IMPACT REPORT
SPRING & SUMMER 2016

INTRODUCTION

Seenaryo is a non-profit theatre and arts training organisation founded in 2015 that works with Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. We work principally with our main partners Women Now, a Syrian grassroots civil society organisation based in the Bekaa Valley.

In Spring 2016 Seenaryo began an extensive evaluation of its work: using both qualitative and quantitative participant questionnaires, facilitated evaluation within workshops, ad hoc interviews, and partner organisation feedback – to better understand how we are benefitting our beneficiaries across Lebanon. This report is a summary of our impact from April – August 2016.

VISION, MISSION & AIMS

- Our **VISION** is a world in which all refugees are able to participate in culture
- Our **MISSION** is to build theatre and art programmes in Lebanon with refugee adults and children
- Our **AIMS** are to:
  - Enable refugee children and young adults to create powerful, high-quality theatre and art
  - Empower these groups by enabling them to find their own voice
  - Build capacity amongst refugee communities by training adults in facilitation, leadership, and artistic skills
  - Foster social cohesion within and between refugee communities and host groups in Lebanon
  - Challenge audiences locally and internationally to reassess cultural assumptions about Syrian refugees - and to promote international dialogue in solidarity with them



Photo by: Women Now

2016 PROJECTS

Over Spring and Summer 2016, Seenaryo delivered the following projects:

- **SHOWBUILDS:** intensive, weeklong plays from scratch during school holidays
- **CULTURAL TRIPS:** monthly excursions to cultural institutions in Lebanon
- **YOUNG ARTIST DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME:** long-term mentorship for emerging artists

In Autumn and Winter 2016-17, we will deliver:

- **WEEKLY WORKSHOPS:** term-time weekly arts sessions in the Bekaa Valley
- **TEACHER TRAINING:** 3 strands of professional development for teachers and young facilitators

2016 PARTNERS

Seenaryo gratefully acknowledges the support and collaboration of the following organisations and partners:

النساء الآن WOMEN NOW SFD

Ettijahat Independent Culture

In the frame of Create Syria: a project to empower Syrian art in exile

ابتكر سوريا Create Syria

marra.tein . beirut

مرتين . بيروت

BEIRUT ART CENTER مركز بيروت للفن

مؤسسة عبد المحسن القطان A M QATTAN FOUNDATION

Fonds Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development

Supported by SELAT: Links through the Arts



Photo by: Jad Safar, Create Syria

SHOWBUILDS

Over Spring and Summer 2016, Seenaryo delivered 3 Showbuilds: intensive weeklong plays, devised from scratch with groups of children. Each week is supported by young, refugee trainees.

- **Beirut Art Center** with Lebanese and Syrian children from **Uruguay School**, April 2016
- **Yabaad Scout Troupe** with Palestinian children from **Shatila**, August 2016
- **Women Now** with Syrian children from **Majdal Anjar**, August 2016

Each Showbuild culminated in a performance featuring original scripts and songs, written by the children themselves, as well as choreography, costume and set. The Summer Showbuilds were followed by one-day intensive training sessions with the trainees. Beneficiaries included **67 participants**, **8 trainees**, and around **450 audience** members.

BEIRUT ART CENTER

HARB EL KOUSA B'LEBAN | THE WAR OF THE ZUCCHINIS IN YOGHURT

This project was funded by and delivered in partnership with Beirut Art Center.

- 10 Lebanese and Syrian participants aged 11-13 years from Uruguay School
- 2 Palestinian trainees, aged 17-20 years old
- 150 audience members, including a group 35 Syrian refugees from Chtaura



Photo by: Beirut Art Center

PARTICIPANT STATS:

100% of participants said they had gained **acting skills**

100% of participants said they had gained **devising skills**

90% of participants said they had gained **dance skills**

80% of participants felt they had **gained confidence**

80% of participants felt they had **made new friends**

100% of participants said they had developed **teamwork skills**

"I have never seen the children speak with **such confidence**. It is incredible that they created this whole show in such a **short amount of time**. I **could never have imagined it** would happen [...] When are Seenaryo coming back?"

- Rachel Chidiac, Headteacher, Uruguay School

PARTICIPANT QUOTES:

"I was most proud of the **feeling of empowerment** when I was on stage."

"Do **more projects** like this!"

"I wish these projects could happen **daily**."

"I have **never participated in a project like this** before."

"This project was **different to projects I've done before**, because it was **funny** and **innovative**."

"I learnt how to **sing**, and **dance**, and **improvise**."

"Thank you to everyone who **helped us**."



Photo by: Beirut Art Center

CASE STUDY | FATIMA:

Fatima was a Syrian participant on the Beirut Art Center Showbuild. She did not know the other children, as she had been invited to the project on account of being the caretaker's daughter. She was nervous on Day 1, at times too shy to speak because of her different accent and dialect. As the week progressed, her participation increased and she began to open up and gain confidence. On the day of the show Fatima performed loudly and clearly, making the audience laugh at jokes she'd written herself. She was incredibly proud of what she had achieved.

> "The **workshop was a turning point** in Fatima's relationship with other kids. On Day 1 she asked if she could sit aside and draw during break; however, she **spent all her time with the group** on the following days. The **way she slowly opened up to others was clear to see**. She was **so happy** with the experience that she **asked to participate in any future activities** that were similar."
> *- Stephanie Ghazal, Education Manager, Beirut Art Center*

> "As soon as Fatima was cast in the part of 'the King's chef', **something shifted in her head**. She hugely struggled with learning words off the page but **worked at it day and night**. The part was perfect for her – she revelled in playing-out familiar domestic scenes, and combining this with humour. She **realised she had the capacity to make people laugh**."
> *- Oscar Wood, Co-Director, Seenaryo*



Photo by: Beirut Art Center

YAABAD SCOUT TROUPE

MIN WARA AL MOZ | ALL BECAUSE OF THE BANANA

This project was funded by and delivered in partnership with "Selat: Links through the Arts", a project launched by A.M Qattan Foundation (Palestine) in partnership with Prince Claus Fund (Netherlands).

- 25 Palestinian and Syrian-Palestinian participants aged 12-18 years from Shatila refugee camp
- 4 Palestinian trainees, aged 17-20 years old
- 100 audience members, including the Head of the Palestinian Scouts in Lebanon

PARTICIPANT QUOTES:

"It has been a **great experience** and it **helped me to tell the truth**, but maybe in a **funny** way because it's the **easier way to reach people minds**."

- Farah, 15 years, Shatila Participant

"*Min Wara al Moz* is a play that **carries within it many ideas under a main social issue** which is the love of money that was characterized by the banana. I think in the play **we were moving the spotlight on a major issue though we're counted as young children**."

- Hanan, 15 years, Shatila Participant

SUSTAINED DEVELOPMENT:

Seenaryo's Showbuilds are a long-term commitment to the refugee groups – they do not finish with the week. Following our day of professional development with Yaabad's trainees, ***Min Wara al Moz*** has been independently re-worked and performed at the Ramallah School in Shatila, with five more performances scheduled in the coming months across Lebanon.



Photo by: Nour Ouyada



Photo by: Women Now

WOMEN NOW

AHLAAM SGHEERA | SMALL DREAMS

This project was accomplished within the frame of Create Syria: a project to empower Syrian art in exile – Ettijahat – Independent Culture.

- 32 Syrian participants aged 11-14 years from various locations in the Bekaa
- 4 Syrian trainees, aged 19-28 years old
- 200 audience members

PARTICIPANT STATS:

100% of participants said they had **enjoyed the entire project**

100% of participants said they had an **amazing time being on-stage**

96% of participants said they had **learnt something new**

PARTICIPANT QUOTES:

"I was happy when I **wrote and sang a solo** song"

"I was **proud of myself** when I was the **dance leader**"

"Writing the song words and the story of the play was **something new for me**"

"I have learnt to **cooperate together**"

"I have learnt that I **shouldn't be afraid** when I speak in front of an audience"

"I learnt **to be myself**, and to **always speak up**!"

CASE STUDY | 6 CHILDREN FROM A LOCAL ORPHANAGE:

On the Women Now Showbuild, we had 6 children from a local orphanage with extremely challenging behaviour. They were unused to group settings and psycho-socially very vulnerable. They had specific issues with focusing for long periods of time and working as part of a team. This made sessions more difficult to lead but their presence was crucial as it makes the work we do more urgent and vital. The creative learning environment of Seenaryo was one they could thrive in because they were not sat stationary behind a desk and, more importantly, they had ownership of the work. In the show, these children were amongst the most confident and charismatic, having come a long way over the course of the week. The director of their orphanage came to the performance and was delighted with the final product.

"The children are **more ambitious, stronger** – they are better in their work now. The best thing about Seenaryo's work is the **long-term impact it has had**."

- Yasmine Shurbaji, Seenaryo trainee

"The idea of the theatrical piece was a **very beautiful** one, and **its plot achieved the intended impact** [...] We thank you and **congratulate** you."

- Orphanage Director


Photo by: Jad Safar, Create Syria

THE TRAINEES

Perhaps our most important achievement across the three Showbuilds has been the development of our eight trainees. The difference in their teaching and leadership skills between last year and this year has been marked and they were clear about how much they have learnt from being a part of Seenaryo. Mentoring and developing trainees is hugely important to Seenaryo's core aims because it is what allows our work to be sustainable.

"These guys gave us **love, power, respect, fun**..."

- Nidal, Seenaryo trainee

"The **training guide** you produced has been **so useful**. I've done a Masters in Education, but **I've never had access to such practical tools** for working with children. I **use them every day**."

- Manal, Seenaryo trainee

CULTURAL TRIPS

Over Spring and Summer 2016, Seenaryo took the group of **32 Syrian refugees,** who also participated in the Women Now (Majdal Anjar) Showbuild, on 5 Cultural Trips. This project was accomplished within the frame of Create Syria: a project to empower Syrian art in exile – Ettijahat – Independent Culture.

- **Beirut Art Center** "Landversation Beirut" exhibition and Seenaryo Uruguay Showbuild, April 2016
- **Basma w Zeitouneh** "Family Ti-Jean and his Brothers" production, April 2016
- **Marfa'** "On Never Being Simply One" exhibition, May 2016
- **Beirut Art Center** "Esma'" exhibition, June 2016
- **Sursock Museum** "Let's Talk about the Weather" exhibition, July 2016

The aim of the trips was to prepare them for creating their own work in the Summer Showbuild. Each Cultural Trip included a bus journey to take the children from Chtaura to Beirut, a tour of the institution with an accompanying participatory workshop, and lunch provided.

PARTICIPANT STATS:

87% of participants said they **a lot of fun on the Cultural Trips**, with

94% of participants saying they had **a lot or quite a lot of fun**

78% of participants found the workshops **very interesting**, while

92% of participants found the workshops **very interesting or quite interesting**

79% of participants enjoyed **watching the performance/exhibition very much**, with

95% of participants enjoying the **performance/exhibition very much or quite a lot**



Photo by: Women Now

"The children **really grew together as a group** from the first trip to the last. The trips were very important in terms of **group cohesion and inspiration** before the Showbuilds."

- Manal, Seenaryo trainee

"The children were **very engaged** with the work and **asked a lot of questions**. It was exciting to see how they **interacted** with the work, and they **didn't want to leave**! They've **received valuable training in looking at art** - from the very basics of how to be inside a cultural institution, to the complex alchemy of engaging with art and asking questions about it. The **workshops accompanying each trip were invaluable** - I remember at the second BAC workshop, they **built something together** that was quite evocative and obviously very exciting for them. This and other collective creative experiences in the trips were **their first experiences of creating as a group**, and were very important in terms of **introducing them to ideas of collaboration, listening, and improvisation** that would be used in the Showbuilds."

- Victoria Lupton, Co-Director, Seenaryo

PARTICIPANT QUOTES:

"My favourite moment of the day was the **explanation about photography and montage**"

"I **loved the music** and the roles"

"I **enjoyed hearing the story** of the museum owner"

"I wish we could have **stayed for longer**"



Photo by: Women Now

ARTIST DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Since Summer 2016, Seenaryo has been mentoring a group of **10 young emerging artists in Chtaura**. We had planned to work with 5 beneficiaries, but extended our parameters due to the very high demand. This programme is being led by Lebanese art and performance collective, **Dictaphone Group**, and is our first programme not to be directly facilitated by the Seenaryo team. The artists completed 6 workshops as an Introduction to Artistic Practices. This project was accomplished within the frame of Create Syria: a project to empower Syrian art in exile – Ettijahat – Independent Culture.

- **Introductory workshop** at Women Now Center in Chtaura, June 2016
- **Acting and research workshop** in Chtaura led by Abir Saksouk Sasso and Petra Serhal, June 2016
- Visits to **Beirut Art Center** and **Ashkal Alwan**: focus on **video making**, July 2016
- Visits to **Mansion** and the **Arab Puppet Theatre**: focus on **handicrafts and performance**, July 2016
- Visit to **Sursock Museum** and attending a rehearsal of **Zoukak Theatre Company**, August 2016
- Visits to **Studio Damj** and **Dawawine**: workshop on **project proposal writing**, August 2016

Additionally, the artists have submitted project proposals after a proposal-writing workshop. They will be developing their projects over the Autumn months for public presentation in December 2016.

PARTICIPANT STATS:

100% of artists felt they had **learnt new skills**

63% of artists **really enjoyed their visits to the various arts organisations**, with nearly

100% of artists **really enjoying the programme as a whole**



Photo by: Jad Safar, Create Syria

"Tania Khoury, co-founder of Dictaphone Group, introduced the notion that the participants should not judge the work they were seeing as good or bad, but rather **try to understand it fully before judging it**. This conversation contributed to the **notable development in the participants' interaction with the work**."
- Victoria Lupton, Co-Director, Seenaryo

"I noticed the young people's interest in visiting the places of art and their **passion for learning about the artwork**. They have been **able to apply this to their own artistic projects** which they are producing."
- Anas AlShamy, Project Coordinator, Seenaryo

QUOTES FROM DICTAPHONE GROUP'S PROJECT REPORT:

"Some of the participants were shocked by the use of insults in Ghossein's film and remarked that art should be 'noble'. This generated an important discussion on how **art mirrors the society, critiques it, re-invents it but is not necessarily beyond it, nor obliged to be 'noble' or polite**."

"All artists talked about **the importance of working side by side and how this is inspiring** for them."

"The group was influenced by both Ahmad and Majd's work [*from Studio Damj*], perhaps because they are both **young Syrian artists doing impressive work** in Beirut, but also because of the content's relevance to the group. They both **respond to the political situation in Syria through their work and they both work with various disciplines making professional art with scant resources**."

PARTICIPANT QUOTES:

"It has been a great learning **how to write a project proposal** and **explain your creative ideas**"
"I enjoyed the **visits to the artistic organisations**"
"One of the most important things I have learnt is that **there is no limit for art** in all its domains"


Photo by: Jad Safar, Create Syria

SPRING & SUMMER 2016 IN NUMBERS

Across the three programmes of work that we delivered in Spring and Summer 2016 (over a period of only 5 months from April to August), Seenaryo had:



WHAT NOW?

- **TEACHER TRAINING**

  Autumn 2016 sees the launch our three-pronged teacher training programme, supported by Asfari Foundation:

  - **Creative Toolkit**: one-off creative training workshops for whole-school staff in the Bekaa Valley
  - **Applying Theatre in School:** an intensive six-week programme for 30 schoolteachers, culminating in the teacher devising an original, musical show with their class
  - **Young Facilitators**: year-round mentoring & training for 10 aspiring facilitators, aged 18 – 25, concluding with their own children's workshop, supported by Seenaryo artists

- **WEEKLY WORKSHOPS**

  Each term, we run a 10-week cycle of theatre and dance workshops building towards a public performance. Autumn 2016's discipline is telling story through physical theatre.

- **BAC CULTURAL TRIPS**

  We are continuing our close partnership with Beirut Art Center by extending our Cultural Trips (beyond our initial project) into Autumn 2016 and beyond, with 15 teenage children visiting each new exhibition.

WHAT NEXT?

- **ASWAT SEENARYO**

  Aswat Seenaryo will be a children's choir, singing cross-cultural music and original songs. It will be led by Oscar Wood, who has conducted children's choirs at UK venues like the Barbican and the Olympic Park. We will partner choirs from the UK, France and Norway in musical, cultural exchange.

- **CREATIVE EFL**

  Creative EFL teaches English language through the arts. Developed by Rewrite, Seenaryo are piloting their own programme for Syrian refugees in Lebanon. We hope to find funding to continue this project beyond the pilot.

THE LONG TERM GOAL

- **CULTURAL CENTRE IN THE BEKAA**

  Seenaryo plan to create a Cultural Centre in the Bekaa, acting as a creative hub for refugees, resident Lebanese as well as local organisations. It would include a suitable space for training, workshops and performances. The lack of such a venue in Chtaura and Majdal Anjar is a palpable problem for local organisations. We feel it would hugely enrich the locale, and help shift Seenaryo into its next phase of development.

SUPPORTING SEENARYO

Seenaryo is managed on a small budget and supported by a combination of foundations, in-kind supporters and generous individuals.

We are seeking to establish **more sustainable funding partnerships** to enable our longer-term plans. To this end, we are approaching a number of foundations and international organisations to support us in this exciting stage of growth.

We also rely on our individual friends and supporters to allow these projects to take place. We are actively seeking **new supporters to give to the project** with a donation of £200, £500 or £1000. All donations are acknowledged on our website, programmes, films and all publicity materials, and we organise an **annual screening and supper event** for all supporters to watch the Seenaryo performances together and meet the Seenaryo team. If you can make it to Lebanon, we would also love to invite all our supporters to watch our original performances.

seenaryo@gmail.com

www.seenaryo.org

> "I've really had a **wonderful week** with you and **fun forever**. Thank you for all your **efforts** and your **energy** and your **information**."
>
> *- Shatila participant*



Photo by: Jad Safar, Create Syria