



MASAR ASSOCIATION

We draw the path with celebration

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 - 2026

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✉ info@masarlb.org

🌐 www.masarlb.org

📷 **in** **f** **t** [masarlborg](https://www.instagram.com/masarlborg)

📞 +961 81 655 806

📠 +961 1 348411





We envision a secular and inclusive State where every human being is actively engaged, enjoys public freedoms, and where the rule of law is respected and abided by.

FORWARD

Masar developed its 5-year strategy (2022- 2026) during 2021. The process constituted an opportunity to pause, assess the rapidly changing Lebanese context, discuss the growing challenges, reflect on achievements, and pinpoint priorities and dimensions that need to be incorporated into our work.

Facilitated by an external consultant, the strategy development process was participatory whereby brainstorming and validation meetings were attended by staff members, General Assembly and Board members, partner organizations and youth partners in Masar's youth projects. Additionally, a questionnaire was shared with partner organizations to reflect their expectations from Masar's projects and the role it can play in advancing societal change and consolidating social cohesion.

To ensure that the strategic objectives are achieved, Masar will continuously monitor the progress of its work against the proposed results framework demonstrated in the strategy. This will help the organization ascertain that it is achieving its mission. Progress will be reported in the annual report produced at the beginning of each year covering the activities of the year before. Annual monitoring will also feed into the planning of the following year. Moreover, towards the end of 2024, this strategy document will be revised in a mid-term review process. Targets for 2026 will be updated accordingly to guide Masar's strategic direction.

I take this opportunity to reiterate our determination to have a solid and visionary strategy that help reach a secular and inclusive State where every human being is actively engaged, enjoys public freedoms, and where the rule of law is respected and abided by.

Kamal Shayya
Chief Coordinator & Head of Office

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ABOUT MASAR ASSOCIATION

Masar is a Lebanese non-governmental organization that was founded in 2005 with the aim to contribute to local and national development processes and the advancement of society. Masar works in holistic development with an equal focus on community and policy levels, thus constantly promoting development, policy change, and good governance. Masar's programs are based on human rights and the promotion of citizenship while ensuring that empowerment and advocacy are key approaches in the association's work. It cooperates with youth as an initial point of contact, since it profoundly believes in their abilities.

In its communal work, Masar mobilizes young people and empowers them to act as agents of change in their local communities. In its policy and governance work, Masar advocates the implementation of the National Youth Policy that was endorsed in 2012 by the Lebanese Government as well as upholding the rule of law. Masar also advocates the acknowledgment of Palestinian refugees' human rights in Lebanon to have a dignified life until the United Nations Resolution 194 is implemented, and to mitigate incorrect stereotypes against them.

Vision

We envision a secular and inclusive State where every human being is actively engaged, enjoys public freedoms, and where the rule of law is respected and abided by.

Mission

Masar Association was founded in 2005 with the aim of contributing to local and national development processes and the advancement of society. Masar operates at the community and policy levels, enabling wide access to information and emphasizing empowerment and advocacy as cross-cutting approaches. In fact, it works with every human being in Lebanon through mobilization, empowerment, participation, networking, and advocacy to achieve development, policy change, and the promotion of good governance.



Core Values

At Masar, we are guided by a set of core values, at the center of which lie participatory decision making, diversity, non-discrimination and inclusiveness, human rights, equity, and the promotion of a knowledge society.

Diversity

We believe in wide involvement, irrespective of gender, race, nationality, and beliefs.

Equity and Human Rights

We believe in the right of every human being to equitable treatment, justice, and non-bias.

Non-Discrimination and Inclusiveness

We advocate for non-discriminatory and inclusive laws and practices where every human being is treated without favoritism and none is discriminated against.

Participatory Decision Making

We value joint ownership of decisions made and the continuous search for options that everyone feels comfortable with.

Promotion of a Knowledge Society

Since knowledge is power, we believe in the promotion of a society where knowledge is freely generated, shared, and made available to all members to use for the improvement of wellbeing.

WHO WE WORK WITH

Driven by equity and non-discrimination, we work with a multitude of stakeholders, some of whom are core and central to our work, accompanying us in almost every step we make, while others are ad hoc (though not less in importance), depending on the program, project, or activity.

Core Stakeholders

Our stakeholders vary in almost every aspect of their role, with each immensely contributing to our mission. For that reason, we are guided by the belief that a long-term partnership with each stakeholder is vital to our success.

CORE STAKEHOLDERS

Young People

Citizens

Local Authorities, Ministries
& Governmental Committees

NGOs

Parliamentary
Committees

Youth Wings in
Political Parties

Political Groups

Palestinian Refugees
In Lebanon

UN Agencies

NGOs & CBOs

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Digital Media

Private Sector

Resource People

Media

Schools &
Universities

Palestinian
Political Factions

Lebanese Political
Parties

WHERE DO WE WORK

Our Context

Lebanon's gross domestic product has plummeted from \$55 billion in 2018 to \$20.5 billion in 2021, according to a World Bank report. Since October 2019, Lebanon and its residing populations have been living through the worst conditions since the country got its independence in 1943, as described by many economic experts. During the first quarter of 2020, the Lebanese government announced to the international community its inability to pay the country's debts, noting that its debt-to-GDP ratio has reached 152%¹, which is one of the highest in the world. As of June 2021, the Lebanese Pound has lost around 90% of its value, and the national minimum wage, which equaled 450\$ in 2018, is now worth 30\$ according to the black market's exchange rate (Lebanon Minimum Wage - World Minimum Wage Rates 2020, no date; The World Bank, 2021). This led the World Bank to call it "one of the deepest depressions of modern history"².

Furthermore, the Lebanese labor market has been characterized with a mismatch between labor demand and supply, knowing that most of the Lebanese youth that opted for higher education were oriented towards majors that are related to the banking sector since it was a steady and profitable sector. Many of these are now joining the lines of unemployed. As a result, according to relief web, the multidimensional poverty rate has nearly doubled from a 42% in 2019 to an average of 82% in 2021³. Living conditions have also been aggravated by the fact that the country hosts the highest number of refugees per capita (World Economic Forum, 2019). While the country continues to try to deal with this unprecedented number of refugees, vulnerable communities, including current and tenured refugees are still enduring the repercussions of the crisis with access to basic rights becoming more challenging, and income decreasing impacted by the unavailability of job opportunities.

To make matters worse, the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus has led many institutions to close their doors, driving more people out of their jobs, especially hourly workers whose income is tightly connected to daily work. Concurrently, under the pretext of protective measures, the authorities tightened their grip on the freedom of assembly, removing protest tents from downtown Beirut. Culminating matters, on the 4th of August 2020, Beirut witnessed a colossal explosion severely impacting lives and livelihoods and uncapping distrust, frustrations, and party-to-party accusations. The explosion is yet another sign of the blatant criminal and irresponsible nature of the political class who to date, has been obstructing investigations. Politically, Lebanon witnessed two government resignations since 2019, and a failing

1 Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-50183895>

2 Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/lebanon-currency-drops-new-low-financial-melt-down-deepens-2021-06-13/>

3 Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/multidimensional-poverty-lebanon-2019-2021-painful-reality-and-uncertain-prospects>

governance that affected foreign capital inflows and investment climate due to the lack of trust of investors and the Lebanese diaspora in the ruling class (The World Bank, 2021). The World Bank (2021) warned that Lebanon might undertake one of the cruelest economic crises in the past 150 years in the world if urgent reforms are not implemented.

In light of all the above, once a vibrant civil society, the Lebanese civil society is transforming young activists into passive aid recipient, relying on food parcels, hygiene kits, cash-for-food, and other charitable contributions that come their way. For Masar, it is the right time to continue working on governance, policy change, youth and citizen empowerment and advocacy as we are keen on ensuring that citizens, including youth continue to advocate for their priorities and hold people in power accountable .

People we work with

Masar works at the communal and national levels with youth, community members, civil society organizations, and activists who are interested in eliciting change. Additionally, we work with local and national authorities who influence national policies and governance.



STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth inclusion at the core • Diverse activities • Mission upheld without being donor driven • Broad participation of organizations • The issue-based approach which brings people from diverse backgrounds to work on common issues • Youth ownership and trust in the association • Non-partisanship and work with different parties • Professionalism • Partnerships and networks • Nondiscrimination • Pioneer youth initiatives • Small team, maximizing efficiency and communication • The association's credibility • Adaptability and flexibility • Platforms for the exchange of experiences and knowledge • Digitalization process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small team who multi-tasks • High staff turnover • Reliance on donor support
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with youth who are aware of their role and able to impact the public opinion • Expanding relationship with existing youth groups • Initiating new programs and updating existing ones to match the changing context • Building the capacity of local organizations and youth groups • Networking and building synergies among groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of COVID-19 pandemic • Shift in donor priorities • Sectarianism • Patriarchal society • State-wide despair • Political instability • Economic and financial collapse • Downfall of governmental institutions • Civil war

Assumptions

In planning our way forward, we forward a number of assumptions, including:

- Youth remain motivated in influencing their society and being proactive in shaping their own future.
- Youth remain interested in participating in decision making processes in Lebanon.
- Parliamentary elections take place on time so there is a new and legitimate political class to work with.
- The Lebanese government is more open to discussing and acknowledging the rights of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

STRATEGIC ORIENTATION

Programmatic components

Youth for Community Development (YCD): This program aims at mobilizing and empowering young men and women to become active citizens in their communities through (a) developing their capacities via the provision of training, concepts, skills, tools, monitoring and support on the field to enable them to positively engage in civic and communal life, and (b) supporting them establish partnerships and synergies to initiate dialogue over their priorities with municipal councils and local authorities among other stakeholders. Through this program, youth from across Lebanon are provided with a space to meet, interact, and exchange experiences, thus supporting them appreciate diversity and practice their citizenship roles away from sectarian and regional limitations. More importantly, youth are provided with an opportunity to put in practice the knowledge and skills they learn during the trainings and are guided to be sensitive to their communities' needs critically, thus promoting their self-confidence and self-esteem through their communal work. They are empowered to identify their needs, problems, and ambitions; prioritize them; plan and implement advocacy projects; and collaborate and initiate a dialogue with relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, and on a broader scope, the program aims to establish a cross-regional and cross-sectarian youth movement through which youth are enabled to develop their collective efficacy to work on their identified priorities and those of their communities as active young citizens.

Youth Policy and Governance (YPG): This program seeks to support youth to push for the implementation of the National Youth Policy (NYP) which was endorsed by the Lebanese Government in April 2012. The NYP is an exceptional experience in the Arab region, particularly that young people themselves have set its recommendations and submitted them to the Ministry of Youth and Sports, demanding its ratification by the Cabinet. The aim of advocating the NYP is to ensure that youth are guaranteed their rights to welfare and influence. At a broader scale, this program supports the engagement of citizens in dialogue and advocacy with duty bearers and political decision makers over issues and topics pertaining to

enhancing the rule of law, access to information, accountability, and participation in the public life.

Rights for Palestinians in Lebanon (RPL): This program is implemented at two levels: Community and policy. RPL aims to ensure that Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon (PRL) are enabled to lead a dignified life until the United Nations Resolution 194 is implemented. It works on breaking stereotypes held towards PRL through organizing strolls and discussions among Lebanese and Palestinian groups. It opens the door for joint action, advocating for the endorsement of human rights through enhancing communication opportunities between Lebanese and Palestinian groups for the best interest of both nations and through forwarding policy recommendations to relevant duty bearers and service providers.

Cross-cutting approaches

- **Development through art:** Masar believes that art is a vehicle to achieve development. Through theatre, film making, music among others, youth express themselves better, break their shyness, and feel more confident to engage in the public life.
- **Empowerment:** Masar works on empowering the people it works with to ensure that its interventions are sustainable. Thus, it constantly provides training on various topics including life skills (conflict analysis and transformation, mediation, leadership, advocacy, teamwork, communication) needs assessment and project management tools, human rights concepts, as well as the concepts of citizenship, gender, and development, among others.
- **Advocacy:** Masar supports the people it works with to influence opinions and decisions of people, organizations, and policy makers to elicit a sustainable change.
- **Gender mainstreaming:** Masar believes in gender equity and works to ensure that all its programs are gender sensitive and promote the equitable participation of both men and women.
- **Publishing youth friendly resources:** Masar produces interactive and youth friendly resources to enable citizens to become active players in public life. It also organizes training workshops and dialogue sessions on topics of interest to the people it works with across its three programs.
- **Replication of successful models of participation:** Masar documents best practices of citizens participation that are achieved in its interventions and supports their replication either directly or through Community Based Organizations and Initiatives it works with.
- **Media for Development:** Masar uses media and social media in its projects as a means to promote its mission and objectives, educate citizens, influence their perceptions and practices, advocate citizens' rights, and question decision makers and hold them accountable.

Results framework

Strategic Outcome 1: Young men and women empowered to become active citizens in their communities.			
Outcome Indicators	Milestone 2024	Target 2026	Assumptions
<p>Youth from different areas across Lebanon provided with access to a space where they can practice their citizenship and act/ advocate for their rights.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300 youth trained to use their newly acquired skills to practice their citizenship rights. • Communication and collaboration mechanisms established in 25 communities across Lebanon. • 25 advocacy projects implemented annually by trained youth on issues of concern to them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 125 youth trained annually to use their newly acquired skills to practice their citizenship rights. • Communication and collaboration mechanisms established in a total of 30 communities across Lebanon. • 25 advocacy projects implemented annually by trained youth on issues of concern to them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained youth remain committed to advocate for their rights and actively engage in their communities. • Adequate resources are provided to the youth.

Strategic Outcome 2: Citizens in general and youth in specific supported to advocate for the implementation of the youth policy, have influence in public life, and promote good governance and the rule of law.

Outcome Indicators	Milestone 2024	Target 2026	Assumptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy actions taken on the national youth policy endorsed by the Lebanese government in April 2012. • Evidence generated on advocacy topics related to governance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 resources produced to support youth to advocate for their rights: one focusing on a technical and legal review for the policy implementation and another on the monitoring role of the Youth Forum over policy implementation. • 4 meetings held annually with decision makers. • 6 media releases published annually. • 2 policy papers and briefs issued per year. • Lobbying meetings held with 10 decision makers. • 1 media campaign implemented per year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 resource produced annually to support youth to advocate for their rights. • 4 meetings held annually with decision makers. • 6 media releases published annually. • 2 policy papers and briefs issued per year. • Lobbying meetings held with 15 decision makers. • 1 media campaign implemented per year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A functional government is in place. • The political and economic situation in Lebanon stabilized enough to enable meetings with decision makers on youth-related topics.

Strategic Outcome 3: A rights-based approach adopted in laws and implementations, enabling Palestinian refugees in Lebanon to access their rightful human rights and lead a dignified life until the United Nations Resolution 194 is implemented.

Outcome Indicators	Milestone 2024	Target 2026	Assumptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevalent stereotypes against Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon are broken and they are provided with access to their basic rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 strolls and dialogue sessions organized between Lebanese and Palestinian youth in several areas across Lebanon as well as inside Palestinian refugee camps. • 2 policy recommendations forwarded to decision makers with the aim of improving the living conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon (PRL). • 1 advocacy dossier/ thematic study report submitted to duty bearers. • A newly established network supported to take advocacy actions. • Two topics addressed through evidence generation actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 strolls and dialogue sessions organized between Lebanese and Palestinian youth in several areas across Lebanon as well as inside Palestinian refugee camps. • 1 policy recommendation forwarded to decision makers with the aim of improving the living conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon (PRL). • 1 advocacy dossier/ thematic study report submitted to duty bearers. • A newly established network supported to take advocacy actions. • One topic addressed through evidence generation actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A functional government is in place. • PRL are committed to improve their humanitarian conditions in Lebanon until their return to their homeland.