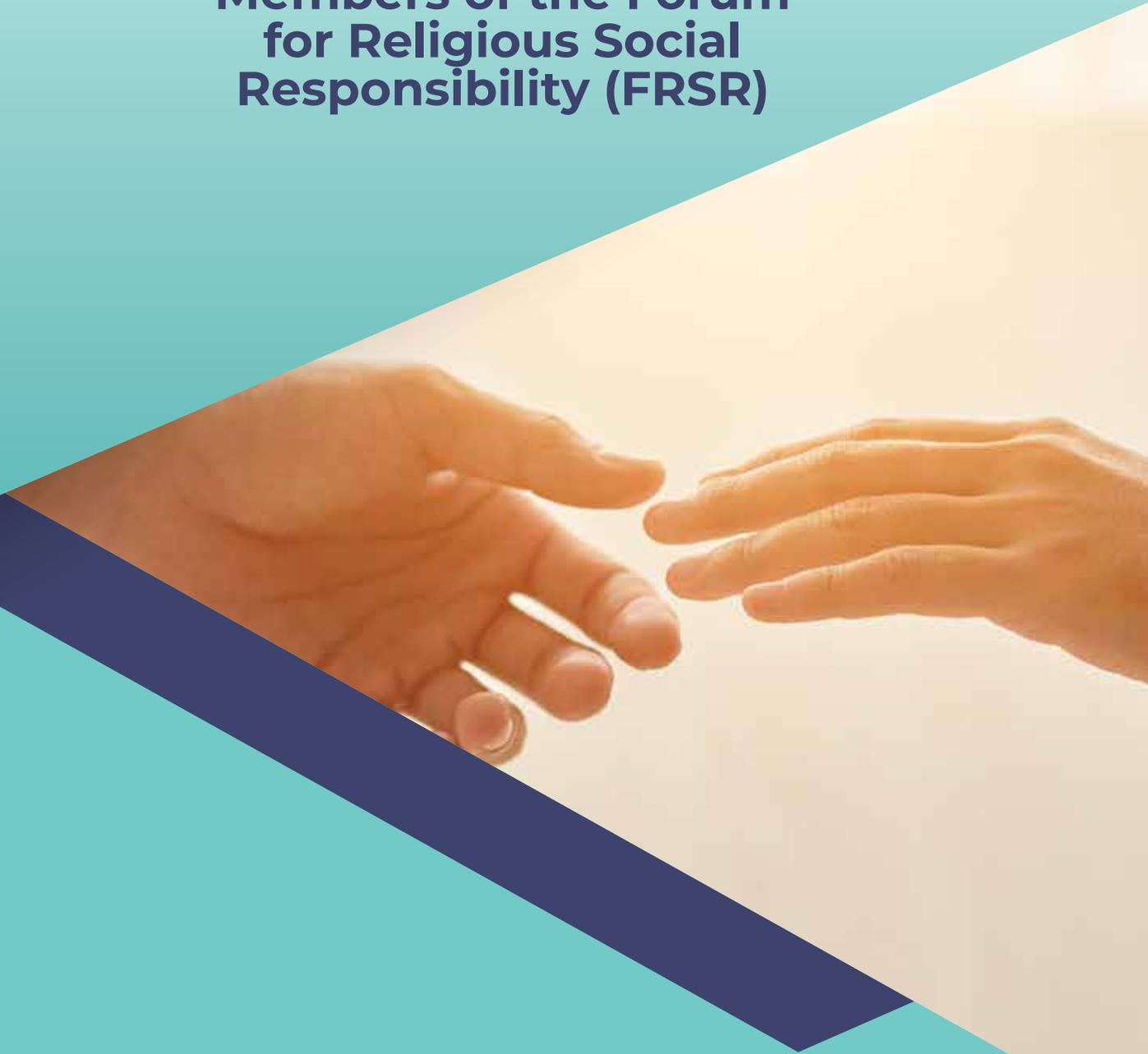


# Best Practices in Inter-religious Civic Action in Lebanon

Members of the Forum  
for Religious Social  
Responsibility (FRSR)



This booklet is part of the Inter-religious Networks for Humanitarian Action and Culture of Peace (IHCP) project which will showcase and promote inter-religious cooperation for peacebuilding and humanitarian action in Lebanon, to audiences in Lebanon and across the Euro-Mediterranean (EuroMed) region.

The project consists of a series of three dialogue panels led by Adyan's Forum for Religious Social Responsibility (FRSR) members. This Forum is a multi-faith network of religious leaders and activists in Lebanon who steer communities away from violent extremism and promote concepts of diversity and living together. Adyan launched the Forum in 2019, and it has grown to encompass over 100 members.

In addition to sharing insights live via the panel webinars, the religious leaders and activists will also share their best practices in inter-religious civic action. These best practices will be compiled into a short digital compendium, which will be sent to all attendees following the panel series and posted online. The aim is to ensure a wide reach of the lessons from the dialogue panels, as well as sustainable network building. In addition, a short film will be produced containing highlights from all three panel discussions, with a focus on the recommendations and best practices shared. The film, which will be in Arabic with English subtitles, will be shared on Adyan's social media platforms and via partners.

The project is implemented in partnership with [Anna Lindh Foundation \(ALF\)](#) as part of its Network Activities for the Intercultural Cities Program. Adyan is one of 31 CSOs from the EuroMed region selected to take part in this project.

**Note:** The initiatives mentioned below express the opinion of their promoters and not necessarily the opinion of Adyan.

# INITIATIVE 1

## "A diversity of dishes on the same table"

**A dinner gathering various parties from Tripoli, separated by fanaticism and politics, and brought together by culture and dialogue.**

**Initiative coordinator:**

Ahmed Samir Mohammed

**Implementing party:**

The coordinator himself with the participation of the Imam Al-Hassan Al-Mujtaba (peace be upon him) Complex in Jabal Mohsen, and the Cultural Association in Tripoli (Al Rabita El Sakafia) and with the support, supervision and funding of Adyan Foundation.

**Initiative site / geographical scope:**

Tripoli - Jabal Mohsen.

**Topics covered / activities implemented by the initiative:**

Organizing a literary dinner gathering a number of poets from Tripoli who are united by a culture of dialogue and peace and by literature, and who come from a region that used to be considered as an axis of conflicting fanatic militants and warring enemies (Jabal Mohsen / Bab al-Tabbaneh). This event reflected the depth of relations between different participants who used to be separated by fanaticism and politics, and who were brought together by culture and meaningful dialogue under the auspices of Adyan Foundation.

**Initiative description:** (target group - number of participants – implementation method – etc.):

The Cultural Association in Tripoli, a number of poets from the region (Tripoli), religious leaders, women, associations, activists, and a number of civil society representatives took part in the dinner. Around 200 people attended the dinner that was documented live through photos/video.

**Initiative duration:**

3 hours.

**Initiative outcomes:**

The initiative, which sought to shed light on several aspects, succeeded in highlighting many ideas and opening many doors. For this end, the initiative brought together many community representatives from the region (Tripoli) around one table (parties to the conflict), and we were all focused on common principles between us a group of wise men and women (intellectuals). Since we are all gathered as well by our Arab nationalism around one central cause (the Palestinian cause), we have invited to our dinner a well-known and admired Palestinian poet who spread an atmosphere of enthusiasm. We all have as well a shared identity (Lebanon), and are followers of the same religion (Islam) that believes in respecting the homeland, maintaining civil peace and good neighborliness, and adhering to the principle of constructive dialogue. All these were highlighted in a civilized manner (during a literary dinner), with the blessing of the clergy, which gave the dinner a legitimate "religious cover". In fact, the clergy met and got acquainted with each other - during and after the dinner – which inspires and mobilizes laypeople, urging them to coordinate, commit to the common good, and renounce differences.

The outcomes of this initiative that was organized in partnership with Adyan Foundation presided by Father Dr. Fadi Daou, were broad in terms of its course and events, and revealed the real goals behind it. The initiative was accompanied by a wide media coverage, and it was positively welcomed by the people of Tripoli who described it as positive. Other subsequent meetings were held in the same spirit of that initiative knowing that our initiative was the first of its kind, since the end of the last rounds of violence in 2014 and until 2019.

**Initiative partners:**

The Cultural Association in Tripoli and the Imam Al-Hassan Al-Mujtaba (peace be upon him) Complex in Jabal Mohsen in partnership with Adyan foundation.

## INITIATIVE 2

**Religious tourism can promote the relationship and cohesion between religious and secular leaders of various confessions.**

**Initiative coordinator:**

Firas Hussein Ballout

**Implementing party:**

The coordinator himself.

**Initiative site / geographical scope:**

Tripoli and its surroundings.

**Topics covered / activities implemented by the initiative:**

Visits to and introduction of Islamic and Christian archaeological sites.

**Initiative description: (target group - number of participants – implementation method – etc.):**

Around 15 clergymen and laypeople participated in this initiative. This group is part of several others groups affiliated with the Network for Religious Leaders in the North.

**Initiative duration:**

4 months.

**Initiative outcomes:**

Better understanding and integration among the network's members, introducing new elements, and identifying new archaeological and religious sites and landmarks.

**Initiative partners:**

The Sustainable Network for Religious Leaders.



# INITIATIVE 3

## The importance of training courses in building young men and women's skills in peacebuilding.

**Initiative coordinator:**

Kassem Kasir

**Implementing party:**

The Conflicts Resolution Group, and the General Coordination Entity of the Safety Net for Civil Peace.

**Initiative site / geographical scope:**

All over Lebanon.

**Topics covered / activities implemented by the initiative:**

Organizing training courses on conflict resolution, and working to reduce political and religious tensions.

**Initiative description:** (target group - number of participants – implementation method – etc.):

A number of activists, students and academics took part in this initiative.

**Initiative duration:**

Two days for the first training course, and other subsequent courses will follow.

**Initiative outcomes:**

Training youths, students and activists on conflict resolution.

**Initiative partners:**

The Forum for Development, Culture and Dialogue (FDCD), Balamand University and Liqaa Center.



# INITIATIVE 4

## **The importance of education on inclusive citizenship from childhood, in order to reap peace in adulthood.**

### **Initiative coordinator:**

Violette Al-Khoury

### **Implementing party:**

Antonine Sisters School - Mar Elias - Ghazir.

### **Initiative site / geographical scope:**

Ghazir and Nabatiyeh.

### **Topics covered / activities implemented by the initiative:**

Promoting inclusive citizenship by gathering secondary school students from two schools in two different regions with different confessional affiliations, building bridges of communication and friendship, and breaking the ice of fanaticism.

### **Initiative description: (target group - number of participants – implementation method – etc.):**

Around 30 students took part in this initiative. They exchanged visits, and different dialogue and discussion topics were raised, and a joint activity was held, including coffee and lunch breaks. A visit to touristic and religious landmarks was organized with a guide, and symbolic and meaningful gifts were exchanged highlighting respect for religious and social diversity.

### **Initiative duration:**

2 months.

### **Initiative outcomes:**

Students communicated with each other, exchanging addresses and information, establishing friendly relations, and sharing experiences, through communication platforms, and in front of their parents and schoolmates.

### **Initiative partners:**

Adyan Foundation.

# INITIATIVE 5

## "A human being feeling good is a society feeling good"

**Providing moral and psychosocial support to every human being is a sure way for a more peaceful and fraternal society.**

### **Initiative coordinator:**

Alaa Wajih Hajj Youssef

### **Implementing party:**

Active Voices group, the "Because You Are Human" (li'anak ensan) initiative, and the "We are here for you for psychological support" initiative.

### **Initiative site / geographical scope:**

Beirut (especially the areas affected by the Beirut Port explosion), and Tripoli (particularly the areas that had witnessed armed conflict, namely Jabal Mohsen and Bab al-Tabbaneh)

### **Topics covered / activities implemented by the initiative:**

Providing psychosocial support, openness to others, social integration, acceptance of others, breaking stereotypes, instilling love and brotherhood, establishing the values of tolerance, security and peace building.

### **Initiative description:** (target group - number of participants – implementation method – etc.):

We organized several initiatives aimed at providing psychological support to those affected by the port explosion, as well as providing logistical support depending on our capacities. In Tripoli, we worked on raising awareness a good number of armed youths from several confessions. Activities were carried out through home visits or weekly meetings, aimed at removing the remnants of the past, namely seditions and stereotypes.

25 Syrian, Lebanese and Palestinian men and women from different confessions and sects participated in these initiatives.

### **Initiative duration:**

1 year for the Active voices, while the "We are here for you" initiative is still ongoing.

### **Initiative outcomes:**

This initiative generated great results, putting an end to violence, strife and quarrels in all their forms. Indeed, most segments of society worked to promote positive results and live together in peace, acquiring a sense of security, peace and tranquility, away from fear or anxiety, whether for themselves, their money or properties. These outcomes made a large group of people feel more positive, and more capable of giving and making sacrifices for the other, bringing them closer together despite their differing opinions and points of view. This allowed them to work together on doing the good thing for the common benefit of all.

This initiative helped me personally form good relations with people like me from different countries and cultures, as we agreed on building a culture of peace for all.

# INITIATIVE 6

## **Dialogue and common spaces have the final say, despite the differences.**

**Initiative coordinator:**

Mohammed Ahmad Hammoud

**Implementing party:**

Berghof Foundation.

**Initiative site / geographical scope:**

Beirut.

**Topics covered / activities implemented by the initiative:**

Conducting a Sunni-Shiite youth dialogue in partnership with a Sunni and a Shiite sheikh.

**Initiative description: (target group - number of participants – implementation method – etc.):**

A group of 30 high school and university students participated in the dialogue which lasted for a whole day, and involved discussions between the young men and women at times, and between them and the two sheikhs at other times.

**Initiative duration:**

1 full day.

**Initiative outcomes:**

I do not know whether the participants' daily practices have changed after that dialogue, since each participant went to his/her own environment and life. As for my students with whom I remained in contact after this activity, I have noticed a clear intellectual and behavioral change in them, especially today that they have become university students in religiously and politically mixed institutions.

**Initiative partners:**

None

# INITIATIVE 7

**Through play, art and handicrafts,  
we can unite the vision for a better society**

**Initiative coordinator:**

Jessica Abou Haydar Matar

**Implementing party:**

KAICIID – The Dialogue Platform

**Initiative site / geographical scope:**

All over Lebanon.

**Topics covered / activities implemented by the initiative:**

Establishing a fund with a variety of different recreational and educational activities (drawing, games, music, handicrafts...), aiming to achieve new goals, namely enhancing social cohesion and peaceful coexistence, through: accepting diversity and uniqueness in society, getting to know and accept the other regardless of any culture, religions or background-related differences, discovering common values and principles, and breaking the prevailing stereotypes.

**Initiative description:** (target group - number of participants – implementation method – etc.):

It is a Lebanese initiative implemented by 6 colleagues, who participated in the KAICIID program for dialogue between followers of different cultures and religions in the world: Sheikh Yahya Abdel-Khaleq, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khanji, Father Rony Bou Gharios, Deacon Garin Yusulkanian, Jessica Abu Haydar Matar and Sandra Karam. The initiative targets boys and girls aged between 9 and 14 years, from different Lebanese regions.

**Initiative duration:**

1 month.

**Initiative outcomes:**

Still under study

**Initiative partners:**

KAICIID – The Dialogue Platform

# INITIATIVE 8

## The importance of involving people of different ages in various activities around the values of dialogue, living together and peace.

### Initiative coordinator:

Sandra Karam

### Implementing party:

KAICIID, Orthodox Youth Movement

### Initiative site / geographical scope:

All over Lebanon.

### Topics covered / activities implemented by the initiative:

- Organizing a summer camp for Syrian children.
- Gathering 7 Lebanese families and training them on dialogue and accepting the other.
- Preparing a group of activities for children to introduce them to diversity in society.
- Preparing a group of activities for children to provide them with psychological support.

### Initiative description: (target group - number of participants – implementation method – etc.):

1- Organizing a summer camp in Qusaiba for 65 Syrian children, through the Orthodox Youth Movement, and in cooperation with UNESCO, in 2015. The camp was attended by Lebanese and Syrian volunteers from various organizations.

2- Launching the “We are family” initiative, aimed at promoting living together, by bringing together 7 Lebanese families (parents and children) from different sects, by organizing two meetings over the weekend, to create a safe space between them, and train them on the concepts of identity, diversity, dialogue and reconciliation, and to share experiences, break stereotypes, transcend the painful memories of the war, and work together for the common good.

3- Launching the “Meeting in a box” initiative, targeting about 100 Lebanese children aged between 9 and 14 years from various confessions and regions. The box contains 15 diverse recreational and educational activities (drawing, games, music, handicrafts...). The initiative addresses new goals that aim to enhance social cohesion and peaceful living together through: accepting diversity and uniqueness in society, getting to know and accepting others regardless of their different culture, religion and background, discovering common values and principles, and breaking prevailing stereotypes.

4- Launching the “Me in a box” initiative, targeting 65 children from various confessions, aged between 5 and 11 years, and coming from the areas surrounding Beirut, which has witnessed the greatest impact from the Beirut Port explosion. The initiative consists of preparing boxes containing 14 diverse educational and recreational activities, under the supervision of a psychologist, with the aim of: creating a safe space for children to express freely what they are going through, help them overcome fear and anxiety, highlight the need to pay attention to children’s mental health, and promote the role of dialogue and free expression in their lives, in order to build a healthy future for society.

### Initiative duration:

- The summer camp: 10 days.
- The “We are family” initiative: 6 months.
- The “Meeting in a Box” initiative: 3 months.
- The “Me in a box” initiative: 6 months.

### Initiative outcomes:

Enhancing diversity in society as a source of wealth, promoting dialogue, and consecrating living together.

### Initiative partners:

KAICIID, Orthodox Youth Movement

# INITIATIVE 9

## Maryam's Kitchen

**We share a lot of love with little food,  
without any discrimination.**

**Initiative coordinator:**

Father Hany Tawk

**Implementing party:**

Jouzourouna Association

**Initiative site / geographical scope:**

Karantina - Mdawwar.

**Topics covered / activities implemented by the initiative:**

Creating Maryam's Kitchen, which distributes daily about 800 hot meals.

**Initiative description:** (target group - number of participants – implementation method – etc.):

The initiative aims to take care of the poor, the needy, the afflicted and the homeless, especially in Karantina - Mdawwar area, which was affected by the explosion of the Port of Beirut on August 4, 2020. In this kitchen, daily hot meals are prepared by volunteers who have committed themselves to come to the kitchen every day and help, while others distribute the dishes to the homes of people in need, or those who do not have the physical or financial ability to leave the house and buy their necessities. The kitchen also welcomes people who come themselves to take their meals, or eat them on-site. Every human being in need of food or care is lovingly welcomed into Maryam's Kitchen, which is a second home to people, regardless of their religion, color, gender or race.

**Initiative duration:**

It has been going on for the past year and a half

**Initiative outcomes:**

Distributing more than 150,000 hot meals in a year and a half.

**Initiative partners:**

Adyan Foundation, Mon Liban d'Azur, L'Œuvre d'Orient



