



Call for Partners Baytna Lebanon: Healing Through Play

Introduction

Lebanon is a small, yet historically rich and diverse country, with a long history of hosting refugees fleeing conflicts in the region. From Palestinians forcibly displaced during Arab-Israeli war (Nakba) to an estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees fleeing escalating conflict in their country, today, Lebanon hosts the largest number of refugees per capita in the world. More recently, Lebanon has experienced further displacement compounded by the latest escalation in conflict which displaced over one million people internally and caused widespread infrastructure damage.

Despite the latest ceasefire in Lebanon, the situation remains tense with many communities still facing attacks and seeking refuge in overcrowded shelters. Even those who have managed to return to their towns and villages continue to deal with the stress of having lost their homes, belongings and livelihoods and being forced to rebuild their lives, often not for the first time. While recent political developments in Syria have brought hope for Syrian refugees to return home, for many the situation remains uncertain. While the pressure to go back mounts, people remain fearful of what awaits.

This latest crisis comes amidst a complex and protracted humanitarian context in Lebanon, after multiple years of economic and political turmoil. It is estimated that more than half the Lebanese population is living below the poverty line, and it is reported 9 out of 10 Syrian refugees require humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs (UNHCR 2024). Communities in Lebanon, including refugees, are having to make difficult choices for survival including skipping meals, not seeking urgent medical care, and sending children to work instead of school (UNHCR 2024). Economic pressures combine with the toll of living through conflict and experiencing displacement also impact the ability of caregivers to provide the nurturing care that children need. Without the opportunities to play, learn and heal, children have little respite from the psychological impact of violence and forced displacement. If this is not addressed, the trauma these children may experience can be carried into adulthood with far-reaching, life-long consequences.

Amna is currently collaborating with locally led community organisations in Lebanon to offer mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) to refugees, displaced individuals, and vulnerable communities. Our local partners are deeply embedded within the community, providing trauma-informed and identity-sensitive collective healing spaces. However, we recognize that the additional need for MHPSS services, especially for young children and families, is widespread and increasingly urgent.

Amna's approach

Amna which means 'safe' in Arabic, works to improve access to safe, empowering, quality, community-led psychosocial healing spaces for people who have experienced displacement and conflict. To achieve this, we are building a global network of therapeutically trained local organisations that are working with refugees and displaced communities. We do this by strengthening the capacity of local community organisations through training, partnerships and funding to deliver programmes that combine evidence-based practices with cultural traditions and practices including including rhythm, movement, and storytelling for healing. Central to Amna's ethos is promoting solidarity, joy, and belonging as therapeutic tools.

To enhance access to MHPSS services for children and families in Lebanon, Amna is launching the Baytna Lebanon Community Partnership programme. This initiative brings together 10 local organisations dedicated to community-led, trauma-informed early childhood care.

The programme will provide mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) training and development to enable these organisations in implementing Amna's Baytna programme, a trauma- and identity-informed, play-based intervention designed to help children, and their caregivers address the immediate and long-term effects of trauma and toxic stress caused by conflict and displacement.

Amna recognizes the expertise of local organisations in their unique contexts. Rather than prescribing a rigid model, we equip partners with its methodologies and support them in adapting the trauma informed approach to best fit their needs and circumstances.

Baytna Programme

Amna developed its approach through direct service delivery and close collaboration with refugee communities to create and implement a high-quality early childhood program. After several years of direct delivery, Amna launched the Baytna Hubs program in 2019, a three-year capacity-building and funding initiative designed to help local organisations adapt and implement Baytna across Greece.

Amna's flagship programme Baytna, meaning "our home" in Arabic, is a trauma and identity informed healing play-based intervention that helps children, and their caregivers reduce the immediate and long-term physical and psychological impact of trauma and toxic stress that can result from conflict and displacement. Baytna fills in critical gaps in humanitarian contexts by providing childcare, safe play-based spaces, mental health and psychosocial support and a caring supportive community for caregivers.

With play at its heart, Baytna has been designed for refugee children aged 0-8 years and their caregivers, as this is a critical period for social, emotional and cognitive development. It adopts a strength-based view focusing and building on the abilities, skills and assets of the children and families who participate in Baytna sessions. The Baytna model is flexible meaning a Baytna space can be created in any environment such as a children's centre, kindergarten or a refugee camp. A typical day at Baytna is structured around play with specific goals to help the healing and social and emotional development for children and caregivers to foster a sense of safety, joy, and agency.

Baytna supports young children and their caregivers to manage their day-to-day challenges and develop psycho-social skills necessary for everyday lives. At Baytna, children feel safer and play and learn, and families strengthen relationships in a respectful, supportive and joyful environment and are

supported to face their situations. Engaging parents and caregivers is a key part of the intervention as their capacity to provide care and protection is crucial to building resilience in their children. Each element of Baytna is trauma and identity informed and designed to support children and their families heal from profound grief, loss and hardship they experience by nurturing joy and belonging.

Baytna is therapeutically informed, participatory and child centred. It has been cited as best practice by UNESCO, Moving Minds Alliance and the Nurturing Care Framework. It has been evaluated by University of Virginia's Humanitarian Collaborative (2024) which found that the programme had a significant positive impact on children, caregivers, the facilitators and organisations who participated in the Baytna programme.

Call for Partners in Lebanon

Amna is committed to supporting frontline workers in community-based (CBOs), refugee-led (RLOs), and locally-led organisations to deliver non-clinical mental health support to young children (0–8) affected by conflict and displacement.

Over the next 2.5 years, Amna aims to partner with 10 organisations in Lebanon working with children and their caregivers from refugee, displaced, and vulnerable communities. Through this partnership, we will provide training, support, and funding to help partners create or enhance healing spaces using the Baytna approach. Partner organisations will join a community of practice, committed to continuous learning, peer support, and knowledge exchange, and will have the opportunity to become members of Amna's Global Healing Network, connecting them with like-minded organisations dedicated to community led ECD and MHPSS care worldwide.

We are seeking a diverse set of partners, particularly those led by individuals with lived experience of displacement or whose teams include members of the communities they serve.

Through scaling this initiative in Lebanon, we aim to further showcase the transformative impact of refugee-centred, trauma-informed programming. The programme highlights the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of investing in local communities to build a local therapeutic workforce equipped to address early childhood development and education in challenging contexts.

What we offer

Amna's Lebanon Baytna Programme offers a learning and development journey that includes:

- Funding of up to £33,000 over 24 months to support programme design and implementation
- Online and in-person training including travel grants for up to 3 training participants to attend in-person training in Lebanon
- Training in providing safe, non-clinical, mental health and psychosocial care to children and caregivers
- Training in identity informed, culturally sensitive trauma-informed practices that blend the latest research and evidence with cultural wisdoms
- Tools for supporting communities experiencing the impact of elevated stress, discrimination, grief, loss, fear, uncertainty and systemic inequalities
- Building the capacity of facilitators to use culturally informed safe practices such as arts, movement, music and rhythm, storytelling, mindfulness and other creative tools to support healing and wellbeing

- Guidance and practices for setting up safe, early childhood development and education services, which centre predictability, safety and creativity and include circle time, free play, structured and unstructured collective healing activities, welcome and closing rituals
- Developing a values-based approach that incorporates Amna's values of respect, curiosity, understanding and connection, along with the partner organisation's own values
- Developing soft skills such as listening, therapeutic communication and perspective taking
- Train the Trainer module for master trainers, offering the tools, materials and guidance needed to offer Amna's training to train other practitioners
- Monthly peer support and reflective practice to integrate trauma and identity-informed mental health and psychosocial skills
- Quarterly organisational support sessions for facilitators and managers
- Access to a community of practice of other organisations working in this context
- After 18 months, opportunity to join Amna's Global Healing Network, a network of Amna's global community partners, researchers and funders committed to quality, empowering mental health and psychosocial hearing care

Eligibility

To be eligible, organisations must meet the following criteria:

- The organisation must be a registered NGO or an established legal entity
- Based in Lebanon and working as a local community organisation
- Work with children aged 0–8 in early years and engage with, or be willing to engage with, their caregivers
- Serve vulnerable communities, including refugees, displaced, stateless, and other marginalized groups in Lebanon
- Have prior experience working with these communities
- Ensure facilitators are appropriately managed, compensated, and supervised by a management team
- Commit to a minimum 2.5-year partnership and learning journey with Amna
- Commit to having three facilitators participate in Amna's trauma and identity-informed training and learning journey, including online and in-person training sessions, as well as monthly peer support and reflective sessions
- Participate in quarterly organisational support calls
- Engage in a community of practice with other partner organisations in Lebanon
- Have policies and processes in place to ensure the safety of staff and the communities served
- Maintain monitoring and evaluation processes to assess and enhance program impact.

Application process

If you are interested in partnering with Amna, please complete an Expression of Interest (EOI).

[Link to Expression of Interest English](#)

[Link to Expression of Interest Arabic](#)

Deadline for submission is 21 February 2025.

Shortlisted organisations will be invited to an assessment meeting where they will have the opportunity to discuss their application in more detail. Those who progress further will be requested to submit a Project Plan and Budget and go through Amna's due diligence.

For any further questions, please contact [**partnerships@amna.org**](mailto:partnerships@amna.org)