3. Theory of Change

Working both with young people and political actors, the project aims to create opportunities and capitalise on existing entry points for participation. Central to the approach is addressing the problem of the lack of trust among youth in political actors and the political process. This trust deficit is most clearly displayed in public perceptions of dissatisfaction, low participation in elections and limited attempts of youth and youth organisations to demand accountability. The 2016 municipal elections managed to mobilise a segment of the population, including youth from across Lebanon's confessions around new electoral lists comprised of candidates from 'civil society'. The results of the elections in Beirut and few other locations suggested that a new type of political engagement was possible outside of the traditional political parties. The parliamentary elections in 2018 however proved that new political actors' reach was still limited and the traditional actors who were able to mobilise their clientelist networks were as powerful as ever.

Whilst these new political actors which emerged in 2016 are key players in political reform, building accountability and enhancing the diversity and inclusivity of participation, focusing the debate on issues rather than appealing to traditional bases. Yet after the 2018 election results, confession-based clientelism continues to restrict space, opportunities and debate, whilst feeding this lac k of trust in the political process. Since these new actors have retracted from the political scene returning to their civil society roles, organisations and campaigns as tools for change. This democratic deficit and lack of trust in the political process extends to institutions, political actors (parties, coalitions and individual politicians) and the electoral process.
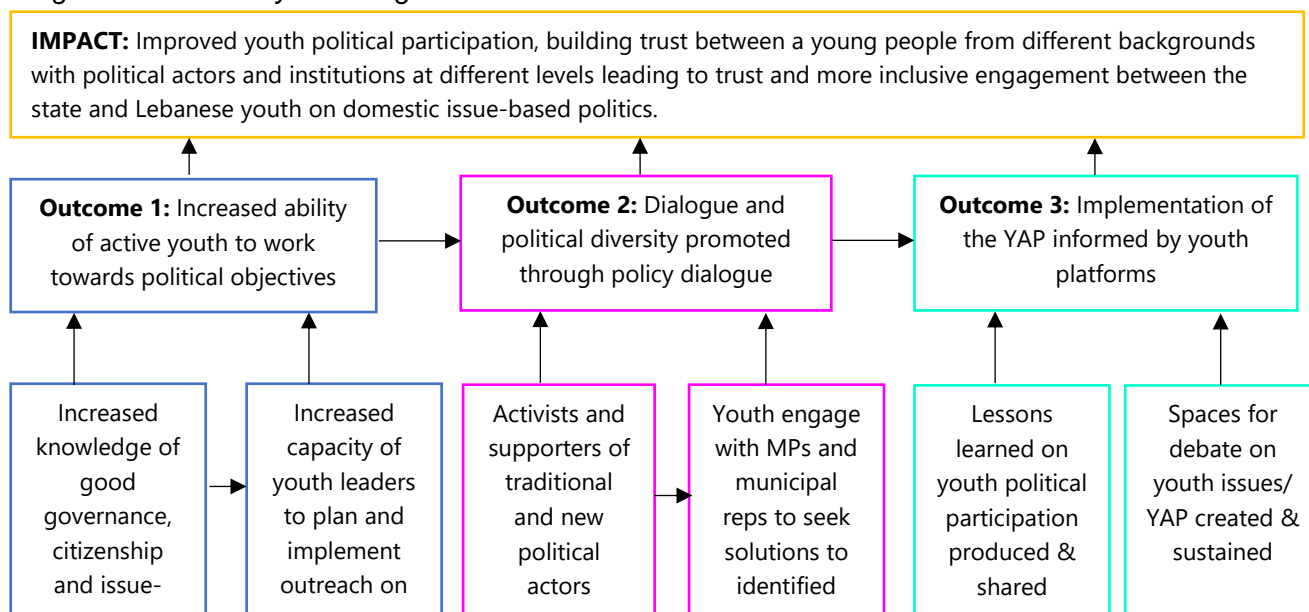
Trust in state institutions – politicised appointments, lack of public accountability, limited budgets of municipalities and key ministries, are among the reasons for low trust in public institutions. Directly elected institutions in fact enjoy less trust than the security institutions (ARK survey, 2018). Municipalities, which took on additional responsibilities in response to the Syrian crisis, are received more favourably due to their presence on the ground and coordination of humanitarian efforts. The Parliament however, which is not able to hold the Cabinet to account, is generally seen as a weak institution. (Westminster to review) Trust needs to be re-build by establishing mechanisms for participation and accountability accessible to citizens, including young men and women.

Trust in politicians – politicians in the power-sharing system of Lebanon use clientelistic relations to stay in power and use the votes they can get as a bargaining chip in the formation of electoral lists and temporary coalitions. Research shows (LCPS) that Lebanese continue to favour politicians of their own confession, which is often associated with access to key resources such as clintelistic reallocation of institutional and budgetary support for certain areas, as well as "personal" favours for access to state jobs and services. Trust needs to be re-built by modelling politicians who champion transparency, accountability and efficiency.

Trust in electoral process – some activists blamed the 2018 electoral law and its division of electoral districts for the failure of the new political actors to win seats. While many would agree that the law was drafted by those in power to ensure they would stay in power, other factors besides the law serve to explain the results of the Parliamentary elections. An awareness of these factors among youth and ability to participate in politics within the current legal framework are essential for regaining trust in the political process as a whole. This project will address the lack of trust at different levels by building understanding of the political and socio-cultural eco system, capacity to engage with different institutions and political actors, creating channels of communication between old and new political actors, and generating positive examples of institutional collaboration, pro-activeness and accountability.

The impact of the project is increased trust among youth in Beirut, Tripoli and Mount Lebanon in the political process. Indicators of trust will include youth perceptions of municipalities and Parliament and the ability of the institutions to address the needs of youth; perceptions of politicians and ability to recognise viable opportunities for youth to influence political decision concerning their lives.

Diagram of the Theory of Change

IMPACT: Improved youth political participation, building trust between a young people from different backgrounds with political actors and institutions at different levels leading to trust and more inclusive engagement between the state and Lebanese youth on domestic issue-based politics.

Outcome 1: Increased ability of active youth to work towards political objectives	**Outcome 2:** Dialogue and political diversity promoted through policy dialogue	**Outcome 3:** Implementation of the YAP informed by youth platforms

Increased knowledge of good governance, citizenship and issue-	Increased capacity of youth leaders to plan and implement outreach on	Activists and supporters of traditional and new political actors	Youth engage with MPs and municipal reps to seek solutions to identified	Lessons learned on youth political participation produced & shared	Spaces for debate on youth issues/ YAP created & sustained

Outcome 1: Increased ability of active youth to work towards political objectives

- **Output 1.1:** Increased knowledge of good governance, citizenship and issue-based politics of youth leaders in target areas
- **Output 1.2:** Increased capacity of youth leaders to plan and implement advocacy and outreach initiatives

TOC Outcome 1: Capacity to work on political objectives includes understanding the political system, the institutions and the work of politicians who can act as both insiders and critics of the system. Increased capacity is expected to positively influence trust in institutions, politicians and processes. A key learning element under this outcome is the implementation of advocacy and outreach actions, which will require strategic planning and prioritisation, identification of allies and gradual engagement. Research (PVE Tripoli) has shown that trust in institutions is built when youth experience positive communication with representatives of the institution, therefore project like this one need to reach out to institutions in advance and identify individuals within the institution who are committed and engaged, and who can play a facilitating role on the project.

Outcome 2: Dialogue and political diversity promoted through policy dialogue platforms

TOC Outcome 2: Policy dialogue platforms will create opportunities for horizontal and vertical connections in the policy space. Horizontal connections between citizens and government will be fostered through youth's participation in municipal and parliamentary committee meetings, dialogue sessions with representatives and possible learning opportunities with the Parliament. Horizontal linkages will be created between policy group that normally do not engage with each other, namely youth affiliated with the traditional political parties and youth supportive of new actors, such as Beirut Medinati, Sabaa, civil society initiatives and movements. These dialogues will enrich participants understanding of diverse political actors and their views on key policy issues.
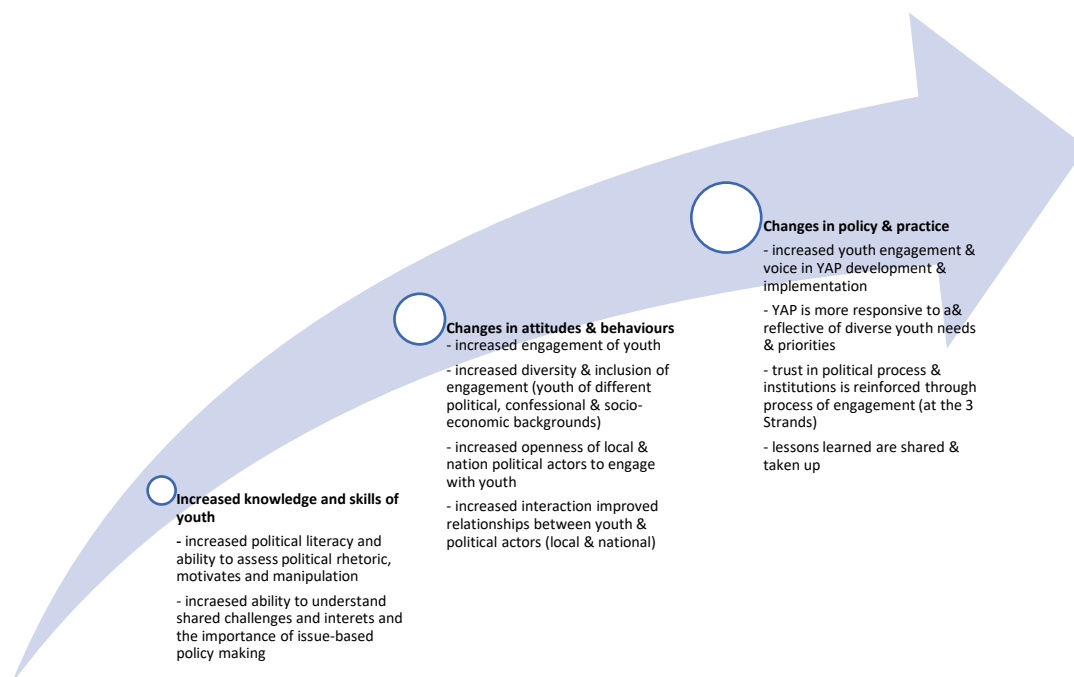
- **Output 2.1:** Activists and supporters of traditional and new political actors engaged in dialogues in Beirut, Tripoli and in online platforms
- **Output 2.2:** Youth engage with MPs and municipal representatives to seek solutions to identified problems

Outcome 3: Implementation of the national Youth Action Plan informed by experiences of youth consultation, participation and activism Convening and mobilising young people around a focused and relevant mechanism for youth engagement (YAP), gives clear direction for engagement

- **Output 3.1:** Lessons learnt from youth engagement and recommendations for future actions produced and shared with YAP stakeholders
- **Output 3.2:** Spaces for debate on critical issues relating to youth priorities and YAP opened, young people actively, critically and constructively engage.

Anticipated Trajectory of change: The project's TOC is based on the below understanding of levels of change in horizonal and vertical levels (across and amongst young people and between young people and institutions) and interaction between: 1) changes in knowledge and skills, 2) changes in attitudes and behaviours and 3) changes in policy and practice (with the anticipated changes within the project time frame).

Diagram of Trajectory of Change

Changes in policy & practice
- increased youth engagement & voice in YAP development & implementation
- YAP is more responsive to a& reflective of diverse youth needs & priorities
- trust in political process & institutions is reinforced through process of engagement (at the 3 Strands)
- lessons learned are shared & taken up

Changes in attitudes & behaviours
- increased engagement of youth
- increased diversity & inclusion of engagement (youth of different political, confessional & socio-economic backgrounds)
- increased openness of local & nation political actors to engage with youth
- increased interaction improved relationships between youth & political actors (local & national)

Increased knowledge and skills of youth
- increased political literacy and ability to assess political rhetoric, motivates and manipulation
- incraesed ability to understand shared challenges and interets and the importance of issue-based policy making

Linkages with other CSSF Political Engagement programmes: In is anticipated that the lessons learned and exchange process and events as well as the policy brief development and dissemination will be an opportunity to share learning and coordinate with other CSSF implementers working in a similar space and specifically linking up the youth political engagement with the women's leadership and democratic mechanisms processes. In addition, we envisage engagement with other actors at inception phase to align TOCs and indicators and develop an agree plan for communicating between implementers across CSSF's Political Reform portfolio in Lebanon.