

The UNDP
Youth Leadership Programme 7
in Bahrain

Outcome Report 2021



YOUTH LEADERSHIP
PROGRAMME



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Foreword

The world entered the year 2021 with a new variant of the COVID-19 virus, setting in the realization that the pandemic will be with us for a while. At the same time people, businesses, and the public sector have found creative ways of adapting to the pandemic, enabling a burst of innovation in the way society and organizations worked together. While the pandemic has continued to create setbacks in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), many of the world's communities has shifted their focus towards long-term contribution to sustainable development. For young people, the impact of the pandemic has been especially challenging. Yet, we have seen that the burst of innovation is immense in young leaders, who are choosing to co-create a thriving future for all.

The Kingdom of Bahrain is working faithfully to involve and listen to the younger generation to find sustainable future pathways for the country and beyond. This commitment is reflected in the Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030 and the Government Action Plan 2019-2022 of their focus on capacity building for young women and men to become active contributors to the Kingdom's economic and sustainable development. This approach is further supported by the UNDP's Country Programme Document and the UN Strategic Partnership Framework in Bahrain, building on years of collaboration between the UN and the Kingdom to continue the implementation and advocacy of the SDGs in all its activities and policies.

On the ground, these strategies are actioned through youth initiatives from many organizations across the Kingdom. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) works closely with the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs (MYS) to support the international King Hamad Award for Youth Empowerment and the SDGs, in its 4th edition in 2022. The Youth Leadership Programme (YLP), a regional initiative led by UNDP's Amman-based Regional Youth Team, is also a testament to UNDP and MYS partnership in working with local youth-serving organizations to build their programmatic capacity and the capacity of young leaders to steer their societies towards sustainable development.

The YLP continued in the year 2021 to develop and expand its impact in its 7th edition (YLP7). With UNDP and MYS leading the partnership with 5 youth-serving organizations and YLP alumni, a National Committee was formed to design, plan, and deliver an impactful programme to youth in Bahrain, using innovative and holistic approaches to addressing real present-day challenges to sustainable development in the Kingdom and across the region and the world. The UNDP's partnership with Abdulrahim AlKooheji Foundation in sponsoring the YLP is a testament to the desire for all entities, private and public, in supporting young people in Bahrain. The continued support from the Arab Youth Center in the UAE to deploy local Youth Development Delegates across the region, as part of a strategic partnership with UNDP RBAS, is evidence of the developing support ecosystem youth have across the Arab world, and an indication of the creativity and hope young people hold for the future.

This report expresses the achievements and learnings of the YLP7, and it also showcases the importance of such programmes to create a space for youth-supporting organizations to work and learn together, and to support young leaders that become part of shaping how best to serve our future generations towards sustainable development.

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Immense gratitude to the YLP7 community of leaders and change-makers that were part of the programme – National Committee representatives, YLP alumni, volunteers, young participants, facilitators, trainers, speakers, and judging panelists – whom together have created a vibrant and supportive YLP7 programme, that will continue beyond this year towards the journey to sustainable development.

Members of the YLP7 community are:

Stefano Pettinato (UNDP), Jehan AlMurbati (UNDP Bahrain), Husain Janahi (UNRCO Bahrain), Abdulkareem Al Meer (MYS), Arwa Albufalah (MYS), Latifa Mutaywea (MYS), Mohammed Alansari (AKF), Abdulla Raikhy (AIESEC Bahrain), Fatima Al Jar (MKF), Mariam Almahmeed (MKF), Shaikha Showaiter (Ayadi), Leena Sharif (Ayadi), Ahmed Almulla (Ayadi), Seham Yateem (Shapers), Eman Bahrani (Shapers), Jumana Khorrami (Shapers), Sanket Kothari (Rotaract), Tanima Chakraborty (Rotaract), Budoor Kaladari (YLP6 alumni), Raheel AlAbbasi (YLP6 alumni), Kawthar Alsekri (YLP4 alumni) Fatima Alzari (YLP6 alumni), Jannat Jameel (YLP6 alumni), Hamad Alsaad (The Nourishers), Siddiq Murad (The Nourishers), Dina Al-Borshaid (The Nourishers), Farrah Halwachi (The Nourishers), Tariq Al-Olaimy (Recipes for Wellbeing), Nadia Muijers (Alphard), and Latifa Al-Khalifa (Clever Play).

A huge congratulations and thanks to the graduated YLP7 participants: Abdelrahman Abdulhadi, Abdulla Khudadad, Abdulla Yaqoob, Abrar Mohamed, Ahmed Alawadhi, Ahmed Suhrab, Al Mughirah Ebrahim, Ali Almuathen, Azeen Abdul Azeez, Dana Yaqoobi, Ebrahim Sajjad Fatema Radhi, Fatema Al Banna, Fatima Alshamasi, Fay Obaid, Hajar Alawadhi, Malak Alqaidoom, Mariam Isa, Marwa Janahi, Marwan Kadhem, Mohamed Salah, Nawraa Naser, Noor Alhawaj, Rahaf Izzat, Rayan Mohamad, Safa Almalood, Saleh Alrowaiei, Samana Mohammed, Tahani Abdulla, Yousef Elziny, Zaina Alkhadem, Zainab AlTaitoon.

Executive Summary

The Youth Leadership Programme (YLP) is an initiative under the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS), launched in 2015 to build the region's most dynamic network working at the intersection of youth, innovation, and sustainable development. The programme aims to empower a generation of young leaders, changemakers, and social innovators, to grow their capacity in tackling the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in their countries and the Arab region.

Over the last 6 years, UNDP, in partnership with governmental entities and youth-serving organizations (YSOs), has been working, training, and building the capacity of youth to be the drivers of sustainable development and progress in their countries and communities. Workshops have been delivered ranging from the training in the SDGs and Gender Equality to Social Innovation. Design Thinking has been used as a methodology to support young people in creating solutions to the sustainable development challenges they are most passionate about. These past 6 years have demonstrated the creativity, agility, and eagerness of young people to support the implementation of the SDGs in the region as partners.

With more than 28,600 alumni and 80 partners in 18 countries since 2015, the regional YLP was launched in 2021 in its seventh edition to support youth to develop solutions that contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UNDP Bahrain Country Office (CO) joined the YLP in its third edition (YLP3). Since then, and through working with the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs (MYS), local YSOs, and the YLP Bahrain Community (consisting of YLP alumni, facilitators, and speakers), the YLP Experience has been shaped through a collaborative effort in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Under the title of "Creating Change from Inside Out," The YLP7 in 2021 focused on the topics of Wellbeing and Mental Health, exploring the reality and challenges in Bahrain through looking at the interconnection of individual, community, and planetary wellbeing, and how addressing all levels of wellbeing could galvanize the achievement of the SDGs. Guided by the exploration of these topics, a close collaboration between UNDP and MYS, along with five YSOs – AIESEC Bahrain (AIESEC), AlMabarrah AlKhalifia (MKF), Ayadi Relief Organization (Ayadi), Global Shapers - Manama Hub (Shapers), and the Rotaract Club of Bahrain (Rotaract) – was established. With a representative from each organization and two YLP6 alumni the programme formed the National Committee (NC), who worked together to design, plan, and implement the YLP7 Experience. Additionally, members from each partner organization joined in at different instances during the programme to support the young participants and share their knowledge.

The programme this year has been exclusively and generously sponsored by Abdulrahim AlKooheji Foundation (AKF), as part of a wider partnership to support youth and youth-serving organizations capacity in contributing to the achievement of the SDGs.

Building on the "YLP Experience" learning module developed during YLP6 (2020), the YLP7 Experience became a 2-month long capacity training and social innovation development programme. The programme consisted of 14 dynamic and engaging virtual workshops, that were delivered by 15 trainers and speakers, which included local professionals, members of the partner YSOs, and UNDP experts. The participants learnt about the SDGs, social innovation, wellbeing, gender equality, systems thinking, the design-thinking process, and the art of storytelling, all within the context of real challenges present in Bahrain. The programme ended with an SDGs Challenge, where each team presented their social innovation ideas to a panel of judges, consisting of senior members the YLP7 partner organizations. Three winning teams were then selected to gain more support in developing their innovation and join the YLP7 Regional Forum.

This report reflects the findings and learnings from the YLP7 Experience, charting future potential of youth and youth programming in Bahrain through the collaboration of UNDP, MYS, and partner organizations.

1.2. Planning and Developing Concept

The UNDP Bahrain CO joined the Youth Leadership Programme by the third edition in 2017. Since then, and through working in partnership with MYS, local YSOs, and YLP alumni, the YLP experience in Bahrain has been continuously developed with the aim to create an impactful and transformative learning experience for young people in Bahrain.

In the previous year, YLP6 faced great challenges with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, forcing the programme to shift from in-person to virtual. The YLP7 continued this format, and with the experience from the previous year, was able to expand its capacity to deliver effective and engaging virtual workshops.

The NC worked together through a series of 6 activities and workshops, including joining the regional seven-day Regional Launch Workshop series led by the UNDP RBAS Regional Youth Team. The team reflected on the launch event and worked together to localize the regional theme and its direction in the context of Bahrain.

1.3. Communications and Outreach

In continuation of the online ecosystem that the YLP6 team setup last year, and with the presence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the YLP7 Experience was planned to be completely virtual.

During the YLP7 Awareness Campaign phase, The YLP7 NC worked together to spread awareness about the programme using the following mediums:

- Posting the YLP7 Launch article on UNDP Bahrain website, providing all the information participants need to know about the programme and how to apply to it.
- The design and sharing of social media posts with informative (about YLP7), inspirational (previous experience of YLP participants), live sessions (in Arabic & English), and call for application posts.
- Sending invitations to University students through Student Affairs offices across most of the universities and colleges in Bahrain.
- Sharing call to application and YLP7 launch article through YLP7 partners' networks and YLP Bahrain community through WhatsApp messages.

The YLP Bahrain Instagram account is the main social media platform used to communicate with the public and share updates about the programme, this is due to the high use of Instagram in Bahrain by young people. The programme also has a Twitter account, although it is not active.

The YLP7 application process was designed to be rigorous and with a few reflective questions that invites applicants to share their view on the YLP7 theme (of wellbeing and mental health). This meant that almost all applicants were young people that truly wanted to join and create change for their communities. Through the Awareness Campaign, the programme received a total of 58 applicants, 3 of which did not match the criteria, approving 55 applicants (31 female, 24 male). Most applicants were bachelor university students, current or freshly graduated, from various universities across Bahrain, undertaking a diverse range of degrees, including business, law, medicine, engineering, IT, media, HR, finance, and life sciences. The applicants were sent another form to confirm their participation and to share more information on the programme. 45 applicants confirmed their participation, 37 of which joined the YLP7 Opening Session.

The programme graduated 33 participants (with 20 female and 13 male), grouping together to create 7 youth teams by the end of the programme, achieving a 60% retention rate of participants.



2. Creating Change from Inside Out

Under the title of “Creating Change from Inside Out,” The YLP7 focused on the topics of Wellbeing and Mental Health, exploring the reality and challenges in Bahrain through looking at the interconnection of individual, community, and planetary wellbeing, and how addressing all levels of wellbeing could galvanize the achievement of the SDGs.

Questions explored during the programme were: how can wellbeing be at the center of tackling all the SDGs challenges? How can changemakers create effective positive change while addressing their mental health? What does community and planetary wellbeing mean, and how can we work towards it?

2.1. Introduction

YLP7 in Bahrain focused its programme on developing the capacity of young people in thinking about challenges and accessing innovative processes that help them come up with effective and practical solutions for those challenges. The intention was to create a safe and experimental space where young innovators learn how to approach socially driven solutions holistically.

The programme had the following **Objectives**:

- Strengthen capacity of youth as leaders for social impact
- Develop youth's emotional intelligence and resilience
- Expand youth understanding of wellbeing for people and planet
- Advance youth's ability to create systemic solutions for the SDGs
- Enhance collaboration between Government, YSOs, and Youth
- Foster a Global Changemaker mindset

The programme achieved these objectives by activating the following **Learning Targets** for the participants:

- Developing leadership and social innovations skills
- Gaining a deeper understanding of the SDGs and how to contribute to their achievement
- Understanding wellbeing and mental health and its role in creating effective change
- Enhancing the ability in tackling and presenting complex challenges systemically
- Learning about the different pathways to take to achieve positive social change
- Attaining a range of networking opportunities among other youth, changemakers, and experts
- Becoming part of local and regional networks of like-minded peers that support youth's social impact journey, including local youth-serving and international development organizations
- Co-creating a safe space and support system for each other and youth in Bahrain
- Utilizing a space where they can explore and collaborate their brimming changemaker ideas
- Leading to participants playing an active role in the achievement of the SDGs!

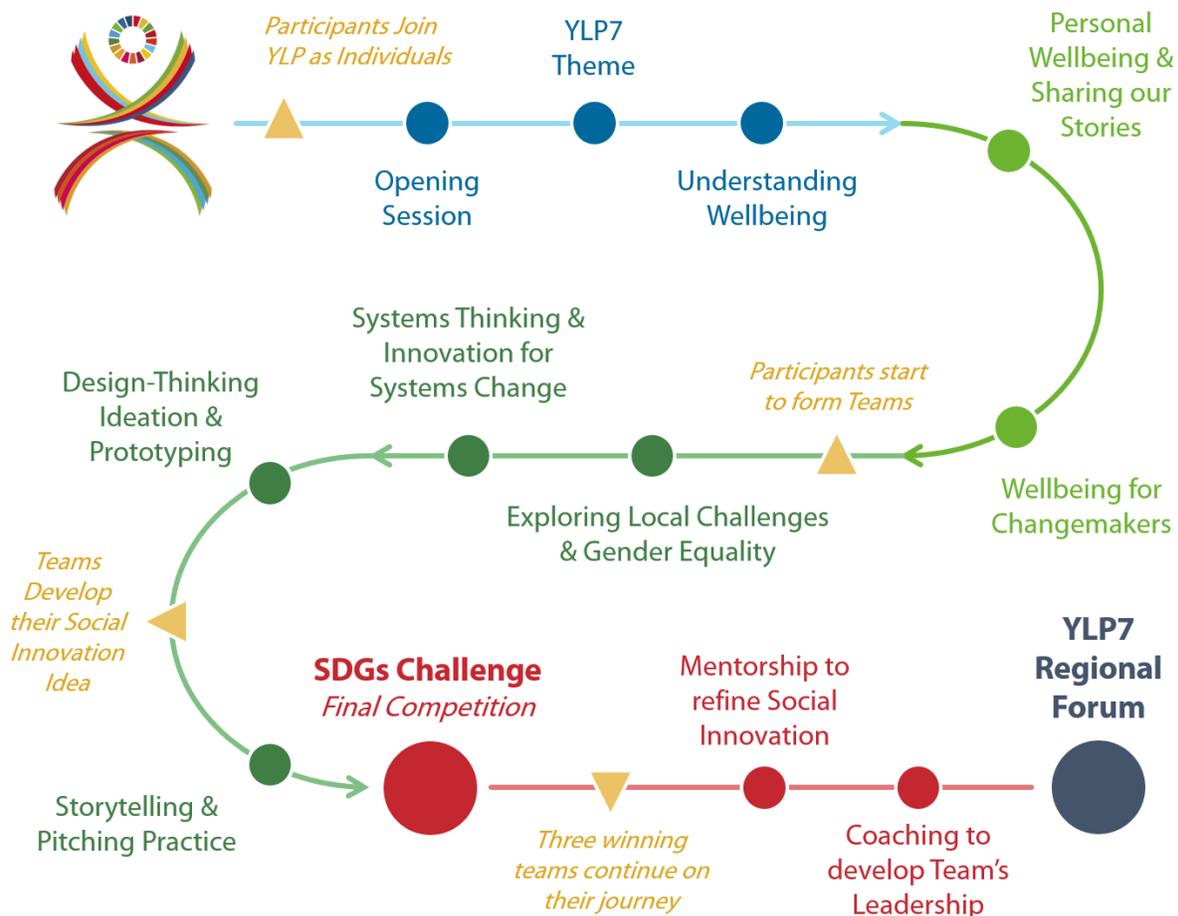


2.2. The YLP7 Experience

There are two main parts for the YLP7 Experience – Individuals’ part, where participants understood the main topics and approaches of the programme; and Teams’ part, where participants teamed up together to work on three deliverables that encompassed the process of creating effective social innovations:

- **Identifying a Challenge Area** – The team present a holistic view of a challenge society faces and explain the complex relationships it has with relevant social, economic, and environmental challenges.
- **Developing a Social Innovation** – The team offer a solution / intervention that innovatively address a specific element in the challenge area they are exploring. The intervention contributes to the achievement to one or more SDGs.
- **Presenting it through Story** – The team share their challenge area and social innovation through an engaging story, that connects emotionally to the audience while presenting a grounded-to-reality and logical narrative.

Below is an illustration of the programme’s flow:



The YLP7 Experience participants undertook the following 14 virtual workshops ([see Annex 2 for schedule](#)):

1. **YLP7 Opening Session:** Programme opening remarks by UNDP and MYS, with an introduction and detailed outline of the programme for the participants.
 2. **YLP7 Theme:** Introducing the SDGs and YLP7 theme and topics in Wellbeing and Mental Health from a regional perspective.
 3. **Wellbeing 101:** Identifying the basics of wellbeing and its implications on individuals and communities, focusing on Bahrain's context.
 4. **Technical Training:** Training in the digital platforms and tools used in the programme.
 5. **Personal Wellbeing:** Exploring personal wellbeing and its different dimensions (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual). Participants had opportunities to share their stories with wellbeing and learn from each other's perspectives.
 6. **Wellbeing for Changemakers:** Discussing the relationship between personal wellbeing for changemakers and its implications on community and planet from a whole-being perspective.
 7. **Exploring our Challenges:** Investigating current and multilayered sustainable development challenges present in Bahrain and initiatives that are already contributing to the achievement SDGs.
 8. **Gender Equality and Analysis:** Understanding Gender Equality and Mainstreaming, and how participants can analyze their social innovations through a gender lens.
- *Participants formed into 7 teams and worked together during the below sessions*
9. **Systems Thinking:** Understanding complex (human and non-human) systems and how they influence each other in relationship to the SDGs. Teams mapped their challenges ideas to explore the deeper rudiments that enable these challenges to continue.
 10. **Innovation for Systems Change:** Learning how to create social interventions to complex challenges, mapping relationships of their challenge and identifying the point where their intervention can influence these systems.
 11. **Design Thinking for Social Innovation - Ideation:** Understanding how to create a strong challenge statement to build a diversity of social innovation ideas using the Design-Thinking process of ideation.
 12. **Design Thinking for Social Innovation - Prototyping:** Working on prototyping ideas through imagination and stakeholder engagement using the Design-Thinking process of prototyping.
 13. **Storytelling for Change:** Exploring the art of storytelling and how it could be used to present their challenges and social innovations in an engaging and interactive way.
 14. **Storytelling Action Space:** Practicing their storytelling pitches with each other, with teams learning from each other and in how to receive and give feedback.

The learning programme concluded with the **SDGs Challenge** – the final competition where each team delivered a 7-minute pitch of their social innovation idea to a panel of 5 judges – that consisted of members from the UNRCO Bahrain office, MYS, Ayadi, Shapers, and Rotaract.

To celebrate and reflect on the achievement of the programme, the **Closing Ceremony**, the first in-person event of the programme, was hosted at the Bahrain Science Center for SDGs. The ceremony was an opportunity for the participants to meet each other face-to-face, reflect on their learnings, challenges, and future direction after the programme. All attending participants and YLP7 team members received their YLP7 certificates, and the SDGs Challenge's three winning teams were announced.

Additionally, during the YLP7 Experience, there was a group of 3 YLP alumni that joined a **YLP7 Co-Facilitators Training** during the programme starting from the Systems Thinking workshop to Storytelling for Change. They received training by facilitators of all these workshops and practiced their facilitating skills during the YLP7 Experience workshops with the participating teams.

Throughout the programme, various **Optional and Support Sessions** were hosted during the week, where participants had an opportunity to get to know each other more, reflect on the learnings of each block of sessions, and gain further guidance on the Systems Thinking, Design Thinking, and Storytelling workshops.

Out of the 7 youth teams during YLP7 Experience, 3 teams continued to the **Teams Mentorship** phase. Each team received further mentoring, and were connected with governmental innovation experts, to further expand their social innovation in preparation for the YLP7 Regional Forum. The winning teams were:

- **ECO MEDIUS** – Ahmed Alawadhi, Ahmed Suhrab, Fatima Alshamasi, Saleh Alrowaiei, and Samana Mohammed
- **SEEN** – Dana Yaqoobi, Fatema Radhi, Mariam Isa, Rayan Mohamed
- **WeBond** – Marwan Kadhem, Tahani Abdulla, Zainab AlTaitoon

2.3. Impact and Reach

During the YLP7 Awareness Campaign phase, the YLP7 team depended on social media (mainly on Instagram) and person-to-person communication to share information about the programme and how to apply to it, in addition to emailing Student Affairs offices in various universities and colleges in Bahrain.

During the Awareness Campaign (17 May to 12 August 2021) Bahrain Instagram account gained 94 followers, receiving 727 active engagements, with an average of 9.8% engagement rate for each post. By the end of the programme (17 May to 17 November), the YLP Bahrain Instagram account gained a total of 144 followers, receiving 1840 active engagements, with an average of 8.9% engagement rate for each post.

As the programme started, 37 participants gained basic knowledge of the SDGs and in the topics of wellbeing and mental health, most of which were university and college students (approx. 34%). The programme graduated 33 participants (with 20 female and 13 male), grouping together to create 7 youth teams by the end of the programme, achieving a 60% retention rate of participants.

YLP7, in collaboration with MYS, worked with 5 YSO partners (4 existing, and one new), along with a private sector foundation, AKF, that provided exclusive sponsorship. A total of 15 individuals who were members of the above entities were actively part of the programme.

In addition, the programme was led and supported by 5 YLP alumni through being part of the NC, volunteering, and being part of the Co-Facilitator training programme. A total of 15 trainers were part of delivering the workshops of the programme.



3. YLP7 Regional Collaborations

The Youth Leadership Programme is a youth capacity development programme initiated and led by the Arab regional office of the UNDP – or Regional Bureau for Arab States. During the YLP7, 15 Arab countries were part of the programme, each with their own interpretation and form to fit the needs of the local context. Participating countries in the programme 2021 included: Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen.

3.1. The Youth Development Delegates and Arab Youth Center

The Youth Development Delegates programme (YDDs) is the result of a partnership between The Arab Youth Center (AYC) and the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS). This employment programme provided the opportunity for 10 Arab youth from different countries (Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Somalia, Syria, and Tunisia) who are passionate about achieving the sustainable development goals to work for 2 years at the UNDP offices in their countries under the field of youth work to achieve the common vision of both parties aimed at enabling the youth in the Arab region. Ahmed Buasallay was the YDD in UNDP Bahrain during YLP7, in his second year. The programme also provided a platform for young delegates to interact and collaborate, creating a space for sharing ideas and approaches to youth capacity building programmes and supporting tasks.

The YDDs also co-organized webinars as part of a Youth Talk series, discussing topics such as human and planetary wellbeing during the International Youth Day, youth in the digital era, and volunteering for the future. These initiatives enabled the tightening of relationships between the delegates across the region, creating long-lasting connections that is further supporting youth collaboration across the Arab region.

The Arab Youth Center provided immense support to the YDD through providing this unique opportunity to work with UNDP and lead the YLP, while providing great support for the programme through opening a position fully dedicated to youth programming in the participating countries.

3.2. Regional Interactions

This year, the YLP7 seen a continuation of interaction regionally, with tremendous support provided by the Regional Youth Team that enabled the mainstreaming of YLP and helped YLP7 in Bahrain to greatly develop its programme delivery and quality. This includes:

- Funding the second year of the Youth Development Delegate (YDD) position, through a programme in partnership between UNDP RBAS and the Arab Youth Center (see above).
- Assigning a regional focal point, Magda Janiszewska. in direct contact with the UNDP Bahrain CO team, providing continuous support and assistance for the local YLP implementation.
- Hosting a virtual YLP7 Launch Workshops series to introduce and train YLP7 country teams (including the NC in Bahrain) in the programme theme, topics, and approach.
- Technical Support in providing branding and media for YLP7, developing concept and plan, hosting various informative and training virtual workshops, and providing access to UNDP regional experts and colleagues to support the local programme.
- Collaborated with Social Media Campaigns, including the Youth Talk series. YLP Bahrain did a takeover day of the YLP regional Instagram to showcase the programme and its achievements.
- Provided speakers and facilitators for programme delivery during the YLP7 Experience.
- Hosted the final hybrid event, the YLP7 Regional Forum, inviting all NC members and YLP7 Bahrain winning teams, who pitched their social innovations on a regional stage.

3.3. YLP7 Regional Forum

The YLP7 Regional Forum is the final regional event of the Youth Leadership Programme, bringing together all participating countries, teams, and selected young participants to reflect on the programme, explore new approaches for future YLP, and connect with young changemakers across the region.

With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, last year's forum shifted into a virtual environment, where before 2020, the regional event brought together people in an in-person event in a different participating country each year. For this year, after a consultation with all YLP participating countries, the event was moved to a hybrid model, where each country's team and participants would gather in-person and connect with the regional team and other countries through a virtual Zoom call, with many engaging and in-country activities to reflect on YLP7 and imagine the future of youth programming in the future under UNDP.

In Bahrain, the NC and participants from the winning teams gathered at the Bahrain Science Center for SDGs in Isa Town, engaging with the regional programme, and going into deep discussions during the in-country activities, such as exploring the development of a Policy Shapers pathway in Bahrain, and discussing the meaning of leadership and changemaking for youth in the context of Bahrain.



4. Analysis

The YLP7 Experience approach was built on the YLP6 module designed by the YLP6 National Committee, along with consultations with the UNDP Regional Youth Team. The programme has been further developed thanks to the feedback and lessons from the YLP6 community.

This module is still in development, and YLP7 provided some great opportunities for experimenting with new forms and knowledge to integrate into the programme, while continuing the virtual-only approach. The central aim of the YLP Experience in Bahrain is to build the capacity of youth in Bahrain in understanding complex challenges and learn ways to design robust and realistic social innovations, and the design of the programme's content and flow ensures the achieving of this aim.

During this year, Gender Equality became a core workshop in the middle of the programme, before entering the solution-making phase, in order to give a gender lens to the ideas the participants will work on. Additionally, the Systems Thinking and Systems Change workshops were integrated into the Design-Thinking process, inviting participants to analyze and understand the complex interactions their challenge is centered in, while giving them a perspective on how to create change within the complex systems they work and live in. Lastly, the pitching workshop shifted towards the art of storytelling, focusing on skills in creating engaging and empathic presentations / talks that capture the attention of the audience, while giving the challenges and ideas a story that clearly illustrates the narrative of their social innovation.

While this year's YLP7 Experience delivered the intended objectives (see section 2.1), the YLP Experience will continue to become richer with active involvement from the YLP community, a necessary element to build along with UNDP's partners, in order to create a support ecosystem for young social innovators. This was evident in the active role YLP6 alumni had as part of the National Committee (Budoor and Raheel), who contributed immensely to the development and delivery of the programme, and were active in supporting YLP7 participants, providing mentorship that comes from experiencing the same programme.

Overall, the YLP7 Experience had a strong impact on the participants' understanding of wellbeing and how to move towards creating a diversity of solutions that tackle the wellbeing of people and the planet. Many participants also shared that the programme was a "mind-opening experience," where they learnt a lot about complex challenges in Bahrain and across the world, while feeling equipped with the ability to address and contribute to the solutions to tackle these challenges.

4.1. Feedback from the Youth Community

The programme has been assessed based on the verbal and written feedback shared by some of the YLP7 community members (YLP7 programme team, participants, and facilitators). The YLP7 Experience participants shared their reflections through feedback forms, group reflection processes, and interviews. The following are the most significant change indicators shared by most of the **YLP7 participants**:

- The participants learned from a diversity of perspectives, from the facilitators, YLP7 team, and other participants.
- Participants gained a better understanding wellbeing and mental health and their implications on bigger developmental challenges in Bahrain communities and across the world.
- Participants felt connected to a network of people that want to create sustainable and positive change in Bahrain and the region.
- The participants enjoyed and learnt a lot from the process of the programme – i.e., understanding the topic of wellbeing, learning its current challenges, how to explore and form a challenge question, and create social innovations based on that understanding.
- Most of the topics and approaches in the YLP7 Experience were new and inspiring for the participants.
- Many participants appreciated and enjoyed having space (both during and after the core workshops) to share about their wellbeing and their perspective on it. Some expressed an improvement to their mental wellbeing because of the sharing and the knowledge they gained from the sessions.

The following are what the **YLP7 team and facilitators** shared about their experience with YLP7:

- It is inspirational to work with young people who seek to create change in their communities
- The level of awareness of local and global challenges from the participants is noticeably (and positively) different from other programmes in Bahrain
- Participants were very engaged in the subjects delivered and expressed appreciation in learning something new.
- The team and facilitators enjoyed working together in co-creating the programme

Generally, the YLP7 community expressed the following points of improvement for the programme:

- Many participants and facilitators expressed the need for more time to share and absorb the material and for the participants to learn how to apply it on their social innovation ideas.
- Most facilitators expressed that there is high potential for this programme that is not being completely utilized in the reach and impact on youth.
- Most shared that it was getting more difficult for them to engage / be engaged virtually, which affected their level of engagement, and expressed a desire to have the programme in-person.

4.2. Stories

Below are some of the stories shared by the YLP7 community. All quotes were extracted from interviews that can be found in the YLP Bahrain social media account.

“Being on the National Committee for the Youth Leadership Programme for the second year in a row has added a lot to me. It has helped me develop my programme development skills and my project management skills. Additionally, it really challenged me in ways that helped me understand that it’s really important to keep an open mind and to be flexible. Something that is key that this programme has shown me that there is such importance in providing spaces and learning opportunities, such as this [programme], for young people because that is where magic happens.”

- Latifa Mutaywea, National Committee member representing the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs

“Being a participant last year and a national committee member this year gave me the opportunity to not only see the programme but also see how it works, see the flow of the programme. It also taught me how to work with different organizations, and the group work that goes into making a programme as big as the YLP.”

- Raheel AlAbbasi, YLP6 alumni and YLP7 National Committee member

“YLP gives to youth a new outlook on the world, opening their eyes to the fact that the whole world is connected, we are not just living in isolated countries with only difference. On the contrary, we all work towards the Sustainable Development Goals, where anyone can learn it and use it to understand how they can create change in the world, even on a personal, community, or country level.”

- Shaikha Showaiter, National Committee member representing Ayadi Relief Organization

“The [UNDP’s] YLP was a completely new experience for me. I participated in other programmes before, but YLP was very new. It had very innovative workshops such as Design-Thinking, which was one of the workshops that helped me a lot to kind of go deeper into a problem instead of focusing on solutions, which we usually do as humans... There was a lot of support for us as students, everyone was trying to help us making sure we understand [the content]. They [UNDP and YLP teams] also provided us with support sessions, so that if we didn’t understand through the week or we were busy and couldn’t attend, we could understand the information on a deeper level.”

- Samana Hassan Mohammed, YLP7 participant, ECO MEDIUS team

““From the beginning of the programme, from exploring Wellbeing until Design-Thinking, there was always mentorship from the programme [UNDP and YLP] team. When we came up with our idea, we explained it to them, and they were very open to it and gave us a lot of constructive feedback on how to make it even better and accessible to everyone.”

- Fatema A.Jalil Radhi, YLP7 participant, SEEN team

“I remember my first today in YLP when I started, I was really nervous, but I really wanted to share a lot, and there were other changemaker sharing... And there was something within me that told ‘now you need to share, now it’s your time to shine up.’ After one click of ‘unmute [on Zoom] the change happened to me, I changed to the person I want to be right now.”

- Marwan Jalal Kadhem, YLP7 participant, WeBond team

“Throughout the YLP experience we got the opportunity to connect with so many mentors, be inspired by them, and learn so many things from them. The fact we are still connected to them is very useful and we can always seek help from them. Even the participants were very helpful, and we have learnt from each other and each other’s stories. The whole experience was really great, and I am grateful for it.”

- Tahani Mahdi Abdulla



5. Shaping Next Year

The UNDP’s Youth Leadership Programme in Bahrain continues to hold a unique position of uniting youth programming in Bahrain and connecting youth-serving organizations to facilitate truly effective and impactful opportunities for young Bahrainis to become leaders and change-makers in their communities and across the region. It’s important to continue developing the YLP Experience in Bahrain with ongoing consultation with the YLP community, in partnership with MYS, and in collaboration with the UNDP RBAS Regional Youth Team. Beyond youth programming, the YLP can become an example of multi-organizational and cross-regional collaboration between governmental entities, private sector organizations, YSOs, and young people.

5.1. Challenges

The persistence of the COVID-19 pandemic meant that the YLP Experience continued in its virtual format. While there have been many benefits to having experience in doing the programme virtually last year, there also has been challenges to people's engagement to the virtual-style of learning, with many challenges arising from "Zoom-fatigue," and other digital-related challenges.

The following are the main challenges and lessons learnt during the YLP7 Experience:

1. **Pre-Programme Outreach:** The seventh edition of the programme enjoyed relatively more exposure than YLP6 (2020), where potential participants knew about YLP7 primarily through social media, partner organizations, and universities. Yet, there was still a low number of applicants. Potential challenges to that could be because of the oversaturation of youth programmes in Bahrain, zoom-fatigue (youth not feeling inspired to take another online learning programme), and lack of awareness about the programme and its practical benefits for the youth (in how it would benefit their professional work). Another element is the long YLP7 applications and detailed, although this has provided higher retention rate than last year.
2. **Creating Moments of Connection:** This is a challenge that was present during YLP6, although it continued during YLP7 even though there have been strategies implemented to increase moments for connection. Most notably is keeping Zoom calls open after the workshops are finished (as After-hours chatting) and host reflection and support sessions during the week. This challenge also became apparent in the way the YLP7 team connected and worked together. It seems that virtual connection cannot work with out a lot of time investment inside activities, time both the YLP7 team and participants themselves didn't have (evident in the attendance of support sessions, with 3-5 participants only attending). Creating a hybrid model for the programme with core workshops and/or support sessions done in-person while adjusting for the COVID-19 pandemic regulations can create better engagement.
3. **Teamwork & Applying Knowledge:** The YLP7 Experience increased its duration relative to the previous year (2 more weeks), with extended periods between workshops to give time for the youth teams to work on their social innovation and integrate the content they've learnt during the week. Yet many participants still expressed a lack of time to apply the knowledge and work on their team's social innovation. The challenge is in delivering very new content for the participants, and them not having enough time to fully comprehend and understand those subjects. Most participants were also busy with their studies or work, not having enough time (and difficulty in organizing team-work meetings) to dedicate to extra-curricular activities outside the core YLP7 workshops. The timing of the programme and / or the diversity of content will need to be adjusted to give more time for participants to fully understand the knowledge.
4. **Evaluation & Impact Assessment:** While YLP7 received good feedback through the programme using the Block surveys, the number of participants sharing their learnings and challenges was small (with less participants responding to surveys further down the programme). Additionally, there were participants that did not show clear indication of engagement, and there were complaints from some participants that their teammates didn't contribute to the team's efforts (leading some teams to break up). This can be improved by creating reflective and simple assessment after each workshop to gain an idea on what the participants learnt (incremental impact assessment) in addition to gauging the engagement of participants.

5.2. Opportunities

The long-term intention of YLP in Bahrain is create a space for youth, YSOs, governmental entities, and private sector organizations to work together on a shared programme, enabling potential collaborations to emerge from this space. This was the intention last year and due to the continuing COVID-19 situation, and lack of engagement with the partner youth-serving organizations (outside of the National Committee), as they were also focusing their work on other subjects with limited capacity, this process was not completed in 2021, and the potential is still there to tap into. This is especially true for 2021 hence there many people and organizations with interest in learning more about the SDGs and how to contribute to the Kingdom's sustainable development.

Additionally, there many opportunities and potential partner already laid out for the development of an expanded UNDP youth programme in Bahrain, which includes the four pathways (Social Entrepreneurship, Community Building, Policy Shaping, and Job Seeking). While all pathways are relevant to Bahrain, the Social Entrepreneurship has a great since UNDP already works with partners that have initiatives on this pathway, namely the MYS. Participants during YLP7 also showed a keen interest in being part of developing the Policy Shapers pathway.

5.3. Recommendations

These recommendations are based on the analysis of the UNDP youth team, and feedback from the YLP7 Community in how YLP can continue developing.

1. **Partner YSOs Involvement.** Create sister-programmes with partner YSOs to increase their capacity in delivering learning programmes related to the SDGs and social innovation, while building a pool of young women and men in Bahrain with foundational sustainable development knowledge, with potential to join and be part of YLP.
2. **Expand Partnerships.** Continue to involve more YSOs, private sector organizations, and governmental entities with YLP, building relationships and programmes based on YLP and the four pathways. This will continue building a better ecosystem for young social innovators and strengthen the UNDP's youth programming network and partnerships.
3. **YLP Alumni Engagement.** Create an engagement pathway for YLP alumni in how they can be part of youth programming with UNDP in Bahrain and regionally. This is already done through involving YLP alumni as part of the NC and as volunteers in the programme. Opportunities for alumni to be hired as a Youth Development Delegate will continue this engagement and open other possibilities.
4. **Link with other Initiatives.** UNDP can connect with ongoing and new youth initiatives in the Kingdom, to gain partnership and contribute to existing work and networks. This will need a dedicated team to establish linkages with governmental entities and private organizations' youth initiatives and UNDP's youth programming and opportunities for new programmes to emerge from these partnerships.
5. **Regional Collaborations.** Continue and expand collaborations with the Regional Youth Team and seek more opportunities to create cross-national interactions between the YLP community.
6. **Marketing and Awareness.** Further develop the marketing of the programme (hiring a media company has made a big difference in sharing quality content) and reach to other learning-institutions and civic societies with young members.
7. **Participants' Evaluation.** Develop an evaluation rubric for the young participants and youth teams to understand how the YLP team, facilitators, and mentors can support their personal development and social innovation idea.

8. **Mentorship.** Add mentors for teams during the YLP7 Experience to assist in developing their ideas. This can be connected to the Regional Mentorship Programme that is currently in development.
9. **Programme Content.** Develop the programme’s deliverables further expand the duration of the programme to make it more effective at delivering the knowledge to the participants and give more time for teams to integrate the approaches they learn.
10. **Post-YLP Support.** Connect with organizations that can take the participant’s ideas further after the programme. This can go into ecosystem mapping of potential organizational partners that take graduated participants in their (for example) business entrepreneurship programme. It can also connect to the new initiatives by the UNDP Regional Youth Team (ex. Mentorship Programme).
11. **Co-creative Development of YLP.** Share outcomes of the YLP7 Experience with the YLP community to listen to feedback and ideas on how to further develop the YLP Experience module. This can be done as a pre-YLP8 meeting, sharing the insight gathered and exploring ways of improvement to the YLP Experience and other potential youth initiatives through UNDP.



The Experience in Bahrain is still not a mature programme, which is exciting as it opens room for experimentation to future YLP teams. The maturing process requires the continuous engagement and collaboration with the YLP community (locally and regionally) to create a shared sense of contribution to the programme, as a programme created by the community and not just the UNDP. Through this approach, the UNDP already has a unique position in becoming a unifier of entities and individuals that value and prioritize the future of young women and men in Bahrain.

6. Annexes

6.1. Annex 1. Useful links

YLP Bahrain

- [UNDP Bahrain website](#)
- [YLP7 launch article](#)
- Social media: [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#)
- [YLP7 Instagram Highlights](#)

YLP7 Bahrain Partners

- [Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs – Instagram](#)
- [Abdulrahim AlKooheji Foundation - Instagram](#)
- [AIESEC Bahrain – Instagram](#)
- [AlMabarrah AlKhalifia – Instagram](#)
- [Ayadi Relief Organization – Instagram](#)
- [Global Shapers. Manama Hub – Instagram](#)
- [Rotaract Club of Bahrain – Instagram](#)

YLP Regional Resources

- [YLP website](#)
- [UNDP RBAS website, About YLP](#)
- [Youth Development Delegate programme](#)
- Social media: [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)

6.2. Annex 2. YLP7 Experience Schedule

Saturday 28 Aug	4:00 – 5:00 PM	Opening Session
Monday 30 Aug	5:00 – 6:00 PM	YLP7 Theme
Wednesday 1 Sept	5:00 – 6:00 PM	Wellbeing 101
Thursday 2 Sept	5:00 – 6:00 PM	Technical Training – Zoom, Slack, Mural
Saturday 4 Sept	4:00 – 6:00 PM	Personal Wellbeing + Sharing our Stories
Saturday 11 Sept	4:00 – 5:30 PM	Wellbeing for Changemakers
Thursday 16 Sept	5:00 – 7:00 PM	Exploring our Challenges
Saturday 18 Sept	5:00 – 6:30 PM	Gender Equality and Analysis
Thursday 23 Sept	5:00 – 7:00 PM	Systems Thinking
Saturday 25 Sept	4:00 – 6:00 PM	Innovation for Systems Change
Saturday 2 Oct	4:00 – 6:00 PM	Design Thinking for Social Change - Ideation
Saturday 9 Oct	4:00 – 6:00 PM	Design Thinking for Social Change - Prototyping
Saturday 16 Oct	4:00 – 7:00 PM	Storytelling for Change
Saturday 23 Oct	4:00 – 7:00 PM	Storytelling Action Space
Saturday 30 Oct	4:00 – 6:00 PM	SDGs Challenge – Final Competition
Saturday 6 Nov	4:00 – 6:00 PM	Closing Session