REPORT

MAPPING OF ACTORS WORKING ON SOCIAL COHESION AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT SHARED REALITIES

The Shared Realities Project is an initiative of the **Reos Institute** aiming to develop enhanced awareness and understanding of the dynamics between social cohesion and mis- and disinformation (both on-line and off); to create new scenarios for possible futures for societies impacted by this feedback loop; and to catalyze and support the development of tangible action to shift from harmful to more healthy dynamics.

With Shared Realities, our impact goal is to help communities shift from harmful feedback loops to healthy ones.

FROM

TO
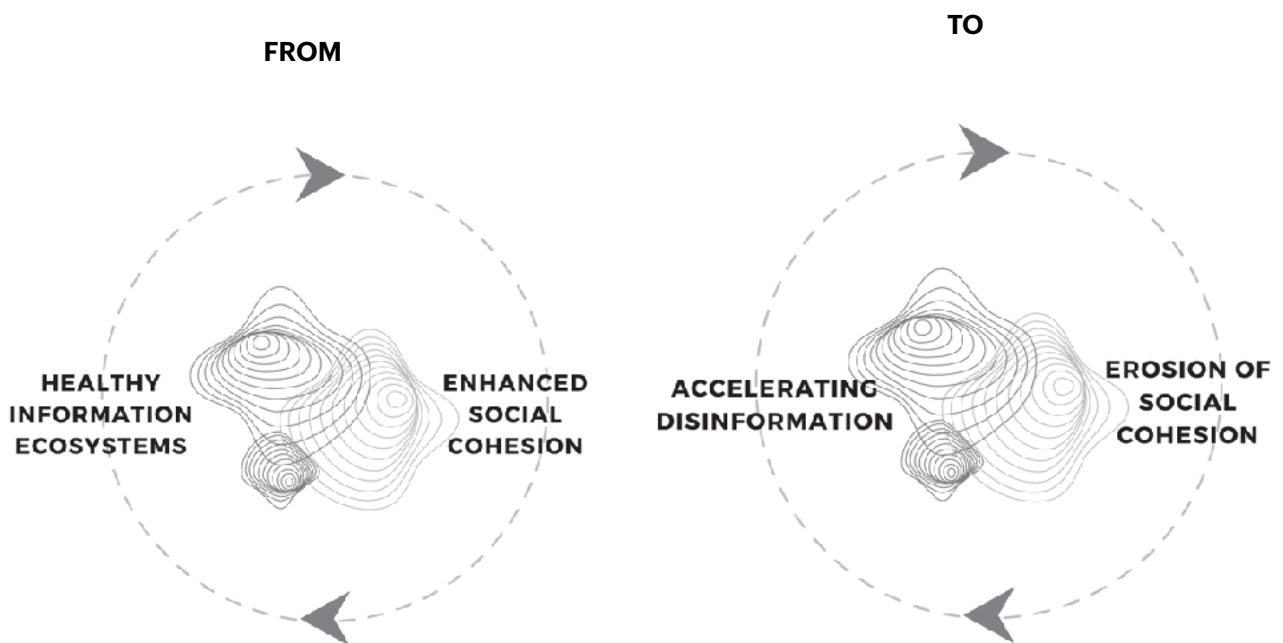
By working with diverse multi stakeholder groups in different geographies, Shared Realities seeks to contribute to efforts to inoculate individuals and communities against mis- and disinformation; support their agency in creating strategies for coping with harmful dynamics between social cohesion and mis and disinformation; and to generate relationships of trust needed to shift such dynamics in their own contexts in support of healthier societies and information ecosystems.

This report is an element of the first prototype of Shared Realities, in which initial work is being undertaken in Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia. This first prototype was undertaken with the support of Porticus, and with the engagement of many collaborators.

The larger vision of Shared Realities is to undertake work in three different domains:

1. Undertaking collaborative, systemic processes in different geographies and regions
2. Fostering cross-context learning
3. Influencing Globally

In each country, Shared Realities is bringing together people from different sectors, professions, and life experiences. Our expectation is that by bringing together a diversity of actors who have country-based knowledge, experience, and influence, participants will be able to generate new understandings, and contextualized insights concerning how global drivers are playing out in each country. Further, this diversity of actors can begin to envision fresh opportunities and influential entry points for shifting the harmful feedback loops between social cohesion and mis- and disinformation in these different contexts.

PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

In order to bring together an effectively constituted group of actors to work on Shared Realities, we have conducted a mapping of the actors who are influential on the loop in each country. This mapping aims to shed light on:

- Which types of actors are relevant to the loop
- What types of activities these actors are engaged in that are relevant to shifting the loop
- Who the specific actors are

This report is intended to be useful to actors inside and outside the countries that Shared Realities has worked in so far, to help to understand the diversity of activities and actors working on elements of the loop, and to enable better connection, collaboration, and synergies.

Part 1 of this report describes the methodology used to create this mapping, and highlights other resources that complement this mapping. **Part 2** describes, through narrative and graphs, the types of actors that are active in each country, and the types of strategies that they are using. **Part 3** offers some thoughts about the types of actors and strategies in the countries mapped, and relative strengths and gaps. Finally, the **appendix** provides a listing of the actors that have been identified in this mapping.

1. METHODOLOGY

The research for this report was undertaken through a set of interviews and desk review. Formal and informal Interviews were conducted with 20 individuals engaged in one of three countries or the wider region who work on social cohesion, information, or related topics. Interviewees were asked to describe the organizations and activities that they worked in or were very familiar with. They were also asked to indicate other organizations and individuals that might have relevant perspectives. All of the organizations and individuals indicated were researched and documented and many of the organizations were also subsequently interviewed. Additionally online research was conducted using search terms within the countries including misinformation, disinformation, and social cohesion, and on some key network websites, which gather information about relevant people.

Though there were many interesting and engaged individuals that were researched and spoken to as part of this mapping, we have chosen to focus the mapping only on organizations, given the relative consistency of organizational mission and feasible scope of researching organizations, versus individuals.

Once most of the organizations covered by this mapping were identified, the research team developed a typology of tactics that these organizations employ that are shifting the social cohesion/information loop . The research team subsequently reviewed notes from interviews, as well as websites to capture a short description of the organization and to classify the focus and activities of the organization into both the location of their activities and their focus.

GAPS AND COMPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

While this mapping has aimed to capture a wide range of organizational actors engaged in working to understand or advance different elements of the social cohesion and information loop in Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia, it does not aim to document all organizations. There are certainly many that this mapping has missed, particularly those that work at a more local level, and those that do not have a significant presence on the web.

Additionally, there are several types of actors that are highly influential in the dynamics of the loop that have not been included in this mapping. First, this mapping does not include legacy or social media platforms or content producers. Internews has conducted robust mappings of the media landscapes in both Tunisia and Lebanon, which describe the types of media actors that are present in the country, as well as how information is engaged with in the country context.

MAPPING REPORT

For Jordan, there is a 2023 media guide put out by the BBC and USAID published a media assessment in 2020. Additionally, for Tunisia there is an active database of start ups, some of which focus on communications. This database can be viewed at https://startup.gov.tn/en/database.

This mapping also does not include the activities of political parties, finance institutions, or many professional groups or associations, such as teachers unions or advertisers associations. Specific initiatives by these groups that might positively influence the loop were not evident through internet searches, nor mentioned by interviewees. While these are not included here, their lack of inclusion does not indicate that there are not relevant activities by these actors, but rather that they were not found by the research team.

Finally, the research team has not included multilateral and bilateral organizations active in addressing the loop in each country, nor on international donors who are providing funds in each country, though there are many. Our research scope was focused on actors that are from the country or the broader region. Though we did not include them in the mapping, some multilateral and bilateral organizations that were mentioned as active in addressing the loop included UNDP, UNESCO, UN Women, USAID, and GIZ.

2. FINDINGS

The appendix provides information about the 80+ organizations identified through this mapping. It provides a brief description of each organizations, the country or region that they work in, and which side of the loop they are focused on. The following page provides a brief summary of how many organizations the mapping has identified in these different categories.
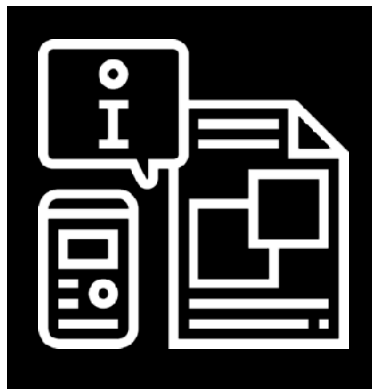
AREA OF FOCUS

With the focus on the social-cohesion and information loop, this mapping aimed to identify actors in the three countries and working regionally who are primarily involved in advancing social cohesion, who are focused on creating healthy information systems, or who are working on both simultaneously (nexus).
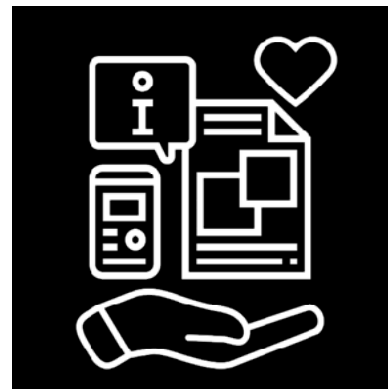
SOCIAL COHESION	**INFORMATION**	**NEXUS**

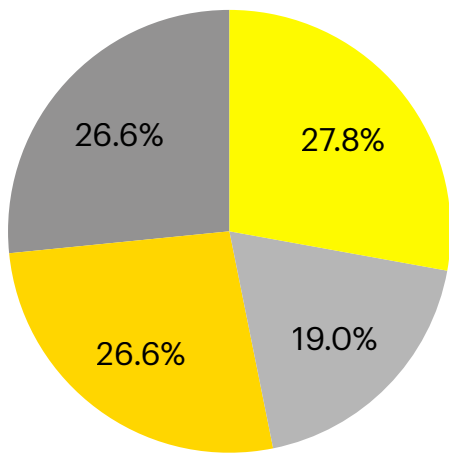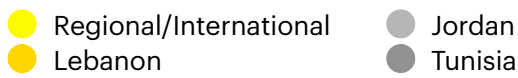| 37 ACTORS	18 ACTORS	24 ACTORS
PERCENTAGE 46.8%	PERCENTAGE 22.8%	PERCENTAGE 30.4%

Social cohesion actors span a wide range of topics. There are many who are working on ensuring inclusion and rights for populations that often experience social exclusion and injustice. Others are working on advancing social cohesion itself, aiming to generate understanding and engagement among all members of society.
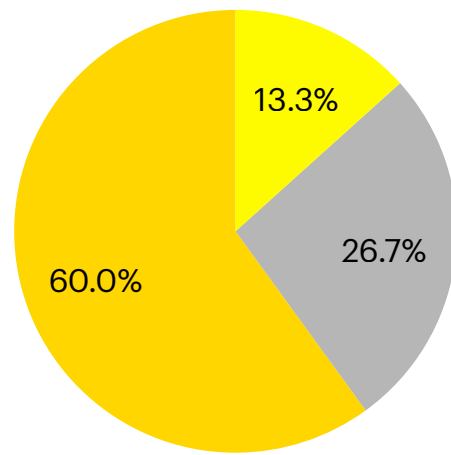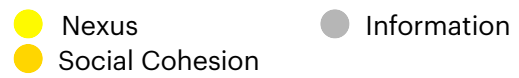
As mentioned previously, we have not included the many media actors who are aiming to share accurate or informative information. Many of these media actors have a complementary social mission, such as helping excluded voices to be heard, reaching remote populations, or connecting local communities. We have included only those who have, as their mission, shifting the information systems.

In the domain of information systems most of the actors mapped are focused on fact checking, on freedom of the press and capacity building for journalists, or on information access and transparency.
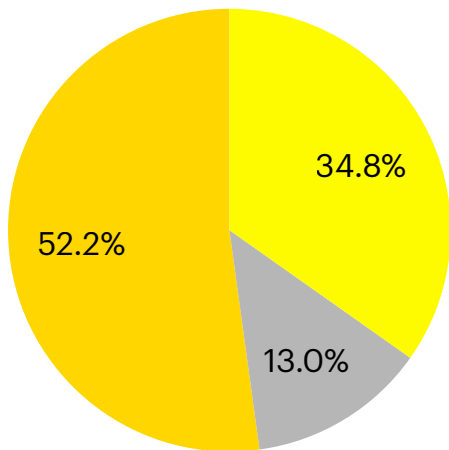
It is useful to note that across all three countries, and regionally, when excluding media actors, there is a much higher proportion of social cohesion actors than information actors, or those working on the nexus. It is also useful to note that each country has several actors working on the nexus between social cohesion and information.

Legend:
- Regional/International
- Lebanon
- Jordan
- Tunisia

ALL ACTORS BY LOCATION

- Regional/International: 27.8%
- Jordan: 19.0%
- Lebanon: 26.6%
- Tunisia: 26.6%

Legend:
- Nexus
- Social Cohesion
- Information

JORDAN ACTORS: AREA OF FOCUS

- Nexus: 13.3%
- Information: 26.7%
- Social Cohesion: 60.0%

Legend:
- Nexus
- Social Cohesion
- Information

LEBANON ACTORS: AREA OF FOCUS

- Nexus: 34.8%
- Information: 13.0%
- Social Cohesion: 52.2%

Legend:
- Nexus
- Social Cohesion
- Information
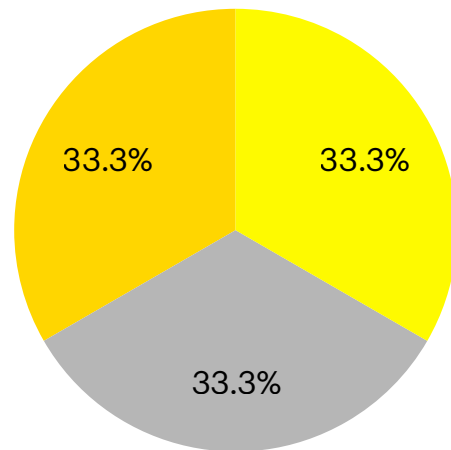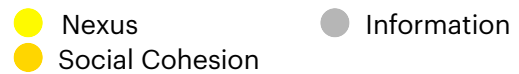
TUNISIA ACTORS: AREA OF FOCUS

- Nexus: 33.3%
- Information: 33.3%
- Social Cohesion: 33.3%

TACTICS

Across the countries there are different tactics that the actors mapped are applying. The most common tactics are building awareness through campaigns on various topics, creating media literacy for the general public or for a specifi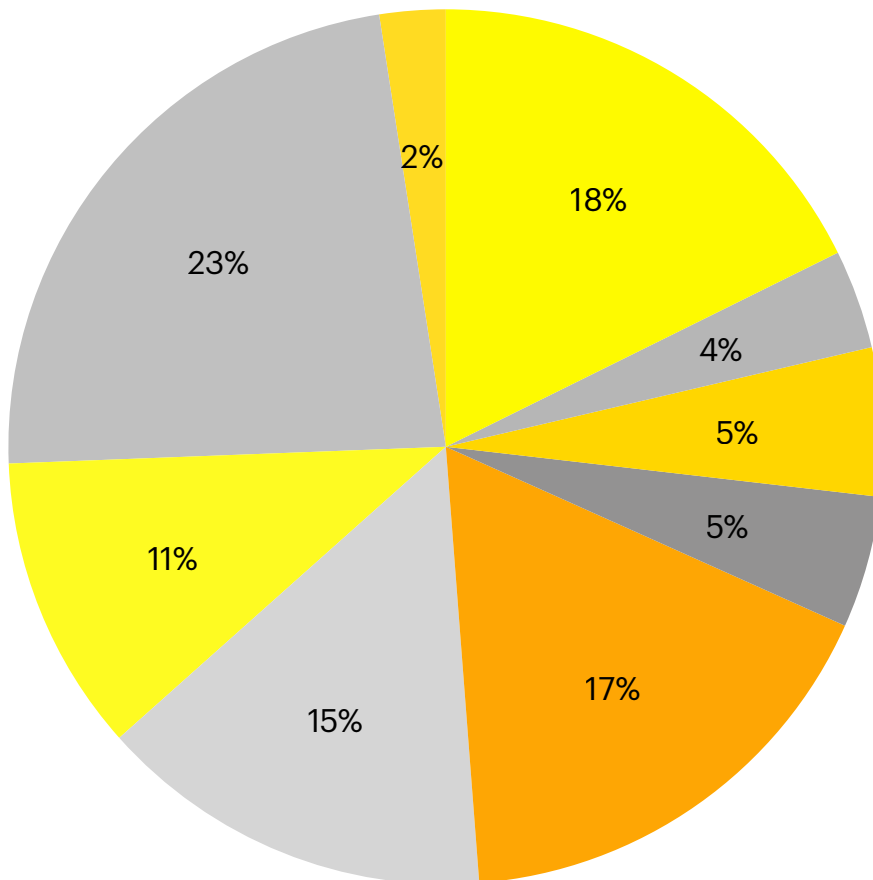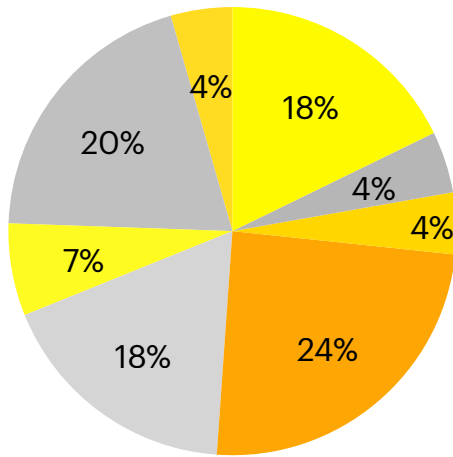c population, building the capacity of media actors, fact checking or information monitoring, research, creating content, developing curricula, advancing the social inclusion of one or several groups, and advancing social cohesion. There are different tactics being applied to different subject matters across the countries, some of which might have the potential to be equally effective in other contexts.

The following diagrams give a sense of how many actors in each country and in the broader region are using each tactic.

ALL ACTORS BY TACTICAL ACTIVITY

SHARED REALITIES PROJECT
[social cohesion and resilience in an age of information disorder]

Awareness Campaigns — 18%
Media Literacy for General Public — 4%
Capacity Building of Media Actors — 4%
Fact checking/Monitoring
Research — 24%
Content Creation — 18%
Curriculum Development — 7%
Advancing Social Cohesion and Inclusion — 20%
Other — 4%

LEBANON ACTORS BY TACTICAL ACTIVITY

Awareness Campaigns — 12%
Media Literacy for General Public — 2%
Capacity Building of Media Actors — 7%
Fact checking/Monitoring — 7%
Research — 12%
Content Creation — 20%
Curriculum Development — 10%
Advancing Social Cohesion and Inclusion — 27%
Other — 2%

TUNISIA ACTORS BY TACTICAL ACTIVITY

Awareness Campaigns — 9%
Media Literacy for General Public — 6%
Capacity Building of Media Actors — 6%
Fact checking/Monitoring
Targeting Specific Audiences — 12%
Research — 15%
Content Creation — 6%
Curriculum Development — 21%
Advancing Social Cohesion and Inclusion — 21%
Other — 3%

JORDAN ACTORS BY TACTICAL ACTIVITY

SHARED REALITIES PROJECT
[social cohesion and resilience in an age of information disorder]
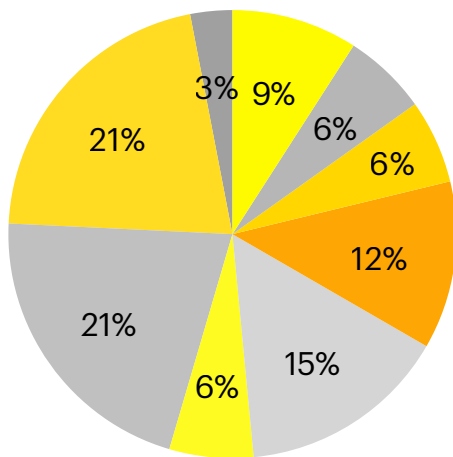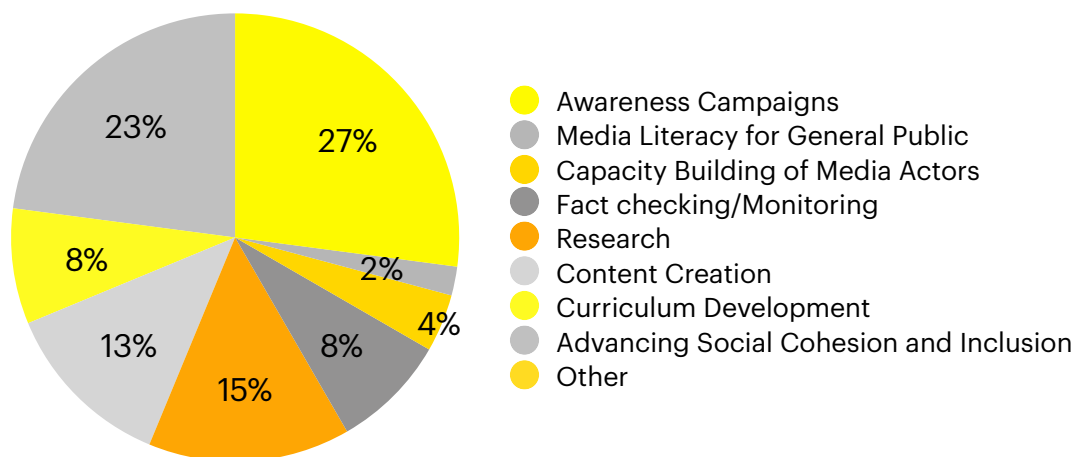
Awareness Campaigns — 27%
Media Literacy for General Public — 23%
Capacity Building of Media Actors
Fact checking/Monitoring — 8%
Research — 15%
Content Creation — 13%
Curriculum Development — 8%
Advancing Social Cohesion and Inclusion
Other — 2%, 4%

**REGIONAL/INTERNATIONAL
ACTORS BY TACTICAL ACTIVITY**

ADVANCING SOCIAL COHESION AND INCLUSION

The largest number of actors included in this mapping are those engaged in advancing social cohesion and inclusion. Nearly half of the actors mapped are directly and explicitly involved in working to advance social cohesion or inclusion.

Ways that they are advancing social cohesion and inclusion include using: Art and culture, Strategic litigation and access to legal services, Advocacy, Providing access to physical and mental health services, Sports-based games, Dialogue, Media activities, Conflict resolution, Entrepreneurship, Empowerment, Policy making and monitoring, Trauma healing, Creating safe spaces, Workforce preparation, Encouraging a shared sense of identity, Rehabilitation, Political and civic engagement, Research.

Specific groups that they are working toward the inclusion of include: People with disabilities, Women, Refugees and migrants , Children and youth

AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

Across the three countries, awareness campaigns related to the loop generally address three topic areas: social cohesion, information, and topics relevant to various social issues.

- Social cohesion topics include addressing social cohesion's importance to society, how to improve it generally, and inclusion and rights for specific socially excluded groups
- Campaigns about information include the importance of freedom of expression, advocating for access to information, advocating for journalist rights, raising

greater awareness about mis and disinformation in general, and raising awareness about specific types of mis- and disinformation

- Specific topics relevant to society include health, governance, civic action, justice, and environmental justice

MEDIA LITERACY

Across the region and the three countries there is a small number of actors who are engaged in advancing media literacy. These actors focus on

- Teaching people how to validate whether information is true or not,
- Teaching people how to counter mis- and disinformation
- Teaching youth critical thinking skills around media consumption
- Teaching about good online practices in general

CAPACITY BUILDING OF MEDIA ACTORS

Each country has one main actor that is aiming to build the capacity of journalists. In Lebanon this is focused largely on independent journalists, while in Jordan and Tunisia it is for journalists in general.

Additionally, there are several regional actors working to support journalists and media actors. These actors are supporting journalists to fight disinformation, to be influential in human rights, and to amplify marginalized voices. The key actors who are working in this area in the region are Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism, the Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists, and Internews.

FACT CHECKING AND MONITORING

There are a few regional fact checking platforms, networks, and tools that are enabling fact checking and verification in the region. These include the Arab Fact-Checkers Network and Fatabyyano, as well as an analytical tool created by Siren analytics. In addition, there are a few organizations engaged in fact checking in Tunisia.

RESEARCH

Across the three countries there are many actors who are engaged in researching topics that are directly or peripherally related to the loop.

Topics that actors are researching which are relevant to understanding social cohesion in an age of mis- and disinformation include: Freedom of expression, Peacebuilding, Governance and democracy, Media and technology, Social Policy, Gender, Climate

change and peace, Migration, Mental health, Access to legal justice and rights, Social justice, Journalism

CONTENT CREATION

There are actors in each country and in the region who are working to shift narratives and perspectives by creating and sharing content via various mediums including online, print, video, and audio. The topics that these actors are working on include: Gender equity, Media, Freedom of expression, Human rights, Technology, Social inclusion, Peacebuilding, Governance, Fact checking, Media literacy

DEVELOPING CURRICULUM AND PROVIDING TRAINING

One tactic that is contributing to shifting the loop is developing curricula that can be delivered by others, for example through formal education systems, as well as directly delivering training. There are several actors in the three countries and in the region employing this tactic. The audiences targeted with these curricula and training include:

- Children and youth
- Democracy activists
- Lawyers
- NGOs
- Journalists
- General public

Topics that curriculum and training are available in include: Media production, Media consumption, Politics and governance, Peacebuilding, Journalism, Access to legal justice, Social justice, Sustainable development, Social cohesion and inclusion, Environmental topics, Freedom of expression

FINDINGS ABOUT INTERNATIONAL ACTORS

While mapping the activities of international actors was not a focus of this mapping, interviewees did describe some relevant activities of international actors in Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia. While certainly do not present a complete picture of these actors and their activities, they do present an insight into the types of international actors and their activities in these three countries.

SHARED REALITIES PROJECT
[social cohesion and resilience in an age of information disorder]

The multilateral and bilateral organizations that interviewees mentioned as active in addressing the loop included UNDP, UNESCO, UN Women, USAID, ILO, GIZ the European Union, the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund. Some examples of the types of activities that these organizations are engaged in include are the following:

Relevant focus areas of GIZ include sustainable economic development and employment promotion, and regional development, local governance and democracy

In Jordan one of UNESCO's activity areas is misinformation
UNDP has many relevant activities in all 3 countries- for example, UNDP is engaged in collective memory work in Lebanon, as well as a social cohesion group in Lebanon which was initiated during the Syrian refugee crisis

IOM in Lebanon is contributing research, psychosocial assistance, livelihood support programmes as well as supporting the government and civil society in reconstruction and community-stabilization initiatives for migrants

The UN Women Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls program is helping to create public spaces that are welcoming and inclusive for women and girls

USAID provides funding for a range of initiatives focused on developing skills in sharing information effectively, promoting social cohesion, and countering mis and disinformation

Interviewees also mentioned several international non-profit organizations that are engaged in relevant activities in the three countries. International NGOs that were mentioned include: International Committee of the Red Cross, National Red Cross organizations, Save the Children, United States Institute of Peace.

SHARED REALITIES PROJECT
[social cohesion and resilience in an age of information disorder]

4. CONCLUSIONS

Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, and the wider region that they are located in already have a rich landscape of actors who are working on advancing social cohesion and healthy information systems. These actors possess a wealth of local knowledge, experience, and have many capabilities and ideas that can be leveraged to shift the loop. Within each country and across the countries, there are many opportunities for synergy and complementarity. Finding synergies and complementarities among them, and supporting them to advance work together, at a systems level holds significant promise for advancing a healthier future.

5. APPENDIX

This appendix aims to provide readers with access to useful information about the individual organizations included in this mapping. For each actor it provides information about the country or region that they are active in, a brief description of the organization, and a brief description of the activities that the organization engages in that are relevant to social cohesion and mis- and disinformation.

DATABASE OF ACTORS