

2. APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

SUMMARY

Our vision is to get youth from different backgrounds to exercise together - and in doing so - reduce tensions between them through health and sports activities.

Our Theory of Change is that if youth spend time together and positive interactions are amplified by local media, intra-community tensions will reduce.

Our activities: 1) Identify, train and support a Lebanese and Syrian event board in each location to conduct outreach and organise weekly events called MASHI **مشني**, ensuring joint participation; 2) Create a brand, website, app, and social channels to publicise events and stimulate engagement from both Lebanese and Syrian youth in target areas; 3) Identify and train two or more local social media champions to create and disseminate content to build community awareness of events and amplify positive stories of inter-community interactions

We will draw on new research, behavioural psychology and economics, and data-driven insights from digital channels to design the programme.

We have successfully delivered similar attitude and behaviour change programmes in health and sports, including Change4Life - the largest ever anti-obesity campaign for the UK Department of Health, and a program in the West Bekaa training and providing a safe space and activities for young men from host and refugee communities.

The Problem

Stability - despite some progress, security and stability in Lebanon remains precarious. The UN estimates that more than 944,613 Syrian refugees are registered in Lebanon, while informal estimates suggest closer to two million¹. This is putting pressure on fragile infrastructure and creating competition for basic services and jobs. It is also creating a sense of hopelessness amongst host communities and refugees, particularly the youth. Some host communities and refugees (Syrian and Palestinian) are reacting with negative behaviours, including non-interaction with different communities, non-violent conflict, and sometimes violence. Young people (18-35 years) particularly lack purpose, prospects or the mechanisms to work with government to enact change. Key tension hot-spots exist in areas of the North and the Bekaa where the lack of civil and political rights, and feelings of social marginalisation are particularly high. Anti-refugee discourse is perceptible both across popular and political levels, and across policy and practice throughout Lebanon such that politicians may never find consensus on a solution. The long-term implication being that Syrian refugees will remain in Lebanon for many years.

We therefore think that a bottom-up, grass-roots approach is the only realistic option for enacting change. Trust in municipalities is high² and will only increase if it is linked to a strong and sustainable initiative that brings communities together. As we know from experience in Somalia, Syria and Iraq, focusing programmes at a local level has more scope and is more adaptable to changing attitudes than anywhere else³. We will primarily focus on the negative behaviour of 'non-interaction' in this programme as levels of *meaningful* interaction remain very low - for example individuals from different nationalities, confessions or socio-economic backgrounds purposely avoiding each other on the street, not greeting each other, using separate public services or spaces, shopping at different markets etc.

The Solution – MASHI **مشني**

We will reduce tensions and build stronger relationships amongst - and between - Lebanese host communities and refugees by bringing people together through a series health and sport events called MASHI (in English: 'Let's move!'). MASHI will create safe spaces for people in fragile areas to come together where there is no sports infrastructure to do sports and exercise. We will begin with walking and running events but be flexible to new ideas following further research with the TA. We are confident of the health and sports entry point because a) there are successful examples of similar initiatives – for example, the Beirut Marathon, which is an annual run attracting people from all backgrounds under 'health, competition and 'peaceful coexistence' themes⁴, b) being healthy is a universal and unifying goal, but Lebanese currently report low levels of exercise⁵, and c) academic studies indicate that the mental health benefits from exercise are greater in individuals that - as in our target audiences - have experienced crisis, loss or trauma⁶. We will use communications to remind the people how important their health is⁷ to motivate them to exercise together. We will demonstrate MASHI's expected positive social impact to local politicians and potential donors to get their support for future activities.

Our Target Audiences (TA)

Our understanding of media and stability drivers in Lebanon has informed who the target audiences are and how we will reach them.

Primary TA: Youth: Our TA for MASHI is 18-35-year olds of mixed national, confessional and socio-economic backgrounds⁸. We chose youth because they have the highest latent potential to be positive change agents in their communities⁹. Over 75% of our communications programmes over the last five years have been youth-focussed for similar reasons and academic literature supports this. We also recognise that youth are more optimistic about the prospects for social change at the community and municipal level, where trust is significantly higher. We see this youthful, politically engaged group as social change agents and leaders of cross-cutting, inclusive activities in their communities. They are digital natives, heavy social and messenger app users and typically have high trust in national TV and word-of-mouth. We intend to leverage the latter for optimum effect.

¹ This figure was last updated 31 March 2019 on the Syria Regional Refugee Response Operational Portal: Lebanon, United Nations of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (Web Resource)

² Target Audience Analysis: An Updated Understanding of the Communications Landscape in Lebanon, ARK Group DMCC (March 2019) p.19

³ Target Audience Analysis: An Updated Understanding of the Communications Landscape in Lebanon, ARK Group DMCC (March 2019), p. 22-25. ACTED have situated community-based initiatives at the heart of disaster resilience, social cohesion and human development programmes, in [ACTED 2016 Annual Report, ACTED \(2017\)](#);

⁴ The Beirut Marathon, The American University of Beirut (AUB) (Web)

⁵ Lebanese were in the bottom five countries surveyed, WIN World Survey, 2018

⁶ This effect has been noted in: N Schülenkorf, 'An Ex Ante Framework for the Strategic Study of Social Utility of Sports Events, Tourism and Hospitality Research (2009); multiple other references available on request

⁷ Change4Life Campaign Resources, Public Health England (Web Resource)

⁸ ARK's Target Audience Analysis identifies the **Lebanese minority with the greatest potential to lead positive social change by the following characteristics: an average age of 30, primarily of Christian and Shia (Minority Sunni) instruction, a level (but not always) of socio-economic mobility, the rejection of violence as a change tactic, yet greater confidence in civic and protest action as effective change tactics.** Target Audience Analysis, ARK Group DMCC, p. 17 - 19

⁹ Target Audience Analysis, ARK Group DMCC, p. 1, 19, 24. multiple other references collected and available on request

Secondary Target Audiences (STA):

1. The Potential Target Audience¹⁰ - Approximately 12% of the Lebanese population is likely to engage in positive civic action.¹¹ We will target this group to recruit 'Event Boards' to organise and recruit for MASHI events and mobilise other youth, many of who will be their peers.
2. Extended communities – other ages and locations. Attitudinal change amongst the wider community is needed in the long-term. Older demographics can support and reinforce negative narratives surrounding refugees. Targeting them via their children, younger opinion leaders and via local media will help reduce tensions and violence by demonstrating positive interactions and mainstreaming narratives around those.
3. Potential Donors – we have long-standing relationships with many other donors (governments, multi-laterals and foundations). Looking ahead towards programme sustainability, we will also ensure selected organisations in the international development and social stability sector are aware of the programme and its progress.

Partner organisations and their programmes - such as the UNDP, NGOs and other stabilisation organisations - will not be a specific target audience. However, coordination with those actors will support deconfliction and higher collective effectiveness. We plan to open our media campaigns to disseminate and amplify their activities and content with permission of the Authority. We plan to do the same with other programme beneficiaries such as local health sector actors and sports clubs.

Our Activities

1. Preparation, training and community engagement

We will obtain profound community buy-in through a lengthy preparatory process of participatory engagement in each MASHI event location, via our consortium partners with their deep local knowledge and existing relationships. They will lead on the vetting, recruitment and training of an 'Event Board' to organise events. The precise criteria, process and details of training curriculum will be developed during the inception phase. The boards will be volunteers recruited from the PTA and STA¹². They will be drawn from middle-income communities and be at the higher end of the TA age range.

2. Supporting the organisation of MASHI events

We will give the board the platform to organise the events, an app, the brand, the materials, the training, the local contacts and ensure municipality buy-in. Board members will be community ambassadors and champions of the weekly event. We will leverage our networks in the key locations across health, exercise and community sectors to encourage participation, bolstering initial numbers. The boards will organise weekly walks/runs for the youth, regardless of background. These will be held at the **same time and same place, every week**. In the first year we plan to use **five event locations**, increasing to **10 in the second year**. **There will be 625 events in total** over the two year contract period. We will aim for each location to have 20-50 participants by the 10th weekly event, and 50-100 by the 50th event.

Location 1 (North)	Wadi Khaled
Location 2 (Beirut)	Jnah-Ouzaii loop
Location 3 (South)	Saida seafront
Location 4 (East)	Hasbaya
Location 5 (Beirut)	Achrafieh-Bourj Hamoud loop



We will organise MASHI events in areas that meet the following criteria: no entrenched political divisions (e.g. where Syrians will continue to mobilise when their parties require them); no open conflict; no Hezbollah-controlled areas; where there is a Syrian refugee population. We have identified the following five locations (red = areas that have experienced conflict; orange = areas experiencing heightened tension; green = calmer areas which can be most easily leveraged for media purposes). Our team has access to all areas of the country and can navigate security and government actors. Final details on events themes, their frequency and locations will be agreed following further research and consultation with the Authority.

3. Running social media campaigns and the MASHI app

We will support the boards by working with social media micro-influencers and established local news and media platforms to raise awareness of and share success of the events, personal stories of participants and community contributors. We will to engage and mobilise local media champions and paid media. We will also mobilise our media networks to engage journalists for local, national and regional press coverage, and leverage our global media buying power to purchase value-for-money media to support the promotion of the events. Messaging will focus on raising awareness of the event, remind people to participate and communicate successes. It will not approach the refugee issue head-on. We have chosen a different entry-point for the programme and its communications for two reasons: a) historical attempts to force peaceful coexistence have rarely found success¹³, b) any attempt to reject or obstruct national political discourse would jeopardise the messaging and programme. Instead we will focus on the success of the events and amplify them through the media and local community actors. Reported positive interactions and benefits experienced by the participants will dispel negative stereotypes and mistrust amongst host communities and refugees that lead to tensions and conflict, as per our Theory of Change.

Data-driven insights and harnessing the power of Digital

We will take a human-centred design (HCD) approach to maximise the connections between programme activities - from preparation and post-event meetings, to participants building and entering teams together with other meetups. We will build an ecosystem of social pages and tools, a central

¹⁰Target Audience Analysis, ARK Group DMCC, p. 19

¹¹Target Audience Analysis, ARK Group DMCC, p. 19

¹²Target Audience Analysis, ARK Group DMCC, p.1, 24

¹³ See: Identity, Integration and Assimilation: Factors of Success and Failure of Migration, Refugee Survey Quarterly 24(1), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2005); M Cox, Social Capital and Peace-Building: Creating and Resolving with Trust and Social Networks (2009); SG Simonsen, 'Addressing Ethnic Divisions in Post-Conflict Institution Building: Lessons from Recent Cases', Security Dialogue (2005)

website and the mobile application (app) to provide ongoing connections to the communities and municipality. The HCD will be data-led, enabling the content, tools and functions to be optimised to drive both participation in the event and ongoing connections after the event. The app will be a forum for feedback; for participants to get their statistics; and for community interaction outside the weekly event. We will carry out social listening to optimise the programme in two ways: a) to keep us aware of the trending topics and stories developing in the TA's social space, which in turn could be used to tailor our strategy and messaging. b) to track mentions and hashtags of MASHI to gauge its popularity, impact and reach. This will provide insights about the reaction to MASHI along with potential demographics breakdown and age categories through hashtags, mentions and brand tracking.

Applied Research - we will conduct formative, inclusive qualitative groups in areas we think could benefit from MASHI and that have existing refugee-host tensions. The research will include participation from a mixed gender sample from municipal Government, local media actors and youth and will test for audience resonance and how best to involve community, approach event preparation and other factors described in section five. We will also be undertaking research that builds on the ARK TAA and new research on the relationship between strategic communications and social stability, including the development of a systems map. We will utilise third-party Artificial Intelligence (AI) and listening tools to measure the impact and effectiveness our communications strategies. The AI engine will allow us to cut through the noise to locate 'micro-influencers' and be able to apply a 'credibility' score to each influencer identified, ensuring brand safety and messaging effectiveness. Listening tools will allow us to analyse the conversations around our key words, as well to study imagery and text in its contextual setting, ensuring that our messaging, listening and reporting are effective and accurate. This accuracy will be paramount to protect the brand and messaging in a such a volatile media environment.

Behavioural Change

We will draw on psychology, social science and behaviour change principles to define known change mechanisms. We will then develop these into a framework to inform product development. We will use a human-centred design (HCD) approach to attract the *attention* and *participation* of the TA. We will develop products and interactions with an understanding of, and with empathy for, the TA's wants and needs, together with active participation through user testing, pilot projects and product trials. This will ensure it is human centric, culturally sound and contextually relevant. This approach has a proven track record of success with our work on issues such as extremism in the UK and LGBTI rights in Southern Africa. In these areas it has shown the importance of putting users and stakeholders' needs central to decision making to ensure positive interactions, ongoing participation and subsequent success of the programme. For this programme, our design framework has three interconnected pillars:

1. Confluence – a theme that transcends identity to generate motivation 'Confluence Points' are the common ground that unite diverse communities and can be physical spaces, common passions or shared beliefs. In this case, the 'hook' is health and encourages participation and the formation of shared values, the specifics of which (locations, the exact route, distance and event experience) will be designed in partnership with the municipalities and evidence-led. **2. Contact – specific activities that foster direct interaction** Intergroup Contact Hypothesis shows that prejudice and the threat of the 'other' can be greatly reduced by bringing two groups together in the right circumstances over a period of time.¹⁴ It is important to note that 'contact' will take place between Lebanese and Syrian residents; Lebanese elite and Lebanese working class; and, between local government and citizens (e.g. to discuss initiative). The goal is to maximise the frequency of contact periods, create a routine, and ensure they are deemed a 'positive experience' by the participants. Employing an HCD approach will allow user testing, product pilots/trials and ongoing feedback to maximise outcomes. **3. Connections – enabling the functioning of social groups** Increasing the relationships and networks of society (the 'social capital') is proven to improve cohesion, co-operation and trust in communities.¹⁵ The connections and networks developed through the programme will live beyond the bounds of the event and give communities new opportunities for positive interactions.

Gender & Conflict Sensitivity

We will ensure that our activities do not sustain or create new gender inequalities. Our experience in Lebanon and the methodology demonstrate our deep understanding of gender issues facing refugee and host communities: cultural differences between Syrian and Lebanese families and communities; domestic stress/violence and female health and hygiene challenges; as well as the evolving new role of women refugees working (agricultural labour) more than the men due to security fears and movement restrictions. In some cases, traditional gender roles are either being reinforced and in others they are being reversed/challenged. In this sense, the MASHI programme would provide opportunities to engage women alongside men in positive health-reinforcing behaviours of equal participation and benefit, in a shared and peaceful communal exercise activity. Our programme will address them by ensuring that men and women receive a fair share of the benefits of our activities and pursuing gender sensitive reporting / M&E. Data will be sex and age-disaggregated, and include indicators to measure gender issues as specified in our Measurement and Evaluation section. Our budget also includes a highly regarded gender specialist, Dr. Alma Abdul-Hadi Jadallah, to ensure gender equality is included throughout our activity design and all programme staff are trained. We commit to undertake ongoing conflict gender analysis to update our understanding during the programme. As an organisation, we promise three commitments globally amongst our staff and partners: a) to support female career progression with transparency and mentoring; to address specific barriers women face such as race, disability, neurodiversity, sexuality or age c) to support women (and men) with flexible working and shared paternity leave¹⁶. Our experience and methodology set out here demonstrates our deep understanding of the causes of conflict in host communities - namely the strain on services and competition for jobs - and the opportunities to address them - bringing communities together for healthy sport events. We will ensure that MASHI Events Boards, events and campaigns target youth from all nationalities, confessions and socio-economic backgrounds to prevent new grievances emerging amongst host communities and refugees. We will also ensure that partners in municipalities/political parties in target areas receive equal support to prevent perceptions that we are favouring any elite group. We also commit to undertake ongoing conflict analysis and horizon scans to update our understanding during the programme.

Sustainability

The outcomes and success of the programme relies on frequency and regularity, so it is critical to sustain the programme after the cessation of allocated CSSF funding. We intend to leverage our relationships with other Governments including the host Government to find another donor to continue the programme, which could also be one of our larger, appropriate commercial partners in the region with CSR imperatives.

¹⁴ TF Pettigrew, 'Intergroup Contact Theory', Annual Review of Psychology vol. 49 (February 1998) p. 65-85

¹⁵ This is grounded in Bourdieu's conception of social capital, where repeated interactions and shared experiences accrue to foster durable networks. See P Bourdieu, The Forms of Capital (1985)

¹⁶ M&C Saatchi Gender Pay Gap Report 2019 – full report available on request

“When the youth are playing sport, they forget what nationality they are.” – Alexandra Tohme, CEO, Azahir Charity