



Action for Hope



# Action for Hope العمل للأمل

Action for Hope was founded in March 2015 to provide cultural development and cultural relief programs that meet the social, cultural, and psychological needs of distressed and displaced communities

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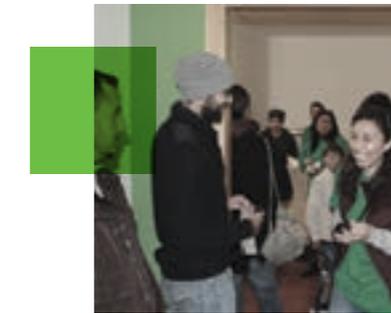


## Our Mission

We work with communities in crisis, helping people face the ensuing social, economic and political challenges by freeing their imagination and unleashing their creative abilities. We provide communities suffering from war, displacement, violent political unrest, extreme poverty, or difficult living conditions with tools for free expression, artistic creativity, communication, knowledge and healing from psychological wounds.

## Our Vision

We share the same vision as many other organizations and movements towards a just and tolerant world, where communities risking social fragmentation because of war, displacement, and extreme poverty use creativity to face and surmount their difficult circumstances.





## Our Goals

- 1** Provide youth, women, and children living in refugee camps and marginalised and poor communities with the creative abilities and tools needed to communicate and document their stories, and express themselves freely and creatively.
- 2** Provide artistically talented children and youth living in refugee camps or within underprivileged communities with opportunities to develop their talents, obtain the skills and knowledge needed to pursue art professionally, and showcase their artworks within their communities and beyond.
- 3** Support cultural initiatives and enrich cultural life in the countries where Action for Hope is present through the work and production of young artists from non-traditional cultural circles, and provide cultural activities and services to marginalized communities deprived of such services.
- 4** Contribute to the preservation of a community's cultural heritage by highlighting its artistic particularities, especially when it faces the great threat of war, forced migration, and extreme poverty.

- 5** Encourage schools and education and literacy organizations to introduce art education modules systematically into their programs, and to use arts as a pedagogical tool.
- 6** Encourage and train young leaders from the target communities on basic organizing, communication, and leadership skills that will enable them to oversee the continuation of Action for Hope's activities over the longer term, including by winning their communities' support for these activities.





# Programs and Activities

## 1 Cultural Relief Convoys

Cultural relief convoys include activities such as training workshops in theatre, photography and film-making,, training modules in journalism and media, discussion sessions on social issues, a medical clinic, health awareness and first aid training, cultural events and concerts, cooking competition and gifts and awards composed of books, musical instruments and photography equipment. Cultural relief convoys include artistic and cultural experts who live and work from within refugee camps or disadvantaged communities for a period of about two weeks, thus getting a first-hand understanding of the needs and providing a direct response to their material and psychological needs.

A group of some twenty artists, doctors, educators, psychologists and social workers from different Arab countries make up each convoy. Moreover, volunteers from local communities actively participate in Action for Hope's cultural relief convoys, thus maintaining our links with the community ensuring the continuation of activities. Volunteers constitute one of Action for Hope's most important resources.

As of the end of 2016, Action for Hope has organized seven cultural relief convoys in Egypt, Lebanon, and Jordan. More than sixty volunteers were part of these convoys, which, combined, have touched the lives of over ten thousand people who have benefitted from services and activities.





## 2 Music Schools

Music schools aim to discover, train, and introduce musically gifted Syrians displaced in Lebanon or Jordan, hoping that this will lead to the formation of small musical ensembles that can play music professionally. Music schools also seek to prepare gifted students to become eligible to enrol in formal music institutes in the countries where they have sought refuge.

Music schools started as a pilot four-month program in Lebanon in August 2015, before being formally launched in Lebanon in March 2016. The schools, so far operating from the Bekaa Valley and Shatila camp in Lebanon, both teach a standard curriculum in music education of six hours per week, which allows students to also pursue their regular studies.

Music schools accept musically talented students between the ages of 10 and 18 who have been displaced or are from host communities to study music theory and history. Accepted students can choose to either specialize in an instrument or in singing. The school curriculum also includes other subjects such as English language, general cultural appreciation and life skills.



### 3 Advanced Arts Training Programs

Advanced arts training programs build on the work done in communities that have already received cultural convoys. These programs, unlike the cultural relief convoys that usually target large numbers of participants, focus on a small number of gifted children and young adults whose artistic skills we seek to develop.

By the end of 2016, fifty-five young men and women in Bekaa valley in Lebanon have received theatre and video training leading to the production of four theatrical performances and the creation of a number of short films by the trainees.



### 4 Local Cultural Centres

Action for Hope opened its first cultural centre in December 2016 in the town of Ghazze in West Bekaa, Lebanon, a short distance from a large Syrian refugee camp. The centre has a library of arts and literature books, a video-making school, and a small hall equipped for screening films and for holding cultural activities. Action for Hope plans to open another cultural centre at the end of 2017 in the town of Bar Elias in the Bekaa too, housing a music school and theatre training, as well as a small well-equipped theatre.



## 5 Scholarships in the Arts

Action for Hope provides scholarships for university-level studies in arts, and allocates grants for arts training to Syrians between the ages of 14 and 25 residing in Lebanon. These grants help students who received preliminary arts training and who wish to become qualified to work professionally as artists or art teachers in schools.

In 2016, Action for Hope provided five scholarships for university studies and 26 grants for arts training in the fields of theatre, video, plastic arts, and graphic design.





## 6 Creative Literacy and Arts Education in Schools

Working directly with people in refugee camps allowed Action for Hope to establish the concept of «creative literacy», meaning enabling those with poor reading and writing skills to express themselves creatively, resorting to methods used by literary writers or theatre performers. Action for Hope encourages other organizations working in literacy and education to adopt this concept.

More than eighty women and girls from Syria and living in camps in the Bekaa valley participated in the first stage of this program which focused on literacy, and twenty-five participated in the second stage, which focused on developing storytelling and creative writing skills. Our efforts aim at having all participants reach the third stage, which will focus on developing storytelling and performance skills, then performing their own scripts in front of an audience.

Action for Hope is seeking to work with educational institutions to develop arts education programs in schools, discover and nurture artistic talents at an early stage, and prepare artistically gifted students to enrol in university education in the arts.

## 7 Cooking and Nutrition

Cooking traditions are a strong component of any society's cultural identity and a source of pride for many women. When communities undergo a crisis, whether temporary, such as displacement, or protracted, such as extreme poverty, preserving these traditions becomes a challenge due to lack of financial resources and the collapse of the social fabric to which these traditions are usually attached. This program aims to preserve cooking traditions and their cultural roots, and at the same time to educate communities about the nutritional value of the food they eat while enhancing the effect of women as agents of cohesion in their social surrounding, especially in societies torn by wars and terrorism.

As part of cultural relief convoys and during cultural events, Action for Hope organizes activities around traditional cooking, introduces more contemporary variations and links traditional cuisine to other arts. These events include cooking competitions in camps and cooking demonstrations and tasting in public.



## 8 Cultural Events

As part of the organization's goals of providing cultural and artistic services in underserved areas, Action for Hope organizes cultural and artistic events that reach out to its target communities and beyond. In 2016, Action for Hope organized a tour of the theatre production «Angie & Yalanji» in four different theatres in the Bekaa valley region. Musician Mustafa Said and his group gave a Ramadan concert of muwashahat and oriental music in Ghazze in the Bekaa. The group Imperial Kikiristan from France presented a concert at Baidar Camp in Ghazze too.

Action for Hope's cultural events are a crucial way of showcasing the results of the trainings. At the end of 2015, Action for Hope held a festival in Beirut that included a concert called «Bitter Days» by students of the Action for Hope Music School and a performance of the theatre production «Angie & Yalanji» (inspired by the play «The Government Inspector» by Gogol). The festival also included a compelling photo exhibition, «No Homes in the Camps» by artists from Egypt and Tunisia from their participation as volunteers in cultural relief convoys.

In October 2016, Action for Hope organized «Landscapes of Hope» in Berlin. The three-day festival was our first cultural event in Europe celebrating Syrian art and featured art works by professional Syrian and other Arab artists living in Europe and in the Arab region. The festival included discussions and symposiums on the challenges facing young Syrian artists as well as the role of arts and culture in the current crisis and the importance of protecting free artistic expression in the face of wars and dispossession. It also included concerts, dance and storytelling performances, film screenings, cooking demonstrations, and a photography installation.

## Action for Hope Members:

**Tamara Alrifai**, Chairperson of the Board

**Hanan Hajali**, Vice Chairperson of the Board

**Brigitte Boulad**, Secretary of the Board

**Petra Stienen**, Member of the Board

**Basma El Hussein**, Director of Action for Hope and Member of the General Assembly

**Cecilia Udden**, Member of the General Assembly

**Fairouz Nishanova**, Member of the General Assembly

**Hany Elhosseiny**, Member of the General Assembly

**Nadia Sukhtian**, Member of the General Assembly

**Osama Abdullah**, Member of the General Assembly

**Randa Salti**, Member of the General Assembly

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## Action for Hope's Supporters:

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