

Application Form

PART 1: BASIC DATA

Experience data (complete the information below in a clear and concise manner)

Title of the experience: <i>Engaging the citizen to be part of the Emergency Response Plan to fight against COVID-19</i>		
Name of the city or region: Dannieh		
Inhabitants of the city or territory: 245000		
Country: Lebanon		
Institution presenting the candidacy (name of the municipality, department, government, institution leading the candidate experience): Union of Dannieh Municipalities		
Website of the experience or institution: www.dannieh.com		
Profiles in social networks of the experience or the institution: https://www.facebook.com/Danniehunionofmunicipalities		
Start date of the experience:		
End date of the experience (if operational, indicate "ongoing"):		
Budget of the experience (indicate the budget of the experience or the resources mobilized for its development and implementation):		
Type of candidacy (Mark with an X in the right column)	New experience	X
	Innovation on an existing experience	
	Continuity of an experience	
Type of experience (Mark with an X in the right column) (you may choose more than one)	Participatory budgeting	
	Participatory planning	X
	Standing council	
	Workshop/meeting for diagnosis, monitoring, etc.	X

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	Public Hearing/Forum		
	Poll/referendum		
	Assemblies / Citizen juries / Deliberation spaces		
	E-government/Open government/Digital platforms		
	Citizen initiative		X
	Other (specify):		
<p>Objective of the experience</p> <p>(Mark with an X in the right column) (you may choose more than one)</p>	To achieve higher levels of equality in terms of participation		
	Including diversity as a criterion for inclusion		X
	Community empowerment		X
	To empower non-organised citizens		
	To increase citizen's rights in terms of political participation		X
	To connect different tools of participation within a participatory democracy "ecosystem"		
	To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the mechanisms of participatory democracy		X
	To improve the quality of public decision-making through the mechanisms of participatory democracy		
	To improve the evaluation and accountability of the mechanisms of participatory democracy		
To improve any public policy through the active participation of the public			
<p>Territorial area</p> <p>(Mark with an X in the right column)</p>	All the territory	Local	
		Regional	X

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<i>(you may choose more than one)</i>	District	
	Neighbourhood	
Thematic area (Mark with an X in the right column) <i>(you may choose more than one)</i>	Governance	
	Education	X
	Transport	X
	Urban management	X
	Health	X
	Security	X
	Environment/Climate change and/or urban agriculture	X
	Civic associations, grassroots and new social movements.	
	Culture	
	Housing	
	Job creation	
	Decentralization	
	Local development	
	Training/learning	
	Economy and/or finances	
	Legal regulations	
Social inclusion		
All		

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	Other (write the topic)	
<p>Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) associated with the practice Mark with an X in the right column (more than one option can be chosen) You can also add the specific target</p>	SDG 1 - No poverty	X
	SDG 2 - Zero hunger	X
	SDG 3 - Good health and well- being	X
	SDG 4 - Quality education	X
	SDG 5 - Gender equality	X
	SDG 6 - Clean water and sanitation	
	SDG 7 - Affordable and clean energy	
	SDG 8 - Decent work and economic growth	
	SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	
	SDG 10 - Reduced inequality	
	SDG 11 - Sustainable cities and communities	X
	SDG 12 - Responsible consumption and production	
	SDG 13 - Climate action	
	SDG 14 - Life below water	
	SDG 15 - Life on land	
	SDG 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions	
	SDG 17 - Partnership for the goals	X

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PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE

Fill in the following fields clearly and concisely. You can add links if you consider it appropriate.

Context

In a **maximum of 300 words**, it presents the cultural, geographical, historical, institutional and socioeconomic context of the city, the territory in which the experience takes place.

Dannieh is a region in North Lebanon extending from the Mediterranean Sea to the highest mountains in the Middle East on a 365 km² area; with 175,000 recorded inhabitants, not counting the Syrian refugees, estimated at 75000 people, characterized by a mild climate that varies according to the altitude.

Dannieh is characterized by a rich biodiversity and beautiful landscape. It is endowed with the deepest valley in the Levant and the highest mountain, (Qornet es sawda, 3'088 meters above sea level), plains and orchards, cedar forests, rare Lazzab (Juniper) trees, as well as a tempered summer climate that attracts tourists from Lebanon and the Arab region. Snow falls on its mountains during winter, and the area is rich with water resources including rivers, and water fountains. These natural resources are the principal asset of the area. This diversity of weather reflects a distinctive biological richness.

The economy in Dannieh has a seasonal aspect. It's a one-dimensional economy that relies in the first place on agriculture 70%. The tourism sector especially in summer is also an important sector in Dannieh, in addition to other sectors. The region is closer to a traditional society and has a lot of challenges.

Despite all these rich characteristics, Dannieh is one of the most marginalized regions in Lebanon and suffers from limited infrastructure, scanty basic services (including education and health services), increasing poverty levels, unemployment as well as limited capacities of local development (such as the diversification of economic activities, and investments). The Syrian crisis put strain on all economic sectors in Dannieh, mainly agriculture, tourism and trade. In addition to the severe competition in the labor market and local micro and small investment, the high influx of displaced exacerbated the problems of infrastructure and the need for maintenance and rehabilitation.

Precedents

Explain the precedents and origins of the experience: if it is the innovation of an existing experience, what are its origins, if it is a new experience, what are the antecedents in participation in your city/municipality/region. You can also indicate if you have been inspired by experiences in other cities/countries. (maximum 300 words)

In the face of all the aforementioned challenges, the Union of Dannieh Municipalities is working hard to be on the right level of responsibility towards what it is facing. The adoption and the implementation of SDGs was the most certain approach to place the UDM on the global development map, bringing advantages and possibilities to the region. The Thousand Miles path began with the development of a strategic plan based on a participatory approach

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to meet the sustainable development goals, which brought new opportunities to promote investment in agriculture and, the region's main economic component, tourism and other fields.

The Union believes in the big role of Young people in bringing changes on all levels so he sought to support them, highlighting on building capacity, and empowering women, allowing them to innovate and be effective in this journey, in the total absence of the government. The absolute transparency implemented in every aspect of the Union's work, including the budget, awarded him an official certification as a pioneer in this field from the International Association of Transparency.

In 2020, to face the COVID-19 pandemic, the Union of Dannieh Municipalities created an Emergency Response plan from 15 committees of highly educated and specialized young volunteers to respond to the needs of the local community, in collaboration with the Union's 17 municipalities. He relied on the contributions of civil society for funding and support, as well as the use of technology, for data collection and communication, despite the difficult situation in Dannieh, effectively connecting volunteers and civil society and encouraging them to be more active and involved: they attended meetings, suggested ideas, and implemented projects.

Objectives of the experience

*What is the objective listed in Part 1 that you think is the most important, and indicate other outstanding objectives of the experience (**maximum 100 words**)?*

In the face of the enormous challenge posed by Corona, as well as a lack of funding due to the country's severe economic crisis, the initiative discovered **community empowerment** as a tool for localizing sustainable development goals and bringing opportunities to the region, as well as a local solution that relies on youth to overcome the crisis. They played a key role in mitigating the crisis, and they went on to become an active body inside the union, participating in project execution and continuing after the crisis was well over.

Methodology

*Describe the methodology of the experience: phases of the process, participation channels (**maximum 300 words**)*

The Union of Dannieh Municipalities had established an Emergency Response Plan with 15 committees of volunteers from youth with a high level of education and specialization. These committees worked to assure the needs of the residents despite the already challenges exacerbated by the crisis as following:

Emergency and Relief Service, Volunteer Doctors Committee, Nurses Committee, Committee for Volunteers for Delivery Services, Call Center Committee, Union Police

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Support Committee, Health Committee (sterilization), Media and Communication Committee, Guidance and Orientation Committee, Data and Statistics Committee, Follow-up and Monitoring Committee, The logistical support committee.

Heads of municipalities daily follow-up of municipal cells and deposit them to the Union. A session was held, attended by the council, where it was agreed to establish the Crisis Cell, and approval was obtained from the relevant ministry, the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities. The crisis cell has the power to work on the ground and take the necessary measures depending on the municipal decision.

We have invited the youth to form a Crisis Cell aiming to assist people affected by the lockdown. They were divided according to their specializations and preferences into different committees, (15 committees), each of which has a specific work headed by a coordinator with several volunteers to perform the tasks assigned in a participatory approach. The Union has facilitated for them the necessary equipment, means of transportation, and methods of protection. They were like an orchestra working harmoniously.

Innovation

*Explain what you consider most innovative in the practice. (In a **maximum of 150 words**)*

The initiative can be considered as revolutionary because nothing similar has happened in the area whether during the COVID-19 crisis, or in similar situations that occurred before. It was the result of combined efforts and somehow inspired by successful initiatives around the country. The most significant component of this initiative is the young community that has taken major part in the planning and the implementation. Involving the youth was aligned with our previous experiences with SDGs. Besides, this initiative had relied on the use of technology, which is considered an innovation in the area.

Inclusion

*Point out the importance of including as many groups and diverse populations as possible and how you have achieved it. (In a **maximum of 150 words**)*

The innovation had shed light on the marginalized people by which we mean people with limited or no income, disable people, women and elderly. It covered the greater part of the area of Dannieh, and addressed the majority of communities there. It had affected almost the whole region, even villages that are not under the Union's umbrella, the priority of work was dedicated to the marginalized groups including the elderly, women, and people with disabilities, 60%, the temporarily affected families 30%, others 10%.

Communication

*What has been the strategy and communication channels of the experience so that the population knows about it and gets involved. (In a **maximum of 150 words**)*

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As mentioned before, this initiative had relied on the use of technology. The use of shared folders and WhatsApp groups has helped facilitate communication between committees inside the cell on one hand and with people on other hand. When necessary, traditional messages were used and members of the cell have created connections and networks with locals and residents. All information about the initiative is shared on the website of the Union, and it is accessible by everyone. This means that other cities can benefit from our experience and get inspired by the steps followed.

Articulation with other actors

*It explains how the experience was articulated with different actors and simultaneous or pre-existing processes. What roles did these participants assume? Explain the degree of success of this joint. (In a **maximum of 150 words**)*

Youth were the main pillar of this initiative, they were able to integrate with other components of the community. It encouraged them to be more active and involved, and it has shown their abilities and skills. They were attending meetings, suggesting ideas and implementing projects.

The Union of Dannieh municipalities has coordinated with the 17 municipalities that were under its umbrella, and has cooperated with active people in the civil society, supported by the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, as well as the Ministry of Public Health. Locals and residents of Dannieh area have benefited from this initiative in terms of PCR tests, follow up ,delivery services, and other services upon needs.

Evaluation:

*What evaluation mechanisms have been implemented? Develop whether citizenship has participated in the evaluation of the practice (In a **maximum of 300 words**)*

The main obstacle that has hindered our innovation from progress is the lack of awareness of locals and residences about COVID-19. We needed time and effort to convince people to take safety majors, wear masks, sanitize, and apply physical distancing. Moreover, the lockdown has affected people's work and income which made it harder to apply lockdown guidelines imposed by the government. Financing was also a challenge for our innovation because the budget is limited and the needs are excessive. Despites of these challenges, as for the region, the initiative can be considered as very innovative in terms of activities, people involved, and outcomes. It gave the youth the opportunity to play a role in their community and to feel responsible for themselves and others. They are now a part of the Union; they participate in its periodic meetings as well as in proposing development projects. Moreover, the efficiency of the initiative has improved compared to the beginning of the crisis. It is now more credible and includes more people and cover larger areas. Locals and residents became more cooperative and aware.

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Impacts and results

*Describe the impacts and results of the process. How many people have participated, and which are their profiles. What have been the impacts on public policies, on the functioning of the administration and on citizens. (In a **maximum of 300 words**)*

The initiative was in continuous improvement as the community was highly interactive. It became more credible, with more citizens and entities participating. Thus, it has proven to be sustainable and replicable throughout the country. It has assisted residents in connecting a wide range of social and community resources.

The initiative did not stop at this point, it became the cornerstone for larger, more elaborate, and comprehensive projects.

Subsequently, as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic and the inability of existing hospitals to respond to the urgent needs imposed, we recently established an advanced Medical Center to serve people infected by COVID -19, and to provide them with the necessary medical services under the supervision of a specialized team of doctors and nurses 24 hours a day. It is now a state- approved AstraZeneca Vaccine Center.

Furthermore, we have developed the Dannieh Sustainable Development Centre (DSDC), which serves as an incubator for MSME's, connecting, engaging, and initiating the people of Dannieh by giving chances for personal and economic growth. It is the best example of successful collaboration between the UDM, CSO's and the private sector, which leads to a resilient society with a high level of solidarity.

At the same time, due to the increased relevance of data in enabling connections and implementing initiatives, we established the Dannieh Center for Data and Statistics based on GIS to facilitate our mission.

All of our best practices contribute to achieving the SDGs and should be shared globally.

PART 3: EXPERIENCE SUMMARY

*A summary of the experience: origin, objectives, operation, results, monitoring and evaluation (Do not hesitate to repeat aspects that have already been written before, this summary is the one that will be shared on the digital platform for open evaluation and in the publication of the award). (In a **maximum of 500 words**)*

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