



ACTIVE CITIZENS

Globally connected,
locally engaged.

2017 – 2018

www.britishcouncil.org/active-citizens

WELCOME ...



Image © Helen Clifton

Active Citizens had an inspirational meeting with Peter Kyle MP during their International Study Visit in the UK in December 2017.

In Autumn 2018, the British Council hosted a group of inspiring Active Citizens from all over the world, who had travelled to London to share their stories of change. This Social Action Showcase included projects from Bangladesh, Colombia, Lithuania, Morocco, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Ukraine and the UK, and gave the Active Citizens the opportunity to raise awareness of the issues they are tackling in their own communities — issues that have both local relevance and global significance.

As we approach the ten-year anniversary of Active Citizens in 2019, and the amazing milestone of 10,000 social action projects, these personal and collective learning journeys help us remember the core of the Active Citizens programme — people who are motivated, inspired and empowered to make a difference. People who have the drive and ingenuity to design and deliver positive social action for their communities. People who develop their skills to mobilise local, national and even global networks, to make the world a better place for us all. Active Citizens don't wait for others to make positive change, they drive the change themselves.

The Active Citizens global network is truly inspiring, and it continues to grow as new Active Citizens join the movement. In addition to opportunities such as the

Social Action Showcase, the network is strengthened each year through International Study Visits, bringing together Active Citizens from all corners of the world to meet face-to-face, share new approaches and plan future social action. These events strengthen links and build trust between people, communities and organisations in the UK and other countries, as they learn from each other and work together to tackle 21st century issues and challenges.

This publication is a celebration of the global impact Active Citizens have achieved over the past year. As well as featuring projects from this year's Social Action Showcase, it includes updates from across our regions and shines a spotlight on a recent Active Citizens impact study across the Middle East and North Africa, which demonstrates the different change pathways for individuals, partners and communities. Enjoy the journey!

Sir Ciarán Devane, Chief Executive, British Council.



Image © Frank Noon

ACTIVE CITIZENS AT A GLANCE

**1 GLOBAL PROGRAMME
CONNECTING
68 COUNTRIES AND
971 PARTNER ORGANISATIONS
WHO HAVE TRAINED
7,441 FACILITATORS
WHO IN TURN HAVE TRAINED
243,129 ACTIVE CITIZENS
HELPING THEM LAUNCH
9,305 SOCIAL ACTION PROJECTS
TO BENEFIT COMMUNITIES
WORLDWIDE.**

As of April 2018

HOW ACTIVE CITIZENS WORKS

The British Council's Active Citizens programme has provided hundreds of thousands of people worldwide with the social leadership skills to address some of the big social challenges of the 21st century.

The Active Citizens vision

Active Citizens builds trust within and between communities by supporting people to take action on issues they care about. It connects people locally and globally, developing their knowledge and skills to build fairer and more resilient societies.

The learning journey

At the heart of the programme is the Active Citizens 'learning journey', which is adapted to suit the needs of different audiences and communities. This learning journey consists of four core modules with a clear set of learning outcomes.

How it works



A global network of **partners** — trusted organisations and institutions — are responsible for delivering the programme locally.



Partners recruit **facilitators** to attend Active Citizens training. Facilitators have experience in connecting and inspiring the community to learn, share and take action together.



Facilitators use the learning journey to train local participants. These **Active Citizens** develop new skills, knowledge and motivation to work with their **communities**, building trust and taking meaningful social action.



Active Citizens communities **connect globally** through workshops, study visits, partner networking, online resources and social media. They share experiences, build skills and generate ideas for social action.

Reaching diverse audiences

Since 2009, Active Citizens has continued to be adapted to meet the needs of different individuals and diverse communities. There have been successful examples of thematic innovation building on Active Citizens core content across social enterprise, youth, the arts, sport and mainstreaming gender and disability. Active Citizens content is now available through a digital toolkit, enabling facilitators to search for and create activities to build interactive workshops online.

As an adaptive programme, Active Citizens can work at scale through a variety of funding models and as a key component of wider initiatives. New partners and funders are being engaged to increase reach across the globe, including civil society organisations, social enterprises, arts institutions, local and national governance structures and educational institutions.

THE LEARNING JOURNEY OF AN ACTIVE CITIZEN

Active Citizens is structured around a learning journey, referred to as 'the river', which starts by building self-awareness and confidence and culminates in the planning and delivery of social action.

The river

The river flows along four stages, and participants can stop at, and revisit, these stages as required throughout their journey.

Me

Understanding ourselves: improving self-awareness and confidence; valuing different perspectives.

Me and you

Building relationships with others: learning how to use dialogue as a tool for building empathy, trust and understanding.

We

Improving understanding of communities: developing an understanding of how the community 'works'; learning how to identify interventions for addressing community issues and improving the motivation to act.

Social action

Planning a social action project in the community: this could be something new or it could build on an existing initiative; delivering the social action using improved social responsibility and leadership skills.

SOUTH ASIA

In South Asia, Active Citizens is partnering with civil society organisations, governments, schools and universities to engage volunteers and address social issues.

2017-18 highlights

- New partnerships developed with universities in **Afghanistan** are helping them engage more positively with their communities, and to take the lead on tackling issues and divisions within society.
- UK international development network Bond presented **Pakistan's** Take a Child to School project with its 2018 Collaboration Award, in recognition of the diverse partners who worked together to enrol 225,000 out of school children. The project aims to reach another 200,000 children over the next three years.
- In **Bangladesh**, a new partnership has been developed with the Department for Youth Development, who will now work to support 2,000 young people to build their leadership skills.
- **Sri Lanka's** diverse network of partners has used Active Citizens to support new social enterprises across the country, and to change attitudes about the role of women and girls in society.
- In **India**, Active Citizens have been inspired to tackle important issues in their communities, such as gender rights, and to promote social enterprise.

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PRODIGY IS WORKING AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOCIAL ACTION PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN BY PRODIGY IS WORKING TO LESSEN THE GAP BETWEEN THE SERVICE RECIPIENTS AND PROVIDERS FOR AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY.

Mr. Kamruzzaman Kajal, Councillor, Ward-19, Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), speaking about Bangladesh's flagship Active Citizens programme, now in its second phase



Image © Safe Period



Social Action Showcase

Tilan Manula Wijesooriya used Active Citizens as a platform to raise mass awareness of a key issue affecting women and girls across Sri Lanka — and the world over.

According to the United Nations Population Fund, a staggering 90 per cent of females in Sri Lanka have experienced some form of sexual harassment on public transport. These incidents have a significant psychological impact on the women involved, effecting their education, jobs and daily lives.

Tilan Manjula Wijesooriya joined forces with other Active Citizens from the Western Province to raise awareness of this issue and help prevent further cases of harassment. Using the tools and skills they acquired through their training, they designed activities to gain support and change mindsets.

Their Travel with a Smile project included an awareness-raising campaign to educate passengers, bus conductors and drivers about how to intervene in cases of harassment. The group also organised an awareness workshop for more than 200 drivers, conductors and bus stand officers, educating them on ways to minimise incidents.

To gain wider support, the group mobilised volunteers to participate in a march and street theatre activities on International Women's Day, attracting more than 1,500 participants.

The project soon caught the attention of the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs and the Provincial Road Passenger Transport Authorities, who have pledged support to expand the project to all nine provinces.

Linking their project directly to the Sustainable Development Goal on Gender Equality, Tilan and his team are now looking to build a global network of support for this issue, using their connections to mobilise Active Citizens around the world.

Image © Muditha Katuwawala

Tilan's learning journey

I thought the Active Citizens approach was phenomenal — how it can develop leadership while everyone is learning together, working towards a common goal. It's a multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious approach. Everyone is working for a better future. It's a collective effort.

The community mapping module was very helpful for my project. It helped me identify and mobilise diverse people who can make social change happen through fraternity and collectivism. Active Citizens also helped me take all perspectives into account — the local, the regional, the national and the international.

Personally, it's really helped with my public speaking. It teaches you to be natural and to speak with passion. It also taught me to never give up, no matter how many challenges you face.



Image © Sungkavi Selvakumaran

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ACTIVE CITIZENS IS A GLOBAL MOVEMENT FOR A BETTER WORLD.

Tilan, Active Citizen



WIDER EUROPE

Across Ukraine, Moldova and the Western Balkans, thousands of Active Citizens are receiving training to contribute to community cohesion and promote intercultural dialogue and conflict resolution. The programme is also supporting universities displaced by the conflict in Ukraine.



Image © Kyrylo Dubrovin

Image © Olexander Pilyugin

2017-18 highlights

- Stronger networks have been forged across the region, as demonstrated by 130 Active Citizens from **Ukraine** and **Moldova** coming together to pave the way for future partnerships and collaboration.
- Young Active Citizens across Ukraine are pitching their ideas and designs for social action to local authorities. Their efforts have secured funding for new community-based projects and have helped to strengthen trust and cooperation between local authorities and civil society, who now work as partners in community development.
- With the support of the UK Government's Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, Active Citizens are enhancing social cohesion in eastern Ukraine, by helping to transform school premises in conflict zones into spaces for after-school activities for learners and families.

CLOSER CONNECTIONS BETWEEN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS ARE KEY TO CREATING SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL CHANGE WITHIN COMMUNITIES ACROSS UKRAINE.

Olena Pravylo, Chairwoman of partner organisation the Active Citizens Association

Social Action Showcase

Uliana Kashepa had always dreamt about living in a more open and inclusive society. Active Citizens helped her make this a reality, giving her the tools to bring people across her city together to build trust and understanding.

Young people growing up in Lutsk, north-western Ukraine, have few opportunities to interact with people from different cultures. This has led to a lack of trust and understanding about different nationalities and minorities in the city, as well as acts of conflict amongst the student population.

Uliana knew the situation needed to change, so she began looking for others in the community to support her to find a solution. Attending an Active Citizens workshop in her local area gave her the opportunity she had been looking for. Meeting others with the same aspirations for change inspired her to launch CultureFEST — a celebration of diversity in Lutsk.

Working with three other Active Citizens, Uliana brought together more than 70 young people from different nationalities and minorities to participate in activities designed to break down barriers and shatter stereotypes.

'We drew directly from the intercultural dialogue module of Active Citizens. We wanted to give a voice to all participants, to help them look at familiar things from a new perspective and to build common ground across cultures,' says Uliana.

The relaxed atmosphere gave participants the space to have meaningful conversations and build relationships. Games like 'No Hate Speech' were a powerful way of exploring issues such as social discrimination. Ultimately, the overarching spirit of collaboration helped everyone feel part of a new-born community.

'CultureFEST has promoted trust, cooperation and long-term relationships amongst locals, overseas students and national minorities, and has helped to eliminate instances of conflict amongst students.'



“ ACTIVE CITIZENS IS A WAY OF LIFE. IT'S A WHOLE OTHER WAY OF WORKING AND LIVING. ”

Uliana, Active Citizen

Uliana's learning journey

I always knew I was an Active Citizen before I even participated in the training. And after the training I knew that this is what I want to do for the rest of my life.

I'm now a facilitator and I help people to understand the basics of intercultural dialogue — to understand how others can help you, how you can help them, and how we can work together to change communities.

Active Citizens taught me that people are the key to everything. Through the training, I found three teammates to work with, and we are achieving things that we could never do by ourselves.



Images © Yura Evtushko

EUROPEAN UNION



Images © Edvinas Sinkevicius

“THE GREATEST EXPERIENCE WAS CARRYING OUT THE COMMUNITY RESEARCH. I COULD COMMUNICATE WITH LOCAL PEOPLE, LISTEN TO THEM AND HEAR THEIR STORIES.”

Active Citizen, Czech Republic



Active Citizens is expanding its impact across the European Union, strengthening community cohesion, promoting tolerance and encouraging collaboration across diverse communities.

2017-18 highlights

- The European-Union-funded Empowering Communities in Europe project has inspired emerging leaders and community members trained through Active Citizens to launch social action projects that challenge negative stereotypes of refugees and migrants in **Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania** and **Slovakia**.
- Poland hosted the launch of the European-Union-funded MURAL project, which aims to promote tolerance and respect, and tackle discrimination, in relation to faith, religious belief and ethnicity. Through Active Citizens, community leaders have been equipped with new insights and approaches to cascade their learning in communities across **Germany, Greece, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal** and the **UK**.
- Active Citizens brought together people from different linguistic communities in **Lithuania** to find shared solutions to common issues as part of the UK-government-funded People to People project, which is now being extended to **Estonia** and **Latvia**.

Social Action Showcase

For Sandra Mazulyte, Active Citizens training was like flicking a switch, inspiring her to find a creative solution to help marginalised children in her community.

Many children living in Naujininkai, on the outskirts of Lithuania's capital, Vilnius, are from at-risk families and Roma communities. The area offers little in terms of access to cultural activities, and many children have poor language skills, which impacts on their sense of community and ability to integrate.

As a coordinator in the local cultural centre, Sandra was aware of problems in her community, but had no idea how to make a difference. Taking part in Active Citizens changed all that.

‘The training helped me stop and look at what was happening around me. It gave me the tools to analyse the real issues and inspired me to think: how can I get more involved in my community?’

Through her Bridges of Culture project, Sandra organised games and informal learning activities for marginalised children in the cultural centre, giving them a safe space to interact with each other and express themselves.

The children explored different cultural activities, such as theatre and scenography, helping them develop their creativity, learn how to work in groups and improve their language and communication skills. The project culminated in a public performance of a play the children had created during the workshops.

Successfully contributing to social integration in Naujininkai, the project was included in the presidential campaign ‘For Safe Lithuania’ and has inspired Sandra to do more with local children.

‘For many, it was the first time they had seen art or visited a cultural institution. Even now, when the project is over, they are visiting us to talk and share what’s new in their lives.’

Sandra's learning journey

Active Citizens training helped me refocus. It talked a lot about local community and inspired me to find key issues to work with. There are lots of issues you don't normally pay attention to, and this makes you ask: what can I give back?

My work is my passion, but I now know I need to have a social impact. Active Citizens has helped me find a new way of working, to use our artists and creators to make a difference.

Working with kids was new to me. It surprises and inspires you. I now know my future lies in educational projects.



Image © Alex Brighton

“ACTIVE CITIZENS HELPS YOU FEEL LIKE YOU ARE PART OF THE COMMUNITY. NOT JUST WATCHING FROM THE OUTSIDE.”

Sandra, Active Citizen



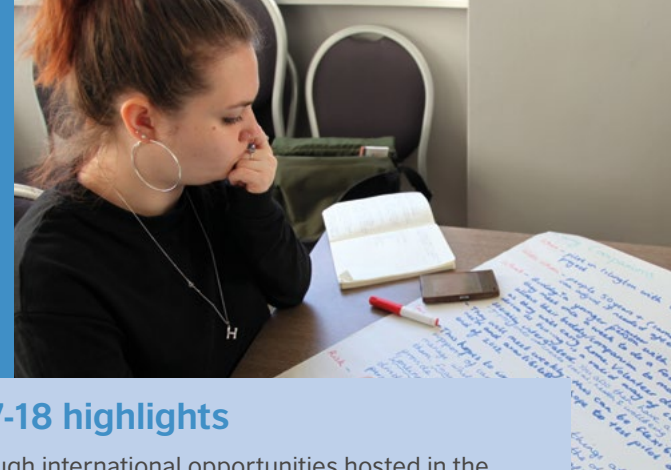
UNITED KINGDOM

In the UK, Active Citizens works with community organisations, universities and local government to build more inclusive and resilient societies. Representing the diversity of the UK, it brings together different generations and faiths to improve community cohesion, challenge stereotypes, support employability and use the arts and social enterprise to support community development.



Image © Jack Drum Arts

Image © Helen Clifton



2017-18 highlights

- Through international opportunities hosted in the UK, including two International Study Visits, an International Facilitator Development Workshop, and a Social Action Showcase, Active Citizens had the chance to build common ground, strengthen relationships, contribute to global discussions and raise awareness of local and global development issues.
- Long-standing partner Jack Drum Arts are using Active Citizens to engage adults with learning difficulties, helping them overcome past negative experiences with young people and make a positive contribution to the organisation's youth focused projects.
- Communities are taking the lead on tackling negative perceptions of faith and immigration, as demonstrated by a social action project in Bury, where a whole community came together to celebrate diversity and multiculturalism.



Image © Helen Clifton

Social Action Showcase

Afi Dometi's Active Citizens journey has seen her change the lives of vulnerable women and girls across two continents, demonstrating the truly global power of social action.

Arriving to Newcastle in 2002 from Togo, Afi Dometi knows first-hand the language, social and cultural barriers people face when integrating into a new community.

Working at the North of England Refugee Service, she also saw how many migrant women can suffer from social isolation, due to a lack of language skills and employment options.

'These women just want to find a job and improve their English, but they have no experience or references,' says Afi.

Wanting to help these women take the next step in their lives, Afi approached local charity and Active Citizens partner Reviving the Heart of the West End, who invited her to participate in Active Citizens training. There she got the tools and inspiration to start her own social business.



WE WERE ALL FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES AND BACKGROUNDS, BUT AS ACTIVE CITIZENS, WE WERE ALL EQUAL.

Afi, Active Citizen



Image © Christopher Symes



Recycling Bridging Women started life in Afi's living room, bringing together local women to collect, clean and sort recycled clothing for sale and export, saving mounds of unwanted garments from ending up in landfill. It soon became a registered business, AfricaWAD, and Afi negotiated the use of community venues for the volunteers to meet.

This project has given the participants work experience in areas such as stock control, managing petty cash and record-keeping, while also boosting their self-confidence, communication skills and sense of belonging. So far, it has helped three women find employment.

'I'm forever grateful to AfricaWAD. It was truly inspiring, and now I have a full-time job thanks to the employment reference from Afi,' says Emma, who is originally from Angola.

Proceeds from the clothing sales have also paid for the tuition of 20 girls in Togo, and there are plans to support more girls across Africa.

Afi's learning journey

Active Citizens taught me that all cultures are similar. No matter what country or continent you are from, if we all try to understand each other, to see how each of us thinks, we can all work together to achieve peace.

At my training, I met more than 20 people from different countries. I was amazed to see that there are so many other people who, like me, want to change the world. I was so proud to be amongst them.

English isn't my first language, so I've always found public speaking difficult, but Active Citizens increased my confidence and gave me the inspiration to always try.

GLOBALLY CONNECTED

Each year, Active Citizens from across the globe come together to share experiences, plan collaboration and be inspired!

International Study Visits (ISVs)

Across three ISVs, close to 100 Active Citizens from 19 countries came together to gain new ideas for social action, which they could then take back to their own communities.

In the UK, participants discovered new approaches to promoting social cohesion and inclusion, and tackling unemployment.

In Sri Lanka, participants attended a showcase day in Colombo, where partner schools, universities, youth networks and civil society organisations presented 50 projects on a diverse range of social issues.

MEETING PETER KYLE MP WAS ONE OF THE MOST INSPIRING THINGS TO REMEMBER.

ISV participant from Egypt

BEING ABLE TO SEE PARTICIPANTS FROM ALL AROUND THE WORLD IS A BLESSING. I NOW HAVE A FAMILY THAT LIVES IN 15 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES.

ISV participant from Sudan

International Facilitator Development Workshop

In the UK, 43 participants from 14 countries joined an International Facilitator Development Workshop to build connections and share best practices. They will go on to support an estimated 1,200 people in their own communities.



Image © Christopher Symes

Social Action Showcase

Participants from nine countries got the opportunity to present projects at the 2018 Social Action Showcase in London. Read more about their inspiring projects throughout this publication.

GETTING TO MEET PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT PLACES, PLACES WITH DIFFERENT CONTEXTS BUT THE SAME SORT OF PROBLEMS — IT WAS VERY MOTIVATIONAL TO KNOW I WAS NOT ALONE.

ISV participant from Ethiopia

ACTIVE CITIZENS IN ACTION COMPETITION

The annual Active Citizens in Action competition gives social action projects a global platform to share their impact and raise awareness about the issues they are working to solve.

After 4,400 public votes on Facebook, the Safe Period project from Bangladesh was crowned the winner of the 2018 competition.

Project founder, Mehedi Hasan Robin, was invited to present Safe Period at the 2018 Social Action Showcase in London.

The winner: Safe Period

Menstruation is viewed as a taboo subject in Bangladeshi society, and this has very real consequences for lower-middle-class girls across the country.

Often receiving incorrect advice on menstrual hygiene, many young women suffer from serious health complications, causing damage to their reproductive systems and, in some cases, fatal diseases.

Wanting to break this taboo, and raise awareness of menstrual hygiene, a group of young Active Citizens launched their Safe Period project. Going into local schools, they offer information and support to female students about menstrual hygiene, opening a dialogue on what is, for many, a forbidden subject.

Image © Safe Period



‘Only six per cent of schools teach about menstrual hygiene, while 40 per cent of girls are absent for three days a month during menstruation. We talk to them to identify how we can help and how to take steps to overcome their fears and problems,’ says Mehedi Hasan Robin.

Safe Period has so far provided advice and counselling to more than 1,700 students. They are now looking to expand the project to schools, businesses and public places in even more communities.

‘The problem is bigger than we first thought. It’s not just school girls. It affects all groups of women. And it’s not just Bangladesh. It’s a global problem.’

The shortlist

The **Pesawat Kertas** project encourages people in Indonesia to donate their paper waste, which is then turned into handicraft products. The proceeds from sales contribute to ‘Paper Scholarships’, which provide shoes and uniforms for underprivileged children.

Through **Together We Make a Difference**, students from a university in Lahore collected donations to provide facilities and skills training to residents of a local slum area. As a result, two women have found employment, and the student union plans to improve one slum area per year.

In Burrel, Albania, **A Rose for a Book** promoted reading as a window to a better future by encouraging people to donate books, receiving a rose in return. A total of 250 books were donated to the city library, who then established a youth book club. The project was replicated in Elbasan, where 720 books were donated.

The **Travel with a Smile** project in Sri Lanka (featured on page 7) was also shortlisted and received the second-highest number of votes.

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Active Citizens continues to deepen trust and understanding within and between communities across Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia. Working with a broad range of partners, including civil society organisations, schools, universities and government ministries, the programme has inspired diverse social action focusing on youth, gender and disabilities.

2017-18 highlights

- Through large-scale European-Union-funded projects, Active Citizens has strengthened community participation in **Tunisia** and encouraged girls and disabled children to enrol back into school in Iraq.
- New partnerships have been developed to extend the reach of Active Citizens across **Lebanon**, including working with the Centre for Educational Research and Development to support teachers to engage primary and middle school learners on citizenship issues using the Active Citizens methodology. The Lebanese University will also soon pilot Active Citizens training with 2,000 students.
- An in-depth study was carried out to assess the impact of Active Citizens across **Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco** and the **Occupied Palestinian Territories**. Its findings (covered on pages 25 to 27) clearly demonstrate the wide-ranging benefits of the programme on individuals, partners and communities.

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WITHOUT ACTIVE CITIZENS TRAINING, VOLUNTEERS WOULD NOT HAVE COME TOGETHER TO TAKE INITIATIVE TO CHANGE THINGS FOR THEMSELVES.

Active Citizen, Occupied Palestinian Territories

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Social Action Showcase

A meeting between Karima Daoudi, from Morocco, and Teresa Buckland, from London, sparked a long-term partnership that has had a life-changing effect on women and girls in a rural Moroccan community.

The isolated village of Aghouatim, in the Al Haouz province of Morocco, is home to 3,000 people. As in other rural villages, women and girls there face many inequalities.

With the nearest school kilometres away, local girls are forced to drop out of education for safety reasons, leading to a lack of skills in later life. Children also have no access to a kindergarten.

To tackle this issue, a group of Active Citizens opened the Youth Center for Personal Development, providing a space for women, girls and children to access new learning opportunities.

Despite being housed in a dilapidated building with few working services, the centre has so far supported 200 girls to improve their language skills, helped 100 women improve their cooking, agriculture and handicrafts skills, and provided more than 50 children with a kindergarten education.

The centre's success is down to the determination of Active Citizens, community members and international volunteers, who have contributed in various ways, from offering labour for building renovations, to fundraising for furniture and supplies.

A key moment in the project's success was the meeting between Karima Daoudi, one of the centre's founders, and Teresa Buckland, an Active Citizen from London, during an International Study Visit.

This led to a fruitful collaboration that has opened new sources of support for the centre and the opportunity to share learning between two very different communities.

Thanks to this, the centre is now a buzzing cultural learning space, where women and girls can develop their skills, exchange ideas and become more active in local issues.

Image © Helen Clifton



Karima's learning journey

Growing up in Morocco, your life is all about focusing on your studies. But from a young age, I knew my passion was to help people. So, Active Citizens was an amazing opportunity.

At my training, there were people from all over Morocco, and we shared knowledge and learned from each other. After my first social action project, I knew I couldn't stop. I'm now a facilitator, and every Active Citizens training feels like being part of a family.

Before Active Citizens, I was doing social work, but I wasn't really helping communities or those really in need. But it helped me realise that passion.

“

BEING AN ACTIVE CITIZEN IS ABOUT REALLY HELPING YOUR COMMUNITY. YOU'RE NOT JUST LIVING FOR YOURSELF. YOU'RE HELPING PEOPLE WHO REALLY NEED YOUR HELP

Karima, Active Citizen

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EAST ASIA

In East Asia, Active Citizens supports people to create positive change, develop more resilient and inclusive societies and promote social enterprise as a tool for development.



Image © Myrtyna Millennium Center



MANY [YOUNG PEOPLE] HAVE RESTORED THEIR SELF-CONFIDENCE AND LOVE THEIR VILLAGE MORE. NOW THEY ARE PROUD OF BEING PEOPLE FROM NAMBU.

Denik Purwati, from Active Citizens partner Yayasan Wisnu, talking about a social action project to turn a local Balinese village into an eco-tourism destination, which has been open since 2016

2017-18 highlights

- In the **Philippines**, Active Citizens continues to tackle conflict through economic empowerment, and has supported new discussions between diverse partners on how to build more peaceful and stable communities.
- Communities in **New Zealand** and across the **Pacific** are being empowered to improve education, promote gender rights and tackle mental health issues.
- In **Indonesia**, 100 new social action projects have been initiated by Active Citizens, focusing on the environment, education, culture and inclusive economy.
- In **Vietnam**, social action continues to support inclusion and the growth of the country's social enterprises, bolstered by new partners, including the Ministry of Education and Training.
- Active Citizens continues to support projects working to strengthen **Myanmar's** civil society, deepen communities of practice and bring new partners together, leading to more inclusive development.
- New regional networks and collaboration opportunities have led to joint projects between **Malaysia, Vietnam and Indonesia**, and initiatives to engage artists in **South Korea**.
- Active Citizens from **Samoa, Fiji** and the **Solomon Islands** attended the Social Enterprise World Forum in New Zealand to share their insights and learn from global peers.

Social Action Showcase

Active Citizens offered experienced community trainer Rashid Bangcolongan a new approach to supporting hundreds of displaced families amidst the long-standing Philippines conflict.

When armed conflict broke out between the ISIL-inspired Maute group and the Philippine security forces in Marawi in 2017, hundreds of families fled the city to avoid being caught in the crossfire.

Leaving their belongings behind, many found themselves in non-recognised evacuation centres, leaving them isolated and unable to access government assistance.

Community organiser Rashid Bangcolongan first entered the Pantar West evacuation centre, with his non-governmental organisation Kapamagogopa Incorporated (KI), to mobilise local networks and organisations to donate food, clothing and temporary shelters for those in the camp.

But as he began interacting with the displaced people, he realised he would need a new approach to support their diverse psychological needs.

Image © Kapamagogopa, Inc.



ACTIVE CITIZENS HELPS PEOPLE IDENTIFY THEIR OWN RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR COMMUNITY, AND THEIR RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBOURING COMMUNITIES.

Rashid, Active Citizen

Using the skills and tools they gained through their Active Citizens social enterprise training, Rashid and the KI team provided capacity building support to 211 families, equipping them with the skills to start their own income-generating agricultural businesses.

With this approach, they helped those displaced to regain their self-worth, confidence and dignity, while addressing the key social and economic causes of conflict and extremism in the countryside.

The KI team also mobilised local community members, who had previously abandoned their farmland, to work together with displaced families to build and sustain successful enterprises by making saleable products from local produce.

The initiative has re-introduced economic activity into the local area, giving people the financial means to support themselves and their families. Many can now send their children back to school, without relying on government support, and it has strengthened the role of local women in decision-making and planning within the community.

Rashid's learning journey

I'm an experienced community organiser, but there was always something missing from the training sessions I've been on: the community approach.

Active Citizens considers different perspectives, traditions and cultural practices. It's about recognising and appreciating the perspectives of others.

I use the Active Citizens methodology when approaching any type of training I deliver. The modules are so free and flexible, they can be aligned to the community's thinking. My colleagues have seen the change in my training approach. They are amazed at how I can make everything so participative.

THE AMERICAS

Through new partnerships, Active Citizens is impacting on more and more people across the Americas than ever before, reaching rural and urban communities in five countries.



“ I UNDERSTOOD THEN THAT BEING A LEADER IMPLIED MAKING LEADERS OUT OF OTHERS. I AM AN ACTIVE CITIZEN. I FORM PART OF THE LAST GENERATION OF WAR AND THE FIRST GENERATION OF PEACE.

Active Citizen, Colombia

Image © Tristan Oliff Photography



2017-18 highlights

- In **Brazil**, new partnerships have resulted in more than 300 newly trained Active Citizens, who are now delivering social action in communities, including a project that aims to reduce obstetric violence and the violation of women's rights related to pregnancy and childbirth.
- In **Canada**, 14 young Active Citizens and social enterprise leaders presented their approaches to addressing the Sustainable Development Goals to a panel of experts from Canada and the UK at the annual Active Citizens Youth Summit.
- **Mexico's** first Facilitator Development Workshop brought together 30 facilitators from 12 civil society organisations.
- In **Colombia**, partnerships with the United Nations Development Programme, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Colombian government have seen 681 young people and 700 community leaders trained. They are now working to contribute to the post-conflict stability of the country.



Social Action Showcase and learning journey

Participating in Active Citizens training through the UN's Hands for Peace project was a truly life-changing experience for history student Ana Maria Jessie Serna, setting in motion a journey that was as much about self-discovery, as it was about social impact.

Ana Maria Jessie Serna set off for the indigenous Yanakona reservation of Caquiona, deep in the Colombian Andes, with the aim of strengthening the role, voice and historical memory of the local indigenous women.

The community had suffered the Colombian conflict for more than 50 years, including large periods of guerrilla occupation. This had deeply transformed the mentality of its people. Women had been forced to act within culturally accepted roles, compounded by traditions that perpetuate the dominating role of men at home and in society.

Ana began training the community women, using the Active Citizens methodology to help them recognise themselves, to learn more about their rights, and to understand their role and importance within the community. Over four months she worked with 183 local women.

Through this process, Ana found herself becoming more and more inspired at the resilience of the women she was training.

'It was the strength of these women — being mothers, heads of households and farmers, all at the same time. Their tenacity to go to meetings, to talk about their rights and their needs, and the wisdom to keep fighting for them and their families,' she says.

'I began to really understand the importance of listening, to forgive, and to find solutions to our problems.'

Joined by a volunteer photographer, Ana worked to rebuild the historic memory of the Yanakona women through thought-provoking images. Photography was used as a tool to help the women think and talk about themselves and their history.

'The project is called Daughters of the Earth, because in the indigenous cosmology we are all children of the Pachamama (the Earth goddess), and that creates a condition of 'equality': you are my brother because you come from the Earth.'

Since the project, the community has elected its second woman governor, and many of the indigenous women are receiving government-certified training to learn skills that can improve their lives.

For Ana, the journey of learning and self-discovery is just beginning, and Active Citizens will be with her along the way.

'The greatest purpose of Active Citizens is to change lives, and what a change it has made to me. I now plan to take everything I've learnt out into the community.'



“ THE IMPOSSIBLE IS POSSIBLE. I CHANGED, AND I GOT THE OPPORTUNITY TO CHANGE OTHER PEOPLE'S MINDS AND PERCEPTIONS.

Ana, Active Citizen

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

In Sub-Saharan Africa, Active Citizens is helping to improve governance, accountability and citizen engagement. Across Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda, Active Citizens has empowered communities through social action, supported social enterprises and engaged young artists.



“ACTIVE CITIZENS IS ABOUT BEING CONFIDENT, CREATIVE AND FULL OF HOPE AND DREAMS. IT WAS A ONCE IN A LIFETIME EXPERIENCE, AND I WANT TO THANK EVERYONE WHO WAS A PART OF MY JOURNEY. YOU MADE ME WHO I AM TODAY.

Active Citizen, Sudan



2017-18 highlights

- In the **Horn of Africa**, 70 artists trained through the Active Citizens Activism project have become the creators of change in their communities. By bringing artists and communities together to connect and express themselves, they've impacted on the lives of close to 2,000 people.
- A diverse range of social action has taken place across the region:
 - In **Nigeria**, literacy classes have been delivered to adults with no formal education, primary school pupils have received access to tap water, and a wall of trees has been planted to protect classrooms from the harsh sun.
 - In **Uganda**, social action projects continue to change the lives of women with disabilities and HIV/AIDS, while young people are being encouraged to turn away from crime and drug abuse through music and drama.
- Active Citizens in Nigerian universities continue to encourage collaboration across cultural and religious divides to support greater civic engagement.

“ARTIVISM GAVE ME HOPE. THE TYPE OF HOPE THAT IS LINKED TO DEEP-ROOTED CHANGE.

Active Citizen, Ethiopia

Social Action Showcase

Active Citizens training helped Doreen Nimungu and other disabled women in her community break free from the negative stereotypes they had experienced their whole lives.

Doreen Nimungu helped to establish the Nebbi Association of Women with Disabilities in 2011 to provide socio-economic and political empowerment for disabled women in her community.

Life is difficult for disabled people in Nebbi, a district in northern Uganda, where disability is traditionally seen as a curse. The situation is especially bad for disabled women, who face discrimination and a lack of educational opportunities, locking them into a cycle of poverty.

The association received a boost when Doreen was approached by local Active Citizens facilitator Willy Ochila, who suggested they participate in training.

‘At first, I had my doubts. How much could we achieve as women with disabilities? But after the training, the way we looked at ourselves changed. We felt we could contribute to society,’ says Doreen.

After the training, the women no longer felt bound by the stereotypes the community placed on them. They used their new skills and confidence to start an arts and crafts business and savings scheme, giving them the opportunity to generate their own income. They also began training other community members in different crafts techniques.

‘We felt that we should share our skills and train others in our community, so that they can also develop,’ says Doreen.

The future looks bright for the association, and they are now planning to sustain their initiative for the future by further professionalising their business and re-investing their proceeds in the development of the wider community.

Doreen's learning journey

When the community sees you as someone with a disability, they think there is nothing you can do. But after Active Citizens, we are proud and we talk with our heads up.

The project has done a lot for the group. They are all happy, and people in the community recognise them. Some of us now hold political positions. I've become a councillor in Nebbi district local government.

Before, the group members depended on others, but now most of them depend on themselves, and they are helping other communities. Our aim is to bring in more women and girls with disabilities so they too can be empowered.



“ACTIVE CITIZENS HAS CHANGED THE LIVES OF DISABLED WOMEN AND GIRLS IN NEBBI.

Doreen, Active Citizen



ASSESSING IMPACT

How do we know that Active Citizens empowers people and communities to improve their wellbeing, contribute to more inclusive and resilient societies, and address the big challenges of the 21st century?

Our approach

We assess Active Citizens impact at three levels: **individuals**, **partners** and **communities**.

Our theory of change comprises a series of interconnected change pathways and benefits at each of these three levels. By ‘travelling’ along these change pathways, Active Citizens and partners bring about positive change that goes beyond an individual transaction — by receiving and delivering training, by planning and undertaking social action, by mobilising and participating in networks. The pathways they take depend on the issues they address, the networks they are part of, and their goals for change. These pathways lead to more inclusive, cohesive communities and fairer societies.

Our tools

We use multiple tools to assess impact across the Active Citizens programme, and to learn lessons to adapt and grow within a global context. These are underpinned by the theory of change and an Active Citizens evaluation framework, which includes ongoing monitoring and deeper impact studies.

Our focus

Impact on individuals

Individuals can be facilitators, who are trained at Facilitator Development Workshops, and Active Citizens, who are trained in communities by facilitators. By undertaking the Active Citizens learning journey, planning social action and accessing new networks, individuals benefit from enhanced personal development and renewed values and interpersonal skills, leading to different pathways of change, from becoming community leaders, to gaining new employment opportunities, to building stronger cross-cultural networks.

Impact on partners

Active Citizens partners are a diverse range of organisations, from grassroots civil society groups to universities. Participating in Active Citizens leads to many positive organisational changes, including increased capacity and confidence, stronger partnerships, an enhanced profile, increased visibility and sustainability, and a renewed commitment to inclusion. Depending on their aims and mission, partners follow different pathways, from engaging more with cross-cultural networks to strengthening ties within their communities.

Impact on communities

Communities are engaged through social action — both as social actors and beneficiaries. Social action projects bring together citizens, organisations and networks to improve wellbeing for the wider community and those most marginalised. Long-term, community-wide changes include increased community cohesion, better access to services and support, safer communities, improvements in local living environments and other outcomes that lead to fairer and more equitable societies.

INDIVIDUALS

As individuals travel along their own change pathways, through training and social action, their actions benefit the individuals and communities around them. A social action project in Skoura, Morocco, shows how one Active Citizen’s determination to make life better for those less fortunate inspired a group of women to grasp their own economic empowerment.

Planting the idea

Participating in Active Citizens training gave English teacher Nouzha Halim a renewed impetus and new tools and approaches for helping poor women from Skoura, an isolated village one hour from her town.

‘I realised that if I really wanted to help these women, I should help them to create their own tools and to rely on themselves,’ she says.

Using her knowledge and skills to mobilise networks and set up sustainable projects, Nouzha brought together a group of women in the village, all of whom had children to support and no income, and introduced them to the idea of starting a food co-operative.

Seeing the co-operative as an opportunity to free themselves from their current economic situation, all of the women agreed to join. And so the Skoura food co-operative was born.

Over the following pages, you can read examples of Active Citizens impact across the Middle East and North Africa, highlighted in a recent impact study by not-for-profit research and consultancy organisation INTRAC.

Small beginnings

Nouzha helped the women secure rent-free access to two rooms in a small building, from which they could bake and prepare their products. Starting with varieties of couscous, they soon moved on to taking orders for cakes and sweet breads for feasts.

While the market in Skoura was limited, the women began making a small income from their sales, which inspired them to branch out further and find new opportunities.

‘We heard that it is hard to have a co-operative, but we are here to work for something, and we will achieve it,’ says co-operative member Sa’ida Brom.

A sustainable future

With Nouzha now supporting the co-operative on an informal basis, the idea she planted and the hope she sparked has given the women motivation to sustain the business into the future. Experiencing economic empowerment for the first time and forming new friendships and relationships has given them a sense of freedom and self-worth.

‘We want to rely on ourselves, not men, to show others we can rely on ourselves,’ says co-operative member Boushra Assou.

**I AM NOT JUST A WOMAN
AT HOME. I AM FREE.
WE HAVE CHANGED OUR
VIEW OF SOCIETY.
THEY THINK THAT WOMEN
CANNOT DO ANYTHING,
BUT NOW WE WORK AND
DO MANY THINGS.**

Khadija Oukhlou, co-operative member

PARTNERS

As they connect with new individuals and networks, the organisations who train Active Citizens benefit from their own change pathways. Partnering with Active Citizens has given one non-governmental organisation in Sa'ida, Lebanon, the chance to expand its work and deepen its impact.

Strengthening networks

The Development for People and Nature Association (DPNA) began its Active Citizens journey in 2010. The programme had just arrived in Lebanon, and Rami Shamma, the DPNA's director, immediately recognised its potential to strengthen the organisation's community ties and build new relationships.

'Active Citizens has given us a much more trusted and needed involvement in the community, especially with youth. It's also given us the opportunity to build new partnerships with civil society organisations in the communities we target,' says Rami.

Through recruiting and training Active Citizens, the DPNA has reached new and more diverse groups within society, enabling it to strengthen its participation in networks and movements for positive change. The organisation has fostered a particularly close relationship with Mobaderoon, Syria's 5,000-strong network of activists, which started life as an Active Citizens initiative, and has become one of the most respected non-governmental organisations in Syria.

'A cornerstone'

Active Citizens values, methodology and approaches are embedded across all of the DPNA's activities, from entrepreneurship and peacebuilding projects, to capacity building for non-governmental organisations. The participatory approach characterised by Active Citizens is applied right across the organisation's training offer, and tools such as World Café feature in all activities. This approach has seen the DPNA become recognised as a leader in areas such as citizenship amongst the Lebanese development community.

Inspiring and developing staff

Every staff member and volunteer is given the chance to participate in Active Citizens training, helping them develop new ideas for working with people of different backgrounds, religions and nationalities, and giving them the opportunity to become part of new local and global networks.

While many stay within the DPNA, supporting the organisation's varied activities, others are inspired to follow their own change pathways.

Mona Hasouna was a programme manager at the DPNA until 2015, when she decided to create her own organisation, STEPS, inspired by her Active Citizens learning journey.

'I see myself as one of the people most affected by Active Citizens. It built my expertise in training and how we can impact the lives of people. STEPS was founded because of the achievement and impact of Active Citizens,' she says.



ACTIVE CITIZENS IS A CORNERSTONE IN EVERY INTERVENTION WE DO.

Rami Shama, director, DPNA



COMMUNITIES

As individuals and partners mobilise wider networks, they create positive change for entire communities. In Behaira, Egypt, Active Citizens, organisations and government worked together to make medical testing and lifesaving treatment available to thousands of people.

Identifying a community-wide issue

Back in 2012, a group of newly trained Active Citizens noted that while breast cancer was on the rise, very few women actively tested themselves. Analysing the issue more closely, they realised the problem was not only about access, but about public perceptions and stigmatisation related to health awareness.

'People in rural Egypt prefer to face their destiny, rather than get tested and find out that they are sick. We wanted to change this, because breast cancer is a leading cause of death,' says Active Citizen Amro Ahmad.

Mobilising networks

The group approached Hamd Development Association, one of the area's largest healthcare providers, who agreed to support a series of planned breast cancer awareness workshops. They also secured the time of several local doctors, who volunteered to deliver sessions.

Alongside key healthcare stakeholders, the group collaborated with local organisations and leaders to

raise awareness about the importance of breast cancer screening. They developed breast self-exam sessions with the National Women Centre and Ministry of Health, and convinced a local imam to talk about breast cancer and screening during Friday prayers.

Changing mindsets

As a result, breast cancer testing became more socially acceptable and less stigmatised. Women began talking easily and openly about the importance of self-exams, and, more importantly, demand for breast cancer screening grew dramatically.

To meet this demand, Hamd purchased a mammogram machine and began offering free tests to local women. Since then, more than 5,000 women have been tested, and many have been referred to the National Cancer Institute for treatment.

Maximising the impact

Seeing this community-wide impact, the Governor of Behaira asked the Active Citizens to use the same approach to tackle Hepatitis C — and to an even wider audience. The group organised awareness sessions and testing for the entire population of Rahmaneya, totalling 70,000 people.

They also advocated the Ministry of Health to improve access to testing and health services, resulting in a new testing centre and drug treatment centre, reducing Hepatitis C treatment waiting times from six to one month.



YOUTH ARE EAGER TO LEARN AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR COMMUNITIES, BUT THEY DON'T POSSESS THE KNOWLEDGE OR TOOLS TO BE ACTIVE AGENTS OF CHANGE. ACTIVE CITIZENS PROVIDES THIS KNOWLEDGE AND TOOLS.

Tawfik El-Kabash, Active Citizen



CONNECTING WITH INSPIRATIONAL PEOPLE FROM ALL AROUND THE GLOBE, LISTENING TO THEIR STORIES AND THE WAY THEY PERCEIVED THEIR CULTURAL IDENTITIES LEFT ME WITH A TREASURE OF INVALUABLE HUMAN EXPERIENCES AND AN UNQUENCHABLE THIRST FOR MORE.

Active Citizen, Sudan



THE WORKSHOPS STRENGTHENED MY KNOWLEDGE OF THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING SOCIAL PROJECTS, AND I ALSO GOT A HUGE DOSE OF INSPIRATION AND NEW ENERGY.

Active Citizen, Poland

Active Citizens has worked in partnership with and been funded by a range of organisations, including:



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EU Non-State Actor

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Thank you to all those who have contributed to this publication.