

BEST PRACTICE (BP) COLLECTION FORM

Details about the nomination process are provided at creativemediterranean.org.

Mandatory sections are marked with an asterisk (*). **Nominators are asked to provide detailed answers to at least 3 of the 7 subsections under “3. Impact”.** We encourage you to provide answers to all applicable sections.

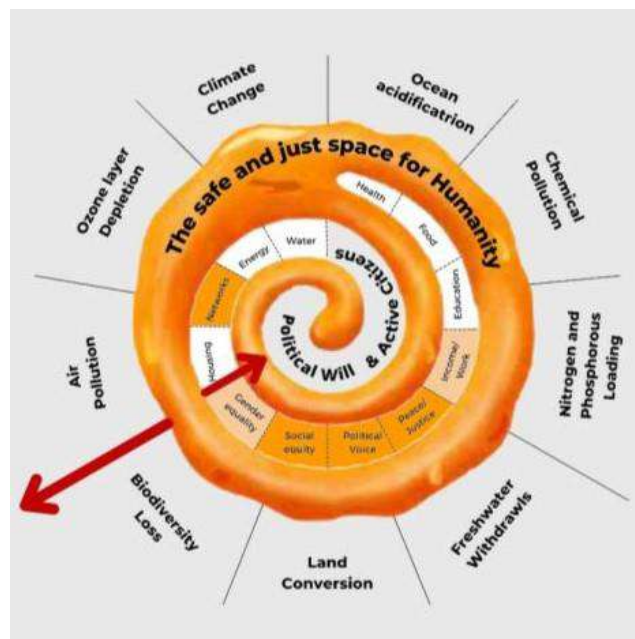
1. Basic info*	
Name	<i>Nader Akoum, Founder of Studio Madane</i>
Title	<i>Aims for socio-economic and urban regeneration in Lebanon. It catalyzes progressive youth opportunities in multidisciplinary capacities along the way of intersectional reform.</i>
Implementer	<i>Nader Akoum, Studio Madane, naderakoum@hotmail.com</i>
Website	<i>www.studiomadane.com / info@studiomadane.com</i>
Country	<i>Lebanon</i>
Subsector	<i>Innovation, Social Impact, & Inclusivity</i>
Category	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Inclusion of women and young people in creative and cultural projects</i> ✓ <i>Event organization (lasting operation, growing attendance)</i> ✓ <i>Social impact of a cultural or creative project in terms of social cohesion and wellbeing of individuals</i> ✓ <i>Facilitation and support of the CCI from NGOs and civil society organizations</i> ✓ <i>Advocacy for and mainstreaming of the importance of culture and creativity to public policy</i> ✓ <i>Awareness-raising of CCI as a viable career path among young people</i> ✓ <i>Productive multi-disciplinary partnerships for strengthening the CCI</i>
Year of establishment and duration	<i>Established in Jan 2021 and BP implementation duration is 34 months [since onset]</i>
Target group	<i>The members of Studio Madane are beneficiaries at the professional level, whereas <u>the residents in Lebanon, as a whole, are beneficiaries of the implementation of BPs in the project[s].</u> Public authorities are rendered as the clients that fund the reform initiative.</i>
2. Main characteristics*	
Objectives	<p><i>The overall target is to achieve a Lebanon that would have a regenerative socio-economy, progressive politics, and active citizenship in the urban environments. In turn, it will lead a regenerative change towards the world through its land and people.</i></p> <p><i>The specific objectives vary between achieving ownership in the city, establishment of neighborhood stewards, reformed public space, inclusive institutions, informed youth, co-governance, and cultural reset, all while integrating political will and active citizenship.</i></p>

Description

Studio Madane, a dynamic Beirut-based youth-led collective, targets intersectional reform by addressing issues at the crossroads of socioeconomic disparities, urban development, and progressive political change. It acknowledges that addressing one aspect alone cannot lead to comprehensive socioeconomic and urban transformation.

Studio Madane looks at Lebanon's youth as both vulnerable to and challenged by the status quo, but also as the driving force behind the country's strength in creativity and innovation. The studio channels youth into impactful projects that transcend conventional boundaries. In an envisioned future, Lebanon would have a regenerative socio-economy in the urban environments, embodying and leading a regenerative change towards the world through its land and people. In this transformed Lebanon, urban spaces would not only reflect economic prosperity but also serve as cultural hubs that celebrate its historic diversity and progressiveness.

Looking at the following Jalebi Doughnut Model, the targets for Energy, Water, Housing, and more, are quintessential to be addressed; however, Studio Madane celebrates the integration of political voice, active citizenship, and social equity in any of its endeavors. It employs rights-based approaches in its problem solving and assessments. It empowers the youth to actively participate in the sociopolitical sphere, fostering a generation of informed, engaged citizens. The ever changing political landscape of the country gives this flexible, yet systemic approach, relevance.



<p>Approach</p>	<p>The BP is not measured by time, and is implemented in every activity that the organization conducts, because the BP is the school of thought of Studio Madane. However, there is a minimum time for one lap of the studio-based approach:</p> <p>Contextual needs and site-specific projects are met by using a studio-based approach where every exercise will rely on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site analysis, starting with the study of contextual elements to understand the particularities of every challenge, • Problem-solving and critical thinking, approaching problematics as opportunities to introduce innovative, sustainable solutions, • Iteration, assessing prototypes and improving these based-on expert feedback and evaluation, and • Collaborative participation, drawing on the knowledge and expertise of every participant [internal and external to the organization] to arrive at comprehensive outcomes. <div data-bbox="470 683 1197 1411" data-label="Diagram"> <p>The diagram illustrates a three-stage methodology for reform. Stage 1, 'Site/ Cause/ Sector Analysis', starts with a 'Problem' and involves 'Research & Surveying', 'Context Analysis', and 'Workshops' leading to a 'Report'. Stage 2, 'Problem Solving & Critical Thinking', starts with a 'Proposal' and involves 'Schematics', 'Ideation', and 'Learning' through 'Workshops'. Stage 3, 'Iteration', involves 'Design', 'Trial & Error', and 'Evaluation' through 'Workshops' to create a 'Prototype'. The process concludes with 'Evaluation', 'Report', and 'Publication', leading to 'Collaborative Execution'. The 'STUDIO MADANE' logo is at the bottom right.</p> </div> <p>The timeframe of this methodology in one run is between 4-6 months;</p> <p>The stakeholders involved would be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the residents of the neighborhoods: communicate in focus groups, give testimonies, and co-design reform initiatives • partner NGOs and CSOs: aid in theoretical, practical, statistical, financial development of our project • governmental bodies [i.e. ministries, municipalities, syndicates...]: fund & paperwork facilitation
<p>Results</p>	<p>The tangible results of BP's implementation are many, but the highlights are:</p> <p>Institutional Achievements:</p> <p>A. Youth Engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Graduated 25+ interns in Summer 2023 ✓ Engaged youth in consistent hands-on workshops and discussions for over 2 years. ✓ Empowered and led by 100% youth, fostering leadership and active participation. ✓ Developed a grassroots network, involving 175+ youth alumni from diverse fields and around 20 active members and advisors.

- ✓ Conducted more than 10 public functions with 50+ attendees: town halls, exhibitions, panel discussions, social networking, job recruitment networking, etc.

B. Community Focus and Inclusivity:

- ✓ Worked exclusively with and for women, minorities, LGBTQ+, and neuro-diverse communities.
- ✓ Accommodated a multitude of actors from society through 7 working groups representing different fields.

C. International Expansion:

- ✓ Established a branch in Barcelona, recognized as a Spanish NGO.
- ✓ Organized Studio Madane exhibition, inviting 30+ attendees from Studio Madane Barcelona.

Achievements per Active Working Group:

A. 'Artists & Laborers' Working Group:

- ✓ Developed a digital reporting system for civic violations, enhancing public accountability.
- ✓ Generated quantitative and qualitative reports on violations in Bourj Hammoud, Beirut River, and Karantina.
- ✓ Created geo-located maps detailing social realities.

B. 'Urbanists & Environmentalists' Working Group:

- ✓ Redesigned a trashed land near Nahr Beirut, sharing architectural drawings publicly.
- ✓ Designed a scalable capsule public space for sociopolitical healing, powered by solar panels.
- ✓ Created maps correlating social realities with geographical locations.

C. 'Documenters & Visual Creators' Working Group:

- ✓ Produced 3 impactful documentaries addressing clientalism and organized entropy in contested areas.
- ✓ Conducted field trips and ethnographies, gathering personal knowledge and testimonials from residents.
- ✓ Recorded and compiled testimonial interviews into two audio albums.

D. 'Citizen Volunteers' Working Group:

- ✓ Developed internal tools and visuals through consistent training, enhancing organizational efficiency.
- ✓ Engaged in sense-making, problem-solving, social media management, and communication strategies.

E. 'Citizen Scientists' Working Group:

- ✓ Included members in weekly analytical statement writing regarding pressing issues
- ✓ Conducted online workshops with delegates from 8 different Lebanese towns in 2021 about bottom up research and Social Contract development.
- ✓ Operated a chain of trainings with new delegates from 9 different Lebanese towns in 2023 to identify key interests of residents outside of the capital and the steps to create focus groups.
- ✓ Established focus groups in Ajaltoun, Baalbeck, and Baisour addressing various subjects such as Youth Opportunities, Social Inclusion, Civil Society Activation, & Safety.

The Organizational **KPIs** that apply to Studio Madane's BPs are:

A. Engagement:

- Number of youth participants engaged in hands-on workshops, discussions, and opportunities.

- *Duration of consistent engagement with youth participants.*
- *Number of active paid project-based members and volunteers.*

B. Multi-disciplinary Metrics:

- Number of fields that are involved in one project.
- Number of types of input and output skills and mediums.

C. Digital & Geographic Expansion:

- Number of youth delegates from rural areas that are involved in research workshops.
- Number of cities/towns with active Studio Madane members.
- Establishment of international branches and collaborations.
- Amount of reach, viewership, and public's participation.

D. Diversity and Inclusivity:

- Number of women, minorities, LGBTQ+, and neuro-diverse communities worked with and served.
- Number of nationalities, genders, sexes, and fields among participants and members.
- Number of focus groups created in neighborhoods for every initiative.

E. Project Development:

- Number of projects designed, built, tested, and pitched.
- Impact assessment of projects on target communities (qualitative and quantitative data).
- Scalability and replicability of designed proposals.
- Number of produced documents for public eye.
- Engagement and interaction levels on social media platforms.
- Amount of interaction with proposals that require interaction.
- Number of analytical pieces per month [written, oral, visual].

Studio Madane has earned **investments** from

- the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom [2022-2023]: A 10-month reform research and design proposal titled "Beirut River: Portrait & Injection." It aimed to understand the requirements that achieve the transformation of political choices of politically biased communities. In addition, it generated tactical urbanism reform designs and digital reform for participatory engagement in the city.
- Beirut Madinati [2021]: This progressive political institution has invested in Studio Madane's media visibility on several types of broadcasting channels including MTV Lebanon and Al-Jadid TV.
- The Other Dada [2023]: Studio Madane is funded for community surveys, mental maps, impact models, and result driven initiatives in neighborhoods by this Regenerative Consultancy office.
- Individual Consultants [2022-2023]: Studio Madane's youth is commissioned to use its studio approach, systems thinking, and technical skills in writing, thinking, architecture, and mapping by various offices and consultants.
- MADA Network: This youth space has invested intellectual and human resources for a join campaign that is in the works today [2023-2024].
- University of Pennsylvania [postponed]: Conversations between Studio Madane, the Lebanese American University and University of Pennsylvania were taking place to design a syllabus for a Spring Semester travelling studio from UPenn all the way to Beirut in order to design grassroots and on-the-ground architectural interventions.

The social, cultural and economic **long-term development** improvements to which the BP contributes to:

A. Social

- ☐ Enhanced Civic Engagement: By engaging youth in workshops and discussions, Studio Madane promotes active citizenship, leading to a more informed and participative society.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Empowerment of Marginalized Communities: By working exclusively with women, minorities, LGBTQ+, and neuro-diverse communities, Studio Madane empowers marginalized groups, promoting social equity and inclusivity.</i> • <i>Promotion of Social Accountability: Through projects like the digital reporting system, Studio Madane fosters public accountability, encouraging responsible behavior and governance in communities.</i> • <i>Community Cohesion: Urban regeneration initiatives and community-focused projects create a sense of belonging, fostering community cohesion and social harmony.</i> <p>B. <u>Cultural</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Promotion of Art and Creativity: Initiatives like public art installations and audiovisual documentaries for social impact promote artistic expression, preserving and enhancing cultural creativity within communities.</i> • <i>Cultural Exchange and Understanding: Through international collaborations (such as the Barcelona branch), Studio Madane facilitates cultural exchange, fostering mutual understanding and appreciation among diverse cultures.</i> <p>C. <u>Economic</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Skill Development and Employability: Youth skill development programs enhance employability, contributing to a skilled workforce in the long run, potentially leading to economic growth.</i> • <i>Sustainable Urban Development: Urban regeneration and sustainable initiatives contribute to the creation of economically viable and environmentally sustainable urban spaces, attracting investments and fostering economic development.</i> • <i>Promotion of Entrepreneurship: Empowering youth and marginalized communities with skills and knowledge promotes entrepreneurship, leading to the creation of small businesses and local economic development.</i>
<p>Long-term sustainability</p>	<p><i>To achieve financial sustainability, Studio Madane's priorities have been at developing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Diversified Revenue Streams: Developed diverse funding sources, including grants, donations, earned income, and social enterprises, reduced dependency on a single source of income.</i> • <i>[in the works] Entrepreneurial Ventures: Explored sustainable entrepreneurial ventures that align with Studio Madane's mission, generating revenue while addressing social or environmental challenges.</i> • <i>Cost-Efficiency: Implemented cost-effective strategies in program delivery, administration, and operations to optimize resource utilization.</i> <p><i>To achieve institutional sustainability,</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Strong Governance Structure: Establishing transparent, accountable and participatory governance mechanisms and decision-making processes.</i> • <i>Capacity Building: Investing in the continuous training and development of staff and volunteers, enhancing their skills and expertise to adapt to changing needs and challenges.</i> • <i>Strategic Planning [also served social sustainability]: Developing a long-term strategic plan that aligns with Studio Madane's mission and vision, providing a roadmap for future growth and development.</i> <p><i>For Social sustainability, Studio Madane aims towards:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sustainable Partnerships: Fostering strong relationships with communities, involving them in decision-making processes and understanding their needs and aspirations.</i> • <i>Education and Awareness: Conducting awareness campaigns to promote social issues, and keeping up with the changes.</i> <p><i>For Political sustainability, which is the trickiest considering the ever-changing political climate:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Political Engagement: Continuous building of relationships with political leaders and policymakers who are promoting the importance of community-based initiatives.</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Transparency and Accountability: Maintain transparency in organizational activities, financial transactions, and program outcomes, building trust with political stakeholders and the broader community.</i> • <i>Policy Advocacy: Engage in policy advocacy to influence policies that align with the organization's objectives, hence creating an enabling environment for sustainable initiatives.</i>
3. Impact (please complete at least 3 of the 7 sub-sections)	
Economic significance	-
Replicability and upscaling	<p><i>Any practice by Studio Madane, especially the aforementioned FNF-funded project, is the development of a pilot-project that can be applied in different contexts. The studio approach is modular. The 'studio' approach, inherently, attests to the 'contextuality' and flexibility of the BP. After documenting the steps and results of the work, the methodology is clearer and easily hacked.</i></p> <p><i>Context-driven projects take the setting's sensitivities, such as diverse demographics in Lebanon's social fabric, into consideration. The BP aligns and adapts to the changing conditions. More importantly, the engagement of the community from conversation to design to implementation places the context's needs in front of the steering wheel. The community's vision is a resource as much as it is a condition.</i></p>
Employment generation	<p><i>Employability is catalyzed by several conditions that exist in the BP:</i></p> <p><i>A. The working capacities are very diverse considering the multidisciplinary nature of Studio Madane:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>More than 15 fields have been in operation: management, writing, speaking, editing, architectural designing, drafting, surveying, photographing, sense-making, fashion designing, engineering, graphic designing, researching, mapping, filming, and more</i> ✓ <i>Enthusiasts in said fields are also welcome for trainings and onboarding.</i> <p><i>B. The BP recognizes 'employees' from diverse backgrounds:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Minorities, women, queers, neuro-diverse individuals, and other vulnerable communities are highly involved which promotes inclusivity in the workforce. <u>This was the case for 100% of the graduating interns from the 2023 Summer Internship Program.</u></i> ✓ <i>Underprivileged youth are always admitted as volunteers and go through trainings and assignments that match their skillset to embark them on serious work.</i> <p><i>C. Studio Madane aims to foster merit-based communities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>More than 30 students have graduated from internship programs that spanned over 2022-2023 and are at an advantage in the job market.</i> ✓ <i>Studio Madane has employed more than 15 youth in the past year [2022-2023].</i> ✓ <i>More than 100 volunteers have worked with Studio Madane in the past year [2022-2023].</i> <p><i>An office space is available for all actors in Studio Madane. This safe space is located in the heart of Beirut. Otherwise, remote work is possible in the cases that being in-person is not necessary, which has boosted the number of opportunities for the youth to get their hands on the work. Flexible working models are offered to all members.</i></p>
Inclusiveness	<p><i>Today's numbers that attest to the high-level Inclusiveness in the practice of the BP:</i></p> <p><i>A. Gender:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Women comprise 25/31 of Studio Madane's 2023 Summer Internship Program.</i> ✓ <i>Women comprise 7/7 of the selected members to be promoted to permanent memberships at Studio Madane after the 2023 Summer Internship.</i> <p><i>B Sexuality:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>7/7 of the service-providers in 2022-2023 identify as either women and/ or LGBTQ+.</i>

	<p>✓ <i>Due to discretion and privacy, statistics regarding ratio of queers to heterosexuals, at the organization's level, cannot be provided; however, it can be confirmed that the majority is non-confirmative.</i></p> <p>C. Background:</p> <p>✓ <i>Between 2020 and 2023, 18 researchers from suburban cities and rural villages outside of Beirut were involved in the Citizen Scientists working group.</i></p> <p>✓ <i>100% of Studio Madane members have reported that they reside in areas that are characterized by urban vulnerabilities [informal conditions/ lack of consistent electricity/ lack of consistent WIFI...]</i></p> <p>D. Age:</p> <p>✓ <i>100% of Studio Madane's members and alumni are between the ages of 16-26</i></p>
Social impact	<p><i>The use of multi-disciplinary working methods and identifying intersectionalities allows the BP at Studio Madane to create multi-lateral social impact:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Studio Madane introduces progressive discourses and ideals to society by discussing anti-sectarianism and social disparities.</i> ✓ <i>Said discourses turn into open conversations in our talks, exhibitions, town halls, and other activities with other actors which is a great promotion to open dialogue about critical issues.</i> ✓ <i>Members and internship graduates from Studio Madane are exercising the values and skills that they attain from their experience at Studio Madane which is a contribution to the collective knowledge and education in society.</i> ✓ <i>The community initiatives are always grassroots and engage both the youth of Studio Madane and the actors in the neighborhoods in sense making and information exchange.</i> ✓ <i>Studio Madane's urban and social proposals are aimed at reduce inequalities at the levels of ownership, infrastructure, engagement, opportunity, and sustainability.</i>
Innovation	<p><i>Studio Madane's ecosystem is merit-based, multidisciplinary, and result-oriented. The youth are supplied with new soft and hard skills throughout the whole process of the BP to encourage an equipped environment that is motivated to innovate:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Innovative Reform: Studio Madane is introducing discourses that communities are unfamiliar with: Documentation for Social Impact, Data-driven analysis, 'off-grid' designs for the city, digital reporting systems, and more as means to reform. These initiatives are also researched and designed by the youth of Studio Madane.</i> ✓ <i>Reimagining Politics: Studio Madane is looking at reform from an urban-politics and civic reform lens, and not just an intangible and theoretical policy lens. This is because Studio Madane has identified that the battle for reform is outside of the corrupt ruling class and judiciary.</i> ✓ <i>Environment Integration: In the sphere of reform, youth take up no space, so Studio Madane places the youth's interest and active integration in its work</i> ✓ <i>Innovative Communication: Studio Madane creates Exhibitions, rather than just panel discussions and chat rooms, to convey the reform proposals that it designs and prototypes.</i> ✓ <i>Innovative Tools & Thinking: The working groups at Studio Madane have integrated Augmented Reality, 3D Scanning by Photogrammetry, Mapping, Systems Thinking, Adobe software, Web Development, and more.</i>
Environmental sustainability	-
4. Challenges and lessons learned	
Challenges	<p><i>The top 3 challenges were:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Challenge 1: External challenges from the host country Lebanon [car-fuel crisis, electricity shortages, pandemic, port-explosion, political instability...]</i> - <i>Response 1: Adjusting the pace of the BP pace and using hybrid methods of productivity.</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Challenge 2: Demotivation of the youth in light of instabilities</i> - <i>Response 2: Providing flexible volunteering/ work schedules. Also, training sessions are provided to bridge skill gaps. Recognition programs and mentorship initiatives were implemented to provide a sense of accomplishment and career growth opportunities.</i> - <i>Challenge 3: Lack of institutional support</i> - <i>Response 3: Collaborating with local and international experts + focusing on smart and small wins to grow.</i>
<p>Lessons learned</p>	<p><i>The most employed lessons are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Assign each project with a strong research question to easily narrate the problematic, even if the problematic is at an intersection of several.</i> - <i>Detail a list of tangible outcomes for each phase of each project [maps, infographics, drawings, digital platforms, archives...] that attest to ideation, research, and prototyping.</i> - <i>In multi-crises contexts, the preparation of an alternative digital space is crucial in order to operate the project without interruptions.</i> - <i>In a place of political/ social instability, guarantee a fund for the volunteers to get monetarily compensated for the effort they manage to pull off despite the challenges. This can be done by building long-term partnerships with donors.</i>
<p>5. Conclusions*</p>	
<p>Conclusions</p>	<p><i>The BP, in sum, is characterized by its intersectional thinking and systems approach which is very context-sensitive and, in Studio Madane's case, result-oriented. The approach yielded transformative outcomes in various realms:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>It has tailored youth opportunities that align with their professional needs ensuring their equipment of necessary skills for the future,</i> - <i>urban reform that responds to the direct needs of the communities that are addressed very delicately,</i> - <i>sociopolitical dialogues that safeguard society's health and safety as a whole, and</i> - <i>garners an efficient journey towards development for all the actors involved in the process.</i> <p><i>These initiatives do not merely exist, they evolve and expand, leaving a lasting positive impact on the communities they touch. In essence, the BP's success lies not only in its thoughtful planning and implementation but also in its ability to adapt, innovate, and create sustainable pathways.</i></p>