Impact measurement

make sense

Lebanon

July 2021

Our first impact measurement evaluation in Lebanon, 5 years after.

makesense is an organisation created 10 years ago in Paris, with offices in Mexico, Peru, Philippines, Ivory Coast, Senegal, and Lebanon. We create tools and programs for collective mobilization to enable everyone to take action and build an inclusive and sustainable society.

makesense Lebanon started 5 years ago in Beirut. Our office today is composed of 6 employees. Through all our projects in Lebanon, we have been focusing on 2 pillars: the citizens and the social entrepreneurs. Our theory of change is as follow:

1 **makesense** strives to "build a society"

2 In which **each women and men** is invited to develop his commitment further

Mobilising other people
Supporting change makers
Identifying solutions for a change
Feeling involved
Building awareness

3 By building their capacities in a collective frame

4 In order to serve an **inclusive, fair & sustainable society**

In numbers, what did we do in the last 5 years in Lebanon?

We supported
150
entrepreneurs, either by collective intelligence workshops, connections to other actors, citizens volunteering, or specific training.

We introduced
+5 000
citizens to social entrepreneurship and innovative solutions to local problems

We have incubated
20
entrepreneurs and social innovators in our programs

We sparked
42
collaborations between social enterprises in Lebanon

Why do we want to evaluate our impact ?

The search for impact has been both our vocation and driving force as well as one of our major challenges. After almost 5 years in Lebanon, we wondered: have we managed to put society into action, to equip citizens to act and mobilize people around them for a more inclusive and sustainable society?

Mid 2020, we started our impact measurement process, aiming to:

- **assess** the value added of our activities - do we make sense?

- **find ways** to represent this value added: how to make it more tangible?

- **understand** what role we should play in the years to come in Lebanon

More than *how* we can improve, we want to understand *where* we should position ourselves in the future. What is the role of an organization like makesense in the current lebanese context?

Methodology used

The evaluation methodology was designed by an external evaluator and based on a participatory approach that ensures the ownership, empowerment, and usability of the evaluation results as a learning means.

In addition, our makesense team (4 people at the time) was also included in the evaluation, to ensure the organisation motto of *"practice what you preach"*.

The data was gathered by our external evaluator through a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques such as:

- 20 semi-structured interviews with citizens and entrepreneurs.

- 228 contributions to an online survey

- 3 pre and post evaluation of 300 participants to 3 different programs (Kater el Kheir, Ollay, Public Online Workshops)

- 4 focus group activities for:
  - 10 citizens
  - 12 social entrepreneurs
 - 4 makesense Lebanon full-time team members

Results!

Do we make sense?

First, we wanted to find out if the makesense activities in lebanon are relevant. Do we meet people's interests? Do we match their needs? Are our values relevant to the local context?

Were the objectives of makesense' intervention relevant to your needs?
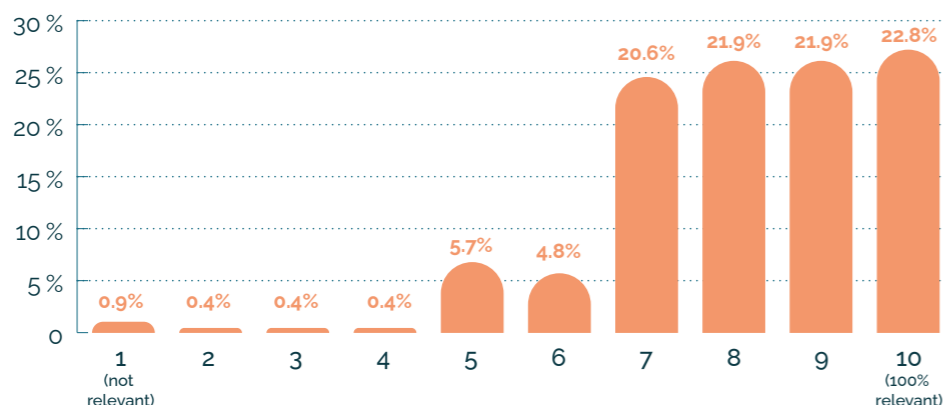1= not relevant at all, 10= 100% relevant

228 out of 228 people answered this question
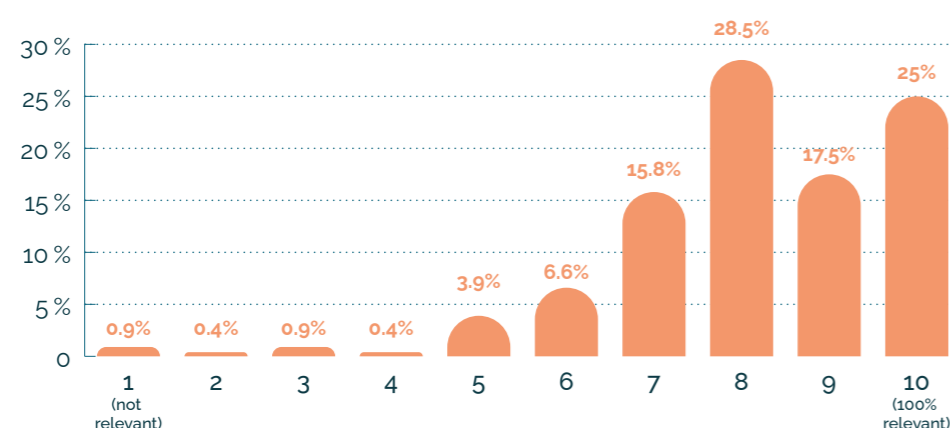
❯ **71% gave 8/10 and above** when asked if our activities are relevant to their needs

Were the intervention logic, activities and operations relevant to the Lebanese context?
1= not relevant at all, 10= 100% relevant

228 out of 228 people answered this question

❯ **66,6% gave 8/10 and above to the question "are makesense activities relevant to the lebanese context".** If only 5,7% gave a rate of 5 and below, we are curious to see how this figure will evolve in the coming years, where the context is constantly changing.

Do our values make sense in Lebanon, do people share them and find them relevant to the context?

What values, vision and aspirations do you share with makesense?
228 out of 228 people answered this question

❯ **«makesense is a lifestyle, it is all about values»**

Participants share our values and consider them as relevant to their context.

The most shared value is "learn, share and learn again." Our empowering tools and methodologies are working: *«The possibility for a volunteer to learn and then lead events and share their learning is very empowering and motivating. I felt the potential to move from a volunteer to a host.»*

Most interviewees reported that attending makesense's events helped them to be open not only to learning but to other citizens *"It helped me communicate and be open to people outside my circle»; «I made friends from a different background who shared the same values and who believed in a change in Lebanon.»*

How is our online switch perceived?

Following the pandemic, we had to switch most of our activities online. We wondered if that change affected our impact and relevance.

What was the most beneficial activities or events for you?

13% Mentoring
6% Bootcamp
17% MOOC
37% Online workshops
27% Sense fiction and Hold Up
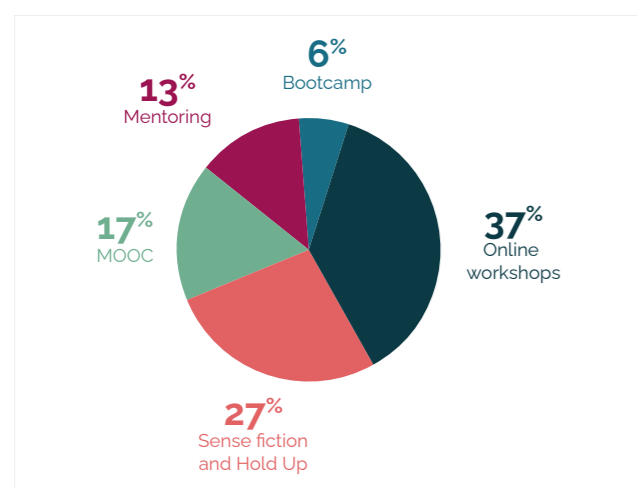
How likely are you to recommend the webinars to someone?
194 out of 197 people answered this question

0.5% (1), 1% (2), 13.6% (3), 16.2% (4), 68.6% (5)
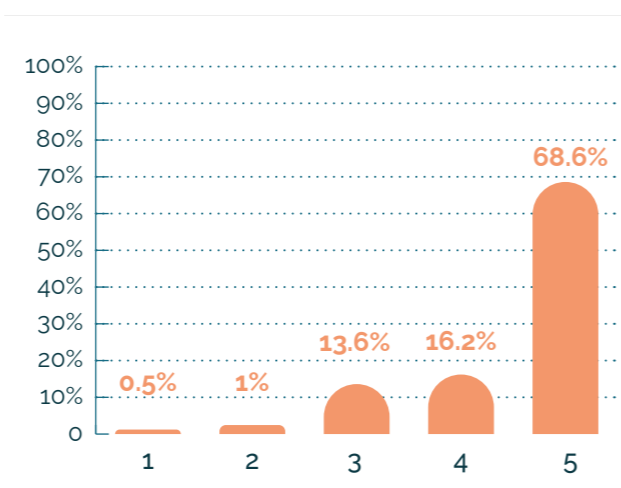
> **52.6%** of makesense community members **consider the online workshops as the most beneficial activity,** and **85% of the participants** to our online webinars **would recommend the webinars to their friends.**

« The online sessions are nice, and the topics are interesting and fun. The team spreads positive vibes in difficult times. »

Several participants highlighted that the online workshops made our activities accessible to a larger number of people: *« You do not need to move; the online sessions were accessible more than the face-to-face sessions in Beirut ». « Online sessions are accessible for everyone, so it is good to keep it ».*

Online sessions are accessible for everyone, so it is good to keep it

Nour's journey:

Curious about the world of social entrepreneurs, Nour joined some makesense inspiration workshops. To stay productive during the 2020 lockdown, she followed a makesense facilitation training where she developed her online facilitation skills. Empowered by those new tools, she then started to co-facilitate some makesense events and organise her own, to mobilise other youth around various impactful topics like waste, education, and collaboration. So far, Nour facilitated 12 online workshops that mobilised more than 300 participants!

One year later, Nour found a job with an international NGO as facilitator and coordinator on the topics of entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship to spread more awareness and equip citizens with the needed tools to kick start their journey.

Why do people join makesense?

Why did you join makesense?

228 out of 228 people answered this question (with multiple choice)

53.9% To learn new skills

45.2% To make impact and positive change

37.7% To get inspired about meaningful topics

36.4% To collaborate and connect with others

30.3% To be more involved in the community

26.3% To know how to start, dare, act

14.5% To have better opportunities to find jobs

2.2% Other

❯ Most of the people join makesense to learn new skills, make positive change in society and get inspired. These results are aligned with the most shared value "learn, share and learn again" as well as our theory of change "developing citizen's capacities thanks to a collective framework ".

After the possibility of learning, the second reason that get people to join the community is for them to make a positive change. By connecting people, matching needs with resources, makesense is giving them clear opportunities to take action and make an impact.

Sarah's journey:

Sarah joined the program "From Idea to Action" by makesense and the Lebanese University. Every Tuesday, she got the opportunity to connect with other participants willing to make a change and learn collective intelligence & citizen mobilisation methodologies. During those workshops, she started to see a path for her to take action and tackle the food waste issue.

After completing the program, Sarah, who holds a degree in Food Safety, was introduced to Philippe, a social entrepreneur from the makesense community working on the topic of Food Waste. Sara got very inspired by Philippe's project, and started to volunteer with him. Together they organized 6 workshops about food waste involving more than 80 citizens.

Patrick's journey:

Patrick is an expert in financial education and also a business coach. To grow his professional network, he joined a makesense workshop about social entrepreneurship in Lebanon, where he got excited by the ambiance, smart, creative and non-political. He then volunteered in several collective intelligence workshops to support 3 enterprises including Caesar Cider. Two years later, Patrick became a mentor for 4 social entrepreneurs of the makesense community. Recently, Patrick benefited from a collective intelligence workshop to support the feasibility study of one of his new business projects. The results were great, and Patrick got very reinvigorated to be able to give, and receive, in the makesense community.

What did people gain from joining makesense?

Why did you gain on both personal and professional levels?

228 out of 228 people answered this question (with multiple choice)

52.6% I gained technical knowledge and skills

43.9% It motivated me to initiate an action

30.7% It helped me identify my potentail

33.3% I developed my professional network

27.2% I gained new friends

26.3% I improved my personal habits

23.2% It increased my sense of belonging to my community

2.6% Other

If I cannot find a solution to a problem, someone can find it for me or can help me find it.

Our **collective intelligence workshops** aiming at supporting **existing social enterprises** or initiatives shape people thinking:

«If I cannot find a solution to a problem, someone can find it for me or can help me find it.»

«The first Holdup was a triggering moment for me. It was nice to see, experience, and witness how makesense fosters collective intelligence. It was a moment of change.»

«It's relieving to see that we can work on helping others and join our forces towards this goal.»

The "learning by doing" approach - hence the ability to facilitate events in collaboration with makesense. It helps people identify their potential, and set new learning objectives. Several participants highlighted that facilitating events helped them have better self-esteem, and that this was reflected in their social, academic, and professional lives.

"I felt that my public speaking skills improved after the webinars I provided"

"I learned how to get out of the negative mindset and how to start setting my priorities and taking actions"

Our horizontal learning approach is catalyzing change in the participants and their environment. We are empowering communities to trust their collective intelligence and to regain trust and ownership of their achievement, an approach that most participants to this study welcomed.

«I learned about the importance of sharing with other citizens ... I am using this technique in my life and even shared it with friends.»

«The openness and the environment that makesense created for me and other participants to brainstorm on ideas for my business was a success factor.»

«[in makesense events] I experienced something I didn't do before, to communicate with new people and share my thoughts.»

Our positioning as a catalyst allows us to quickly adapt to a constantly changing context, as for instance by including mental health and well-being in our content, or by running emergency volunteering programs following the Beirut Blast.

«makesense was supportive with the personal development... they helped me to reduce my stress, get organized and take care of myself».

«I was scared to come see the damage in Beirut but when I came and helped for days i stopped being in denial and started accepting what happened and play a good role»

«With the help of makesense it was a lot easier to help others and be organized. I will definitely be joining the team again soon!»

On the entrepreneurs side, most of the interviewees agreed that in addition to the knowledge and skills they gained, makesense supported them in building a larger network and helped them realize that collaboration is a must for growth. Several mentioned that makesense activities helped them discover the importance of sharing and collaboration rather than competing. This unlearning opportunity changed their mindset and behavior toward others in their community.

Francesco's journey:

Before applying to a competition for social startups at his university, Francesco, a second year business student, decided to dive deeper in the ecosystem. To increase his team's chances to win, he joined multiple workshops with makesense, asking for feedback on his project and advice on pitching. Few months later, strengthened by all this support and collective intelligence, Francesco's team was selected to represent the university.

Almost a year later, and after being trained on using the Sense Fiction methodology, Francesco is now organizing similar workshops to support other new entrepreneurs. He shared best practice with more than 20 university teams. Today, Francesco is using the makesense community and methodologies to connect with other social entrepreneurs and share resources to develop his idea further.

Maryam and Jana's journey:

After the Beirut Blast on August 4th, Jana and Maryam from Tripoli were looking for constructive ways to help initiatives on the ground. They joined the Kater el Kheir program designed by makesense to support Nation Station and its volunteers. Every day, they travelled from Tripoli to the Station in Geitawi, where they were trained to need assessments of citizens affected by the blast. They also participated in the daily lunch kits distribution for 250 families in Geitawi and got to understand the overall activities of the Station.

Ever since, the sisters have been coming daily to the Nation Station to support the Geitawi residents. Their growing and sustained experience as volunteers allowed them to take more responsibility, one of them now working in the psychosocial unit and the other in the healthcare section.

Are we creating change?

Did we create a positive change on people at a personal or professional level?

After participating in makesense activities, was there evidence of change – positive or negative at the level of personal beliefs? and professional?

According to the qualitative interviews conducted by our external evaluator, 65% of the participants observed a positive personal behavioral change following their activities with makesense, and 70% of them observed these positive changes at a professional level.

Personal positive changes are for instance:

"I became aware that I can make a change to my community and impact it."

"I understood the importance of communication with others"

"I learned that I can start small and scale up in life at all levels"

" The importance of including people to contribute to solving an issue"

Professional positive changes are for instance:

"I learned how to present and pitch"

" I have a better understanding of the social enterprise business model"

"I gain the motivation to work on my idea through the baby steps they gave us in the sessions."

"I overcame the fear of public speaking."

"I learned how to gather people"

Did we create unexpected or unintended positive changes?

Were there any unintended changes – positive or negative – in your life or your environment?

80% of participants observe unintended / unexpected positive change in their life or environment after participating in makesense events, from which 40% can relate this change directly to makesense activities (the rest being due to a mix of makesense and external factors too).

Unexpected positive changes can be:

"learned about how to deal with anxiety"

"I felt empower to do things my own way"

"I learned about the importance of sharing"

"I feel a huge difference at the level of my wellbeing and health"

" I am getting positive thoughts from makesense and spread around, like having self-esteem, loving own self, and accepting own self."

"makesense helped with my career to determine what I want to do"
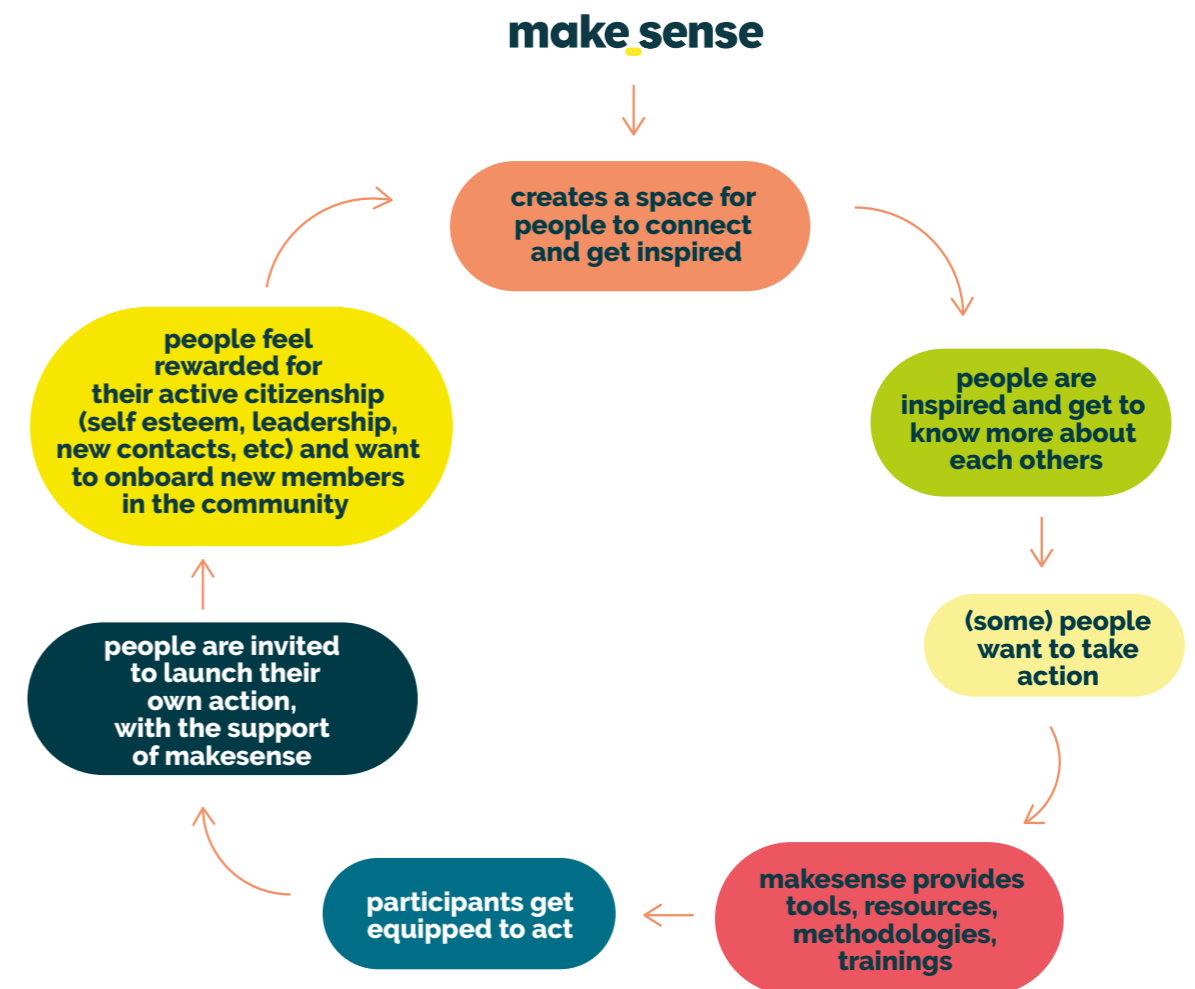
"I start to be more positive and start believing that being negative is not an option anymore."

How are we empowering people?

❯ Since the beginning, we believe in a unique empowering path: we do - we do with you - you do.

This learning-by-doing principle is at the core of most of our activities. We do work on mindset, knowledge and attitude to create a behavioral change.

Concretely, how does that work, and how is it creating change?

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- creates a space for people to connect and get inspired
- people are inspired and get to know more about each others
- (some) people want to take action
- makesense provides tools, resources, methodologies, trainings
- participants get equipped to act
- people are invited to launch their own action, with the support of makesense
- people feel rewarded for their active citizenship (self esteem, leadership, new contacts, etc) and want to onboard new members in the community

Mohammad's journey:

Mohammad heard about makesense through social media and word of mouth. Curious about environmental change, he decided to attend the nearest event, a collective intelligence workshop aiming at supporting an entrepreneur. Energized by this collective experience, he decided to develop his facilitation skills, and enrolled in a training session organised by makesense full-timers. After the training, Mohammad co-organized his own event, with the help of a makesense ambassador, and gathered 15 people to talk about sorting at source. Following the feedback and the self-evaluation, Mohammad wants to co-organize another event before he would eventually feel comfortable enough to facilitate his own event alone - to be continued!

Nation Station's journey:

Nation Station (NS) is a young grass root initiative born after the Beirut Blast. When makesense got in touch to offer some help, NS faced some challenges with volunteer management. How to engage more volunteers? How to make sure the right skills go to the right place? How to make volunteers less volatile? makesense established a specific program, Kater el Kheir, to support to NS, following the principle "we do, we do with you, you do". First, makesense full-times designed a specific weekly volunteer and enrolled new volunteers at the Station (we do). After the program proved to be relevant and beneficial for NS, makesense trained the NS team and volunteers to take over the program, and run the volunteers management activities (we do with you). 3 month later, NS is running the volunteer activities fully by themselves, without staff support from makesense anymore (you do).

Are we creating a community of change makers?

❯ **40% of the participants** said that through makesense, they **increased their ability to accept others in the community** regardless of their different background.
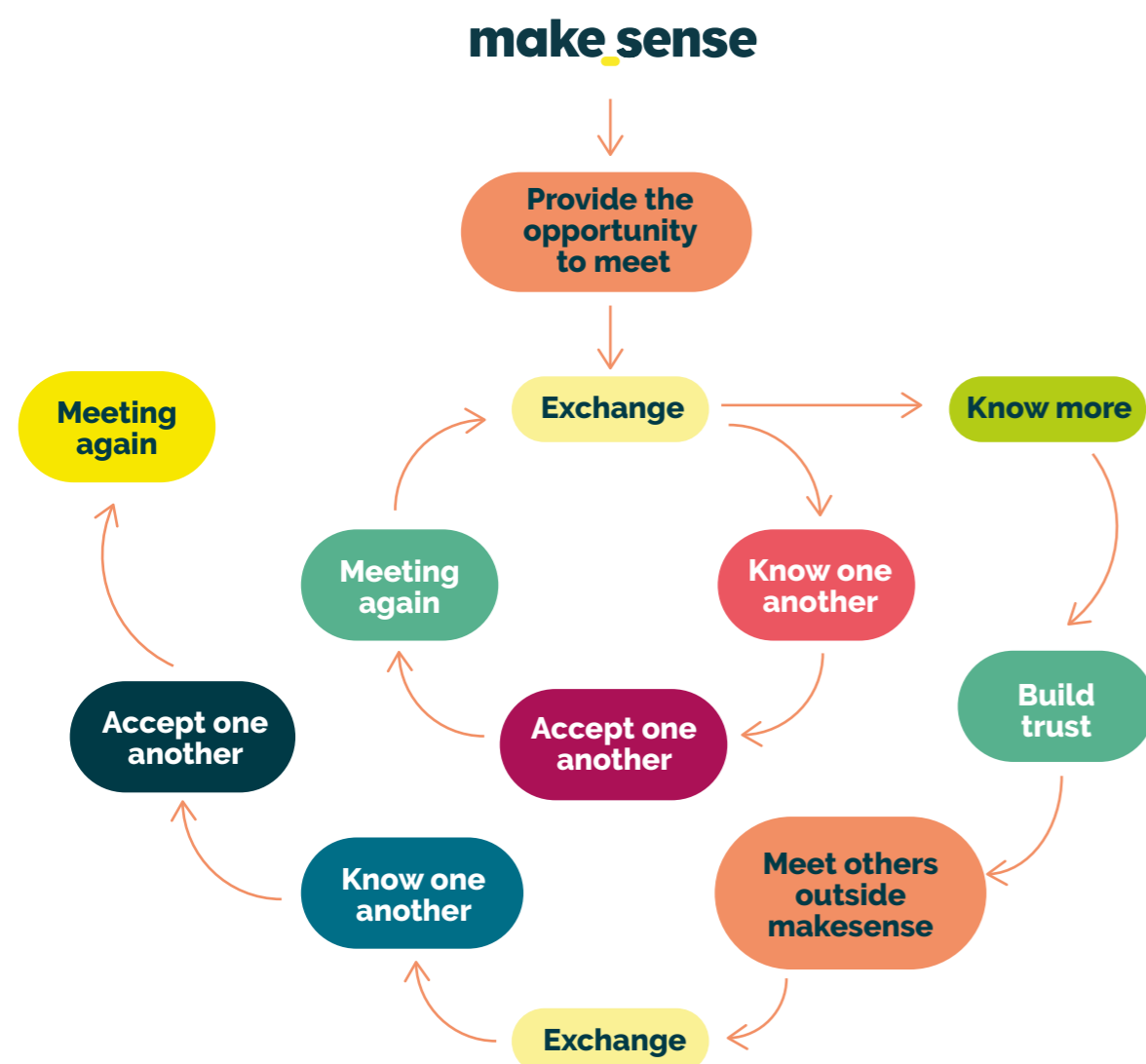
"makesense helped me communicate with people outside my circle"

"They introduced me to other people who have same interested"

"I became more open to others"

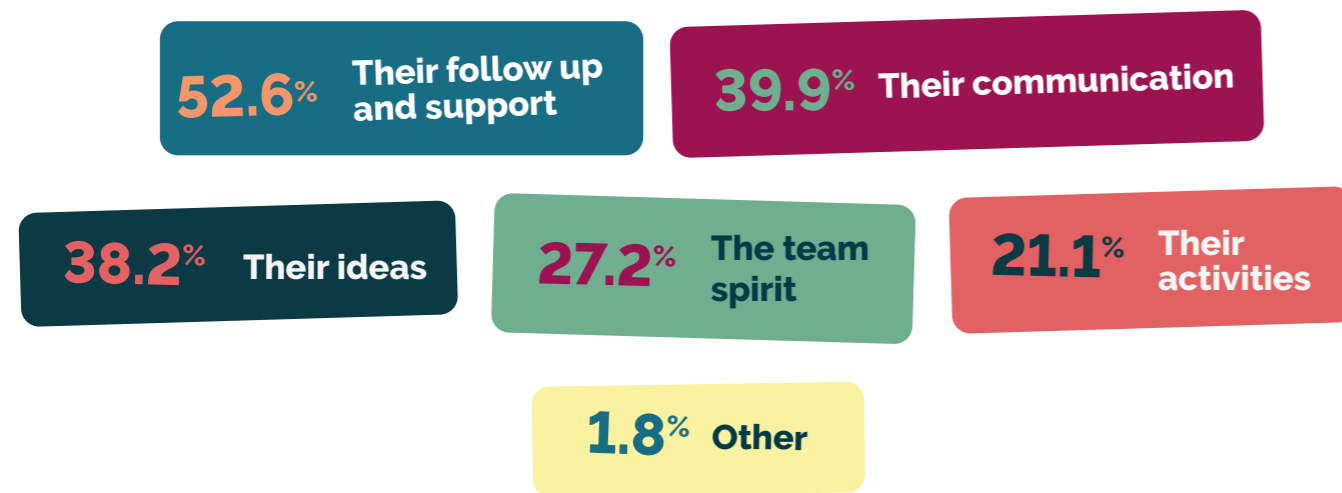*"Through the makesense community, I met people from different background"*

This is happening through meeting, exchanging, knowing, accepting, then trusting one another regardless of their diverse background. This change has an impact on participants' social lives where they mention having meaningful long-term relations with other makesense community members. In this sense, makesense creates a more inclusive society, by bringing together people from various backgrounds, who share the same interests for solving local challenges.

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Provide the opportunity to meet

Meeting again

Exchange

Know more

Meeting again

Know one another

Accept one another

Build trust

Accept one another

Meet others outside makesense

Know one another

Exchange

How are we positioned and perceived in Lebanon?

What is special about makesense?

228 out of 228 people answered this question (with multiple choice)

52.6% Their follow up and support

39.9% Their communication

38.2% Their ideas

27.2% The team spirit

21.1% Their activities

1.8% Other

makesense started by one community member kick-starting the "hotspot" in Lebanon, and grew organically. This **bottom up approach** of shaping the organisation helps us to develop and maintain a unique participative spirit.

"It is diverse and inclusive."

"makesense is very close to people".

"They have a role for everyone regardless of their skills and interest."

"With makesense you feel that you work people not with a system"

"They listen to the community of volunteers and ask for feedback and ideas."

Another point that is highly highlighted by the participants is the makesense team. Many of them mentioned the soft and hard skills of our team members.

"The team is caring and friendly;" "supportive and kind;" "with great communication skills;" "very participatory and flexible in supporting us".

"makesense has brought to us a lot of knowledge. But without the amazing team-spirit that is built in each and every one of the team that we have worked with and the super powerful communication and coordination, none of these workshops would have been that effective."

"Their love for their work, and love to share it with others"

In the team, "enjoy the ride" is indeed our first value. We are happy to know it reflects positively on the quality of work perceived by our community members!

"A story of a community that believes in growth in sustainability and social impact. A small team kickstarter makesense in Lebanon in Beirut... from their perspectives they managed to expand this one module and scale it upto different contexts.

What is the role of an organization like makesense in the current lebanese context?

As a bottom-up organization, we care about the community members' feedback and recommendations. Hence we have asked participants to tell us about their suggestions for makesense improvement, and what we should start doing, or stop doing, or keep doing.

42% think that we should **target more rural areas in Lebanon**

41% said we should **provide advanced technical support for entrepreneur**s (indeed, so far we have been targeting early stage projects, hence focusing most of our support on early-stage needs and not much on advanced ones)

35% said we should **collaborate more** (with youth organizations, NGOs, CSO, incubators, accelerators, etc)

27% said makesense should **provide more opportunities of interaction through online activities**

We heard our community voices, and we are working on it! There were other smaller-scale suggestions, like to improve our social media presence, target younger age groups or work more with private universities, that we will take into consideration as well.

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To conclude

This impact measurement is our first one, and it is just the beginning of a long-term process where we aim to run impact measurement activities on a continuous basis, to make sure we can track our progress and spot the rooms for improvement. Long life learning is one of our mottos, and we love to apply it to ourselves!

We are conscious that it is the first version, a "beta" as we call it, and that there are many ways to improve it. We aim to be more consistent and run measurement activities all along the way. We also aim to be more specific about the metrics we are tracking: this study is mostly based on people's self evaluation (what do I feel I learned with makesense). It would be interesting to include additional data monitoring (how many of the entrepreneurs we supported developed their project, are successful, or stopped their activity?). We have already started to change our internal processes to collect relevant data that will help us answer those questions in the near future. Meanwhile, we wanted to start somewhere. Impact measurement, episode 1 - to be continued!

Any questions?

lebanon@makesense.org

You are part of the makesense community and could not participate (online surveys, interviews, focus groups) in spite of all the times we shared it on social media? *Join the list* so we make sure to include you next time!

Should you want to stay tuned with makesense in lebanon, please join our monthly newsletter here:

With our gratitude to La Fondation des Cèdres

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