



NEWSLETTER PLATFORM

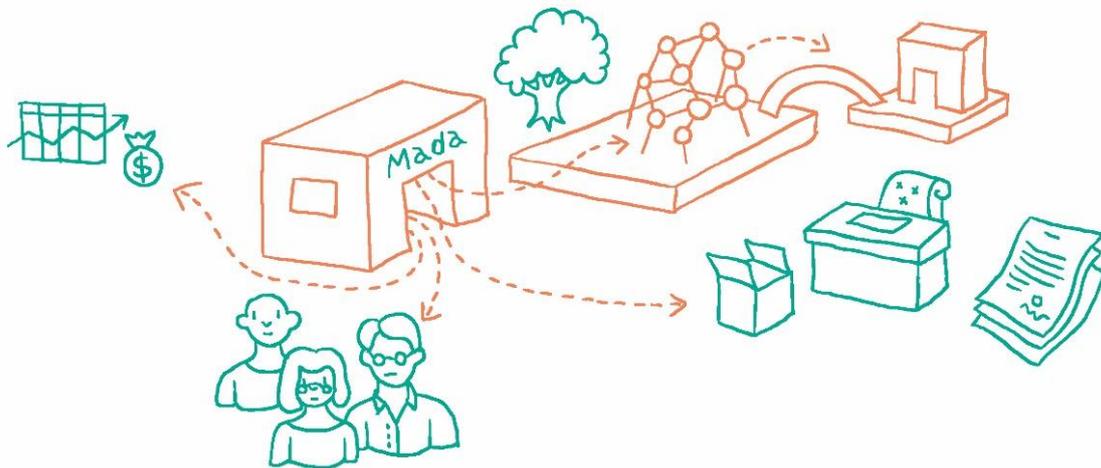
Newsletter #1 – First quarter 2020

The Platform is a space that offers flexible support for civil initiatives to help them grow and reach their full potential. Active since 2005, it has supported more than 10 organizations or groups, such as artistic communities, municipalities, environmental associations, early-stage social businesses... Since the end of 2019, the Platform has grown in capacity which has enabled it to open up to new members and offer closer support.

The purpose of this newsletter is to inform Mada's internal network on:

- How did we support the Platform's members in the first quarter 2020?
- How is the Covid-19 crisis affecting the activity?
- What are our future prospects?

If you have any further question or suggestion, please contact us directly (platform@mada.org.lb), we will be pleased to hear from you.



How did we support the Platform's members in the first quarter 2020?



Closure event with the graduates from the social media training provided by Empower.

Empower is a Lebanese association aiming at promoting social cohesion through education and civic activities. They first partnered with Mada in 2017 on a joint project funded by UNICEF and requested support for project management.

During Q1 2020, the Platform provided general accounting and administrative support and coaching to the project leader. A closure event was organized on the 25th of January 2020 allowing graduates who benefited from the social media training sessions to present their projects.

Hikayatouna is an early-stage enterprise of handmade Levantine handicrafts, led by 3 Syrian women who are former beneficiaries of the association Ninurta (which closed in September 2019). Hikayatouna is still in the process of finding an effective business model and clientele. It seemed important to help them develop at this critical moment.

During Q1 2020, the Platform supported the marketing strategy by hiring a graphic designer and a photographer to renew the visual identity and design a sales catalog. The Platform also helped to connect with points of sale and customers.



Horshna is an outdoor learning program that provides children with a direct experience with nature in the public pine forest of Horsh Beirut. It was conceived by an education specialist and a small group of parents who were looking for an alternative to regular indoor nurseries in Beirut.

During Q1 2020, the Platform held monthly meetings with the education specialist to help with the bookkeeping and work on financial projection, in collaboration with the collective of parents. Networking support was also provided to find an insurance company for the employees.

Najda Now International is a civil society organization supporting marginalized youth in the camp of Shatila through the art of puppet-making. Since 2017, they created the [One Hand Puppet](#) theater group which provides a safe space for expression and creativity. Many shows, workshops and exhibitions were organized in 2019 but the pursuit of activities became increasingly difficult in the past months due to the socioeconomic turmoil.

During Q1 2020, the Platform provided direct support for proposal writing and started one-to-one capacity building sessions in terms of impact assessment and reporting.



Mejwiz is a newly founded association aiming to empower the independent musical scene in Lebanon. With Mada’s support, Mejwiz obtained funding from GIZ to launch a pilot project which was implemented between November 2019 and January 2020.

Over 50 artists and professionals of the sector participated in workshops on entrepreneurship and music copyrights. Two Lebanese artists benefited from music residencies, providing space, equipment and one-to-one trainings. A CD compilation is currently being finalized.

Mada hosted the project and was in charge of the administrative and financial duties. During Q1 2020, the Platform finalized the activities and delivered the reports to the donor.



The musician [Flugen](#) (on the right) receiving advice on how to use a synthesizer. To learn more about Mejwiz’s activities, you can visit their [FB page](#).



Samandal is a Lebanese association dedicated to the advancement of the art of comics in the Arab world. The Platform provides general support since 2017. During Q1 2020, Samandal received a price in the Angoulême International Comics Festival in 2019 as well as the UNESCO Sharjah prize. They also published the 16th edition of their magazine on the theme of Science Fiction (see photo on the left), after postponing its launching several times due to the recent events.

During this period, the Platform provided one-to-one support to the treasurer to finalize the yearly accounting and submit it to the competent public authorities.

The **Sénévé** is a center for disabled children based in Homs (Syria). Since 2017, the Platform identifies expertise and encourages the establishment of a non-formal network with similar Lebanese institutions to strengthen the skills and competencies of the educators’ team.

During Q1 2020, the Platform wasn’t able to implement the workshops planned with the staff due to the general instability. Activities are postponed until the end of the Covid-19 crisis.



More transversally speaking, a consultant was recruited to update Mada’s administrative and financial guidelines, with the parallel objective of sharing the templates and providing individualized support to the members of the Platform who need it.

How is the Covid-19 crisis affecting the activity?

Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 crisis along with the national restrictions (implemented gradually since the 11th of March), most of the Platform's members are out of work. This is a huge challenge, especially for the early-stage social businesses which are deprived of income. Like most Lebanese workers, Mada's staff has been working from home since the 16th of March. We have been maintaining contact with our partners and providing support remotely, through WhatsApp groups and collective calls. Some of the Platform's members are finding innovative ways to pursue their activity remotely and to take advantage of their free time.

What are our future prospects?

- In March 2020, Mada obtained additional funds from the donor CAFOD to extend the activities of the Platform until March 31, 2021.
- With the renewal of Mada's board in February 2020, we are hoping to form a sub-committee for the Platform. This will be very useful to shape and decide collectively of the future orientations.
- During the second quarter 2020, we will pursue individualized support to each of our members, depending on their needs and our capacities. New members may be identified and join the Platform, which remains open and attentive to all initiatives.



Contact the Platform:

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