

Culture in the Civic Space in the MENA Region

A Learning Journey for Field Supporters

الثقافة في الفضاء المدني
في منطقة الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا
رحلة تعلم لداعمي بيئة مجال العمل

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

This FAQ addresses questions related to the program “Culture in the Civic Space in the MENA Region”. In case you didn’t find the answer you were looking for, please do not hesitate to contact us at isma.rauf@iac-berlin.org.

[Please use this link to apply for the program](#). The call is open until **July 7, 2024**.

(See here for the [Arabic](#) version.)

Who is behind the initiative?

The program is run by [iac Berlin](#), a non-profit organization based in Germany. The program is funded by the [Ford Foundation](#). As a Do & Think Tank for impact networks, iac Berlin works with foundations, academia, public institutions, and locally rooted non-profit organizations to build networks and alliances with social impact and to initiate new forms of collaboration and engagement. Together with its partners, it co-creates innovative ways to empower people and their ideas to make their impact more effective and sustainable. iac Berlin was founded in 2017 by the [Robert Bosch Stiftung](#) and contributes to a growing community of network builders and share our knowledge in an open-source manner.

The geographic scope of our work is global, although we have more track records in Europe, North America, and Africa. Since its inception, the iac Berlin has been supporting civil society organizations in the MENA region with small activity and travel grants, mainly through the Bosch Alumni Network. Staff members at iac Berlin have a track record of working with programs and organizations in the region.

The iac Berlin runs this program from 2024 to 2026 also with the aim to establish a caring role for field supporters which can be handed over to one or more organizations from the region in its final phase.

Program Details

What do we consider to be within the scope of field support work?

A field supporter within the realm of art & culture in civic spaces refers to organizations that play a vital role in ensuring a healthy and resilient ecosystem of practice. They may play multiple roles such as serving as facilitators, advocates, and resource mobilizers, while also acting as active listeners or orchestrators. By engaging with diverse voices and observing community dynamics, they provide

insights to help the field and its organizations navigate challenges. Field supporters can propel movements by catalyzing initiatives, leveraging local or regional resources, or fulfilling practical functions such as mediating continuity, producing content, or preserving memory. Thereby, they amplify the legacies of civic space expressions. In addition, some supporters may advocate for a more equitable distribution of resources or influence laws and policies to create a healthier ecosystem. Others may shed light on lesser-known content or knowledge within the civic space, making it accessible to a broader audience through cultural practices to foster new perspectives or understandings.

What do we mean by a learning journey?

To us, the term signifies that the program focuses on learning as well as professional and personal growth, building relationships with peers, and matters related to organizational development. Furthermore, the term “journey” reflects our understanding of how this learning will unfold: there is a rough plan at the start, but we will adapt and evolve as we go, depending on the needs that emerge.

The program includes gatherings, role-experimentation activities, and direct coaching support, all of which serve both individual and collective learning (by doing). We acknowledge that some questions will be shared by the group, while others will be specific to each organization. There will be space for both.

Why is the program focused on the 5 countries mentioned in the call?

As this is a pilot program, we thought of contexts where the arts and culture field has had some time and space to develop and diversify. At the same time, we wanted to take into account the variety of conditions and circumstances that do exist in the region. Recognizing the interconnectedness of the region, we plan to curate the learning journey to include experts and practitioners from other geographies by inviting them to participate in gatherings or contribute to online conversations.

How much time am I expected to commit?

Participants in the program should plan for three to four in-person gatherings over the 18-month duration of the learning journey. The first gathering is scheduled for September 30 to October 2, 2024. The others will follow around May and Autumn 2025, concluding with a gathering in Spring 2026. Each in-person session will typically last two to three days.

We understand that this time commitment may not be easy. However, we believe in the importance of continued conversations in person and the richness of experience and knowledge in the group. We will have an exchange with all participating team members to ensure that the mode of the meetings is constructive. For example, there may be a scenario where we split a larger meeting into smaller ones.

Anything related to mentoring and coaching will be carried out in agreement with the participating organization. There is no fixed plan. At the beginning of the program, we will discuss what could work in terms of capacity and ambition for everyone involved and then find out what needs to be adjusted as the process progresses.

We estimate that participation in this program will amount to an average time investment of two hours per week if one person from a participating organization is the main person involved in the program. This is in addition to the time needed for the in-person gatherings and for working on self-defined goals within the organization. Combining the time required for the gatherings and the work in the organization, this equals 30-35 working days over the 18 months.

Are there any costs associated with participation?

Participants do not have to cover any costs associated with attending program activities. The iac Berlin will cover accommodation and travel expenses for workshops or gatherings as well.

Can more than one representative from our organization participate?

While the program invites only one team member to attend in-person gatherings, there is flexibility for team members to alternate attendance. However, it is important to maintain some consistency in participation as we also see trust building as an essential part of the program. Participation in online meetings is flexible.

What language(s) will be mainly used during the program?

The program will be conducted in a mix of English and Arabic. Participants must be able to speak and understand both languages.

What is the sustainability of the program?

By facilitating this process, we are also prototyping a role dedicated to caring for field supporters. While we will test it ourselves during the pilot, our intention is to transition this role and responsibility to one or more organizations from the field. We will involve funding organizations during the program to discuss funding for such a role after the pilot program is completed.

Application Process

Which legal organization types can apply?

We accept applications from officially recognized non-profit organizations, such as associations or non-profit businesses, as well as from for-profit organizations with a non-profit purpose linked to the thematic context of the program.

In which languages can the application form and supporting documents be submitted?

The application form may be completed in either English or Arabic. Supporting documents can be submitted in Arabic, English, or French.

What are the acceptable formats for submitting supporting documents?

PDF, JPEG, JPG, PNG, DOC, DOCX

When and how can I participate in the information sessions?

Online Q&A sessions will be held in June. You can register [here](#) for June 12 at 10:30 CEST in English, or June 27 at 11:00 CEST in Arabic. A Zoom link will be sent to you 24 hours prior to the session.

What is the selection process, and when can I expect to hear back about my application?

After the application deadline, your application will be reviewed by a jury consisting of 4-6 members. The jury will be a mix of experts from the region and the program team. The duration of the review process depends on the total number of applications received but we aim to notify all applicants of their status by the end of July.

About the grants**How can the grants be used?**

The role-experimentation grants are intended to support approaches and activities that will help your organization to further strengthen its role as a field supporter and to test new or adapt existing field supporter roles. This can take several forms. Based on the grant agreement that we create at the beginning of the program, we trust in your decision-making on how to use the grants along the way. If your process leads you away from your initial idea of how to use the grant, a repurposing is possible in an uncomplicated way.

What are the reporting requirements?

In general, our relationships with grantees are based on trust rather than control. At the same time, we always comply with the requirements of German non-profit law. This requires us to request a full accounting of all expenses within 2 months of the end of the grant period, along with scans of receipts for the financial report. The grants may include an overhead amount for which we do not require receipts. Non-financial written reporting will be light as we also consider our conversations at the gatherings to be a form of reporting.

What does the coaching & mentoring entail?

There is no fixed curriculum or required minimum hours of coaching or mentoring support. We want to find out what you think is feasible and what your support needs are. Based on this conversation, we will agree on a plan that we will be happy to adjust if circumstances change.

When will the grants be issued?

We will collect the necessary information for the grant contract shortly after we send you a positive response to your application. We are aware of differing conditions organizations operate in and we anticipate that the grantmaking process may take longer due to varying requirements. In each case, we will be as supportive as we can to move things forward. The grants are planned to be paid out in two instalments. The first of half of the 20,000 USD will be transferred asap after the paperwork is completed, and the second transfer is planned for early Summer 2025. We can move the payout to a bit earlier or later in the year upon request.