

# MIDDLE EAST YOUTH LEADERSHIP JAM

OCT 23-30  
2022  
CYPRUS



# Greetings friends!

It is our honor to invite you to apply to participate in a unique gathering: the Middle East Youth Leadership Jam!

This Jam will connect 25-30 diverse, engaged, and committed leaders from around the region for a week of deep listening, sharing, self-discovery, systemic inquiry, and community building.

We will gather from October 23rd-30th, 2022 in the spectacular mountainsides of Cyprus.



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# *What is the intention of the Jam?*

The Jam is a gathering for three different levels of conversation about change: the personal (self), the interpersonal (relationships), and the systemic (the whole). The Jam is not a conference, seminar or a typical meeting.

**On the personal level**, it is a place to share and reflect on one's life journeys and the work each does in the world. It is a time to replenish, recharge and renew, and to gain specific and practical tools for self-care and personal sustainability.

It is also an opportunity to grow in self-knowledge, to ask meaningful questions, to unlearn our fears and blocks, and to co-create new possibilities together.

On the **interpersonal level**, we come together to share our cultures, our stories and our struggles with each other, to deepen our understanding of each other and of ourselves.

The Jam values diversity and seeks to bring together as diverse a group of people as possible.

During the week, we hope to discover our commonalities and celebrate our differences. Given the various conflicts happening in the region, it is not always easy to hold onto a vision of unity and cooperation that exists beyond the narrative of 'us' vs. 'them'. The Jam seeks to create dialogues that build on what is common among us, in which our differences are engaged, not with antagonism, but with a spirit of shared learning.

We see the Jam as a chance to move from the 'demonization' that is so prevalent today, to the 'humanization' we so desperately need for a healthier future for all. The intention is to build trust and friendship, in a meaningful (not superficial) way. This means challenging stereotypes, being present with each other, speaking truth, working through tough places and being open to giving and receiving support. We feel that the more authentic our relationships are, the stronger the foundations we will have for developing new collaborations and synergies within our region.

On the **systemic level**, through the Jam, we become clearer about our vision and work in the world. We get a chance to link issues that aren't commonly linked, to notice crucial intersection points, and get a clearer picture of the whole. We come together to learn from each other: about what is working, about what mistakes we have made, about where we need help. We have a chance to share tools and ideas to support one another. In turn, we hope this helps us to generate a body of collective wisdom for activism in the region. We also hope it will enable each participant to feel deepened in their capacity to affect meaningful positive change and carry their dreams forward. In a moment that may feel particularly difficult for many of us in this region, creating a space to explore systemic issues - and our relationships to them - feels especially important.



*"I came to the Jam looking for solutions and answers to my questions. I needed to know there is a possibility that things can be better in my life and the world around me. I felt that I was on the verge of losing hope. At the Jam, I instantly felt a bit lighter. I felt connections I hadn't felt so intensely. The Jam reminded me of the importance of being in nature and the need to give myself space and time away from the many distractions in my daily life. I felt heard and seen, and learned to be completely present and actively listening."*

Layla, 31 , UNHCR, Jordan



# Logistics and fees

The expenses of the Jam including week-long of lodging, full board, transportation within Cyprus, and program expenses, reaches \$750 USD per participant.

We ask that you contribute a minimum of \$300 as participation fees.

We receive a large number of applications every year, and we give some preference to those who are able to motivate themselves and their communities to raise funds to support their participation in the Jam.

A limited number of scholarships for participation are available, our hope is that money will not be a barrier for anyone's participation.

Please approach us if you need any support at:  
[themejam@gmail.com](mailto:themejam@gmail.com)

# *What do you mean by 'Middle East'?* *How do you define it?*

The founding team of our Jam struggled a lot with this question. We know that this region has definite impacts on the world, and the rest of the world has definite impacts on it. Yet, as an 'in-between' place, it is hard to define. Even the term "Middle East" itself comes out of a colonial mindset – one we certainly don't want to reinforce at the Jam. As a team, we realized that part of the intention of the gathering was to increase our understanding of the region as a whole: its uniqueness, its diversity, its cultures and traditions, and what it offers the world today.

Therefore, we decided it was best to leave it to you to define what the 'Middle East' is to you. We have considered its geographic breadth, from North Africa to Iran, from Turkey to Pakistan, and we feel it includes a diversity of issues, cultures, and languages. Many people feel connected to it for various reasons, and all of these reasons have a place at the Jam. In the application, we ask you to describe how and why you feel linked to the region and why it feels relevant and meaningful for you to be part of this Jam.





# Who is being invited to the Middle East Youth Leadership Jam?

We seek to bring together as diverse a group of people as possible. This means we are looking for a range in:

- *leadership* (from 'person on the ground' to 'director and founder'); - *years of experience* (from 'just starting out' to 'been at it for a while'); - *methods and venues of social engagement* (entrepreneurs, NGOs, communities, families, neighborhoods, healers, philanthropists, government, etc.);
- *place of origin and base of work* (in terms of country, sub-region, locale, etc.); - *ethnicity*; and *religion*
- *issue- or work-focus* (ex: community media, local economies and globalization, indigenous issues, education, food security, cultural regeneration, cultural exchange, interfaith, health and physical well-being, ecology, spiritual healing and recovering from trauma, arts, sustainable living tools and practices, political participation, socially- and ecologically-conscious building and architecture, upholding and honoring diverse forms of human dignity, etc.)



# Who is being invited to the Middle East Youth Leadership Jam?

Simultaneously, our intention is to find a great mix of people who share a few commonalities.

- They understand, and are trying to act from, the meeting point of internal, interpersonal and systemic change.
- They are innovating and creating new ways to face challenges that are connected to the realities of their situations, in their personal lives and/or communities.
- They start from, celebrate and build on what's positive, good, healthy, etc. in themselves and in their societies (rather than being based in reaction against what's wrong, or what needs to be fixed).

With this foundation, we also seek a gender balance and a (flexible) age range of 20 to 40.



# *Language of the Jam*

Given the diversity of the region, the Jam will be predominantly in English. It is possible for a person who speaks only Arabic to participate fully, since we expect that there will be a large contingent of people who speak both Arabic and English and who can support him/her. If you are a speaker of any of the other regional languages, we ask that you ought to be comfortable in English, although acquiring translation services is a possibility in special circumstances.



# *Who is putting on the Middle East Youth Leadership Jam?*

This event is being convened by a diverse team of people from around the region. We have all participated in and facilitated past Middle East Youth Leadership Jams. A number of us have also founded or facilitated country based Jams in Egypt, Turkey and Morocco. The Jam continues to show us the immense learning that happens when we come together with people very different from ourselves, but who share with us a common vision and dream.

For this event, we draw upon the inspiration and learnings from Jams happening around the world. If you want to learn more about the history of the Jams, or to see where else they are happening in the world, please visit [www.yesworld.org](http://www.yesworld.org).



# You are invited!

Our team would like to welcome you to apply for the Jam. Feel free to share it with other young leaders you know in the region.

And do not hesitate to contact our participant liaisons, Rawan & Monica, at [themejam@gmail.com](mailto:themejam@gmail.com) should you have any questions or concerns. We look forward to hearing from you soon!

With best wishes, hope, faith and love,

Alia, Nour, Rawan, Liel, Monica, Ayse & Elias  
The Middle East Youth Leadership Jam Organizing Team

[APPLY  
HERE](#)

*"The Middle East Jam was an extremely important stepping stone in my journey of self-discovery. Not only did I find common ground with people who most of my life have been the 'other', but I also received support and was touched to the core by people I now call friends. I have formed relationships that seemed logically impossible but are now deeper than any logic. I think that the Middle East is not as complex as I used to think, if people really decide to invest in relationships and community building, as we did this week."*

**- Mai, 29, Cairo Refugee Film Festival, Egypt**