



Seenaryo  
سیناریو **2025**  
**Impact Report**

# Foreword

*"It is mostly through stories that we learn to think, perceive, feel and remember the world in a more nuanced and reflective way." – Elif Shafak*

2025 began with the thin promise of hope: a fragile truce in Gaza, a new government rebuilding in Syria, the possibility of an end to the injustices of 2024. Yet as the year wore on, newspaper headlines about the region flattened. For our communities, life under war, occupation and displacement continued, in all its complexities, reported or not.

At Seenaryo, we exist to make space for the stories that sit alongside crisis: teachers creating calm in chaotic learning shelters; young people refusing to be defined by what they can't do; children playing – not because everything is fine, but because play is how they survive.

As Noura, a teacher in Deir al Balah, Gaza, reflected: "The children disconnected from the harsh reality of Gaza and drifted into their imagination." Moments like this remind us that play is not an escape from reality, but a way of navigating it.

That belief shaped our work across borders this year. Through *Ibn Battuta Travels*, our cross-country theatre epic, communities in



Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Egypt and the UK built chapters of a shared story. In a region fragmented by physical borders, the project brought hundreds of voices together in a collective act of storytelling that challenges one-dimensional portrayals of our region. The story continues into 2026.

This year also marked Seenaryo's tenth anniversary. We celebrated with community events, a forum bringing together freelancers and partners in Lebanon, and embarked on a research project examining the long-term impact of our work.

A decade ago, our first group of children stepped on stage in Lebanon's Shatila refugee camp. One of them, Ahmad, is now a facilitator, guiding new generations through the same process of expressing themselves. His journey reflects what we have learned over the past ten years: impact is not a moment, but a continuum.

2025 was also a year of transition. After co-founding and leading Seenaryo for a decade, Victoria Lupton stepped into a new role as President. Throughout this change, the strength and commitment of our team across the region has remained constant. Many of the people shaping Seenaryo's work today have been part of the organisation for years, carrying forward the same belief that theatre and play are not luxuries, but lifelines. To our community of supporters: thank you for choosing to believe in imagination, in dignity, and in long-term change. Thank you for helping us continue to widen the story.

*Naqiyat Ibrahim & Lara McIvor*

Joint CEOs, Seenaryo

## Vision

Seenaryo's vision is a world where all individuals can be active collaborators, creators and catalysts for social change.

## Mission

By breaking apart the typical hierarchies that exist in theatre and classrooms, Seenaryo creates playful spaces for the meaningful participation of under-served communities.

## Seenaryo in 2025

# 28,527

people reached through our theatre and play programmes

# 3,656

hours of rehearsals, trainings, workshops & performances

# 59

plays co-created with communities

# 6

countries:  
Lebanon,  
Jordan,  
Palestine,  
Syria, Egypt  
and the UK



**“I feel scared all the time,  
but today I wasn’t scared  
– I was happy”**

SINNAT, LEBANON

A play-based learning session in South Lebanon | Photograph: Abbas Hamze

# Where we work

In a region marked by displacement, economic instability and ongoing conflict, Seenaryo creates spaces where communities can express themselves, connect, and build the social and emotional skills needed to navigate an uncertain world. In 2025, we also worked with Arab and SWANA diaspora communities in the UK.



Lebanon



Jordan



Palestine



Syria



Egypt



UK

# Who we work with

Seenaryo works with under-served communities, and trains teachers, with a particular focus on:

**Women & girls**

**Refugees**

**Children in care**

**Disabled people**

**Migrant domestic workers**

**Communities living in poverty**

**People affected by trauma**



# Seenaryo spotlights



## Emergency response

### LEBANON

At the beginning of the year, we continued running emergency theatre and play projects in the wake of Israel's war on Lebanon. In total, we ran 92 projects, reaching 1,812 people from affected communities. Highlights included a theatre project with the LGBTQ+ community; a series of flamenco workshops for our facilitators; a choir with women aged 50+; and Playkit sessions delivered directly to children in classrooms.

**1,812 people reached  
5 governorates**

## Advocacy via theatre

### JORDAN

We used theatre as a tool to advocate for girls' access to education, with three ensembles of girls in Irbid, Mafraq and East Amman. They each created an original play exploring barriers they face in accessing education. They then trained to lead their own theatre workshops with children from their communities.

**90% of participants feel better able to cope with fears and problems**

## Play in Gaza

### PALESTINE

In temporary learning spaces across Gaza, we began reaching children with play-based and social-emotional learning. We worked with local teachers to design a series of 10 workshops aimed at supporting the learning of 4 to 8-year-olds. You can find out more about the project on page 14.

**703 children reached  
45 teachers and coaches trained**

## Ibn Battuta Travels

### CROSS-COUNTRY

*Ibn Battuta Travels* is a cross-country theatre epic – our most ambitious theatre project to date. The first play premiered at Shubbak Festival in London in June. In the autumn, rehearsals began with ensembles in Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Syria and Egypt. The country groups are creating five plays in parallel, using the life of medieval traveller Ibn Battuta to spark ideas and weave them into new stories.

**“When you're all working towards the same goal as a team, there is a powerful unity”**  
*Participant*



## Theatre in care homes

### JORDAN

We launched a three-year project introducing participatory theatre to children's care homes across Jordan. So far, we've worked with 30 children at the Al-Husseini Care Home in Amman and trained 19 teachers across three care homes. Working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education, this project is working towards change in practice and policy in the care home system in Jordan.

**"[By session 10], Hani started to express his affection for others openly and seemed to feel more recognised and heard in the group"** *Facilitator*

## Staging democracy

### LEBANON

The Studio production *Does It Matter? It Matters* toured across the country, reaching 1,220 audience members. Directed by Issam Abou Khaled, the play explored young people's experience of the political system in Lebanon and responded to a year lived in the shadow of war.

**"We were able to understand the whole of Lebanon in one show"** *Audience member*

## Ministry partnerships

### LEBANON & JORDAN

This year we have forged key partnerships with the Ministry for Education and Higher Education (MEHE) and Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD) in Lebanon, as well as formalising our partnership with UNWRA in Jordan. These partnerships will help us scale our work to reach classrooms across the region.

**23 public schools reached  
60 UNWRA teachers trained**

## First play with men

### LEBANON

We ran our first theatre project with men, using theatre to break the stigma around men's mental health. The ensemble played a group of delivery drivers, each with their own problem to deliver. They addressed challenges of life in Lebanon, exploring how political collapse has affected them both economically and emotionally.

**"I feel like I'm freeing myself through [theatre], I joined because I wanted to break the routine of my life"** *Participant*



A Showbuild in Russeifa, Jordan | Photograph: Muthana Al Zubaidi

## We make theatre

Seenaryo co-creates **collaborative, powerful and imaginative theatre** in partnership with organisations deeply rooted in the communities they serve. The original plays put participants **at the heart of the creative process** and give them a space to collectively share and explore their stories, increasing **wellbeing, life skills and community connection**.

**8,072** THEATRE PARTICIPANTS  
including our first theatre productions in Palestine, Syria & Egypt

**4,263** AUDIENCE MEMBERS  
watched 59 plays and 9 film screenings

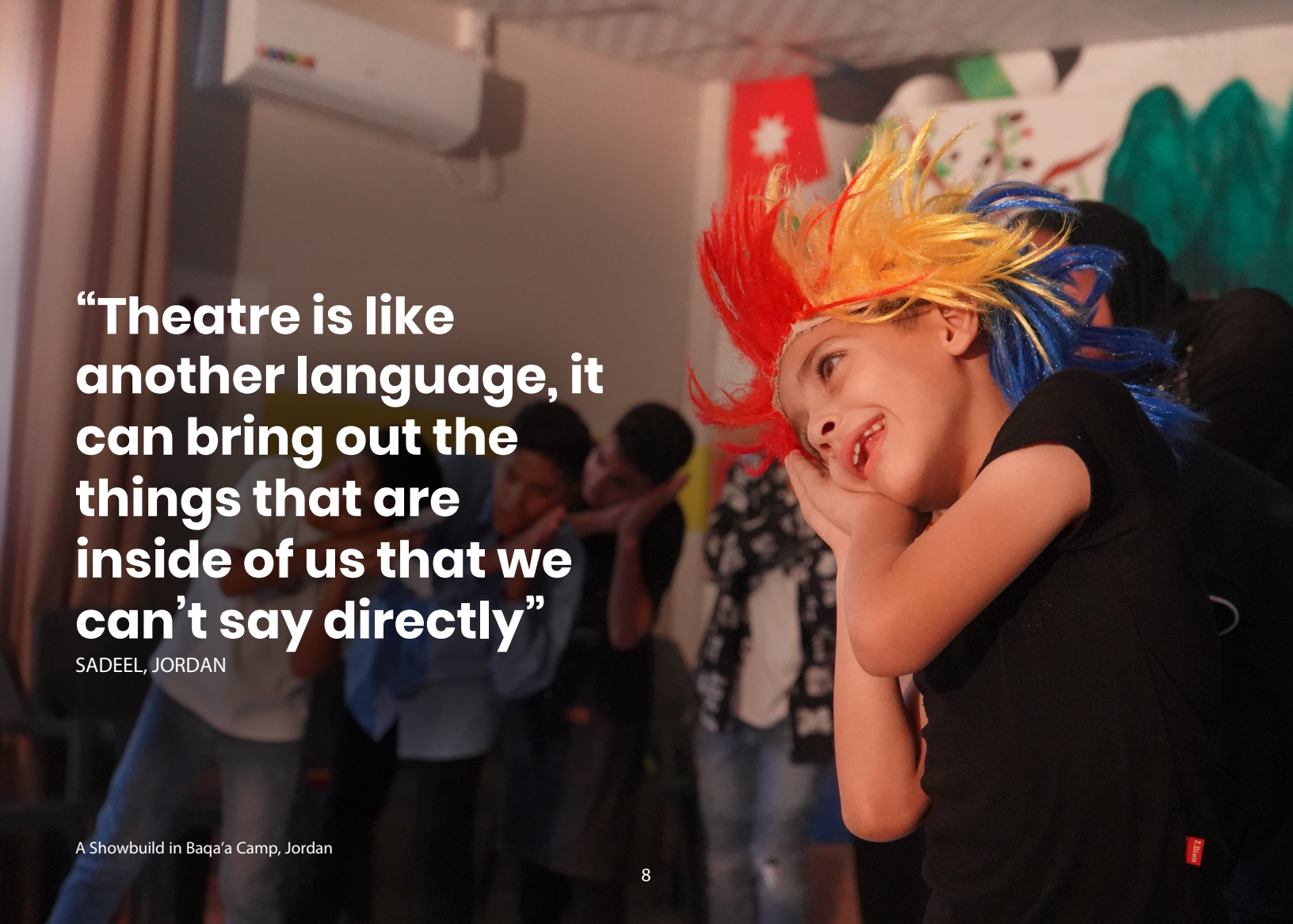
**309** IBN BATTUTA COLLABORATORS  
including participants, directors, production team, filmmakers, and more



**31%**  
**increase** in participants who find it **easy to say how they feel**  
(From 45% pre-project to 76% post)  
677 people surveyed



**97%**  
of participants have a chance to **explore themselves and their story**  
(Compared to 61% pre-project)  
102 people surveyed



**“Theatre is like  
another language, it  
can bring out the  
things that are  
inside of us that we  
can’t say directly”**

SADEEL, JORDAN

**Jad**  
LEBANON



“This project was beautiful because everything came from us. We wrote the story, we did the work. I even wrote a song for the first time.

In the play, I expressed real struggles: access to healthcare, retirement plans, the right to work – as a gay person, it’s incredibly difficult to find a job. I now speak about these issues wherever I go.”

*Jad participated in a theatre project with the LGBTQ+ community in Beirut, Lebanon.*

**Reema**  
LEBANON



“Where I live, we’ve been affected by war, especially the clashes between Tabbaneh and Jabal Mohsen a few years ago.

This Seenaryo project helped me grow and changed my daily life significantly. I rarely used to interact with my community, but I now feel more open to people around me.

The most important thing I took was the energy and joy – I never realised I was so joyous. I feel like I’m truly living again.”

*Reema participated in a theatre project with women in Tripoli, Lebanon.*

**Shouq**  
JORDAN



“The play explored my truth. I couldn’t afford to continue [my education] as it costs a lot for refugees. But through this project I started to believe things don’t have to stop here, there are alternatives.

I used to be scared to speak up, but I’ve overcome that. I’ve realised it’s important to hear and accept different opinions.”

*Shouq participated in a theatre project with girls facing barriers to education in Amman, Jordan.*

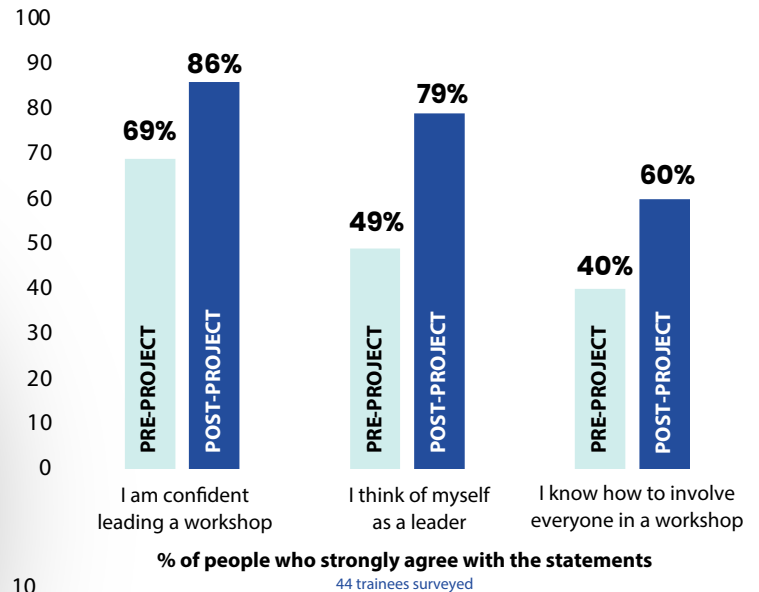


Theatre Leadership Training in Amman | Photograph: Amany Adel

## We train future leaders

Seenaryo trains youth and women to become **creative leaders in their communities**. We currently do this through Theatre Leadership Training, the Scenechangers programme and mentoring facilitators. Through our trainings, we aim to **create wider and alternative employment pathways**, equipping young people with vital professional skills.

**190** FUTURE LEADERS TRAINED  
including 48 Theatre Leadership trainees and 66 Scenechangers





2019

## Meet Hamza

During Hamza's very first rehearsal for a Seenaryo Showbuild, when he was nine years old, he introduced himself as Hamza Hummus in a name game. The name stuck – he's still known as Hamza Hummus to this day. He remembers,

**“It was my first time ever participating in anything like this. It's left a lasting mark on my life.”**

At the end of the week, he stood on stage for the first time, playing a comedic dolphin. “When I first started, I wasn't sociable at all and I preferred to be alone... But in theatre you have to stand on stage and express yourself, so I've learned how to talk about myself now.”



2025

Over the six years since, Hamza has played many roles: a thief rapping his own lyrics in a play about the sun, a father hiding his cancer from his children, and a neighbour bursting onstage in a bathrobe, to the audience's delight. Now in his late teens, Hamza has gone from participant to facilitator. Some children doubted him at first, thinking he was too young to lead them, but he has won them over and facilitated his first full play in summer 2025.

**“In Russeifa, there is little support for people interested in theatre, but Seenaryo broke down that barrier for us and offered us a creative space. We now have somewhere where we can release everything that is inside of us.”**



**“Scenechangers has not only developed my professional skills, but also improved my mental health. I feel like I am planting seeds of hope and joy in the community.”**

ZAINAB, LEBANON

# We bring play to classrooms

Seenaryo trains teachers to use the tools of theatre and play to help children **engage with learning in under-resourced settings**. Seenaryo has developed a range of high level resources, including the Seenaryo Playkit, I Learn From Home, and Stories with Sally & Samer – all of which **bring learning to life** through music, story and play.

**756** TEACHERS  
in 70 schools across Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine

**15,246** CHILDREN  
reached with play-based & social-emotional learning



**17%**

**increase** in teachers who **always encourage resilience building**

(From 32% pre-training to 49% post)

245 teachers surveyed



**16%**

**increase** in teachers who find it easy to **manage difficult behaviour**

(From 59% pre-training to 75% post)

245 teachers surveyed



**99%**

of teachers use different strategies to help children **regulate their emotions**

(Compared to 93% pre-training)

245 teachers surveyed



A Playkit training in Saida, Lebanon | Photograph: Abbas Hamze

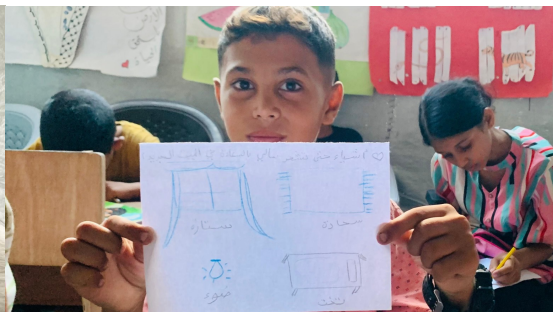
# Social & emotional learning

## WITH SALLY & SAMER IN GAZA

In August, we launched our first project in Gaza, training teachers to incorporate social and emotional learning in temporary learning centres in Gaza City, Khan Younis, Deir al Balah, Al Bureij, and Al Nuseirat. These centres have become the primary spaces for education since over 97% of schools have been either damaged or destroyed by Israeli strikes (UNICEF).

In close consultation with local teachers, we designed 10 workshops for children aged 4 to 8. The workshops are based around two characters called Sally and Samer. Each one includes an interactive story exploring a social-emotional learning theme, such as grief, paired with play-based activities and guided discussions on the same topic.

Due to the destruction of Gaza, the project has been complicated to implement. Before the most recent ceasefire agreement in October 2025, teachers and children would regularly be forced to relocate, meaning that numbers attending trainings and sessions fluctuated. Internet connection has also posed a challenge, when remotely training trainers over Zoom. Despite this, a teacher told us that “the children briefly forget the atmosphere of war” and another added, “the children await the weekly activities and ask about them constantly.”



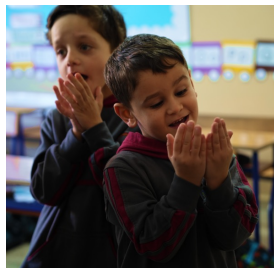
**“Through the stories, they learnt how to shift sadness like the character Sally does”** ENAS, TEACHER

**“They connected the stories to their real experiences of displacement, relocation and moving homes”** FATMA, TEACHER

**“Their mindset changed a lot, Seenaryo’s project broke the barrier between children and learning”** NOURA, TEACHER

# Public engagement & advocacy

In 2025, Seenaryo's work reached audiences beyond our regular programmes through awards, research, conferences, workshops and media coverage – helping increase systemic support for theatre and play, as well as expanding global understanding of our region.



## AWARDS

The Seenaryo Playkit won **Digital Innovation of the Year – learning award** at the 2025 PIONEER awards, recognised for its standout innovation and achievement in digital learning. The Playkit was also shortlisted at the **Montessori Global Awards**.

## PUBLICATIONS

**UCL's Institute of Education** have a forthcoming paper examining the impact of the Seenaryo Playkit in Lebanon and Jordan. Alongside this, Seenaryo commissioned an external tracer study exploring the **long-term impact of our work** over the past decade. The studies will be published in 2026.

## CONFERENCES

Director of Arts, Lama Amine, was invited back to Moleskine's **Creativity Revival** as an ambassador. Our Programmes Manager in Jordan, Megan McGeough, spoke at NOVACT's conference, **Building Social Cohesion in a Changing World**, in Tunis.

## WORKSHOPS

UCL's Institute of Education invited Seenaryo to deliver a workshop-style lecture as part of the **Education & International Development MA: Education in Muslim Communities** module. Seenaryo also delivered a **workshop at Queen's University Belfast** after a screening of our film *TILKA*.

## PRESS

**BBC Arabic's Art for Life** featured segments on two Seenaryo productions: *Does It Matter? It Matters* in Beirut and *Ibn Battuta Travels* at **Shubbak Festival** in London.

**“The children felt for the first time that someone was listening to them, and that decisions were in their hands – they chose the scenes, the title of the play, everything. They came out of their shells.”**

FACILITATOR, PALESTINE



A Showbuild performance in Birzeit, Palestine | Photograph: Baha Zaben

# 2025

## Institutional Funders

The Abdalla Foundation, Amna, The Arthur & Holly Magill Foundation, The Asfari Foundation, Caritas Austria, Cedar Gate Fund, Choose Love, Cities for Children, The Dalia and Ramzi Rishani Charitable Trust, Drosos Foundation, Educational Opportunity Foundation, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, The Esoofally Sulemanji Trust, The Galashan Trust, Kindernothilfe, The Linbury Trust, The MSN Fund, Nafda, Nommontu Foundation, Porticus, Rebecca Dykes Foundation, René Moawad Foundation (in consortium with Agence Française de Développement; International Rescue Committee; Urgent Action Fund Africa), Ruby & Minoo N. Master Charity Foundation, Rusy and Purviz Shroff Charitable Foundation, Save the Children, The Schroder Foundation, Siren Associates, sTF5 CARE, teamArchie, Theirworld, United Nations Democracy Fund, Vital Voices, Women's Peace & Humanitarian Fund



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Women Without Borders, Women's Programs Association, Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)

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