# DESIGN FOR COMMUNITIES

## D4C Annual Report 2024

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# Foreword

**Dear Friends, Partners, and the D4C Community,**

As we step into 2025, we take a moment to reflect on the past year—a year that brought unprecedented challenges but also reaffirmed our commitment to using design as a force for positive change. In the face of ongoing crises, displacement, and social inequalities, we at Design for Communities (D4C) remained steadfast in our mission, adapting swiftly to meet the urgent needs of vulnerable communities while continuing to invest in long-term, sustainable development.

One of our most impactful projects in 2024 was the **Knowledge Container**, developed in collaboration with LAL and CMA CGM. This 20-foot mobile learning space has become a beacon of hope, providing access to quality education for underserved communities across Lebanon. Equipped with the Tabshoura digital learning platform, it offers primary and secondary education while fostering creativity and collaboration among children.
This initiative exemplifies the power of design, technology, and community-driven solutions in transforming education and empowering future generations.

In response to the ongoing conflict in Lebanon, D4C took immediate action to support Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) by creating Guidelines for **Collective Shelters** and designing adaptable furniture solutions. With the generous support of individual donors, ProAbled, and ShareQ, we provided essential living spaces that prioritize safety, dignity, and comfort. Our designs included space-efficient beds, secure storage units, and multifunctional seating areas to improve the quality of life for displaced individuals. This initiative underscores our commitment to delivering compassionate, sustainable solutions in humanitarian crises, ensuring that those affected by displacement have access to dignified shelter environments.

Beyond emergency relief, we continued to invest in the future through education and professional development. We launched an online cycle of **courses on community-centered design** and, in partnership with Di-Lab at the American University of Beirut, conducted an **internship program** for young designers. Four project proposals were developed within the internship program: The Barn and the Apicenter in Domaine de Taanayel in partnership with Arcenciel, the Psychiatry Inpatient Unit at AUBMC, and the Eco-hub with AhlaFawda in Hamra. We aim to raise funds with our partners to implement them in 2025. These initiatives provided participants with practical skills, hands-on experience, and a deeper understanding of socially driven design. By engaging directly with communities and integrating sustainability into their work, these emerging designers are empowered to become changemakers who use design to address pressing social challenges.

D4C also played an active role in advancing global conversations on Community-Centered Design (CCD). We participated in **international conferences**, including the 8th International Conference on Childhood and Adolescence, ICCA 2024 and the ACSA 2024 International Conference: Inflections, and exhibited our work at American University in Beirut (AUB), shedding light on the role of design in tackling urbanization, migration, climate change, and conflict.
Additionally, we organized **awareness sessions at universities** such as AUB, Phoenicia University, NDU, and Alba, engaging students and professionals in the importance of community-driven design solutions and its impact on shaping resilient communities.

Thanks to the generous support of AlFanar Venture Philanthropy, we were able to extend our mission beyond Lebanon by launching the online Community-Centered Design Program and refining our **business model**. This support has allowed us to collaborate with various NGOs to develop communal spaces tailored to local needs.With the support of Leb CAAP, we are also working towards **financial sustainability** while **measuring the impact** of our work. As we move forward, our focus remains on building long-term, community-driven solutions that foster social and environmental resilience.

None of this would have been possible without the dedication of our incredible team, the passion of our **volunteers**, and the unwavering generosity of our **donors** and **partners**. Your support has been instrumental in driving our mission forward and reinforcing the profound connection between **design and social responsibility**.

As we look ahead to 2025, we remain committed to expanding our impact, strengthening our partnerships, and continuing to empower communities through thoughtful, innovative design. Thank you for being part of this journey with us—we are excited to build a future where design continues to be a catalyst for meaningful change.

With gratitude and hope,

**Karim Najjar**
*President*

**Sarah Rita Kattan**
*Executive Director*

DESIGN FOR COMMUNITIES

# About D4C

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
- Education and Training Program
- Community-Centered projects

**Learn** **Engage** **Do** **Inspire**

# Our Impact

**on the design community**

- Form a new generation of socially-responsible architects by changing the **mindset** of young **professionals**, universities and architectural firms.
- Increase the **knowledge** of young professionals, NGOs, and architectural firms in community-centered and sustainable design.
- Create jobs and increase **employment** and **income** opportunities.

**on local communities**

- Increase the number of constructed **communal** spaces.
- Revive **public** spaces.
- Enhance **living conditions** within the community by increasing accessibility to basic services, improving their wellbeing, social cohesion, dignity and belonging.
- Change behavior towards **inclusivity**

**1**
Upgraded Curriculum

**1**
Online Course of Community -Centered Design

**8**
Trained Young Professionals

**15**
Students mentored in partnership with Di-Lab

**2**
Completed Projects

**6**
Project Proposals

**2**
Grants

**3**
MoUs Signed

**8160**
Design Hours Donated

# Community-Centered Design Program (CCD)

**Program Description**

The program and courses offered by D4C are designed to equip young designers with the skills and knowledge to create meaningful, community-driven projects. Guided by our team of experts, participants gain hands-on experience in designing for social impact.
CCD program goes beyond a traditional learning experience— it serves as a platform for transformation. Through workshops, expert-led courses, and collaborative projects, participants develop:

**Innovation Skills**

Addressing real-world challenges with innovative, low-tech and low-cost design solutions.

**Community Engagement skills**

Ensuring designs meet the true needs of local communities.

**Sustainability Expertise**

Integrating environmental responsibility into every stage of the design process.

By fostering creativity, collaboration, and purpose-driven design, the program empowers participants to become changemakers who use design to uplift communities.

**Partners**
giz
ALFANAR

In 2024, D4C's Community-Centered program continues to offer young professionals the chance to engage in community-based design projects, addressing real challenges in Lebanon. The program consists of an online course with 10 lectures on community-centered design, an internship with hands-on experience, and expert guidance. Participants gain valuable skills in Community-Centered Design, Participatory Community Engagement, Placemaking, and Sustainable Design.

This year, the program expanded to include 6 young professionals from various backgrounds who attended the online sessions, 15 students from AUB, 4 graduates who were team advisors, supporting the learning and project management process of the students, and 3 mentors. The internship enabled participants to apply their learning to real-world projects, developing proposals for environmental and earth architecture and urban interventions in collaboration with Di-Lab (Design Impact Laboratory) at AUB.

# 2024 Highlight

By combining academic learning with practical experience, the program equips future architects and designers with the tools to create meaningful social impact and promote sustainable development. Participants assess community needs, develop design solutions, and execute projects that make a lasting impact, all within a structured, hands-on approach. This integration of online learning and real-world experience ensures that designers are prepared to tackle challenges in an innovative, durable and socially responsible way.

As part of its commitment to fostering young talent and providing capacity-building and employment opportunities, D4C strengthened its mentoring program with the support of the Alfanar Venture Philanthropy Seed Fund, funded by GIZ. This initiative not only supports D4C's financial sustainability, but it also empowers emerging architects to lead community-driven projects grounded in professionalism, social impact, and environmental responsibility.

**Collaboration with**
Di-Lab (Design Impact Laboratory) at AUB

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

di-lab

# Community-based Projects

## Completed Projects

## Knowledge Container

Lebanon's ongoing crises have severely disrupted education, leaving thousands of vulnerable students without access to quality learning opportunities. In response to this urgent need, in collaboration with Lebanese Alternative Learning (LAL) and with the support of Fondation CMA CGM, D4C proudly designed the Knowledge Container, a 20-foot shipping container transformed into a fully equipped, mobile learning space for students aged 3 to 18. This milestone reinforces our mission to bridge educational gaps across Lebanon and make education accessible everywhere.

The Knowledge Container introduces vulnerable and local students to Tabshoura, LAL's self-learning app, within an engaging and interactive environment designed to foster creativity and collaboration.

**Partners**
LAL
CMA CGM

Lebanese Alternative Learning
EDUCATION THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

FONDATION CMA CGM

Inspired by the concept of a chalk box (Tabshoura), the container unfolds its facade into a deck, doubling the learning space and inviting more young learners to explore self-learning opportunities.

Highly flexible, the design features a One Unit System that seamlessly integrates fixed and mobile furniture, adapting to individual, one-on-one, and group learning. Bullseye windows and color-coded cushions enhance comfort and accessibility for all ages and can be efficiently stored when the container is in transit.

Designed for autonomy and sustainability, the Knowledge Container operates year-round with solar panels, cross-ventilation, an AC unit, a shading system, and industrial curtains for winter use.

Built to serve Lebanon's diverse environments, the Knowledge Container is more than a classroom—it is a deployable, self-sustaining hub for learning that empowers students, parents, and educators alike. By bringing quality education to underserved areas, this initiative ensures that children across Lebanon have access to innovative learning tools and the opportunity to thrive.
It stands as a testament to how design, technology, and community-driven solutions can reshape education and inspire future generations.

"The Knowledge Container project would not have been possible without the dedication and expertise of Designs for Communities. Their innovative approach transformed a simple container into a dynamic, mobile learning space that brings interactive education to students across Lebanon. Their creative and attractive internal and external design—featuring a welcoming layout, vibrant colors, and functional elements—made the space both engaging and practical for students. The unique design and concept of the container sparked excitement among children, who were eager to explore and learn in this inspiring environment. From the initial concept to the finest details, D4C team worked closely with us to ensure a functional, inviting, and sustainable space. Their commitment didn't stop at delivery—they continued to support and enhance the container's mechanisms, making sure it operates smoothly and effectively." ***- LAL***

# Impact

Successful Launch: First introduced in July and quickly gaining momentum.

## First Stops

1. **Tripoli**
   Initial deployment
2. **Hadath**
   Second location
3. **Abal Mehsin (Tripoli) & Fnaydeq (Akkar)**
   Expanded outreach

## Beneficiaries

**1,685**
Students reached

**58**
Teachers engaged in the program

## Expansion

The project is set to extend to other regions across Lebanon to maximize impact

### Model for Innovation

Demonstrates how adaptive design and strategic partnerships can bridge learning gaps

### Long-Term Vision

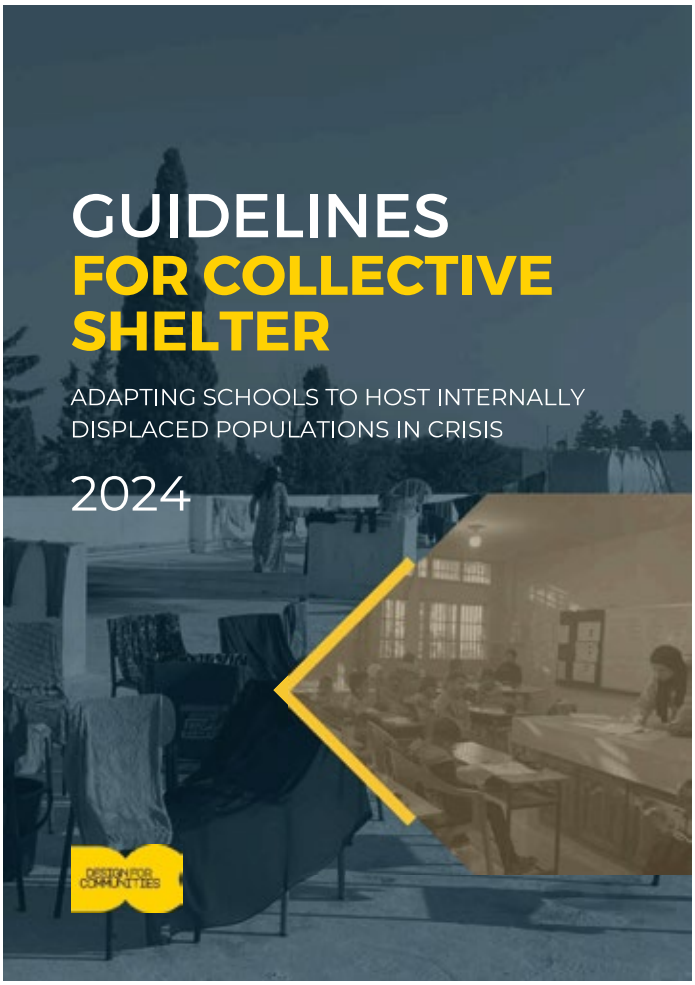
Ensuring access to quality education for children, regardless of their location or circumstances

# Collective Shelters

In response to the ongoing conflict in Lebanon, D4C has taken proactive steps to support more than 1 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) by supporting the transformation of educational institutions into temporary collective shelters in all Lebanon. This initiative, fully funded by individual donors, has provided emergency relief, ensuring that displaced families have access to safe, functional, and dignified living spaces.

**Partners**
ProAbled
ShareQ
Marwan Sfeir

To ensure these shelters were safe, functional, and psychologically supportive, D4C developed Guidelines for Collective Shelters, a comprehensive framework for adapting schools into safe and functional shelters for displaced populations, prioritizing safety, functionality, comfort, and accessibility, drawing from global best practices and incorporating insights from partners like ProAbled, ShareQ, and Marwan Sfeir, Landscaping and Architect Designer. The goal was to foster dignity, security, and a sense of community for displaced individuals facing extreme hardship.

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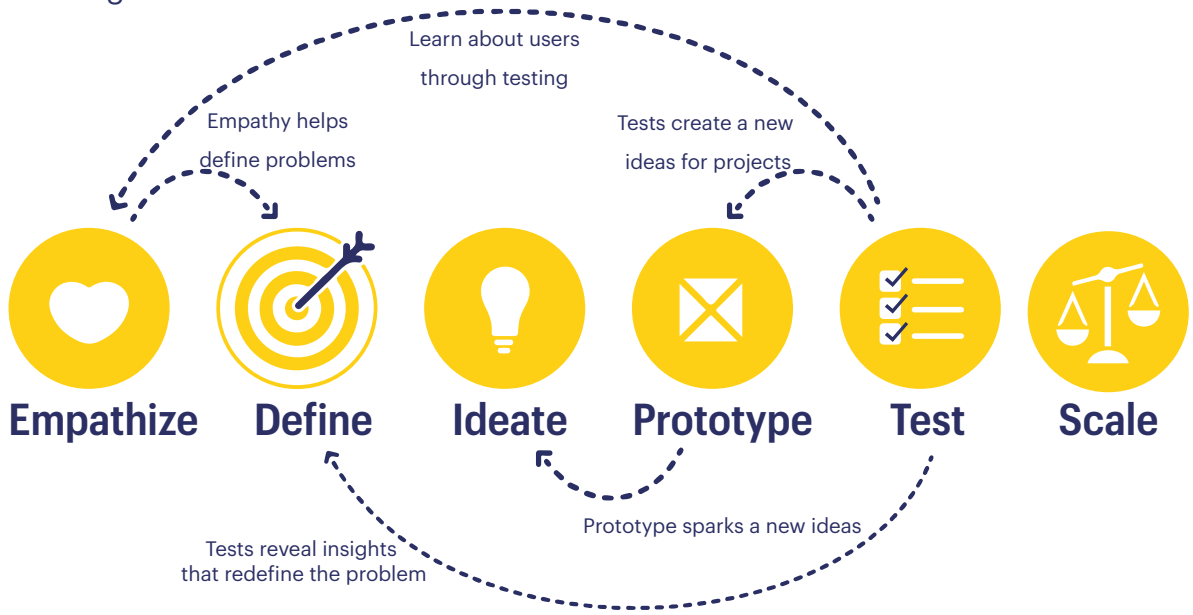
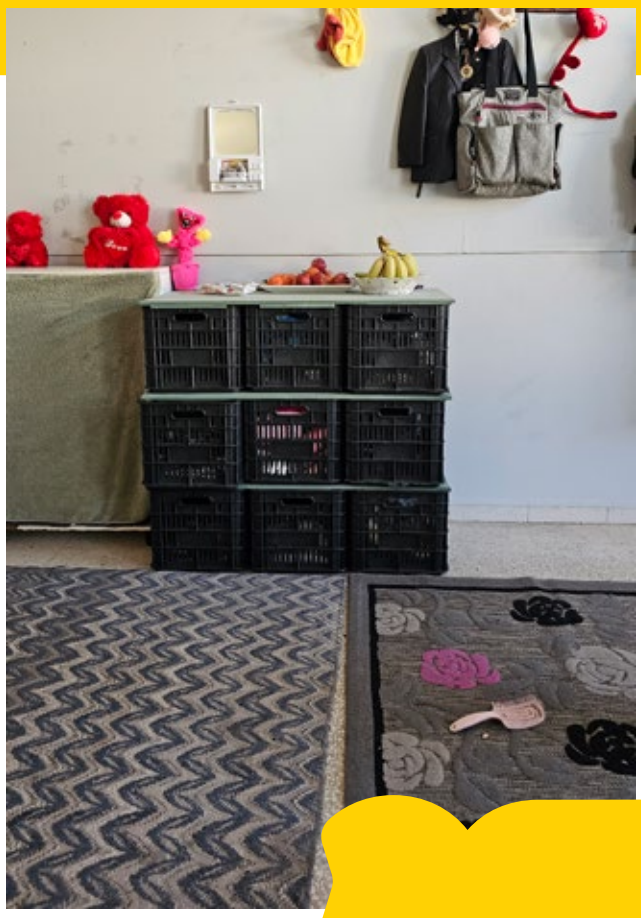
In addition to sharing the Guidelines for Collective Shelters with all NGOs and Lebanon Humanitarian and Development Forum (LHDF) in Lebanon and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), D4C launched an open call for volunteers, including architects and engineers, who were trained to implement the guidelines across various regions of Lebanon. D4C mapped and collaborated with local NGOs to identify schools and community centers that could be transformed into shelters, ensuring a comprehensive network of support. A design unit of architects and engineers worked remotely to create tailored solutions for each shelter, which were then shared for implementation. The design thinking methodology was central to the process, emphasizing a human-centered approach that focused on understanding the needs of displaced individuals, ideating solutions, prototyping, and testing those solutions to refine and implement the most effective strategies.





As a result of this process, D4C developed a 3-in-1 solution with custom, adaptable, and modular furniture made from plastic crates and wooden planks. The same units could be repurposed to create:

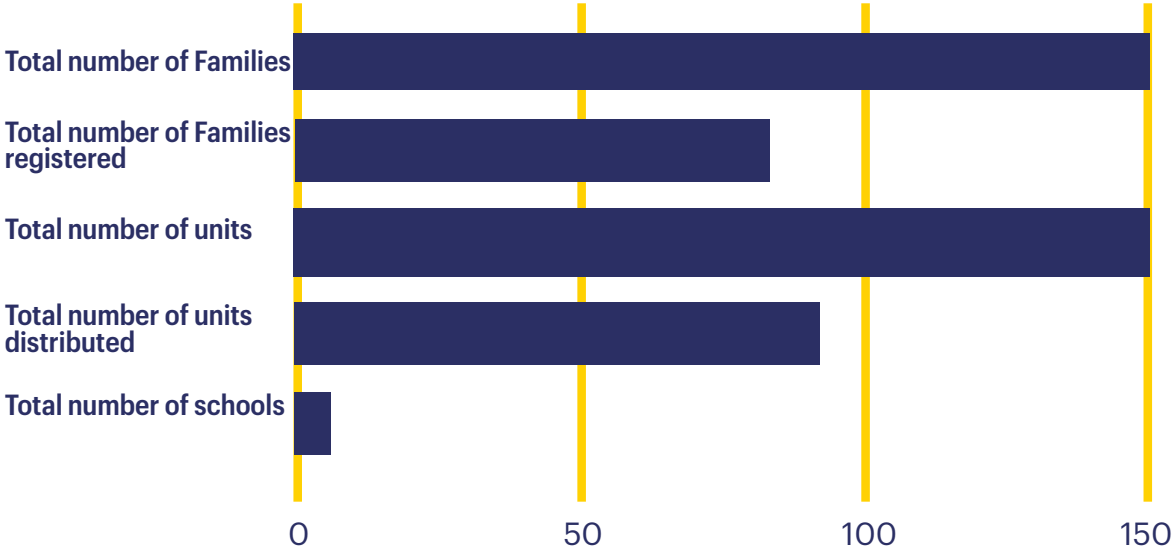
**Beds** – Space-efficient, designed for comfort, privacy, personal space, and safety to maximize occupancy.

**Storage Units** – Secure and user-friendly compartments to help individuals organize and protect personal belongings.

**Seating Areas** – Multi-functional spaces promoting social connection and mental well-being within the shelter environment.

Through the procurement of materials and the collection of in-kind donations at Nafas Community Center in collaboration with Farah Social Foundation, D4C supported displaced individuals with interventions that can enhance the current living conditions of the displaced. This initiative underscores D4C's commitment to sustainable, compassionate solutions in times of crisis, addressing urgent needs while emphasizing the importance of rapid deployment and adaptability in humanitarian response.

# Impact




## Crisis Response Through Adaptive Design

Provided secure, functional, and dignified shelters for displaced individuals.

## Model for Resilient Solutions

Showcased how community-centered design fosters dignity and belonging in times of displacement.

## Community-Centered Approach

**80**

Volunteers trained on guidelines and community-based design

**10**

Architects developed low-tech, low-cost solutions design

## Implementation & Reach

**5**

Modular furniture solutions distributed across five schools in Sour

**84**

Displaced families (totaling 305 individuals) benefited in Sour

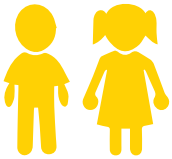
## Diverse beneficiaries

**130**

Males

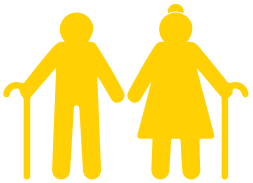
**175**

Females



**54**

Children



**33**

Elderly individuals

**218**

Total adults

## Improved Living Conditions

- Enhanced temporary shelter spaces.
- Contributed to physical and emotional well-being.

## Future Vision

- Raise awareness on integrating design, layout organization, community engagement, and psychosocial support in shelters.
- Advocate for holistic approaches in humanitarian response and resilient and compassionate solutions to crises.

# Projects in the Making

## Eco-hub

The Ahla Fawda Eco-Hub in Hamra, Beirut, is an initiative that merges environmental services with educational activities to promote environmental, economic and social sustainability through its recycling operations and eco-currency supporting vulnerable communities. Designed and developed in collaboration with Ahla Fawda, DI-Lab, students, and the local community, the project was shaped through a participatory process that included site surveys and actively engaged with local workers, volunteering to understand the recycling process firsthand.

**Partners**
DI-Lab
Ahla Fawda

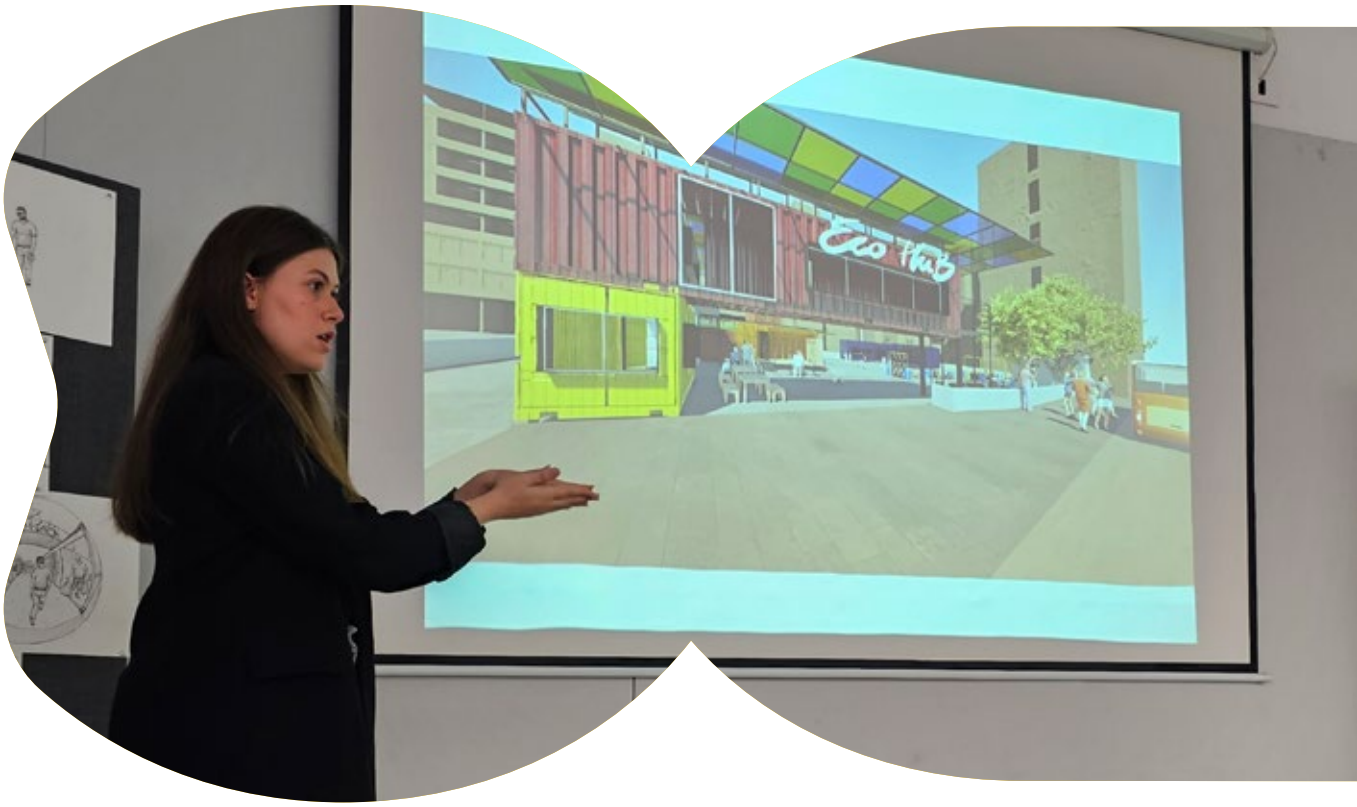
4 QUALITY EDUCATION
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

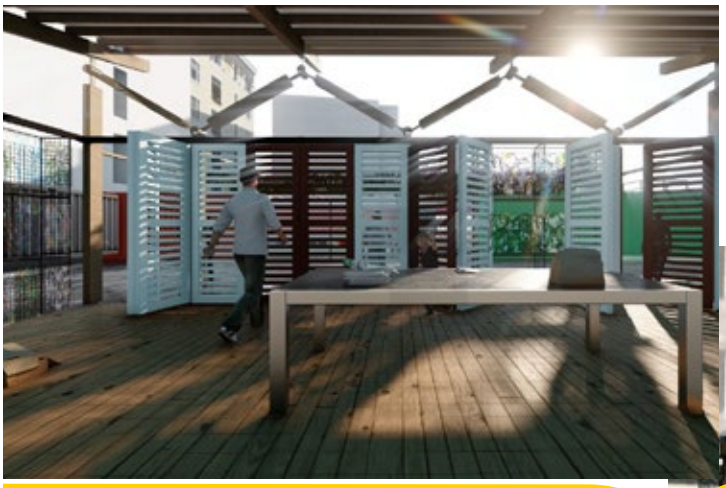
The final design integrates mobile architecture and sustainable materials sourced by Ahla Fawda, creating a versatile space for workshops and awareness programs focused on eco-friendly practices.

The final design embodies Ahla Fawda's commitment to sustainability and community engagement. By utilizing recyclable materials sourced by the NGO, the proposed project remains both eco-friendly and cost-effective. The hub integrates mobile architecture and sustainable materials, creating a versatile space for educational activities on sustainability for all age groups.

Located in the densely urban Hamra neighborhood, the Al-Fawda Eco-Hub is a multifunctional green space designed in partnership with DI-Lab to promote sustainability, education, and community engagement. The entire parking lot was transformed into a dynamic environment featuring a playground, a thrift shop by FabricAid and Hamra Bella, a coffee shop, a market, an educational space, and a primary recycling operation.

Lightweight structures and repurposed containers were used to create various courtyards, offering flexible spaces for gatherings, events, and community activities. This initiative demonstrates the power of collaborative design in fostering inclusive and environmentally responsible public spaces, ensuring that sustainability is at the core of urban development.





# Workshop warehouse

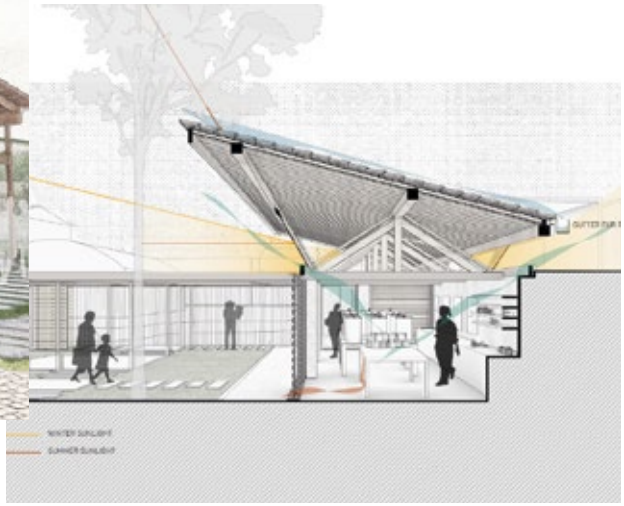
A dedicated space designed as a warehouse was created to facilitate workshops, meetings, and material storage to support ongoing educational and environmental programs. This area also serves as a hub for upcycling initiatives, integrating carpentry, glassmaking, and other craft-based activities that transform waste materials into functional and artistic products. By providing tools and workspace for artisans, designers, and the local community, the hub fosters skill-building, creativity, and sustainable economic opportunities. It ensures that discarded materials are repurposed into valuable resources, aligning with Ahla Fawda's broader mission of promoting environmental responsibility.

# Community Kitchen

As part of the Al-Fawda Eco-Hub initiative, two containers were designed to function as an industrial community kitchen aimed explicitly at responding to emergency and crisis situations. This flexible, self-sustainable, and ventilated space is capable of providing food support in times of need. The design allows for easy adaptation, ensuring that it can be efficiently opened and closed depending on the circumstances. These containers were crafted to support rapid deployment, providing a reliable solution for feeding displaced populations or communities facing food insecurity. Through this thoughtful and practical design, the community kitchen becomes an essential resource, contributing to both immediate relief efforts and long-term sustainability.

This collaboration highlights the strength of combining academic innovation with professional expertise, all in service of creating sustainable, inclusive spaces that align with Ahla Fawda's mission. Together, we are working towards funding these projects to sustain a future where thoughtful design empowers communities and fosters resilience.

# The Api-center



2 ZERO HUNGER

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

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**Partners**
DI-Lab
arc en ciel

Adjacent to the entrance of Domaine de Taanayel lies an abandoned linear structure, once a thriving beekeeping apiary, now in decay. Informed by comprehensive needs assessments and surveys, the project revitalizes the site, aligning with the Domaine's identity as an educational and innovation hub while honoring its beekeeping heritage and its role in the local ecosystem.

The Api-Center which will be operated by arcenciel raises awareness about the global bee crisis and offers visitors a unique opportunity to learn about the vital role of bees through interactive workshops, guided tours, and commercial activities focused on beekeeping and its byproducts. In addition to educating visitors, the center supports local Beqaa beekeepers by offering honey and wax extraction rentals, consultation sessions, and access to beekeeping equipment. The Domaine's beekeepers are also provided with spaces to extract honey, transform byproducts into natural goods, and sell them to visitors.

Through adaptive reuse, the structure has been architecturally and socially revitalized, creating an open flow between indoor and outdoor spaces. An experiential garden enhances the project by offering a sociable, accessible, and immersive environment for all visitors—serving as a community hub for learning, social interaction, and a deeper connection to nature.

### Training in Beekeeping
Providing specialized training for local beekeepers to enhance their skills and knowledge of sustainable beekeeping practices.

### Agricultural Development and Income Opportunities
Offering agricultural development opportunities to local communities, helping to increase the income of those benefiting from beekeeping training.

### Raising Awareness
Educating the public about the importance of beekeeping and its role in sustaining the ecosystem, as well as highlighting the global bee crisis.

This project, a partnership with DI-Lab and Arcenciel, reflects our commitment to preserving history, promoting sustainability, and creating innovative solutions that benefit the local community and environment.

# The Barn

**Interactive Cultural Center in Taanayel**

In collaboration with Di-Lab, we transformed an old mudbrick barn at Domaine de Taanayel into an engaging and multi-functional Cultural Center. This space celebrates the rich agricultural heritage and craftsmanship of the Beqaa Valley, offering visitors an interactive and educational experience. Through engaging characters and exhibits, visitors are immersed in the traditions of earth architecture and sustainable agricultural practices while also discovering the broader cultural story of the region.

The center masterfully combines traditional and modern architectural styles, utilizing mudbrick and wood logs alongside a striking industrial-style butterfly roof. This inverted-pitched roof serves as both a modern twist on traditional roofing and a design element that opens up the space beneath it to the public. The fusion of these materials and styles not only pays homage to traditional craftsmanship but also showcases the sustainability and adaptability of earth architecture in contemporary design.

The Barn aims to:

**Preserve Agricultural Heritage**
Celebrating the Beqaa Valley's rich history of farming and craftsmanship.

**Showcase Earth Architecture**
Demonstrating the sustainability and versatility of traditional materials in modern design.

**Promote awareness**
Offering an immersive experience where visitors can learn about mudbrick construction, regional craftsmanship, and sustainable agricultural practices.

This project, developed in partnership with Di-Lab and Arcenciel, honors the legacy of earth architecture and the Beqaa Valley's cultural and agricultural traditions while illustrating the potential for blending history and innovation to create sustainable, educational spaces for the future.

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**Partners**
DI-Lab
arc en ciel

# Psychiatry Inpatient Unit

**Psychiatry Inpatient Unit Renovation in AUBMC, Hamra**

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

The renovation of the Psychiatric Inpatient Unit at AUBMC is focused on creating a healing environment that promotes mental well-being through thoughtful and human-centered design. Based on research conducted on Spaces of Recovery and the impact of environments on the well-being of individuals, this project integrates color theory, biophilic elements, and data-driven analysis to enhance the functionality, safety, and overall care for patients and staff.

A critical part of the design process was conducting an in-depth analysis of both patient needs and staff workflows, ensuring that the space was tailored to the specific requirements of a psychiatric healthcare environment. The redesign seeks to foster an atmosphere conducive to healing and support.

## Key features of the renovation include:

**Color Theory Integration**
Carefully selected colors are used to reduce anxiety and elevate mood, creating a calm, comfortable environment that aids in patient recovery.

**Spatial Redesign**
The layout has been optimized to improve functionality, ensuring a secure and efficient environment for both patients and staff.

**Healing Garden**
In the terrace, a healing garden with an 8-loop pathway is created to promote relaxation, mental clarity, and overall well-being.

This renovation, a collaboration between DI-Lab and AUB, exemplifies the role of evidence-based design in improving healthcare outcomes. By integrating psychological principles and natural elements—rooted in research on how environments influence mental and physical recovery—this project demonstrates the profound impact of environment on healing, setting a new standard for patient-centered design in psychiatric care.

**Partners**
DI-Lab
AUBMC

# Learning Hubs

The Learning Hub project is designed to provide displaced and vulnerable children across Lebanon with a chance to continue their education amid the ongoing crisis. Through the construction of makeshift educational spaces, the initiative aims to offer a safe, hopeful environment that nurtures both learning and emotional well-being. Lightweight, modular structures make the hubs easy to assemble and disassemble, providing flexibility while creating child-friendly spaces that promote personal growth. These hubs go beyond educational purposes, also serving as safe havens where children can momentarily escape the trauma of displacement and receive psychosocial support, aiding in emotional healing.

In partnership with Lebanese Alternative Learning (LAL), the project reimagines traditional learning environments by blending innovative design with modern educational programming. Central to this design is the use of geodesic domes, chosen for their structural integrity, energy efficiency, and versatility. These domes foster a creative and dynamic learning environment, challenging conventional classroom layouts to enhance collaboration and engagement among students.

The Learning Hub, through its innovative architecture and programming, serves as a beacon for the future of education. It emphasizes creativity, collaboration, and sustainability, providing a transformative space that empowers displaced and vulnerable children and promotes hope for a brighter future.

**Partners**
LAL

LAL Lebanese Alternative Learning
EDUCATION THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

# Advocacy and Partnerships

## Advocacy

In 2024, D4C made significant strides in advancing the conversation on Community-Centered Design (CCD) on a global scale. Our active participation in prestigious international conferences, such as the 8th International Conference on Childhood and Adolescence and the ACSA 2024 International Conference: Inflections, provided a platform to showcase the transformative potential of design in addressing the pressing global challenges of urbanization, migration, climate change, and conflict. Additionally, through an exhibition at the American University of Beirut (AUB), we demonstrated how design can foster resilience in communities facing these challenges.
D4C also took the opportunity to engage with students and professionals across Lebanon, organizing awareness sessions at institutions including AUB, Phoenicia University, NDU, and Alba. These sessions highlighted the crucial role of community-driven design solutions in building more sustainable and resilient societies.

# Partnerships

In 2024, D4C significantly strengthened its impact through strategic partnerships with several key organizations. These collaborations played a crucial role in advancing D4C's mission and supporting its goals of promoting community-centered design. Below are some of the key partnerships that contributed to D4C's success:

**Al Fanar Venture Philanthropy**

Through the SEED Cycle, Al Fanar played a pivotal role in expanding D4C's mission by enhancing the Community-Centered Design Program. Al Fanar provided tailored, one-on-one support to help develop robust business and impact models. This strategic assistance enabled D4C to strengthen its capacity-building efforts, laying the groundwork for sustainable growth and broader outreach in the communities we serve.

**Lebanon Civic Action Accelerator Program Leb CAAP (FHI360)**

This collaboration helped D4C furnish the communal kitchen and psychosocial support room at the Nafas Community Center. It also provided vital resources for D4C's long-term growth, including the recruitment of consultants to strengthen monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) processes and improve financial sustainability.

**USAID Internship Program**

the internship program provided valuable support by enabling D4C to recruit a diverse team of professionals for a six-month period. Through this collaboration, we were able to bring on board three architects, one communication officer, and one graphic designer. This support greatly enhanced our capacity to execute projects, strengthen our communication efforts, and enrich the design process, ultimately contributing to the overall success of our initiatives during the year.

**Various Local NGOs**

D4C formed valuable partnerships with several local organizations, including LAL, Farah Social Foundation, Arc En Ciel, Ahla Fawda, and ProAbled. These collaborations are aimed at creating community-centered spaces designed to meet specific local needs, delivering impactful design solutions that foster social inclusion and well-being. These partnerships have been pivotal in advancing D4C's mission, enabling the organization to expand its reach, improve its financial sustainability, and continue creating positive social impact through thoughtful design.

# Crowdfunding

During the September 2024 war, D4C launched two crowdfunding campaigns to support collective shelters across Lebanon, successfully raising $37,000 to develop and pilot essential shelter guidelines for two schools. One initiative, Eyeuna, was created by the D4C President's daughters, who organized an art sale to raise funds for the cause. The second campaign was conducted through the Sustain Lebanon Platform, mobilizing additional resources to support displaced communities. These initiatives not only mobilized urgent resources but also raised awareness about the critical need for well-designed, community-centered emergency shelters. By working closely with partners and leveraging community-driven support, D4C reinforced its role in providing innovative, sustainable solutions in times of crisis.

# Organizational Development

Board of Directors

Executive Director

Admin and HR | Grants and Partnerships | Operation Director

Finances | MEAL | Project manager

Procurement | Communication | Junior Architects

IT and technology | Graphic Design

Interns

D4C expanded its team to strengthen its capacity to lead and deliver community-based design projects, particularly during the summer and in response to the challenges posed by the 2024 war. The team grew with the addition of 8 graduate architects—4 supporting students and participants in the internship program and four who started as volunteers and were later employed as junior architects, some of whom were internally displaced. Additionally, a communication officer and a graphic designer joined the team. These new hires have significantly reinforced D4C's ability to address pressing challenges and play a crucial role in creating sustainable, impactful solutions for local communities. This expansion further strengthens D4C's mission to drive positive change through thoughtful design.

## Governance

D4C also expanded its board in 2024 by increasing the members of its advisory board. This strategic move provides valuable guidance and expertise to strengthen D4C's vision and mission, enhancing the organization's capacity to address evolving challenges in community-centered design. The board met three times throughout the year, discussing key initiatives, strategic priorities, and providing critical insights to ensure D4C's continued success and impact.

# Business Model

D4C developed key strategic frameworks to strengthen its organizational growth and sustainability. These included a comprehensive SWOT analysis, a theory of change, business model and impact modeling, as well as refining its value proposition.

D4C also explored growth and market opportunities to ensure its continued impact and relevance in the community-centered design space. These efforts help position D4C for long-term success and a greater reach in its mission.

# Value Proposition

D4C exists to provide capacity building and job opportunities to designers and architects by creating sustainable, innovative, and tailored solutions that respond to community needs and foster sustainable social impact.

# Services

**Community-Centered Design courses**

**Trainings**

**Internship program**

**Design consultancy**

# Future plans and goals

In 2025, D4C will actively implement its strategic plan through regular planning sessions, ensuring alignment with its mission and adaptability to emerging challenges. A key priority will be securing long-term sustainability by diversifying funding sources, including fundraising, partnerships, consultancies, and revenue-generating activities such as courses and professional services. D4C will expand its community-centered design program, increase internship opportunities, and leverage networks to facilitate employment, particularly for young architects facing limited job prospects. It will also integrate the MEAL framework (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning) to enhance program effectiveness and long-term impact.

D4C remains committed to aligning its projects with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). It will engage municipalities, NGOs, and institutions to raise awareness and create more communal spaces that address local needs. By actively seeking consultancies in both the private and public sectors, D4C will apply its expertise in sustainable design while generating income for financial stability. Strategic partnerships with organizations and governmental bodies will further expand its reach and strengthen its impact.

As Lebanon moves into its reconstruction phase, D4C emphasizes the critical role of community-based design. Reconstruction efforts must be driven by a thoughtful, community-centered approach rather than reactive planning. D4C advocates for design solutions that reflect the real needs and aspirations of local communities while respecting the environment, ensuring that the reconstruction process results in sustainable, inclusive, and functional spaces for future generations.

# How to get involved

There are several ways to get involved with D4C and contribute to our mission of community-centered design. Whether you're a student, professional, or organization, we welcome your support. You can join our internship program, participate in our courses on community-based design, or collaborate on projects that create sustainable, impactful solutions for local communities. Additionally, we offer opportunities for volunteering, consultancy, and partnerships. By joining D4C, you become a part of a movement dedicated to making a positive, lasting impact through thoughtful design and community empowerment.

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DESIGN FOR COMMUNITIES