DESIGN FOR COMMUNITIES

D4C Annual Report 2023

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Foreword

Dear Friends, Partners and D4C Community,

As we bid farewell to 2023, we at Design for Communities reflect on a year filled with growth, impact, and unwavering dedication to our mission. Thanks to the dedication of our team, the support of volunteers, and the generosity of our donors, we have made significant strides in empowering the design community to be civically engaged through their profession. We have achieved this by creating spaces that foster dignity and hope for communities in need. Join us in celebrating the accomplishments and milestones of the past year!

Nafas is completed!

The community center in Karantina has been fully constructed and is now operational. After screening a number of NGOs that can operate the center, we signed an agreement with Farah Social Foundation, who is managing the center and is committed to ensure that support, programs and activities from various NGOS will be provided for the inhabitants of Karantina. We are now exploring funding opportunities to furnish the equipment of the center that includes kitchen, psychosocial support room and the courtyard. Thanks to the contributions of Fondation de France, La Guilde, Cités Unies France, Toufic Mouawad Initiative, LebCAAP, USAID and ACID, the center is operational and able to support the marginalized community of Karantina.

Mentoring program established

Our mentoring program continues to be a catalyst for positive change. Young professionals had the opportunity to engage through by responding to the current needs and challenges people in Lebanon are encountering. We concluded our pilot project with Asfari Foundation, and launched another mentoring cycle which included lectures and hands-on experiences. We upgraded our curriculum and invited a number of guest lecturers to support our program and deliver courses such as Community-based design, participatory community engagement, placemaking, and environmental and sustainable design.

We expanded our educational program to involve more young professionals and encourage universities across Lebanon to adopt our mentorship program at their Architectural Departments or faculties. With international partners met through the Goethe Institute, we developed a proposal for an international workshop about Community-based design involving architecture and design students as well as young professionals from the Middle East (Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq) and Central Europe to learn about community-based and environmental design.

The goal is to provide education and practical experience in this field, foster intercultural exchange, and promote the ethical and environmental responsibilities of architects. D4C will establish partnerships with universities, educational institutions, and cultural organizations, and seek funding from public or private grants. Local mentors and ambassadors will be identified through this international workshop. Ultimately, the program aims to expand its impact in different countries by establishing references in each country who will be able to replicate the workshop, and support the implementation of community-based projects locally.

Projects in the making

In partnership with Di-Lab at AUB, we developed a proposal to improve the working conditions and livelihood of fishermen in Tripoli. The design of the boat maintenance yard, the corniche, and a cultural center was guided by a participatory approach, placing the needs and desires of the fishermen at the core of the design process. Currently, we are mapping potential partners and funding opportunities that would enable us to pursue the development of this project and its execution.

Due to the current war on Gaza that has led to violence on Lebanon›s southern border with almost thousand Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), a team of volunteers started looking at guidelines that could help improve the quality of life of IDPs in the South of Lebanon. With 50,000 IDPs today, many reside temporarily in collective shelters. D4C is preparing a set of guidelines to support IDPs and NGOs in providing decent spaces for living, sleeping and socializing in those temporary shelters. These guidelines will be made accessible to local authorities and humanitarian agencies, with whom we will further implement the project.

Expanding our impact

D4C actively participated in conferences such as “Envision” by Injaz and Goethe Institute and “Designfold” in Amman, organized by the Goethe Institute. We delved into the critical role of Community-Based Design (CBD) as a response to crises, addressing humanitarian and global trends such as urbanization, migration, climate change, and conflicts. We highlighted the design value that can be provided in addressing future challenges our societies are facing.

In addition, we organized on December 12th, 2023, our second Annual Gathering, in collaboration with Farah Social Foundation, where friends, partners, donors and academics gathered in our Community Center Nafas in Karantina to exchange updates and network with the D4C community.

Aiming for sustainable growth

Thanks to the generous support of Al Fanar, we have received a seed fund to bolster the capacity building of social enterprises, paving the way for the financial sustainability of our organization.

Looking ahead to 2024, our goals include becoming an impact-driven hub for community-based projects, while establishing a plan for our financial and organizational sustainability.

We also aim to raise awareness about community-based design, and continue mentoring program cycles to enable employment of a wider range of young professionals.

With our expertise in development and execution of architectural projects and the successful implementation of Nafas, we aspire to create more impactful projects that improve the quality of life of local communities in Lebanon.

With the growth of our team, in terms of staff and board, we will be able to achieve more impact in 2024!

As we celebrate the accomplishments of 2023, we express our deepest gratitude to each one of you who has played a role in making these achievements possible. Together, we look forward to a future where communities thrive through the transformative power of design.

Karim Najjar
President

Sarah Rita Kattan
Executive Director

2 types of beneficiariess

Design community and young professionals

Vulnerable and local communities

About D4C

DESIGN FOR COMMUNITIES

D4C Is an NGO established in 2018 in Beirut. It brings together designers and professionals from a variety of backgrounds to engage in community projects in different countries. The interdisciplinary platform connects architects, landscape & urban designers, planners, environmental, climate, mechanical & civil engineers through a diverse portfolio of projects operating at the highest levels of innovation in the field.

Mission

Empower the design community to actively collaborate, engage, learn and implement innovative and sustainable projects to improve the quality of life of local communities.

Vision

Create an impact-driven design hub that develops innovative sustainable community-based programs and projects.

4 Strategic Priorities

Organizational development

Partnerships and advocacy

Educational Program

Community based projects

LEARN **ENGAGE** **DO** **INSPIRE**

Impact

1
Curriculum upgraded

2
Proposals developed

10
Mentored young professionals

17
Students mentored in collaboration with Di-Lab

6,200
Design hours donated

1
Networking Event

3
Projects

2
Grants

3
MoUs signed

Mentoring Program

Enhancing Mentoring Program

D4C is enhancing its mentoring program for young professionals and designers through the Alfanar Venture Philanthropy Seed Fund, funded by GIZ. The project aims to bolster D4C›s journey towards financial sustainability.The mentoring program enables D4C interns and trainees to design and implement community-based projects in a professional and sustainable manner. It empowers young architects to execute community-based projects with

professionalism and social, economic and environmental sustainability. The program integrates coursework with practical experience, as interns are guided through projects by mentors. Young professionals/ designers conduct a needs assessment, and based on its results develop a concept design that addresses the challenges the community is encountering.

Donors
GIZ
AlFanar Venture Philanthropy

Community-Based Projects

Nafas Community Center

D4C celebrated the successful completion of the Nafas Community Center, marking a significant milestone in its efforts to support the community of Karantina. An important milestone was achieved with the signing of an MOU with Farah Social Foundation to operate the center and provide vital support to the community. The Nafas Community Center offers a range of essential services, including income generating activities, psychosocial support, food security initiatives and various awareness sessions conducted by both national and international NGOs. A soft opening ceremony was held in December 2023.

It was attended by partners, donors, and friends of the center, signifying the beginning of its operations.Thanks to the generous support of various donors, including Fondation De France, Cites Unies, La Guilde, Toufic Mouawad Initiative, Leb CAAP USAID, and Farah Social Foundation, the center is able to serve approximately 30 individuals per month. This collaborative effort highlights the collective commitment to empowering and uplifting communities in need, ensuring that the Nafas Community Center becomes a beacon of hope and support for the residents of Karantina. Until now, 100 individuals and 4 NGOs benefited from the center.

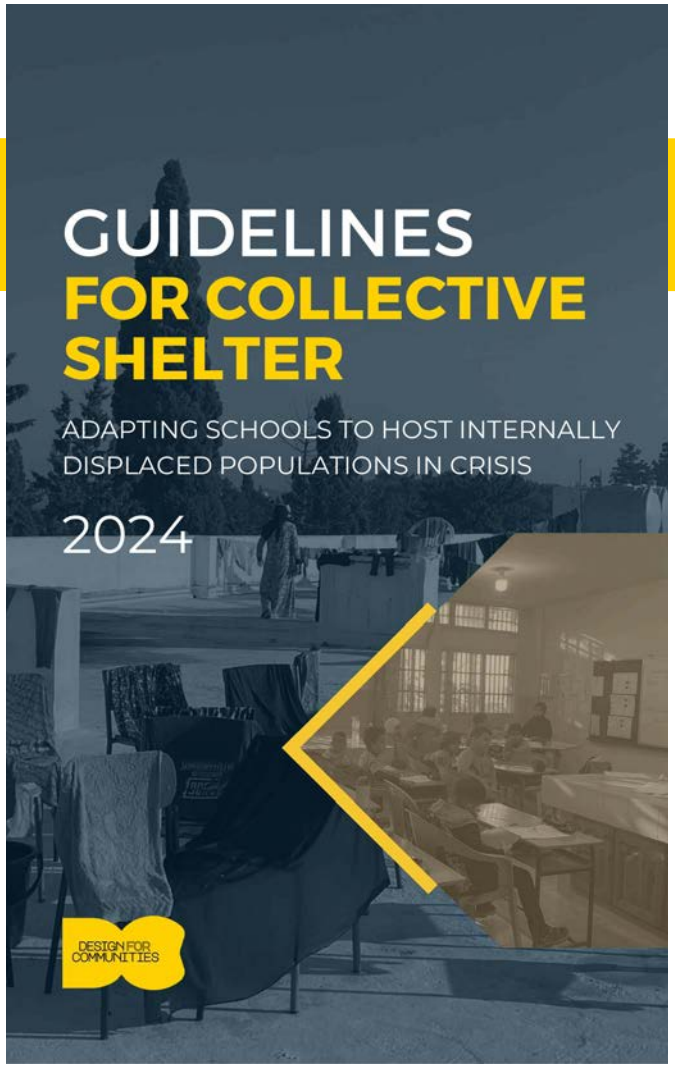
Donors
Fondation De France, Cites Unies France, La Guilde, Toufic Moawad Initiative, Leb CAAP USAID

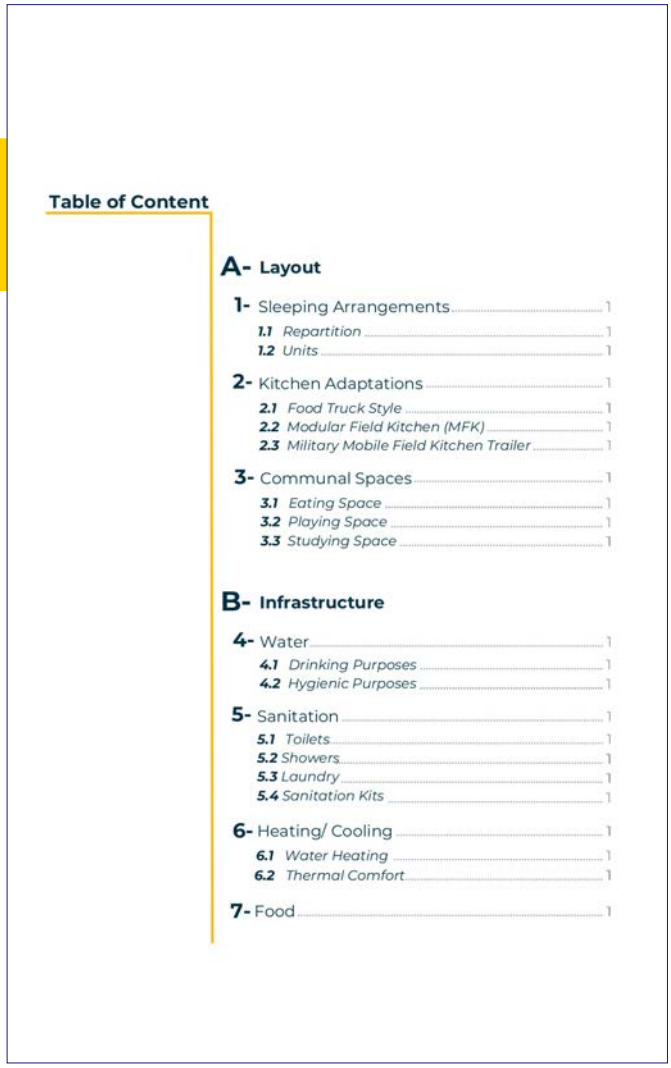
Partners
Beirut Municipality
Farah Social Foundation

Tripoli shipyard

Lebanon's fishermen communities have a rich history and play a vital role in the coastal regions. They have traditionally relied on fishing as their main livelihood, developing unique cultural practices. These communities can be found in coastal towns and villages, particularly in Tripoli, Sidon, Tyre, and Beirut, benefiting from the Mediterranean Sea's abundant fish and seafood resources. Fishing in Lebanon involves traditional techniques like net fishing, line fishing, and traps, with some using traditional wooden boats called "flouka" and others adopting modern vessels.Fishing remains an important source of income, with a variety of fish species caught and sold at local markets, restaurants, and directly to consumers. D4C and the Di-Lab Course at the Department of Architecture and Design at the American University of Beirut collaborated to conduct a participatory needs assessment for the fishermen communities in Tripoli. This assessment aimed to identify the challenges and needs of the communities and utilize design innovation to propose solutions.The objective of this project is to address the concerns raised by the fisherman in Tripoli regarding their work environment in order to enhance the efficiency of the shipbuilding and repair process, both in terms of cost and time. 3 different prototypes were developed for the shipyard, the corniche and a cultural hub.In addition, a prototype for a fishermen's boat that optimizes the use of resources and is environmentally sustainable is being developed.

Partners
AUB
DiLab





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Guidelines For Collective Shelters

Amidst the ongoing conflict along the Southern border of Lebanon and the escalating displacement crisis, D4C undertook a comprehensive study based on assessments conducted with Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in public schools. The aim was to develop guidelines to support the spatial division and organization of the schools in a manner that could effectively address their pressing needs The primary goal of the project is to guide NGOs, local agencies and authorities who facilitate sheltering families in public schools. This ensures that immediate relief is provided while prioritizing the well-being, dignity, and eventual transition of IDPs to more sustainable housing solutions. The assessment phase was carried out withina public school located in South Lebanon, where a significantnumber of IDPs resided. The findings from the study will be disseminated to humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to ensure that collective shelters meet the essential needs of IDPs while caring for their well-being.Based on the funding received, these shelters could be equipped with facilities such as communal kitchens, sleeping and living areas, and toilets, aiming to provide a safe and dignified living environment for those displaced by conflict.

Partnerships

Partnerships In 2023

D4C actively pursued strategic collaborations with a diverse range of local and international organizations, marking a significant milestone in its mission to empower communities through design initiatives. These partnerships were solidified through the formal signing of 3 Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), symbolizing a commitment to shared goals and collaborative efforts. These agreements are geared towards the collaborative development and design of community-based projects benefiting students, fishermen, and displaced individuals. Also, D4C partnered with Goethe-Institut to design and organize an international workshop involving architecture and design students and young professionals from the region, specifically from Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq, as well as from across Central Europe to learn about community-based design. These partnerships aim to co-create sustainable solutions that address pressing issues and contribute to positive social impact.D4C actively participated in conferences like "Envision" hosted by Injaz and Goethe Institute, as well as "Designfold" organized by the Goethe Institute in Amman. During these events, we explored the pivotal role of Community-Based Design (CBD) as a strategic response to pressing crises, using the crisis as an opportunity for sustainable development. Our focus was on emphasizing the significant value of design in navigating the forthcoming challenges confronting our societies, particularly key humanitarian and global issues including urbanization, migration, climate change, and conflicts. Furthermore, D4C has become a part of Sustain Lebanon, a Fundraising Platform that enables individuals to make online donations to causes they are passionate about. D4C is actively seeking funding to sustain its mentoring program and social circus project. In December 2023, D4C organized its second annual gathering at the Nafas Community center in collaboration with FSF. This event brought together friends, partners, donors, and academics, providing an opportunity to share updates, network, and foster connections within the D4C community.

Organizational Development

Organizational development In 2023

D4C embarked on a transformative journey with the invaluable support of different donors, mainly Leb-CAAP, USAID, and AlFanar Venture Philanthropy. Together, these partnerships have been instrumental in driving forward crucial initiatives aimed at enhancing D4C's business model, fostering financial sustainability, and rigorously monitoring the social impact of community-based projects on both the design community and local communities.

With their support, D4C has undertaken strategic measures to refine its business model, ensuring alignment with its mission and vision while enhancing operational efficiency and effectiveness. These efforts are geared towards creating a robust framework that enables D4C to deliver sustainable social impact over the long term, while also fostering innovation and adaptability in response to evolving needs and challenges.

Furthermore, in 2023, D4C welcomed new additions to its team, including a Finance and Administrative Officer, as well as Junior Architects and interns.

Delivering Our Strategic Plan

Delivering Our Strategic Plan 2024

In 2024, D4C continues to actively contribute to its strategic plan by prioritizing tasks and objectives, with weekly meetings held to coordinate activities, monitor progress, and generate innovative ideas for programs and projects. Committed to ensuring the sustainability of its organizational structure, D4C utilizes fundraising, partnerships, and its mentoring program as key pillars of support.At its core, D4C is dedicated to providing employment and capacity-building opportunities in community-based design to aspiring architects, particularly those facing limited job prospects and professional experience. Through empowerment and skill development, D4C aims to equip individuals with the tools to effect sustainable social impact within their communities. All D4C projects and activities are aligned with the principles and objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a primary focus on advancing SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, and SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities.By concentrating efforts on these key SDGs, D4C remains steadfast in its commitment to fostering inclusive and sustainable development, both locally and globally. Furthermore, D4C is forging close collaborations with experts and consultants to transform its mentoring program into a revenue-generating endeavor. This strategic initiative aims to secure the program›s long-term sustainability while continuing to enhance its social impact, ultimately contributing to the improved quality of life within local communities, and to forming the next generation of socially responsible architects.

“Seeing the center completed as envisioned, despite financial challenges, is a testament to the resilience and dedication of D4C team to finish what we have started, and overseeing the construction from start to finish, taught me valuable skills such as project management, problem solving, quality control, and many others.”

AbdelHafiz el Hajj
Project
Architect

Design for Communities
P: +96170758269
A: Hamra, Beirut, Lebanon
E: info@d4communities.org