

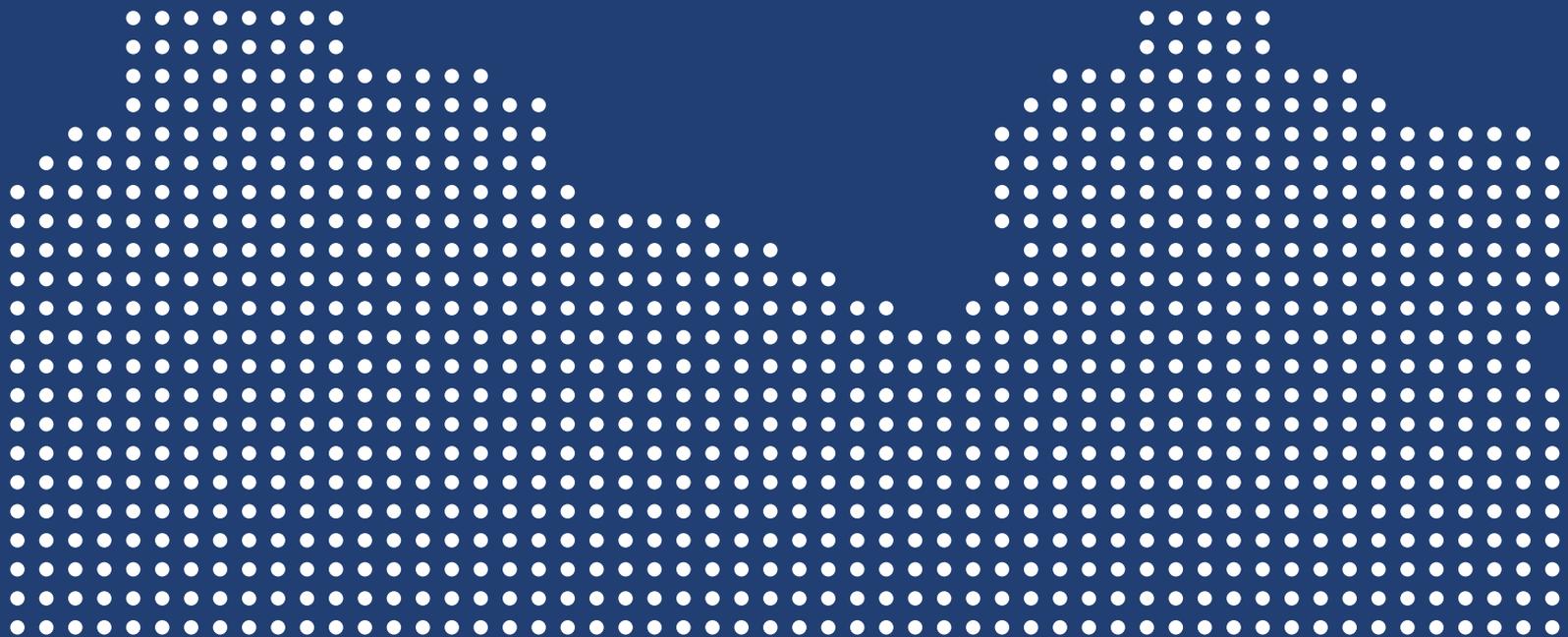


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Libya

Perspectives

A Publication on Youth Participation, Inclusion, and
Pathways to Change by Libyan Youth



December 2025
First Edition

A publication by Libyan German Association (LGA)
a civic initiative by **Libysche Gemeinde in Deutschland e.V.**
within the Project “Libya 2030 – a shared Vision for Shaping
the Future

Supported by **ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen)**
through **zivik Funding Programme**, by the **German Federal
Foreign Office (GFFO)**

Hamburg, Berlin, Germany
Tripoli, Libya



Editorial Introduction

By Isra Mohamed

There are moments in a country's story when young people decide that waiting is no longer an option.

For Libya, that moment is now.

More than a decade after the revolution, our country still finds itself struggling between the weight of the past and the uncertainty of what lies ahead. Yet, beneath that uncertainty, a new energy has quietly been taking root in classrooms, on digital platforms, in community projects, and in the hearts of young Libyans who refuse to accept that the future must look like the past.

Libya 2030 – A Shared Vision for Shaping the Future was born out of that energy. It began as a question: What would Libya look like if everyone had a voice, and that voice truly mattered?

Through the Libya 2030 Future Lab Design-Thinking workshops, we brought together over a hundred young people from across Tripoli, Benghazi, and Sebha, diverse in backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives, but united by a shared belief that **participation is a human right**, not a privilege. They explored civic challenges, developed creative solutions, and built prototypes that reimagine what inclusion and participation could mean in practice.

The essays and artworks collected in this publication, Libya 2030 Perspectives, reflect that spirit of imagination and resilience. They speak of representation and justice, of unity and dialogue, of the rights of women, indigenous communities, and people with disabilities. They explore digital transformation, civic education, and environmental change, not as abstract issues but as lived realities that shape the everyday hopes and frustrations of a generation determined to rebuild trust in their country's future.

This publication is not only for policymakers, experts, or project stakeholders. It is for the international community to see the Libya that rarely makes the headlines: A Libya full of thinkers, creators, and changemakers. It is also for Libyans themselves, especially those in positions of decision-making, to see and hear their youth: the generation that holds ideas, talent, and courage far greater than the limits they have inherited.

This magazine is more than a collection of texts and ideas. It is a declaration that despite the divisions, despite the noise of politics, there is a generation of Libyans thinking, creating, and acting for something better. It is also an invitation to policymakers, to civil society, and to the international community to listen, to engage, and to work together toward a Libya that is inclusive, participatory, and at peace with itself.



Because what would a country look like
where every voice is heard,
where every part of society is involved,
where every group is part of the decision?

*A Libya no longer divided into East and
West, but connected by the shared
belief that everyone belongs.*



CONTENT

I

INTRODUCTION & VISION

Editorial Introduction – Isra Mohamed

An introduction to Libya 2030 Perspectives and its vision: amplifying youth voices and civic imagination for Libya's shared future.

1

Interview – Ralph Tarraf, German Ambassador to Libya

A conversation on Germany's support for dialogue, inclusion, and civic engagement as pillars of Libya's democratic transformation.

9

II

GOVERNANCE, REPRESENTATION & HUMAN RIGHTS

Rethinking Representation and Human Rights in Libya – Asma Dekna

Exploring the connection between representation, rights, and justice in rebuilding a social contract grounded in inclusion.

14

The Price of Fragmentation: Why Libya's Unity Is a Prerequisite for International Strength – Mohammed Qajoum

An analysis of Libya's internal divides and how national unity shapes sovereignty and international credibility.

20

Between Frustration and Hope: Elections in Libya and the Civic Effort to Restore Trust – Mohamed Kndeer

A reflection on Libya's electoral experiences and the civic resilience driving participation amid uncertainty.

25

Women and Libya's New UN Roadmap: Beyond Symbolism, Toward Meaningful Peace – Khadija Elboaishi

A critical look at women's roles in Libya's peace and political processes – from token inclusion to meaningful influence.

31

CONTENT

III

INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND CIVIC TRANSFORMATION

The Libyan South: Wealth, Marginalization, and a Cry for Justice – Ahmed Algheryanie

A field report from the city of Al-Kufra, shedding light on the paradox of Libya's south.

36

Disability Awareness in Libyan Schools: Why It Should Be Part of the Curriculum – Abdulsalam Shlebak

An argument for integrating inclusion and disability rights into Libya's education system.

39

Shaping Libya's Future: The Focus on Civic Education – Haifa Eshawesh

Examining how civic education can foster citizenship, participation, and accountability in the next generation.

41

Digital Citizenship: Between Digital Transformation and Individual Awareness – Sara Oheda

Exploring the link between digital inclusion, personal agency, and democratic participation.

45

Local Governance and the Future of Libya's Economy – Odai Bengered

A deep analysis of how decentralization can unlock Libya's economic potential and bridge regional inequalities.

50

From Climate Challenges to the Birth of a Political Voice for the Next Generation – Yasmin Elahmar

How climate awareness is shaping youth identity and civic engagement in Libya.

54

CONTENT

IV

CULTURAL MEMORY & PRESERVATION

Preserving Libya's Archaeological and Cultural Heritage for Future Generations – Sarah Shennib

An in-depth exploration of Libya's vast archaeological wealth and the urgent need to protect, restore, and document heritage sites amidst ongoing political, environmental, and economic challenges.

60

V

CIVIC INNOVATION & YOUTH PROTOTYPES

Design Thinking: Rethinking Problems, Redefining Possibilities – Insights from the Libya 2030 Future Lab

A look into how Design Thinking empowered young Libyans to turn ideas into action across Tripoli, Benghazi, and Sebha.

66

- SABA: A Green Life with a Drop of Water 68
- The Movement: Developing the Skills of Young Professionals in Libya's Ministries 71
- Bedaya Platform: Countering Hate Speech and Promoting Democracy 74

VI

ARTISTIC PERSPECTIVES

The Institution – Mahmoud Al-fatahli

An artistic interpretation of Libya's civic imagination through visual storytelling.

79

Leave Us the Homeland – Dr. h.c. Iqbal Al Maghribi

A dramatic narrative giving voice to Libya's children – a poetic cry for peace, unity, and the rebuilding of a homeland through knowledge instead of war.

83

Future, in Focus – Sarah Sahboun

A visual narrative capturing youth, identity, and everyday resilience.

86

CONTENT

VI

A Place That Fits Me – Abdelsattar Masoud

A visual metaphor on inclusion and belonging, symbolizing the struggle of youth to find their place in a rigid society that often resists diversity and change.

90

Paths of Renaissance / دروب النهضة – Wafa Abdelsaid

A poetic reflection on unity, resilience, and the rebirth of Libya's national spirit, a tribute to the country's enduring hope and collective strength.

92

VII

FORESIGHT: LIBYA'S FUTURE AND THE NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT

Strategic Foresight: What Libya Owes Its People – Isra Mohamed

A forward-looking reflection on how Libya can rebuild trust between citizens and the state through participation, inclusion, and civic renewal.

95

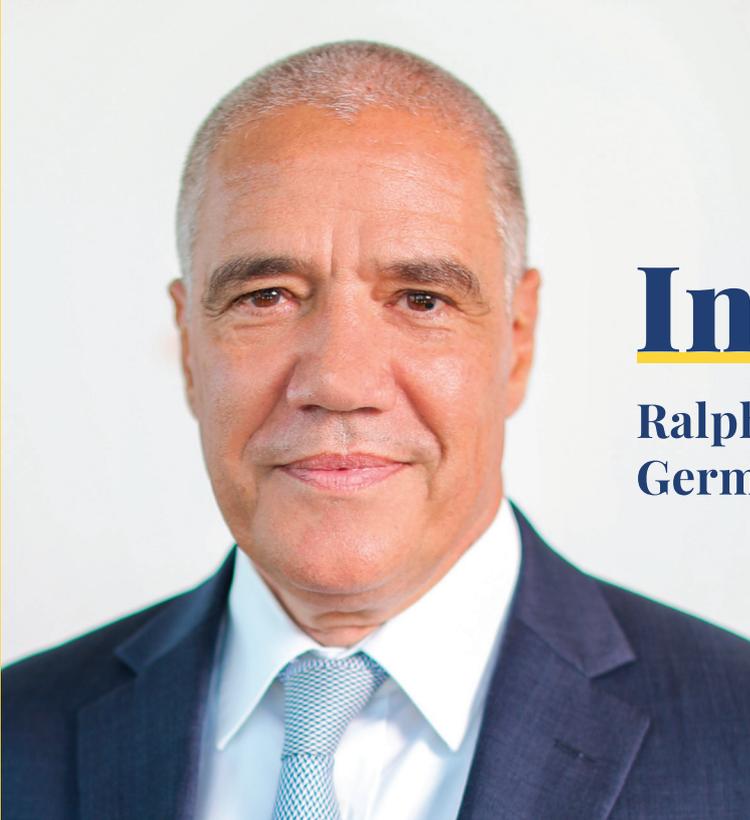
Imprint and Acknowledgments

Credits, contributors, and acknowledgments to partners, authors, and the youth behind Libya 2030.

100

I

Introduction & Vision



Interview

**Ralph Tarraf,
German Ambassador to Libya**

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Ambassador Ralph-Josef Tarraf

Q1

You have worked in many conflict and transition regions – Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, and now Libya. When you first started working on Libya, what impression did the country and its people leave on you? What similarities and differences do you see in the role of youth in political and societal change across these contexts?

What struck me about Libya is the kindness of the people I had the chance to meet. In addition, the potential this country has is remarkable, both in terms of natural resources and of geopolitical location. Properly managed, these resources could contribute to the stability of the country and the prosperity of all its people.

In all places I served as a diplomat, it is young people who have ambitions, dreams, and aspirations – for themselves and for their

countries – to change things for the better and to build more equitable societies.

Differences certainly exist in terms of societal norms and cultural codes. I assume that for historical reasons, Libyans have not had the exposure to the world in general which you would expect given the geographical location of the country..

Q2

In our Libya 2030 survey and workshops, young people highlighted feel excluded from political processes. What do you think can be done to ensure their voices are heard?

It is essential that young people are not only consulted but have an active role in shaping Libya's future. It is their future. This means creating safe and open spaces for their participation in municipal councils, community initiatives, and national dialogues. Libya is a young country by nature, and this is not a challenge but an opportunity. Empowering young people politically, socially, and economically is the best investment in the country's stability.

Q3

Germany was an initiator of the Berlin Process and is a member of the International Follow-up Committee on Libya (IFCL). How do you see the role of Libyan youth and civil society in contributing to, or being represented in, such platforms?

There can be no fully inclusive process without the contributions of young people and civil society. That's why we look forward to the youth component of the structured dialogue led by UNSMIL.

The Berlin Process is designed to support the efforts of the United Nations to implement their political roadmap by bringing together

important international players. This can help to develop a common understanding of the situation in Libya and to agree on how we can collectively support Libya and the Libyans to reunite their country, build state institutions that deliver services to the Libyan and citizens and that are accountable to them. This process is ongoing, as the recent working group meetings here in Libya and a meeting on senior officials meeting in June this year in Berlin demonstrate.

From the outset, the Berlin Process aimed not only to coordinate international efforts but also to strengthen Libyan ownership of the political process. This is where the vital role of civil society comes in. In recent years, we have witnessed increasing engagement from Libyan organizations, youth networks, and local initiatives in engaging with international actors through UN-led consultations. We very much welcome this development.

Q4

How does the EU ensure that international support for Libya remains aligned with Libyan-led solutions, rather than being perceived as imposed from outside?

The EU cooperates with all relevant Libyan bodies to ensure communication is a two-way street. At the recent meeting in Berlin, Libya was represented at the conference table.

Reclaiming Libya's capacity of sovereign decision-making, improving governance and promoting equitable life opportunities for the people of Libya should be the level of the collective ambition. The major stakeholders inside and outside of Libya will have to pull in the same direction. This cannot be imposed. It can only be achieved through a truly inclusive political process.

Q5

What role do you see for partnerships between German and Libyan youth in areas such as education, innovation, climate, or culture?

Libya is a young country, with around %60 of the population under 30, which means there is high potential for partnerships between German and Libyan youth. These partnerships offer valuable opportunities for mutual learning. Libyan youth have already benefited from direct intercultural experiences, such as visits to Germany, where they engaged with peers, participated in workshops, and experienced German youth culture firsthand. They can also gain from academic exchange programs like DAAD scholarships and exchanges organized by the German Institute for International Cultural Relations. At the same time, German youth can learn from the remarkable role of Libyan youth in community service, such as the Scouts, who are highly active in supporting local communities and responding to emergencies like floods, all while remaining independent from political influences. Libyan youth are also demonstrating significant strength in innovation and technology, with areas like robotics showcasing their creativity, problem-solving skills, and entrepreneurial potential.

By engaging in exchanges across culture, education, civic engagement, and technology, young people from both countries not only gain skills and experience but also build understanding, networks, and shared visions for a sustainable, inclusive, and innovative future. Germany remains committed to expanding these partnerships because investing in youth means investing in the future of both our nations.

Q6

Looking ahead: If you imagine Libya in 2030, what is your hope for the country and its young generation?

I hope that by 2030 Libya will be a unified, stable, and secure country, drawing its strength from its diversity and its youth. I hope to see a Libya where every young man and woman has a voice, and where they have free access to education, work, and creative opportunities. This seems very ambitious, but I believe Libya has the potential to deliver on these aspirations.

II

**Governance,
Representation &
Human Rights**

Rethinking Representation and Human Rights in Libya

By Asma Dekna



Photo © Rosen Ivanov Iliev, Soldiers rest after a fight with government forces. Camp of the Rebels of the anti-Gaddafi coalition. Ajdabiya, Libya, April 2011, 7.

Representation, Human Rights and the Social Contract

Inclusive and meaningful representation is closely linked to the protection and promotion of human

rights. In systems of tribal patronage, representation is often informal and instrumental, entrenching inequality and undermining fundamental principles of justice and citizenship ⁽¹⁾. The question of *who represents*

whom and how people are governed lies at the heart of the social contract—an implicit agreement between citizens and the state defining rights, obligations, and legitimacy ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾.

In stable states, representation functions as a mechanism for accountability and collective bargaining, allowing communities to translate shared interests into political power. In fragile states, however, representation becomes a currency of power and legitimacy, offering access to resources, protection, and recognition. It shifts from being an institutional guarantee of rights to a fragile distributive bargain ⁽⁴⁾. Here, representation is privatised and often driven by personal or group gain rather than public good. As Erin McCandless ⁽⁵⁾ notes, “inclusive representation is not only a democratic ideal but a precondition for sustainable peace and human rights realization in post-conflict societies.”

Two types of representation can be observed ⁽⁶⁾. Horizontal representation—such as that of tribes and minorities—governs relations between social groups and ensures distributional balance and stability among them. Vertical representation, on the other hand, concerns youth, women, and persons with disabilities (PWDs); it cuts across social groups, giving voice to those structurally

marginalised within all communities. While horizontal inclusion safeguards balance and stability, vertical inclusion establishes the moral foundations of the social contract, transforming it from an agreement among powerful actors into an implicit pact between the state and citizens as rights-holders.

Representation Practices in Libya

Representation practices in Libya since 2011 have shown both progress and limitations. Post-revolutionary electoral laws introduced quotas for women in national legislative elections and municipal councils. The continued push for greater youth participation in executive positions has pressured political actors to consider vertical forms of inclusion.

In the latest Tripoli municipal elections, four women were elected to the council, exceeding the existing one seat quota. Similarly, women’s election in councils for the first time during the second round, such as Zliten, signalled a cultural shift and growing interest in public participation ⁽⁷⁾. The appointment of women to high-profile ministerial positions ⁽⁸⁾, such as the Ministries of Justice and Foreign Affairs, has also contributed to a gradual shift in public perception. It has also highlighted that women representation is often instrumentalised, giving rise to what Nadjé Al-Ali ⁽⁹⁾ calls ‘*state feminism*

without rights'. This tokenistic approach to women and youth participation in Libya resembles representation without influence, where inclusion serves to legitimize political actors in the eyes of domestic and international actors without redistributing decision-making power or improving rights for social groups.

No formal quotas exist for youth representation at the legislative or executive levels, although UNSMIL has consistently advocated for a 30% youth quota in executive roles, most recently during the LPDF. 'Youth' offices have been established in municipalities and ministries, and a dedicated Ministry of Youth and Sports gained the support of senior officials. While more young people have been elected in successive municipal rounds, signalling cultural change, meaningful participation in national decision-making remains limited. Youth, however, continue to drive grassroots movements, and lead important social movements asking for improved governance in Libya. As with women, youth representation often remains symbolic, lacking mechanisms for shared power and decision-making.

On the other hand, the lack of formal and structured mechanisms to engage different minority and tribal groups has resulted in a social contract that is negotiated through

networks of loyalty rather than institutions of law⁽¹⁰⁾⁽¹¹⁾.

Amazigh⁽¹²⁾ and Tebu⁽¹³⁾ ethnic groups continue to advocate for increased political representation and for further political, linguistic and cultural recognition, including the recognition of the Amazigh and Tebu language as official languages. Representation here does not function as a mechanism for justice but an entry point to a patronage system where access to state resources is continuously being mediated⁽¹⁴⁾ and bargained⁽¹⁵⁾. Such dynamics of representation presents different identity blocs (tribal, ethnic, regional) as continuously competing and delegitimizes the social contract⁽¹⁶⁾. In this case, equal human rights are no longer seen by the state or the citizenry as a universal principle, but as contingent upon one's representation within power networks

This brings us to ask the question of: how can inclusiveness and fair representation be institutionalised in a system where representation is synonymous with power and privilege? And how can representation become genuinely just?

Transforming Representation in Libya

Meaningful representation shifts how power is exercised and not

merely who exercises it. It starts with imposing legal and political safeguards, continuing to advocate for representation which is based on competence and fairness and not merely identity, and working towards a cultural shift and the forging of a new social contract that enables meaningful representation. A society can be 'representative' and still unjust if representation merely mirrors existing inequalities. True inclusion redefines how power operates.

The first step is to ensure that representation is viewed not as a personal or tribal privilege but as a formal right and obligation of the state. Legal mechanisms for elections and appointments must combine identity-based inclusion with merit-based selection. Hybrid models that link quotas to clear decision-making mandates and transparent electoral rules can promote competence and accountability. The Jordanese experience of electoral reforms combined quotas for women and minorities with changes from majoritarian to mixed electoral systems. These efforts aimed to recalibrate the political balance from sectarian and tribal elites towards a more pluralistic system, thereby reshaping power dynamics. Similarly, in Tunisia, gender parity laws in electoral lists and alternating men and women on voting lists proved to

be successful to improve women representation.

However, to ensure that this does not result in a tokenistic opportunity, it is essential that such legal mechanisms are coupled with structured and vertical pathways for women and youth to engage beyond *token roles*. Transforming the 'youth' and 'women' offices, which are often not staffed with women and youth, to youth councils and women leadership boards both in municipal councils and different ministries would institutionalise vertical representation. These bodies should have clear terms of reference (TORs), defined competencies, and oversight mechanisms to monitor inclusivity and rights implementation.

Institutionalising horizontal inclusion is equally vital. The Moroccan experience ⁽¹⁷⁾ demonstrates how proactive constitutional recognition of linguistic and cultural rights of minorities (Amazigh), can help strengthen the social contract, ease tensions, and ensure broad participation of marginalised rural areas. In both Algeria and Morocco, recognising linguistic and cultural rights of Amazigh paved the way for a new vision for a state which is plural, inclusive and rights-based, and strengthened the legitimacy of the central authority.

Decentralisation is another key pillar. In Libya, decentralisation efforts have

been hindered by unclear competencies, central resistance to power devolution, and under-resourced municipal councils. Constitutionalising decentralisation could address these barriers. Activating Muhafada (regional councils) and strengthening advisory councils—already permitted under Law 59 on Decentralised Administration—could create participatory spaces linking local governance to national politics. For this to succeed, advisory councils must have clear mandates, distinct from reconciliation functions, to ensure representation is both inclusive and effective.

Cultural change is the bedrock of a just social contract. We have seen how previous initiatives have helped shift public opinion towards increased women representation in politics in Libya. Education is a key factor in shaping a civic culture of rights-based representation. Media is also critical in shifting the narrative to highlight women and youth leaders as critical agents of change and to encourage inclusive participation across the board.

Closing Remarks

Rethinking representation in Libya requires that we move beyond tokenism and a fragile patronage system, towards an institutionalised rights-based political participation. Reform processes and cultural

changes take time but experiences from Jordan, Tunisia, Morocco and others demonstrate that when inclusion is embedded in legal and constitutional guarantees, coupled with efforts to change civic culture, it strengthens the social contract and improves governance. A just society that upholds human rights is one that is able to meaningfully engage its citizens across different social groups, and in different capacities. It is a society that is based on the rule of law and not the rule of the few.

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Bio

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The Price of Fragmentation: Why Libya's Unity Is a Prerequisite for International Strength

By Mohammed Qajoum



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More than a decade after the revolution, Libya remains a country divided not only by territory but by identity, governance, and lived experience. The line that once separated East and West has hardened into two different systems of rule and two distinct social

realities, especially for young people who have grown up under this divide. The cost of this fragmentation is not abstract. It is the slow erosion of Libya's ability to act as a coherent state, to pursue national interests abroad, and to offer its citizens a shared vision of the future.

Libya cannot regain international strength and recognition unless Libyans agree on the fundamentals of statecraft. Without a consensus on who governs, how authority is exercised, and what institutions speak for the nation, every attempt at foreign engagement becomes an exercise in contradiction. Diplomats arrive in Tripoli or Benghazi unsure which government truly represents Libya, and international partners hesitate to invest or cooperate with a state that cannot guarantee continuity or accountability.

This fragmentation is not only defined by the East–West divide. Within each camp, competing centers of power have emerged, each claiming legitimacy while undermining institutional coherence. Communications with the rest of the world have increasingly been outsourced from formal state institutions to powerful individuals and their personal networks of dealmakers. This dynamic has marginalized Libya’s career diplomats, who once served as the country’s professional interface with the world. The situation reached a breaking point recently when employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tripoli staged a strike to protest against unchecked interference by unelected figures in the ministry’s daily work. Such developments highlight that fragmentation has penetrated the very fabric of governance, weakening Libya’s ability to engage the

international community through legitimate, accountable channels.

Two Systems, Two Realities

In today’s Libya, public administration, legislation, and even education follow different logics depending on where one lives. A generation of young Libyans has grown up in parallel realities—each with its own narrative about legitimacy and victimhood. These divisions are not merely political; they are psychological. They shape how people imagine their country and their place in it.

Fragmentation has also allowed local power structures to entrench themselves. Competing authorities use the divide as cover to suppress dissent. The campaign against civil society in recent years is one of the clearest outcomes of this environment. Organizations that once connected Libyans to international partners have been silenced or constrained under the pretext of national security. Personally, as someone active in civic spaces, I have witnessed the steady shrinking of this space—how registration systems, arbitrary detentions, and public defamation have discouraged many from speaking out. This decline has not only paralyzed community initiatives; it has also thwarted the country’s intellectual and civic elites from reaching out to the world for support effectively, cutting off the very bridge

through which Libyan society could explain itself and seek solidarity.

What little progress was achieved in the past decade in terms of political freedom has been reversed. The tragedy is that Libya once had a vibrant network of thinkers, activists, and professionals capable of translating local aspirations into global language. Fragmentation suffocated that bridge.

Unity as Sovereignty

In international relations, unity is not merely a moral aspiration; it is a strategic asset. A unified state speaks with one voice, negotiates with credibility, and commands respect. Fragmentation, on the other hand, multiplies dependencies. Each side seeks external allies for survival, inviting interference rather than partnership. Libya's inability to consolidate authority has allowed foreign powers to treat it not as a sovereign counterpart but as an arena of influence.

This fragmentation extends beyond Libya's borders, shaping how the world engages with the country itself. Even at the international level, divisions among global and regional actors mirror those within Libya—each backing different sides, narratives, or interests. Yet, amid this complexity, the only moments of genuine progress have come through initiatives led by neutral international partners with credible diplomatic influence. Germany's role

in launching the Berlin Process is a clear example: by convening Libyan and international stakeholders in 2020, it helped end the Tripoli offensive and revive Libya's political track. Such efforts remind us that neutrality, when coupled with genuine commitment, can create openings for dialogue where force and partisanship have failed.

If Libya were to unify tomorrow, three immediate opportunities would emerge. First, migration policy could finally be addressed through sovereign coordination with both African and European partners—shifting from crisis management to negotiated strategy. Second, the oil sector, which today suffers from divided oversight and politicized shutdowns, could be stabilized and opened to transparent investment.

Third, Libya would regain the diplomatic coherence necessary to launch rigorous negotiations with countries intervening militarily in its territory, seeking the withdrawal of mercenaries and foreign fighters. Unity, therefore, is the foundation of sovereignty. Without it, the flag is symbolic; with it, it becomes political capital.

Rethinking Youth Inclusion

Discussions about youth participation often treat young people as a vulnerable group to be nurtured through long processes of

integration—offering quotas, training, or youth councils that exist parallel to decision-making bodies. While well-intentioned, this approach reduces youth to an age category rather than recognizing them as an energy source.

True inclusion does not mean waiting to be invited; it means entering the arena on our own terms. Young Libyans should not aspire to be “included” in old structures, they should reshape those structures altogether. This begins by focusing less on age and more on capacity, initiative, and credibility. Across the country, there are already youth collectives, research groups, and community initiatives proving that competence, not seniority, is the real qualification for leadership.

Principles and Misconceptions

There are three principles that any national reconciliation must preserve: sovereignty, civilian leadership, and decentralization. Sovereignty ensures Libya’s decisions are made in Tripoli, Benghazi, Sebha, and Tobruk—not in foreign capitals. Civilian leadership guarantees that weapons remain under institutions, not individuals. Decentralization prevents unity from becoming another form of domination by one region over the others.

The greatest myth about Libyan unity is that we must all be the same to remain one country. In reality, unity

does not erase diversity—it organizes it. Libya’s strength has always come from its mosaic of regions, tribes, and cultures. Our goal should be to harmonize them under a shared framework, not to dilute their differences.

A Vision for 2030

If Libya succeeds in achieving genuine unity, a different horizon emerges. By 2030, Libya could be a state with diverse income sources, where oil revenues are no longer the only measure of wealth. It could be a place where every region receives its fair share of national resources, reducing resentment and internal migration pressures. A unified Libya could finally reclaim its role as a respected actor—a bridge between Africa, the Mediterranean, and the Arab world—participating confidently in regional dialogues on migration, climate, and trade. Above all, it would be a Libya where young people see public service and innovation as patriotic, not naive.

The Call to Action

To reach that horizon, each actor has a role.

- **Young people** must speak with moral courage, calling out those gambling with the nation’s future, rejecting cynicism, and demonstrating through their work that integrity is still a political value. Yet, young people must also

recognize the ways the ruling elite have succeeded in turning them against each other—sometimes through armed conflict, and other times through cultural wars disguised as moral battles. In recent years, youth have even been used as tools to attack civil society under the pretense of “preserving our culture,” while those invoking this rhetoric have continued to drain the lifeblood of our nation. The first act of resistance, therefore, is to reject this manipulation, to rebuild trust among one another, and to reclaim the sense of shared purpose that unites Libya’s new generation.

- **Political leaders** must rediscover the concept of glory—putting the honor of rebuilding Libya above the short-term gains of factional power. It is true that after four decades of Muammar Gaddafi’s one-man rule, Libya was left with a deep vacuum of genuine leadership. But that historical legacy cannot serve as an excuse for the horrors that followed. The post-Gaddafi era has been marked by an alarming absence of respect and love from our rulers toward their own nation. Leadership, at its essence, is an act of service and humility—qualities that must return if Libya is to have any future worth believing in.
- **The international community** must confront its own complicity in Libya’s fragmentation and support Libyans in regaining full sovereignty

instead of perpetuating dependency through divided partnerships. Its responsibility is not merely moral but historical. The intervention during the 2011 revolution—undertaken under the guise of protecting human rights—was uncalculated and left Libya without the institutional safeguards needed to sustain peace. The years that followed witnessed far worse abuses than those the intervention sought to prevent, underscoring the urgent need for a more responsible and consistent international engagement grounded in state-building, not state breaking.

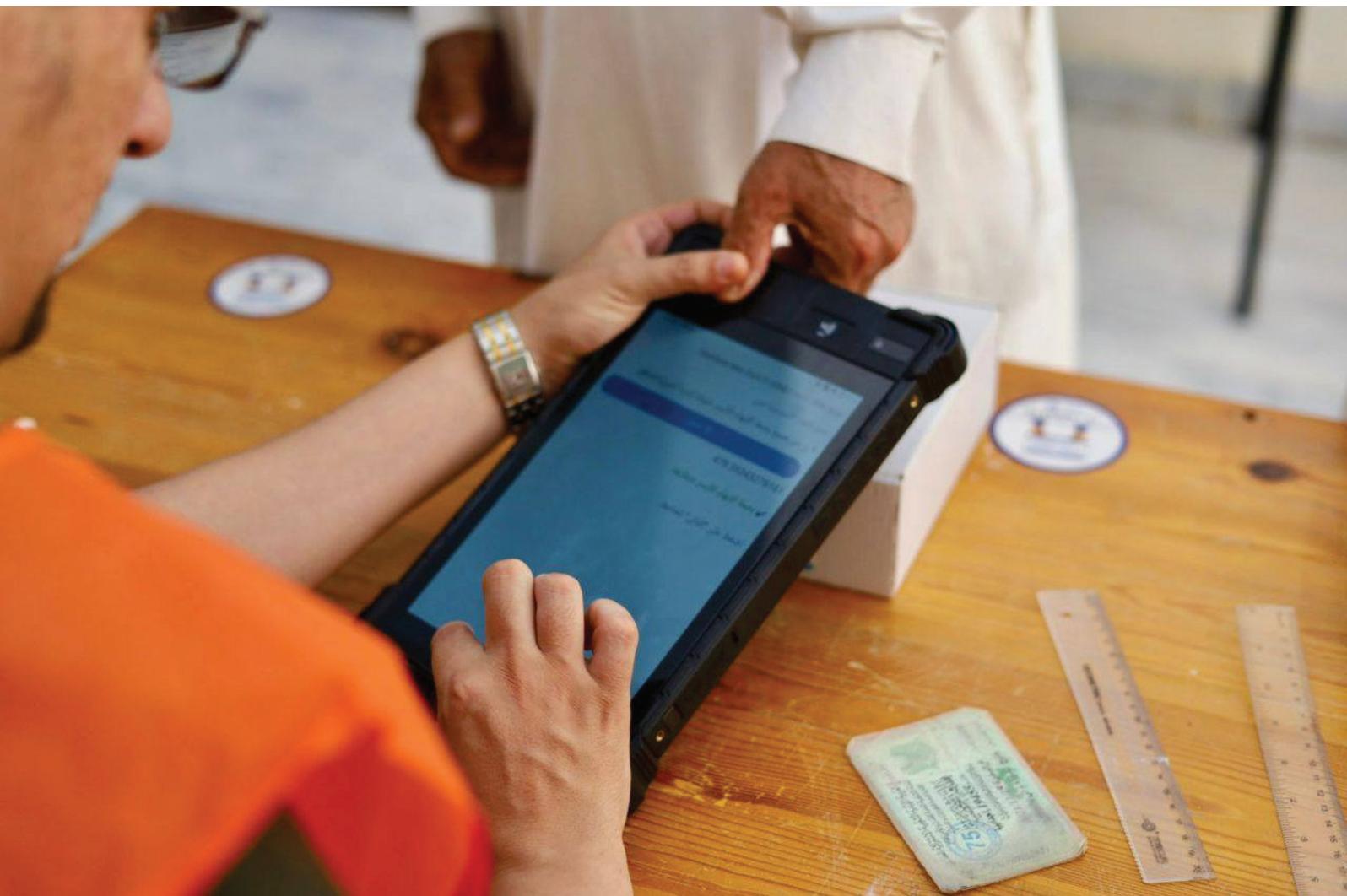
Bio

Mohammed Qajoum is a political science graduate and peacebuilding officer with experience in governance, research, and community development. His work focuses on youth engagement, conflict transformation, and promoting civic participation across Libya.

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Between Frustration and Hope: Elections in Libya and the Civic Effort to Restore Trust

By Mohamed Kndeer



Photos © High National Election Commission (HNEC)

After years of political strife, armed conflict, and chaos that have shaken Libya since early 2011, the word elections still echoes in Libyan streets today. It has not remained a mere

theoretical notion; despite the country's ongoing difficulties, Libya has now entered the third cycle of municipal elections, currently being held in several phases. Each phase

includes a group of municipalities where elections are conducted simultaneously to replace previous councils whose mandates have expired with newly elected ones.

The first post-revolution municipal elections were held in November 2013, covering around 102 municipalities. Those first-term councils, however, stayed in place longer than planned due to political divisions and armed conflicts. The local election process was revived in 2019, marking the second cycle of municipal councils. Elections began in March 2019 across several municipalities and gradually expanded through 2020 and 2021.



While the municipal election process has continued, though fraught with challenges and obstacles, national elections have become a distant dream. The shadow of military and political division, now stretching over a decade, continues to haunt Libya's path toward unified national governance.

Municipalities as a School of Democracy

Despite the numerous voter education campaigns and democracy programs launched by local and international organizations, many Libyans still find it difficult to distinguish between municipal elections, focused on services and local governance, and the more complex national parliamentary or presidential elections, which are political in nature.

This confusion between local governance and politics has contributed to low voter turnout among some groups. Many assume that all elections are equally flawed or expect local councils to solve political crises that are far beyond their jurisdiction. This reflects the ongoing need for civic education campaigns to clarify the purposes and different levels of elections, so that citizens can separate their daily service concerns from the broader political power struggles gripping the country.

The third cycle of municipal elections began in late November 2024, with the first phase covering 58 municipalities, followed by a second phase in mid-2025 that included another 51 municipalities. In total, over 100 municipalities out of 143 have participated so far across Libya.

The current electoral roll includes roughly 380,000 registered voters

and more than 3,200 candidates, with women representing around 17% of participants. These figures mark an important sign of continuity in exercising the right to local participation and offer a genuine opportunity to practice decentralization in action. Through these elections, citizens especially young people learn how to choose their representatives and monitor their performance. This process could lay the cultural foundation for a more democratic and accountable state in the long term.



Municipal elections also signal a possible path to rebuilding trust between citizens and the state, if backed by sufficient resources, transparency, and genuine empowerment of elected councils to fulfill their mandates.

Despite limited funding, logistical delays in some polling centers, and security concerns that postponed voting in certain municipalities, the ongoing municipal elections remain

a small window of hope. They remind Libyans that peaceful participation and change through the ballot box are still possible even if delayed.

The Memory of the Ballot: How Past Experiences Shaped Libyan Awareness

Over more than a decade of electoral experiments, Libyans have accumulated hard-earned lessons about democracy. Many of these experiences were painful, but together they helped shape a new public awareness about participation and citizenship.

From the first national vote in 2012 to recent attempts at organizing new elections, each stage has been more than a political event, it has been a mirror reflecting Libya's evolving social mood, its institutional development, and the shifting relationship between citizens and the state.

Inside the High National Elections Commission (HNEC), a very different picture emerges from the one often imagined by the public. Away from the heated political scene, dedicated teams have worked on developing training manuals, improving vote-counting systems, and refining verification procedures. Despite scarce resources and limited infrastructure, these efforts have laid the groundwork for emerging administrative traditions.

But the memory of the ballot was not built within institutions alone. Political parties suddenly finding themselves in a democratic space unfamiliar to most citizens carried the burden of founding democracy in a society still haunted by the old adage, “He who joins a party betrays the nation.”

In the 2012 General National Congress elections, tribal and regional loyalties overshadowed political programs. The results often reflected social influence maps more than conscious political choice. When the Congress failed to meet public expectations, the first wave of electoral disappointment set in, and many began to lose faith in the democratic process, dismissing it as a luxury ill-suited to a country divided and unstable.

The 2014 elections deepened this disillusionment amid violence, threats, and disruptions, especially in cities like Derna, where voting was forcibly halted. Libya entered a stage of deep skepticism, not only about the usefulness of elections, but about their very legitimacy. Some religious groups branded elections as un-Islamic or a betrayal of faith. Out of this clash between ideals and reality emerged a widespread sense of political disorientation, making many citizens more cautious and less eager to participate.

Meanwhile, civil society, a newcomer to the Libyan landscape after 2011,

tried to act as a third voice between the HNEC and political parties. Through awareness campaigns and election monitoring, it sought to bring democratic values closer to people’s daily lives. Yet the lack of information and transparency posed major obstacles. Media, which should have been a tool for enlightenment, sometimes became a source of misinformation, widening the gap between citizens and facts, and eroding trust in state institutions and political actors alike.

Civil society organizations also faced difficulties in monitoring elections, due to limited numbers of observers and weak coordination, which reduced their impact despite good intentions.

Still, the journey was not without gains. The HNEC accumulated technical experience; political parties began to recognize the importance of engaging youth and women; and citizens, albeit gradually, started to understand that participation is not a seasonal event but a culture and a shared responsibility.

Guardianship and the Ballot: Between International Support and National Ownership

As municipal elections continue across Libya, symbolizing a fragile attempt to revive faith in the ballot box, the country stands before a central question: what will make the next national elections any different

from the failed attempt of December 2021?

Since that date, the electoral process in Libya has become an arena where local aspirations and international agendas intersect between the Libyans' desire to renew legitimacy and the international community's desire for a "safe" political transition that safeguards its interests and prevents further chaos.

The international community has been a key partner in supporting Libya's elections since 2012, but many Libyans perceive that support as far from neutral. Repeated experiences and inconsistent statements from various foreign actors have fueled a popular sense that national decision-making remains hostage to external calculations rather than internal consensus.

Each time a new election date is proposed, familiar questions resurface: Who decides the timing? Who guarantees acceptance of the results? These are not mere political doubts; they reflect a deeper crisis of trust between citizens and their institutions, and between Libyans and international stakeholders who present themselves as champions of democracy.

To be fair, many international projects have genuinely helped build the technical capacity of the HNEC, train local staff, and promote political participation among youth and women. Yet the central challenge

remains: how to turn this international assistance into support for national sovereignty, not a substitute for it.

The more Libya depends on external actors, the weaker its sense of ownership and responsibility for ensuring electoral success. Conversely, the more Libyans themselves take charge of managing, monitoring, and protecting their elections, the closer the country moves toward rebuilding trust in politics and governance.

At the same time, civil society continues to play a vital role in ensuring that Libya's long-awaited elections succeed through voter awareness, observer training, and expanding participation among youth and women. These initiatives, aligned with the vision of Libya 2030, show that true participation is not only a right but a duty shared by all segments of society to build a stable and democratic future.

Citizenship and Pluralism: The Challenge of Building a Genuine Democracy

The significance of elections lies not merely in renewing legitimacy or selecting representatives, but in expressing a society's will to actively shape its own future. Political participation is not only a right, it is a collective responsibility reflecting the maturity of civic awareness.

In Libya, citizens have long inherited the culture of a centralized state, one that managed everything from employment to resource distribution, while the people's role was largely passive, dependent on the state. This legacy, rooted in the previous regime, alienated the idea of initiative and civic action from public life and weakened the spirit of shared national responsibility.

Today, with municipal elections ongoing and national elections anticipated, the need arises to break away from this legacy and replace it with a culture of participation grounded in awareness, accountability, and choice.

Democracy is not achieved simply by holding elections but by transforming them into a sustainable social practice that strengthens people's belief that their voices matter. Genuine participation begins with registration, continues through voting, and extends to monitoring and holding local councils accountable. In this sense, elections become a school of citizenship, not just a recurring event.

Inclusion carries particular importance in Libya, where many groups have suffered from geographic, social, and cultural marginalization. When women, youth, residents of remote towns and villages, and cultural minorities take part in shaping local and national decisions, they do more than add

symbolic diversity, they contribute to a more balanced and inclusive social contract.

Participation is not granted; it is claimed through awareness and determination to engage in every civic space, from municipalities to voluntary initiatives and civil society organizations. Yet the weakness of Libya's civic culture reflects the lack of accumulated experience, organization, and sustainability. Overcoming this requires fostering a free civic environment that encourages volunteerism, initiative, and connection between local action and broader political participation.

Building a democratic state depends on a society that understands one essential truth: **Reform can only emerge from the active, collective efforts of its people.**

Bio

Mohamed Kndeer is a Libyan civic engagement specialist and researcher interested in how societies rebuild trust and participation during democratic transitions. Over the years, he has contributed to initiatives that use communication, training, and participatory research to enhance civic awareness and youth involvement in public life. He has collaborated with national and international partners, bringing a focus on evidence-based dialogue and the social dimensions of democratic transformation in Libya.

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Women and Libya's New UN Roadmap: Beyond Symbolism, Toward Meaningful Peace

By Khadija Elboaishi



Photo © Khadija Elboaishi (UNDP) and women in dialogue

A Roadmap at a Crossroads

In August 2025, the United Nations unveiled a new political roadmap for

Libya It comes after years of broken promises, missed elections, and fragile ceasefires. This roadmap is structured in stages: first, establishing an agreed

electoral framework; second, unifying the country's divided institutions; and finally, organizing national elections.

At first glance, this plan seems pragmatic—learning from past failures where rushing into elections without consensus worsened Libya's divisions. But for Libyan women who have borne the brunt of conflict while persistently demanding a voice, the key question remains: will this roadmap deliver meaningful participation, or will women once again be sidelined in the name of political expediency?

Lessons from the Past: Women as Symbols, Not Architects

Libya's history of peace processes reveals a troubling pattern.

1. Exclusion from the start. In the 2015 Skhirat Agreement and the 2020–21 Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF), women were often included only after the terms of the process had already been defined. They were present in negotiations and implementation but absent from pre-negotiation stages—where the rules of the game were set. This left women reacting to decisions rather than shaping them.

2. Tokenism and backlash. Even when present women were too often treated as tokens. Female delegates endured online harassment, intimidation, and political silencing. Some were hand-picked by elites to fill a “quota,” rather than to represent grassroots constituencies. Instead of empowering women, the system frequently isolated them.

3. Ignoring women's civil society.

Perhaps the greatest failure has been neglecting women-led organizations. Since 2011, Libyan women's CSOs have led community mediation supported displaced families and even negotiated local ceasefires. Yet these peacebuilders were rarely given structured roles in formal talks. By privileging elite bargains over grassroots legitimacy, past processes produced fragile outcomes that lacked public trust.

What Women Want from the New Roadmap

If the new roadmap is to succeed women's participation must go beyond numbers. It must mean influence.

- **Presence at every stage.** Women must be included from the design of the process, not just invited once the agenda is set. Meaningful participation begins with agenda-setting.
- **Enforceable guarantees.** The 30% quota for women in leadership positions—secured by LPDF women—is historic. But without enforcement, monitoring, and accountability, quotas remain symbolic.
- **Protection and enabling conditions.** The political assassinations of Salwa Bugaighis and the disappearance of Seham Sergiwa still haunt Libya. Female politicians and activists continue to face threats and online abuse. The roadmap must embed legal protections and security

mechanisms to safeguard women's right to participate.

- **Intersectional inclusion.** True women's empowerment requires an intersectional approach that ensures no voice is left unheard. Libyan women are not a monolith — their realities are shaped by age, ethnicity, geography, and social status. The perspectives of young women, as well as Amazigh, Tuareg, and Tebu women, and those living outside major cities, must be actively included in all decision-making spaces. Without deliberate and sustained efforts to engage these diverse groups, the concept of “women's participation” risks being reduced to the representation of a small urban elite, rather than a reflection of Libya's rich and varied social fabric.

Why Women Matter for Peace

Women's inclusion is not charity; it is a necessity. Research across conflicts is clear: when women are substantively involved peace agreements are more likely to be reached and to endure. Women broaden the agenda raising issues of justice, livelihoods, healthcare, and community security beyond narrow power-sharing formulas. They build cross communal bridges, as Libyan women activists have done in countless local reconciliation efforts.

But beyond effectiveness, women's participation is a right. UNSCR 1325 (2000) and its successor resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security affirm

that women's equal participation in peace processes is a matter of international law, excluding half the population from shaping the nation's future delegitimizes any outcome.

Toward a Feminist Roadmap

To avoid repeating past failures, the UN roadmap must embed feminist principles: solidarity, inclusivity, and intersectionality.

- **Formalized input from civil society.** Women's organizations must be given a structured mechanism to feed their priorities directly into negotiations.
- **Leadership, not tokenism.** Women should not just be “present” but hold co-chairing roles and lead committees.
- **Collective advocacy.** Alliances between female delegates and grassroots women can transform individual voices into a collective agenda.
- **International accountability.** Mediators must be held to account for ensuring gender inclusion, rather than leaving it to local political actors who may have little incentive to empower women.

This requires moving beyond what feminist scholars call the “just add women and stir” model where women are invited to sit in the room but expected to fix a flawed process without structural support. A feminist approach demands that the entire

architecture of the peace process is built to ensure equality.

The Risks of Repeating Symbolism

The danger is that the new roadmap could replicate old patterns: a process dominated by elites, international mediators eager for quick wins, and women brought in only for appearances. If that happens, Libya will miss another historic opportunity.

Already, women activists warn that without genuine inclusion, the roadmap risks reinforcing the status quo—a status quo in which women’s voices are peripheral, institutions remain divided, and youth lose faith in politics.

Conclusion: Peace with Women, or No Peace at All

The lesson of Libya’s past decade is undeniable: peace agreements without women are fragile bargains. They may produce documents, but they do not produce legitimacy. The new UN roadmap offers a fragile but real opportunity to reset Libya’s political future. But this opportunity will only bear fruit if women are empowered as equal architects—not symbolic participants—at every stage of the process.

This is not merely a matter of inclusion. It is a matter of rights and obligations. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and its subsequent resolutions affirm women’s full, equal, and meaningful participation as a cornerstone of international peace and security. To ignore this is to

undermine both the legitimacy of the roadmap and the UN’s own commitments under the Women, Peace, and Security agenda.

Libyan women have already proven their resilience, vision, and leadership throughout years of conflict. They sustained communities in times of collapse, and they continue to lead reconciliation at the local level. What they require now is not another symbolic seat at the table, but the authority to shape the rules of the game.

For the UN, member states, and Libyan authorities alike, the imperative is clear: transform women’s presence into power. Peace in Libya will never be sustainable until women are recognized not as participants of convenience, but as indispensable architects of the country’s future.

Bio

Khadija Elboaisi is a Gender Equality and Rule of Law Specialist with UNDP Libya and founder of the Libyan Women’s Legal Network. She has over a decade of experience advancing women’s political participation, inclusive governance, and human rights in Libya.

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III

**Inclusion, Diversity &
Civic Transformation**

The Libyan South: Wealth, Marginalization, and a Cry for Justice

By Ahmed Algheryanie



Photos © Mrayef, Kufra City

Field Report and Interview

In the heart of Libya's south, in the city of Al-Kufra, a conversation with **Mohamed Dadi**, member of the Kufra Municipal Council and Director of the Health Office, reveals the painful paradox of a region rich in resources yet poor in rights.

It is a place that borders three African nations, holds vast reserves of oil, gas, and groundwater, and yet remains on the margins of national development.

"We live above a sea of groundwater and sit on a volcano of oil and minerals," Dadi says.

"Yet we are treated as second-class citizens. The south is being drained, not developed. It is managed from afar, without involving its own people in decision-making."

Political Marginalization: "The South Is Absent, Even from the Ballot Boxes"

For Dadi, exclusion in the south is not only economic, but also political.

"In national elections, the south was never granted fair representation that reflects its population or its vast geographic area.

In 2014, we received less than 10% of parliamentary seats, even though we make up more than half of Libya's land."

Even in municipal elections, many southern areas face severe logistical and security barriers.

"Voters here feel their voices don't matter. So why should they participate?"

He describes the south as a "waiting zone," called upon only when national elites need votes, mediation, or stability and then ignored until the next crisis.



A Plundered Economy: "Our Oil Lights Tripoli, While We Live in Darkness"

Despite producing much of Libya's wealth, the south receives almost none of its benefits.

"In Kufra, power outages last over twelve hours a day," Dadi says.

"Roads are crumbling, banks are empty, and yet our oil lights Tripoli while we live in darkness."

He notes that small-scale farming, local businesses, and infrastructure projects are nearly non-existent.

“We have enough water beneath us to green the desert. But we are not allowed to use it. If we could, the south could feed the entire country.”



Health and Education: “The South Suffers and Learns in Silence”

As Director of the Health Office, Dadi describes the dire state of the healthcare system:

“We don’t have a single permanent gynecologist in the city, nor an operating room for emergencies.

Many patients die on the road to Benghazi or Tripoli, the nearest functioning hospital is 800 kilometers away.”

Shortages of medicine can last months, and qualified medical staff avoid working in the region due to poor conditions.

Education faces the same crisis.

“Dropout rates in some southern areas have exceeded 45%, especially among girls. Schools lack teachers, power, and internet access. Distance

learning is impossible when you don’t even have electricity.”

A Call for Justice

Dadi concludes with a message directed at Libya’s political leadership:

“The south is not a burden, it is an opportunity.

We want genuine partnership, not guardianship.

We want to participate in elections, govern through our local councils, and see our resources reinvested in our people.

When the south is treated with justice, it will become Libya’s shield, not its weakness.”

Bio

Ahmed Algheryanie is a Libyan journalist and documentary photographer. He has worked on film and documentary productions with Al Jazeera Documentary, Alaraby TV, Arab24 Agency, and Libya Panorama TV, in addition to contributing to several local and Arab newspapers.

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Disability Awareness in Libyan Schools: Why It Should Be Part of the Curriculum

By Abdulsalam Shlebak



Photo © Tim Mossholder

Since my childhood, I have lived with polio, which has permanently affected my movement. I grew up in Libya, where life is full of challenges for everyone, but the challenges I face are different from those of others. I do not only have to adapt to the limitations

that my disability imposes, but also to the limited understanding of disability in the society around me. Sometimes, it feels as if people see my wheelchair before they see me as a person.

I truly believe that disability awareness should be taught in Libyan schools. And here are the reasons that make me believe so:

Promoting inclusion and acceptance: When we talk about disability in classrooms, we allow students to understand the diversity of abilities and experiences. We need Libyan schools that encourage acceptance of our differences, where students with disabilities like mine do not feel like strangers or outsiders. This awareness helps build an environment in which everyone is accepted, regardless of their abilities.

Reducing stigma and prejudice: Many Libyans still lack knowledge about people with disabilities, which contributes to the continuation of stereotypes and misconceptions. If we teach the coming generations about disability through education, we give them the ability to see people like us with new eyes — eyes that focus on our humanity rather than our disability.

Fostering empathy and compassion: Libya is a society built on cooperation and solidarity, yet the lack of awareness often stands in the way of genuine empathy. When students learn about the difficulties we face, it becomes easier for them to understand the daily challenges that others might not even notice. Such education can create an atmosphere of support and mutual care.

Preparing students for the diversity of life beyond school: The real world is

full of diversity, and Libya is no exception. Today's students will be tomorrow's leaders, and they need to understand how to deal with differences in everyday life, whether those differences are in abilities or in other forms. Through disability awareness in schools, we help them prepare to engage positively and confidently with everyone.

Encouraging the defense of the rights of people with disabilities: Knowledge is power. When students learn about the rights of people with disabilities and the challenges they face, they become more capable of standing up for those rights. This could mean that we will witness a new generation of Libyans who call for greater accessibility and equality for all.

From where I sit, I can see that education can create real change. In Libya, we need a new generation of students who understand that disability is not the end of the road, but the beginning of seeing life from a different perspective — a perspective that makes us all stronger.

Bio

Abdulsalam Shlebak is a disability rights advocate, blogger, and person living with polio. He is dedicated to breaking down barriers and promoting inclusion for people with disabilities in Libya, using his voice and writing to foster awareness and social change.

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Shaping Libya's Future: The Focus on Civic Education

By Haifa Eshawesh



Photos © Sarah Sahboun, taken at Athar, Secondhand Books & Recycling Fair

Libya stands at a pivotal juncture in its development. Over a decade after the upheaval of 2011, while political structures continue to evolve, a young generation is emerging with fresh ideas, energy, and a desire for

change. This generation seeks opportunities to actively participate in shaping their society. In this context, civic education serves as an indispensable tool: it creates spaces for reflection, dialogue, and

responsibility, fosters democratic thinking, and opens perspectives for a peaceful, more just future.

At its core, civic education aims to empower individuals to recognize themselves as active, informed, and responsible members of society. It imparts not only institutional knowledge about elections or constitutions but also strengthens competencies such as critical thinking, communication skills, and the ability to compromise. Politically educated individuals are aware of their rights and duties, can contextualize societal dynamics, and feel encouraged to voice their opinions.

In Libya, civic education is increasingly being developed through projects led by civil society groups, educators, media actors, and youth initiatives. It becomes evident that civic education is particularly effective when conducted on equal footing, connecting with the lived realities of participants, and fostering environments of trust. Schools, youth centers, mosques, and online forums offer young Libyans avenues to engage with political topics, not as abstract theories but as integral parts of their daily lives.

Various programs have been bringing young people together across Libyan cities for several years. Through workshops, local dialogue sessions, and digital exchange formats,

participants discuss human rights, social justice, and political responsibility. The focus is not on predefined content but on mutual exchange and the experience that civic education represents collective learning. Many participants report that these formats have enabled them to develop concrete ideas on how to engage positively for change.



Digital media play an increasingly significant role in this context. Especially for young people well-connected through social networks, digital platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube provide low-threshold access to political content. Initiatives like "Libya Talks" or "Saout Al Shabab" produce short videos, podcasts, and interactive posts that explain political terms, spark debates, and highlight the experiences of young activists. These new formats are crucial as they can be disseminated rapidly, accommodate various languages and dialects, and often reach marginalized regions.

Libyan educators are also beginning to integrate civic education into their teaching despite the absence of official curricula or resources. Many design lessons on topics like freedom of expression, responsibility, and conflict resolution. Some employ role-playing games, debates, or group projects to enable students to recognize diverse perspectives and articulate their own positions. A study by Sahli & Sadeq (2023) describes these educators as "transitionalist pragmatists": rather than acting idealistically or dogmatically, they develop innovative approaches to promoting democratic thinking based on everyday situations—working with limited means but great dedication.

However, civic education's impact extends beyond formal schooling. Many young people gain their first political experiences through extracurricular projects, such as neighborhood initiatives, environmental campaigns, or social movements. For example, in Benghazi, a group of young women engages in recycling projects, which not only promote environmental awareness but also address local responsibility, collective action, and dialogue with authorities. Here, civic education emerges directly through collaborative activities.

Another example can be found in Sabha, southern Libya, where a group

of activists established a radio project broadcasting weekly shows on topics like public welfare, gender equality, and civil rights. These broadcasts, in multiple languages and involving various ethnic groups, not only provide information but also build trust, amplify marginalized voices, and demonstrate that civic education can thrive even in regions lacking functional state structures if locally rooted and inclusively designed.

Civic education holds particular significance for women and minorities. Numerous initiatives strive to ensure that women have access to political knowledge and participation—not merely as voters but as active decision-makers. In Misrata, women's groups organize workshops on legal foundations, municipal politics, and media literacy. In Zuwara, Amazigh groups develop programs focused on political self-determination and cultural inclusion. This educational work is not just a contribution to gender equality but also strengthens democracy as a whole by making all voices heard.

Furthermore, civic education proves most effective when linked to other societal objectives. In peacebuilding initiatives, dialogue processes, or development programs, it is not merely supplementary but foundational for sustainable transformation. Individuals who have learned to tolerate differing opinions, resolve conflicts constructively, and

make joint decisions will also excel in political negotiations. Thus, civic education lays the groundwork for social cohesion and peaceful coexistence, extending far beyond the educational sphere.

To harness this potential sustainably in Libya, structural support is essential. Civic education should be firmly integrated into national education policies—both within curricula and in teacher training and professional development. Local educational initiatives require financial, methodological, and legal backing. International partners can assist through technological infrastructure, capacity-building, and platforms for exchange. However, the key lies in civic education emerging from the heart of society. Only when it is based on trust, participation, and self-responsibility will it have a lasting impact.

Libya possesses a young, creative, and committed population. Despite all challenges, daily life reveals immense willingness, resourcefulness, and courage within society. Civic education can channel these forces toward fostering justice, participation, and solidarity.

Civic education is not a theoretical concept but a tangible opportunity for change. It enables people to comprehend their environment, engage actively, and collaboratively

develop solutions. It builds bridges between groups, regions, and generations. In Libya, it can be the key to a new political consciousness—one that embraces responsibility as an opportunity rather than a burden. The future begins where people learn to stand up for themselves and for one another. Civic education makes this possible.

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Bio

Haifa Eshawesh is an educator with a Master of Education from Leuphana University and extensive teaching experience in Hamburg and northern Germany. She has worked in intercultural education and public administration. As the deputy chairwoman of the Libyan German Association, she focuses on strengthening intercultural understanding and supporting youth and community engagement.

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Digital Citizenship: Between Digital Transformation and Individual Awareness

By Sara Oheda



The availability of internet services or the number of connected devices is no longer a sufficient measure of a country's or society's level of digital transformation. Digital transformation has become a broader concept that calls for adopting ways of working and thinking rooted in data for decision-making, with the principle of reducing barriers between individuals and institutions. In the Libyan context, digital transformation is one of the main tools of political, economic, and social reform. With a stable and capable technological infrastructure, we open the door to practices that strengthen the role of

individuals in society and give them the chance to convey their views and voices through platforms that provide equal opportunities. This is what digital citizenship represents.

Digital citizenship is responsible participation, not a passing interaction

Etymologically, the Arabic word for citizenship is derived from *awtana* — a place of residence and belonging. Citizenship means belonging to a particular country and taking part in its affairs and duties.

Traditionally, citizenship is defined as the relationship between the individual and the state to which they belong, a relationship that grants rights and imposes responsibilities. In its modern sense, citizenship has acquired a new digital dimension. It has become a culture and a daily practice aimed at strengthening transparency, responsibility, and active participation in society. It is not merely a set of social media accounts. It is an expression of commitment and meaningful participation that gives young

people the opportunity to help advance democratic values, because it is a practice that promotes transparency and accountability toward decision-makers.

Libya's median age is 27 (1): a young generation shaping the digital landscape

According to the 2024 International Telecommunication Union report, Libya scored about 88.1 on the Digital Development Index (2). In a country where the median age is 27, this creates fertile ground for youth civic and digital participation.

This is not a marginal fact. It confirms that this demographic structure makes the promotion of digital citizenship a national priority. Given that internet access in Libya is relatively good, there are significant opportunities for young people to engage in community activities. These opportunities also place on us the responsibility to empower individuals and prepare them to be active and responsible participants in building a democratic digital society.

Civic initiatives: when the screen becomes a platform for citizenship

Young people have the ability to shape and steer public debate through interaction on social media platforms, which provide equal

opportunities to convey opinions and voices. This opens doors to engage with social and political issues, and helps them understand democratic values such as justice, equality, and political participation.

Among the notable initiatives reflecting this shift is the "Libya 2030" project, launched by the Libyan Community Association in Germany in mid-2025. It brought together more than one hundred young men and women from across the country in open digital workshops (3) to speak about the future as they imagine it. Through this platform, youth were not only given access to the internet or a space to express their opinions, but opportunities to learn, participate, and contribute to shaping national visions. This reflects the true dimension of digital citizenship.

The findings showed that Libyans do not lack the desire to participate. What is lacking is civic education and the technical infrastructure that ensures fair access. Here, the concept of digital citizenship intersects with social awareness and legislation. When young people have tools for critical thinking and emotional awareness, digital platforms become spaces for building trust rather than arenas of division.

For this reason, emphasis must be

placed on developing digital skills among youth, not only for using social media, but for harnessing technology and its tools to organize civic initiatives. Possessing these skills enables individuals to use digital tools efficiently in support of transparency and accountability.

Digital citizenship requires critical thinking and emotional awareness

In a time when screens have become our windows to the world, citizenship no longer means only an identity card. It extends to spaces that know no borders. In this virtual world, people often react with emotion more than reason, and a single like or share can set off waves of anger or joy that change events in moments.

Hence the importance of conscious digital citizenship, measured not by our presence online, but by our ability to think critically and remain emotionally aware amid the flood of information and reactions.

A study published in *Al-Nour Journal for Human Studies* (4) shows that the digital uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia were not merely virtual protests. They embodied collective emotions that spread through memes and social media. Feelings of anger, hope, and injustice moved like contagion, uniting people around a core demand for change.

Researchers warn that this emotional contagion, powerful as it is, can turn into chaos and a dangerous weapon unless accompanied by the skill of critical thinking that allows people to distinguish truth from incitement, and emotion from irrationality. There is also a need to cultivate emotional intelligence, which has become the link between digital interaction and social responsibility, enabling individuals to understand their own emotions and those of others, and to act with awareness and responsibility.

The study concludes that building responsible digital citizenship requires raising a generation that thinks with its mind and feels with its heart, using its tools for construction and reform rather than fueling discord. It begins on the screen of your device, but extends to create an awareness grounded in both reason and compassion.

Between cybersecurity and individual awareness lies a gap that needs a bridge

A 2024 study by Aisha Saeed Al-Atrash, "The Reality and Prospects of Cybercrimes and the Extent of Awareness of Internet Users in Libya" (5), indicates that cybercrimes are an increasing challenge to building safe digital citizenship in Libya. The researcher explains that weak cybersecurity awareness and limited

knowledge of online risks are among the main factors contributing to harmful digital behavior such as defamation, hate speech, identity theft, and a rise in cases of online extortion. The study also highlights the absence of a national registry for documenting cybercrimes.

To protect and activate digital participation in Libya, laws must balance freedom and responsibility, and education must foster critical thinking. Digital citizenship is not a technological luxury. It is a new kind of awareness that redefines the relationship between the individual and society.

A study based on Libyan cases found that 95% of home users in Libya had their accounts targeted by cyberattacks due to poor cybersecurity awareness (6). While the individual factor may seem small in the bigger picture, these results show that building safe digital citizenship rests not only on laws and regulations, but also on spreading awareness and training.

The Libyan House of Representatives passed the Cybercrime Law in September 2022 to protect electronic transactions and reduce digital offenses (7). Yet a gap remains between legislation and technological reality, which underscores the urgent need for integrated legal frameworks that guarantee the protection of

individual rights. Such frameworks serve as a safeguard when ethics and principles drift from their proper course.

Embedding digital citizenship in classrooms to build a conscious and responsible generation

To build a digitally aware generation in Libya, internet access alone is not enough. Concepts of digital citizenship must be planted at the heart of education and youth initiatives. The study “Developing Digital Education in Libya: Progress and Challenges” (8) notes that improving technological infrastructure and training teachers to use digital tools is the first step toward enabling students to engage with the digital world with confidence and awareness. Another study, “Challenges of Applying E-Learning in Libya’s Higher Education System” (9), stresses the importance of strengthening these concepts among teachers and students to ensure safe and effective use of technology in universities. Integrating digital citizenship into curricula and youth programs has therefore become essential to building a conscious and responsible generation capable of active participation in society.

The road toward digital citizenship is still forming, and contributions can serve the individual and society

Building effective digital citizenship in Libya is not only a technical issue. It is a comprehensive project grounded in awareness, trust, education, and legislation. Digital citizenship is not measured by the number of connected devices or internet speed, but by each person's ability to use technology responsibly and with ethical awareness.

The studies discussed above show that Libyans have the enthusiasm and desire to participate. The path toward genuine digital citizenship requires a safe digital environment, fair legislation, and educational programs that instill values and cultivate critical thinking and emotional intelligence.

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Bio

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Local Governance and the Future of Libya's Economy

By Odai BenGered

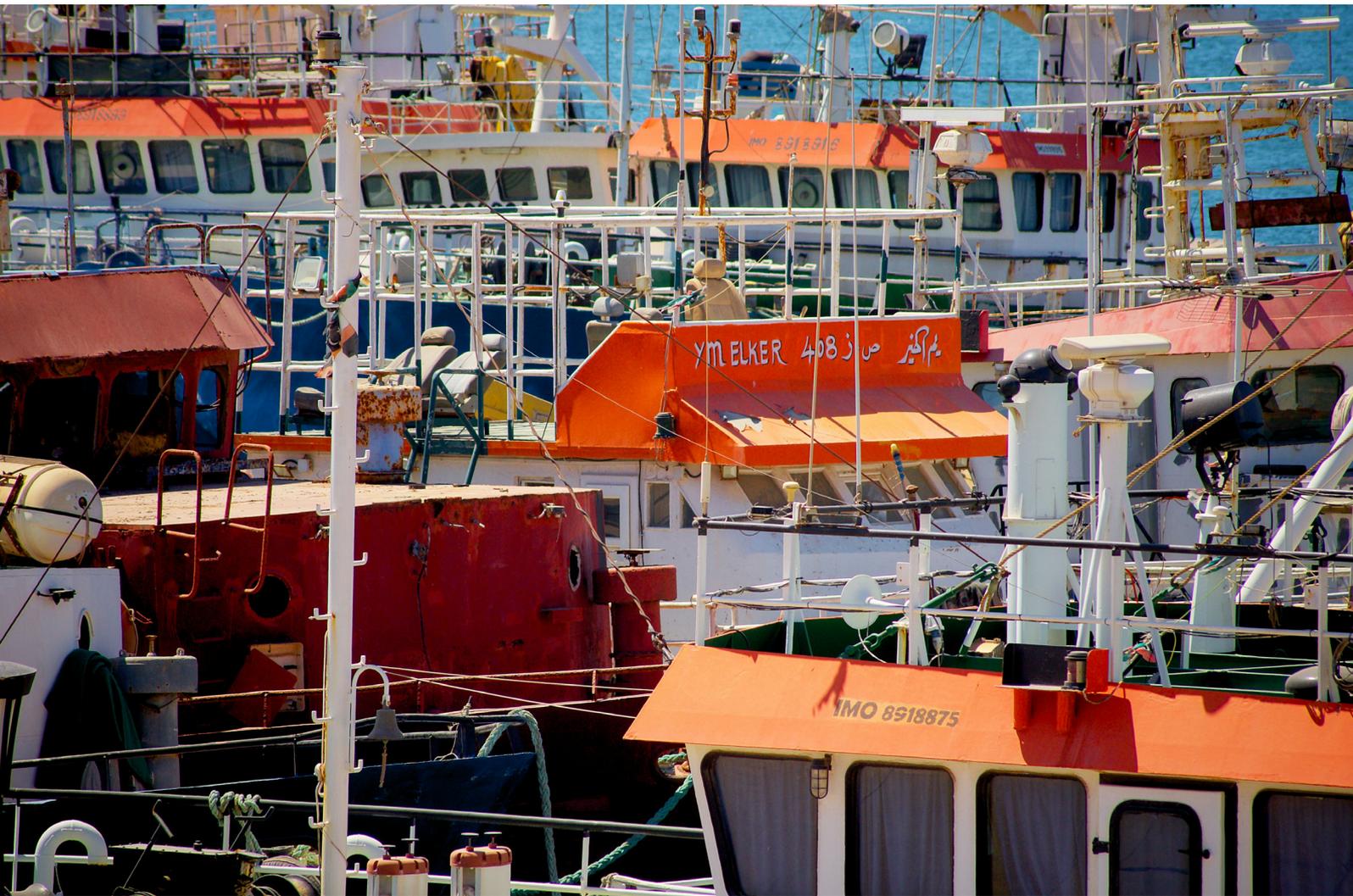


Photo © Ahmed Almahzanji, about the sea, summer, orange and boats.

Tripoli today bears a weight it was never meant to carry. People from every region continue to move toward the capital, drawn by the concentration of jobs, services, and opportunities that have

steadily disappeared elsewhere. The city has become not only the political center but also the only economic destination for many Libyans. Behind this internal migration lies a deeper story of

imbalance: the gradual collapse of local economies and the absence of functioning governance structures outside the capital.

Public-sector employment has become an end goal rather than a means of growth. It offers stability, a salary, and the comfort of predictability in an environment of uncertainty, yet it also reflects the limitations of a system where opportunity depends on proximity to the center. Libya's economic crisis is therefore not only about wealth or productivity—it is about how power and decision-making are distributed across the country.

Local governance sits at the heart of this question. When people speak of decentralization, they often describe it as an administrative process, but in truth it is an economic one. A municipality that cannot raise or spend its own resources cannot shape its development priorities or respond to citizens' needs. Over-centralization has left local councils functioning as intermediaries for ministries in Tripoli rather than as engines of local development. True economic reform, and the revival of local opportunity, will depend on granting municipalities the economical space to act. Economic

decentralization—giving local bodies the authority to mobilize revenue and manage expenditure—is not a technical adjustment but a cornerstone for balanced growth. When local authorities can plan and finance projects independently, they expand services and build the confidence that comes from seeing progress close to home.

Libya already possesses a legal foundation for this transformation. The Local Administration System Law outlines a variety of potential municipal revenues, from service fees and public market rents to proceeds from local transportation and utilities. Article 27 empowers municipal councils to propose or amend such fees, and Article 52 calls for executive regulations to define their application. Yet these powers remain largely symbolic. The Executive Regulation effectively shifts financial control back to central ministries, limiting the economic independence that municipalities require. There have been modest steps forward—ministerial decrees in 2014 on markets, cemeteries, and sanitation utilities offered a glimpse of what local revenue generation could look like—but such measures are fragmented

and insufficient. The system continues to revolve around central transfers and permissions, leaving most municipalities dependent on the state (Ministry of Local Governance) for every expenditure.

The Draft Constitution attempts to address these shortcomings. Article 159 explicitly recognizes two categories of municipal resources: centralized allocations and self-generated revenues. It also introduces a crucial principle—every competence transferred from the central government must be accompanied by the necessary financial resources. This idea is vital. Without funding, responsibility becomes an empty gesture. A municipality can only function effectively if it retains a fair share of the taxes and fees collected within its borders, allowing it to reinvest in local priorities such as infrastructure, education, and employment. However, obstacles remain. Article 176 of the current financial system requires local revenues to be deposited into the national treasury before they can be spent, effectively stripping local units of control. Weak tax bases, vague expenditure rules, and the absence of transparent transfer mechanisms all compound the problem, turning decentralization

into a principle more often discussed than practiced.

The question of the financial decentralization power is not abstract; it has direct social consequences. Young Libyans across towns and small cities are willing and able to work, yet their communities lack the institutional capacity to turn that energy into development. If municipalities could access and allocate their own resources, they could create programs that directly address unemployment—small business, or local service projects. The problem is not a shortage of talent or ambition but the absence of local space to act. A council that can retain even a modest share of its market fees could reinvest them in vocational training or youth-led enterprises. In turn, such local initiatives would generate employment, increase municipal revenue, and rebuild the relationship between citizens and their institutions. Decentralization, in this sense, is a process of trust: trusting communities to manage their own development.

Of course, decentralization must balance autonomy with accountability. Articles 160 and 161 of the draft constitution address this by permitting only subsequent oversight to ensure

legality and quality standards, rather than requiring prior approval from central authorities. This distinction matters. Oversight should guarantee transparency, not paralyze local initiative. Central ministries should set policy and safeguard equity, but municipalities must be allowed to innovate. The goal is coordination, not control. Without that balance, Libya risks replicating the same inefficiencies that have long undermined service delivery and local development.

The transition toward genuine financial decentralization will take time and capacity. It requires a central state capable of managing macroeconomic policy, clear laws defining expenditure responsibilities, and transparent mechanisms for transferring funds between levels of government. It also requires training, data systems, and the gradual building of trust between citizens and institutions. Yet delay carries its own risks. Every year that decisions remain concentrated in Tripoli, inequality deepens between regions, and migration toward the center increases.

Libya's recovery will not emerge from a single center of power. It will come from hundreds of active

local economies—each capable of creating jobs, delivering services, and restoring confidence in public life. Decentralized economic autonomy is not an accounting exercise; it is an act of empowerment. For a generation that has grown up watching opportunity drift toward the capital, bringing the economy home is both a necessity and a promise. Development begins when every community has the power to act, and the story of Libya's renewal will be written not in ministries but in its municipalities.

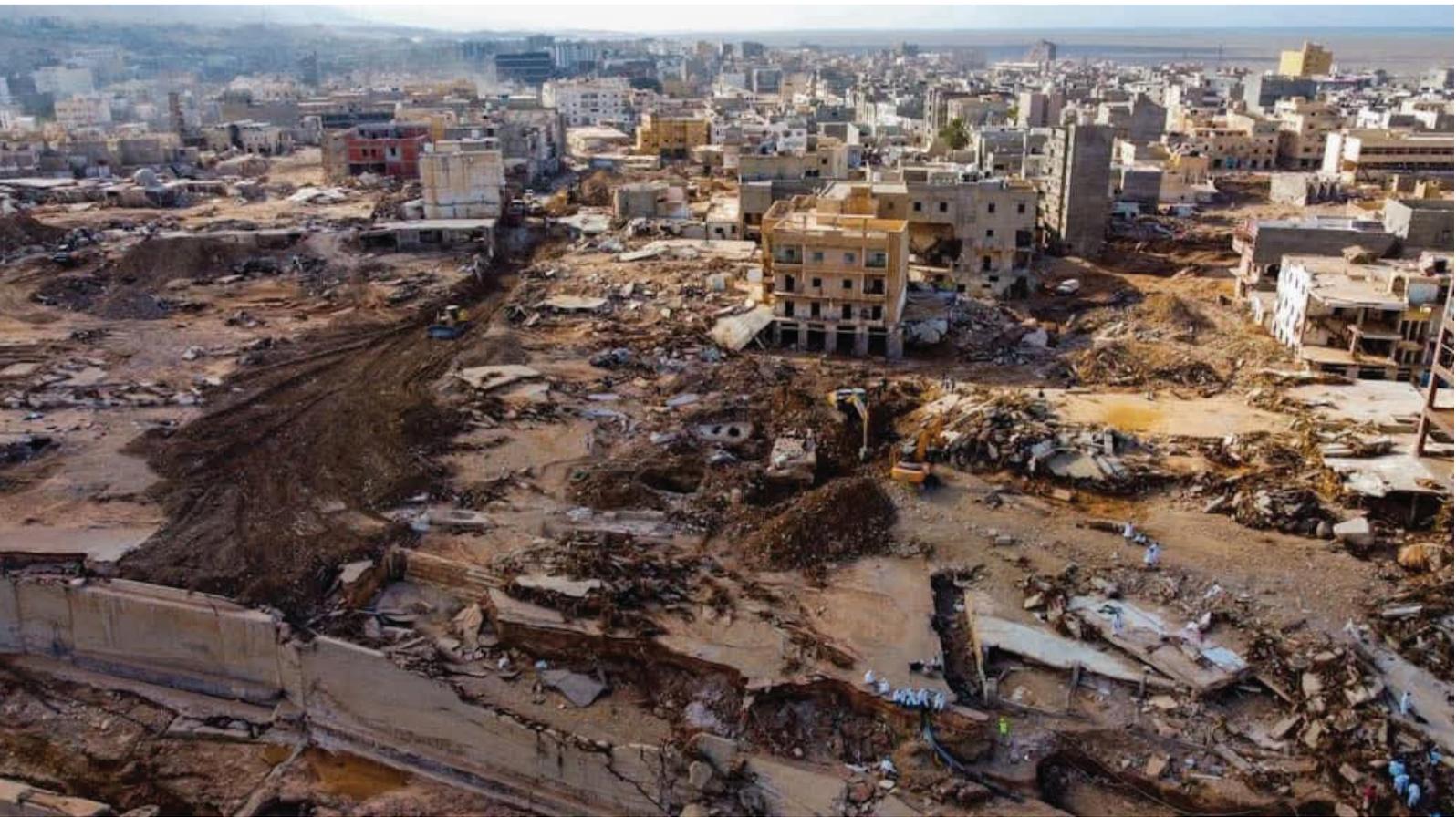
Bio

Odai BenGered is a humanitarian and legal professional with a Master's in International Law and Governance from Liverpool John Moores University. His work focuses on governance, peacebuilding, and access to justice in conflict-affected contexts. With extensive experience in community safety, youth engagement, and policy research, he contributes to advancing inclusive governance and sustainable peace across Libya and similar transitional environments.

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From Climate Challenges to the Birth of a Political Voice for the Next Generation

By Yasmin Elahmar



Photos © äċĵä djĵ - fazeat daranih, Derna flood disaster, 2023

The current Libyan narrative is often drowned out by the noise of political and economic struggle. Yet beneath this surface lies a quieter and more urgent reality that compels us, as researchers and activists, to pay

attention: the existential challenge of climate change.

As a geologist and environmental activist from Tripoli who has devoted her youth and career to

understanding the soil and water of this land, I no longer see these issues as secondary or technical. They are the force shaping the consciousness of the next generation and the foundation on which its political and social voice will emerge.

It Begins with the Land, Where Water Cries Out

My interest shifted from academic curiosity to civic commitment in 2021, while I was working on my graduation project. It was not just an assessment of groundwater quality; it became a field journey that revealed a painful truth in Tajoura. The results showed severe groundwater depletion and seawater intrusion—a direct threat to residents who depend on private wells because the Great Man-Made River does not reach them.

This reality left me deeply unsettled. How can we speak of building state institutions or living in peace while the very basis of life itself is being eroded?

That simple question, born from a single water sample, turned into a lasting conviction: that civic contributions grounded in science are the only way to achieve sustainable development and preserve our resources for future generations. From that point on, I

began to see my role as both citizen and researcher, searching for sustainable solutions.



My story is not unique. It reflects the experience of an entire generation of young Libyans who have realized that the environmental crisis in Libya is not an accident, but the result of three interlinked challenges that test the country's governance: water scarcity, desertification, and urban fragility.

Environmental Challenges as a New Form of National Security

Water scarcity. Libya depends almost entirely on groundwater. The Great Man-Made River is our lifeline, but as geologists we know that this aquifer is non-renewable in the long term. Every cubic meter pumped today is taken from the future of our

children. Climate change worsens the situation, with higher temperatures and increased evaporation. The real danger is that competition over limited water resources could become fuel for local conflicts—forcing young people to think politically about survival itself.

The question is simple: how do we ensure fair and transparent governance of our most vital resource? The call for water efficiency and sustainable technology is no longer an environmental slogan. It is a matter of national security and collective destiny.



Desertification. This is not only the advance of sand over farmland. It is the erosion of rural identity and the loss of livelihoods. As fertile land shrinks, dependence on imports

grows, and farmers are forced to migrate to cities. This puts enormous pressure on both the urban environment and the social fabric. When young people watch their heritage and natural surroundings disappear through neglect and lack of planning, they feel a deep sense of responsibility and begin to demand serious legislative measures to protect the land.

Urban fragility and climate justice.

Most Libyans live along the coast. Disasters such as the Derna floods revealed a painful truth: we live in fragile cities with decaying infrastructure, unable to withstand extreme weather events intensified by climate change. When a dam collapses or a road washes away, it is not merely an engineering failure. It is a failure of climate justice, and of governance that places citizens' safety last.

This is where the political transformation begins. Demanding resilient infrastructure and proactive disaster management—as we consistently advocate through the Libyan Organization for Environmental and Climate Action (LICAQ)—is not just a technical or service request. It is a political statement calling for accountability, transparency, and governance based on scientific foresight.

The Next Generation Finds Its Political Voice

Linking environmental issues to youth political awareness is inevitable. We, the generation that has lived through conflict and division, have found in the climate crisis a new common ground for change. Environmental threats are universal. They do not distinguish between region or tribe. They unite us in a shared fate.

Moving from victims to active citizens, the frustration caused by environmental neglect becomes a driving force for engagement. We do not stop at complaint or criticism; we seek to be part of the solution. This is the essence of civic **responsibility**—pushing for a new agenda where young people compel institutions to integrate environment and development into the political and economic mainstream, not treat them as side issues used for image or propaganda.

Turning Risk into Opportunity

Sustainable development in Libya requires a comprehensive approach that transforms environmental risks into opportunities. It must be led by young people and supported by national and international partners.

During our “70 Days for the Environment” project, organized with the City Scouts and LICAQ, I saw how training and awareness unleash creativity. Young people need the tools and knowledge to turn awareness into practical initiatives. We must reaffirm that caring for the environment is not a choice—it is a national duty.

Libya is blessed with abundant solar energy. Investing in renewable energy is not only about meeting climate commitments; it is also our greatest economic opportunity to create green jobs for youth, reduce dependence on fossil fuels, and build a more resilient economy. This transformation is strategic, and our generation must fight for it politically and economically.



We must also strengthen decentralization in managing natural resources, empower local communities, and provide accurate

scientific data to monitor climate change, assess drought trends, and plan for disasters. These tools allow young people and civil society to hold institutions accountable based on facts, not rhetoric.

A Message for Libya

We are living through a critical stage that demands giving up personal interests for the sake of the common good. Real peace, in my view, is not simply the absence of war. It is a state of harmony, cooperation, and mutual respect that allows security and stability to prevail—and for society to prosper under their protection.

To the youth: you are the hope and the future. Change is in your hands. Do not stand by as environmental challenges threaten your country. Seize every opportunity for civic participation, be part of the solution, and demand sustainability as a fundamental democratic right.

When the voices of young people join those of leaders and thinkers, we can build a genuine platform for dialogue. Only by linking today's environmental and geological challenges to our political vision for the future can we build a more just, sustainable, and resilient Libya for the generations to come.

This is our moral commitment. This is our national duty.

Bio

Yasmin Elahmar is a hydrogeologist and environmental activist from Tripoli. As a geological researcher and trainer in climate and environmental awareness, she focuses on sustainable water management and youth engagement in environmental protection. She is also a founding member of the OpenStreetMap Association Libya and Head of the Libyan branch of the World Food Forum FAO.

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IV

Cultural Memory & Preservation

Preserving Libyan Archaeological and Cultural Heritage for Future Generations

By Sarah Shennib



Photos © Libyan Heritage House

It is well known to the Libyan people that Libya has been blessed with a plethora of edifices, monuments, and archaeological sites of historical and cultural significance worthy of popular interest. Internationally, academic historians and archaeologists are well aware that

Libya is home to numerous World Heritage Sites and many lesser-known sites demanding further academic research and analysis. What is less clear, however, is how Libya can protect, preserve, restore and open these remarkable sites for the benefit of all Libyans and

interested members of the international community in the face of the many challenges confronting the country in its second decade following the 2011 revolution.



Libyan treasures: Libya is home to five UNESCO-listed World Heritage Sites: Leptis Magna, Sabratha, Cyrene, the rock-art sites of Tadrart Acacus, and the old town of Ghadames, as well as many other sites yet to be officially listed but of great importance and worthy of attention for further academic study and popular enjoyment, including the archaeological sites of Ghirza (Marj), Olbia (between Marj and Bayda in Cyrene), and the cave of Haua Fteah (in the Green Mountains of Cyrenaica). The urban areas of Libya are also home to a vast treasure of heritage sites: from Tripoli's Roman triumphal arch of Marcus Aurelius and the Ottoman edifices of the old-town medina to the evocative but architecturally significant Italian colonial buildings found in Benghazi, Libya's cities house a wealth of monuments and structures of

historical and cultural significance. Recent Roman and Greek archaeological finds uncovered in Derna, Zawiya and Shahat in the aftermath of Storm Daniel have shown that there is much left to discover.

Current situation: In recent years, Libya's wealth of archaeological and cultural heritage has faced escalating pressure as political fragmentation, intermittent conflict, economic challenges and environmental stresses have combined to create an exceptionally difficult environment for heritage conservation work. The primary challenges facing Libyan heritage conservation work are as follows:

- **Political fragmentation and periodic conflict:** Intermittent instability has complicated access to sites, particularly for international teams, disrupting the ability to perform regular observation, monitoring and routine protective actions at sites of archaeological and cultural significance. Difficulties relating to travel, visas, and permitting faced by international teams act as obstacles to providing Libyan academic and specialist conservation workers with in-situ support. These barriers make training and knowledge transfer to Libyan teams conducting research, documentation, remediation and

restoration critically important, as travel restrictions and budget constraints often limit external support.

- **Environmental stresses:** Libya's severe environment adds to the challenges of conserving its heritage sites. Along the Mediterranean coastline, sites must withstand salt-laden winds, humidity, and the accelerating impacts of climate change, including increasingly intense precipitation. The deluge experienced by Derna and the surrounding area during Storm Daniel in 2023 is a case in point. Such extreme weather destabilizes terrain and has a deleterious effect on ancient masonry. Further inland, desertification and temperature fluctuations accelerate the weathering of stone.
- **Economic strain:** Libya's current economic challenges limit the commissioning of much-needed conservation projects to the essentials, which usually focus on the five UNESCO World Heritage Sites. A lack of adequate funding renders systematic monitoring and preventive conservation measures, as well as the training and retention of specialist local personnel required for long-term conservation, difficult to sustain. Poor economic prospects also stimulate the black market for

antiquities and encourage illicit excavation and trafficking, particularly in remote locations where oversight is weakest.

- **Geographic scope:** Libya's heritage sites are spread across a large geographic area, and preservation needs far outweigh the current personnel resources available, particularly in the more remote regions of the country.



The role of Libyan cultural organizations:

Within this challenging context, the work of Libyan cultural organizations has taken on heightened urgency in both raising awareness of issues and funding and managing the execution of preservation projects by connecting local and international universities, conservation bodies and technical experts to form partnerships for the transfer of conservation and restoration skills, joint research projects and publications and jointly developed conservation best-practice

guidelines. These efforts help ensure that conservation initiatives remain ongoing even when travel for international stakeholders is restricted or complicated.

It is in this sphere that the Libyan Heritage House seeks to chart a pragmatic path forward by mobilizing local knowledge and engaging the Libyan and international communities to work together on targeted conservation initiatives. Founded in 2020 with funding from the National Council on U.S.-Libya Relations (NCUSLR), a U.S.-based 501(c) nonprofit organization, Libyan Heritage House (LHH) is a cultural initiative dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Libya's historical, environmental, and cultural heritage. One of LHH's key mandates is to fund and oversee projects for the preservation and restoration of Libyan archaeological sites of historical and cultural significance.

Amongst LHH's recent conservation initiatives was remediation work at the archaeological site of the Agora, the main public square at Cyrene, the ancient city set in the uplands of the Green Mountains of Cyrenaica. The ancient city of Cyrene is one of Libya's most captivating sites: the ruins of its streets, houses, theatres, and temples are invaluable evidence of life during the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine periods. It is also listed

as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Danger due to its open access and ensuing vulnerability to destruction, defacement and theft. As part of LHH's initiative, partnering with the Libyan team of Eternal Libya (ليبيا الخالدة), vandalism at the Agora were remediated, destructive vegetation was removed and roots destroyed and a secure perimeter and security monitoring system were installed to deter further unauthorized access and potential damage. Libyan Heritage House's future conservation endeavors will also focus on remediation and restoration work at archaeological sites at the Byzantine city of Olbia, located in Cyrenaica between Marj and Bayda, and on remediation of damaged edifices of cultural significance in Derna and the greater Benghazi area.



In addition to ongoing efforts to physically preserve and safeguard Libyan archaeological and cultural sites, future mandates will focus on documentation, which is a cornerstone of preservation work. These include the preparation of a comprehensive database of heritage

sites that extends beyond a summary of the usual sites of archaeological significance to include items of historical cultural significance found across Libya, such as war cemeteries and memorials, graves of national leaders, edifices of significance from different periods of occupation, including Ottoman and Italian buildings, mosques, churches and other religious sites and other monuments and artifacts of cultural significance (such as the remains of the American Lady Be Good B-24 bomber, whose 1943 disappearance captivated the international community). High-resolution photography, condition mapping and monitoring by drone surveillance can allow conservation teams to track changes over time and prioritize interventions where staffing and financial resources are scarce. In short, in-depth documentation and recording, while not particularly exciting, enables conservation teams to triage the most urgent preservation work and respond more efficiently and effectively.

It is hoped that by undertaking this initiative to prepare a comprehensive catalogue of Libya's diverse heritage sites, charting their locations, respective conditions and needs, and producing high-grade videographic documentation, we will assist Libyans and interested parties within the international community in attaining a heightened awareness of Libya's cultural and historical assets,

encouraging the formation of practical, collaborative preservation strategies that yield tangible progress in protecting these sites, even when circumstances are difficult.

Society must take a long view when deciding whether to allocate resources toward cultural preservation, particularly when there are many valid causes competing for funding. The protection of Libyan heritage sites depends on a shared belief among the public that the benefits of heritage extend beyond economic value to include civic, educational, and emotional benefits to the Libyan, and global, community.

Bio

Sarah Shennib is the Managing Director and Editor of the Libyan Heritage House, a cultural initiative dedicated to preserving and promoting Libya's historical and archaeological heritage. She leads projects focused on conservation, documentation, and international collaboration to safeguard Libya's cultural legacy.

www.libyanheritagehouse.org

V

Civic Innovation & Youth Prototypes

Design Thinking: Rethinking Problems, Redefining Possibilities

Insights from the Libya 2030 Future Lab

Editor's Introduction

In a country where challenges often seem too complex to solve, Design Thinking offers a different starting point rooted in empathy, creativity, and collaboration. It is not just a method but a mindset: a way of looking at problems through the eyes of the people most affected by them and turning constraints into opportunities for innovation.

Unlike traditional problem-solving approaches that begin with resources or policies, Design Thinking begins with people. It asks a simple but transformative question: What do they need, feel, and hope for? By combining human-centered insights with creative experimentation, it enables communities to prototype change, even in contexts of uncertainty.

Through the Libya 2030 Future Lab, this approach became a living experiment in civic innovation. A total of 905 young Libyans from across the country registered to participate. From this impressive number, more than 100 participants were selected, representing all three regions: East, West, and South - bringing together a diverse mix of disciplines, ideas, and aspirations.

During the prototype phase, nine youth-led initiatives emerged, each addressing themes such as climate resilience, civic participation, and inclusive governance. From these, three outstanding projects were selected for further development and publication in this magazine. Yet every idea that emerged was a testament to the creativity, courage, and determination of Libyan youth, proof that innovation flourishes wherever people come together to imagine better futures.

The Future Lab workshops were conducted in cooperation with TrENDi, an initiative of the University of Vechta, under the workshop leadership of

Antonieta Alcorta Rosales, lecturer and researcher in the Department of Sustainability, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation. With over 15 years of experience in civic engagement, education, and innovation, she has trained and mentored students and young professionals across Europe and beyond in Design Thinking and collaborative problem-solving.

For Libya's next generation, Design Thinking is more than a tool. It is a way to reclaim agency. It empowers young people to see themselves not as observers of change but as its designers, shaping the Libya they want to live in.

*You can learn more about what **905 young Libyans** envision for their country's future, their hopes, challenges, and ideas for change, in the *Libya 2030 Future Lab Report*, available on our website: libyschegemeinde.org.*

SABA: Youth-Led Solutions for Water-Smart Farming

By Fatima Lamine Ayad & Abdela Almohaimen Khanfer



We are a group of young innovators from Eastern Libya determined to address the growing agricultural and environmental challenges of our country through sustainable technology. Our project, SABA, tackles one of Libya's most pressing issues, water scarcity and inefficient irrigation; which severely affects agricultural productivity, food security, and the livelihoods of farmers.

Up to 60% of irrigation water is lost through evaporation and seepage. This not only threatens harvests but also accelerates soil erosion and deepens rural poverty. For young Libyans facing limited economic opportunities and the growing

impact of climate change, the need for innovative, locally driven solutions is urgent.

SABA introduces a bio-based polymer technology that improves water retention in arid soils. More than a technical innovation, it is a social and environmental movement; empowering youth to become leaders in sustainable agriculture, environmental stewardship, and civic responsibility. By combining traditional knowledge with modern methods, SABA seeks to inspire a new generation of climate-literate changemakers and influence national policies for resilient agriculture.

Problem

Rural and semi-arid regions such as Tobruk, Al-Marj, and Ras Al-Hilal face severe water shortages and low irrigation efficiency. Traditional irrigation methods waste vast amounts of water, while the widespread use of non-biodegradable plastics in farming pollutes soil and groundwater.

These problems are compounded by limited access to modern agricultural technologies, low environmental awareness, and weak policy support. Climate change and political instability further constrain innovation. Local farmers often share the same story; declining yields, rising costs, and an uncertain future.

This crisis disproportionately affects youth and rural communities. Without intervention, the agricultural sector's decline will deepen, threatening Libya's food security and pushing more young people toward unemployment or migration.

Ideation & Prototyping

During the Libya 2030 Future Lab workshops, our team applied the Design Thinking methodology to explore solutions to water scarcity. We brainstormed multiple ideas; from drip irrigation systems to

solar-powered wells; and evaluated them by feasibility, cost, and environmental impact.

The idea of SABA polymers emerged as the most effective. These superabsorbent, biodegradable materials store water and release it gradually to plant roots. We developed several prototypes; for home gardens, small farms, and educational demonstrations and tested different polymer concentrations for maximum efficiency and soil compatibility.

Feedback from local farmers played a crucial role. Their insights helped us adapt the product to cultural and environmental conditions, ensuring that it would be practical, affordable, and easy to use even in remote areas.

The Solution

SABA is an eco-friendly polymer that retains large volumes of water, reducing irrigation needs by up to 50% and increasing crop yields by 10–30%. The polymer is applied directly to the soil, forming a gel-like layer around plant roots that slowly releases moisture. Made from natural materials, it breaks down safely without harming the environment.

Farmers simply plow the soil, spray 20–30 grams of SABA per square meter and irrigate once to activate

the polymer. It remains effective for several weeks and can be recharged with minimal water.

Early pilot tests demonstrated a 40–50% reduction in water usage while improving yield quality; proof of both feasibility and potential scalability.

But SABA goes beyond technology. It builds a network of youth-led environmental advocates through the **SABA Ambassadors Network**, which connects changemakers across Libyan cities. Ambassadors raise awareness on smart farming, train local farmers, and link communities with municipalities, ministries, and partners such as the Libyan-German Association.

Through this civil initiative, SABA transforms civic engagement into action, uniting sustainability, innovation, and local participation as foundations for a greener Libya.

Expected Impact and Vision for Libya 2030

The expected impact of SABA is both immediate and transformative. It will save water, boost crop productivity, reduce plastic pollution, and create green jobs. Women and young people will benefit through training programs and new income opportunities in sustainable agriculture.

SABA also aims to train individuals, halve water consumption in pilot areas, and replace at least 20% of non-biodegradable plastics used in agriculture with biodegradable alternatives by 2030.

By empowering local communities, SABA contributes directly to Libya's climate resilience, food security, and national agricultural strategies, turning youth innovation into a pillar of the country's sustainable development.

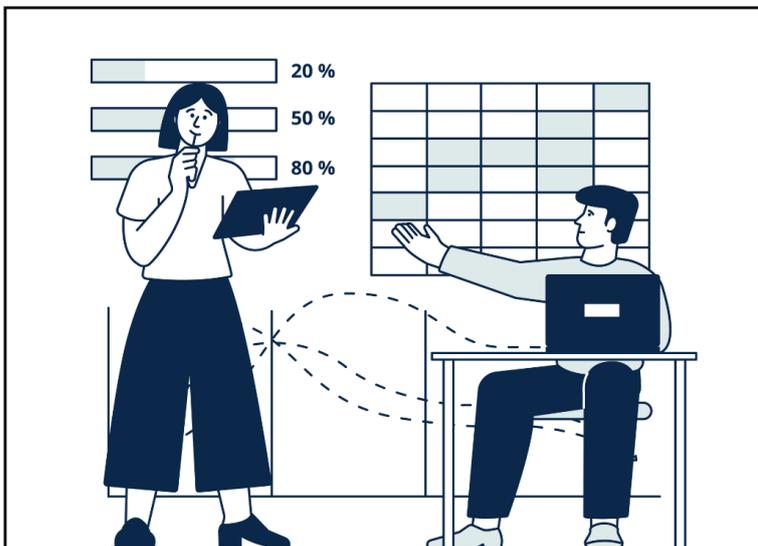
By 2030, Libya will stand as a model for sustainable agriculture in arid regions. Once barren lands will flourish with water-smart technologies, and youth will lead a thriving green economy.

SABA envisions a Libya where each drop of water becomes a step toward shared prosperity, a future where innovation, community, and environmental responsibility form the backbone of national renewal.

Developed by by Fatima Lamine Ayad and Abdela Almohaimen Khanfer – participants of the Libya 2030 Future Lab Design Thinking Workshop (East Region).

The Movement: Developing the Skills of Young Professionals in Libya's Ministries

By Rawasi Omar Ikdeewish, Sarah Sahboun, and Halima Ibrahim



At the heart of Libya's 2030 vision lies a commitment to building the capacity of young professionals across government institutions. Through sustainable, ministry-based training programs, this initiative aims to transform the public sector by fostering innovation, confidence, and accountability.

By equipping young Libyans with modern skills and leadership tools, these programs enable them to navigate challenges, solve complex problems, and participate meaningfully in decision-making. As a new generation of civil servants learns to lead with competence and

integrity, they lay the foundation for more responsive, transparent, and future-oriented public institutions: the cornerstone of Libya's democratic renewal.

A Case Study from the Libya 2030 Future Lab

This project emerged from the Libya 2030 Future Lab – Design Thinking Workshops, led by the Libyan-German Association.

Our team of three participants: a software engineer specializing in UX and innovation, a journalist and international relations collaborator, and a youth development expert and

former legal advisor, worked together to explore one of the country's most overlooked challenges: the lack of professional growth opportunities within Libyan ministries.

While many young professionals enter public service with high ambitions and strong qualifications, most soon face stagnation. In a survey of 123 ministry employees, 71% reported no new skill acquisition in the last five years, and 55% said they were dissatisfied with their jobs. This frustration is particularly strong among those aged 31–40, professionals who should be stepping into leadership roles but remain trapped in repetitive, entry-level patterns.

Nearly 99% of respondents said that structured training and mentorship are essential, yet two-thirds reported that no such programs exist in their workplaces. The result is a cycle of frustration, low motivation, and untapped potential.

From Problem to Prototype: The Design Thinking Journey

Using the Design Thinking framework, our team reframed this challenge through “How Might We” questions and rapid ideation sessions. From over a dozen ideas: mentorships, digital training, team innovation challenges, and job rotation schemes, we synthesized

one comprehensive solution: a Tailored Training and Career Path Program.

This program combines hands-on technical training, soft skills development, and leadership mentoring. It allows young professionals to acquire practical skills and apply them to real projects. Through peer-led mentorship, participants eventually become trainers themselves, creating a sustainable cycle of capacity building.

By shifting from short-term workshops to structured, merit-based growth, the program addresses not only professional stagnation but also institutional inertia.

The Solution: Building a Culture of Learning and Purpose

The proposed training model operates in two phases.

The first delivers high-impact workshops focused on digital literacy, communication, and critical thinking, skills essential for modern governance. Participants immediately apply what they learn to current ministry projects, ensuring that knowledge translates into practice.

The second phase emphasizes direction and purpose: supporting participants to apply their skills strategically, lead new initiatives, and

mentor others. Over time, this creates a self-sustaining ecosystem of trained professionals who drive innovation from within.

Expected Impact: From Frustration to Growth

By investing in Libya's young professionals, ministries can reverse the stagnation cycle and turn frustration into productivity.

In the short term, this program improves morale, reduces job dissatisfaction, and enhances the quality of public service delivery.

In the long term, it strengthens institutional capacity, promotes gender equity in career advancement, and establishes youth as the modern driving force behind Libya's development.

Through continuous peer-to-peer learning and a culture of accountability, this initiative represents more than a training effort; it's a blueprint for how Libya's public sector can evolve into an inclusive, empowered, and forward-thinking space by 2030.

Developed by Rawasi Omar Ikdeewish, Sarah Sahboun, and Halima Ibrahim – participants of the Libya 2030 Future Lab Design Thinking Workshop (West & South Region).

Bedaya Platform: Countering Hate Speech, Disinformation, and Promoting Democracy in Libya

By Maram Fituri, Dua Gadoura, and Suad Kashlout



Since the revolution in 2011, Libya has faced deep political and social fragmentation. Regional division weakened state institutions, and the proliferation of armed groups have all contributed to a crisis of trust and the widespread dissemination of hate speech and disinformation.

With nearly 7.6 million active Facebook users almost equivalent to the country's population, Libya's digital space has become the most influential arena for public discourse. While it allows open dialogue, it also amplifies harmful

narratives that fuel division and undermine democracy.

Against this backdrop, the **Bedaya Platform** was conceived as a youth-driven initiative to counter hate speech and misinformation while promoting democratic values. Through workshops, digital campaigns, and community engagement, Bedaya empowers young Libyans to think critically, communicate responsibly, and become proactive contributors to a more informed, cohesive, and democratic society.

Problem and Context

In today's Libya, social media has become the battleground for public opinion and often for manipulation. Polarizing narratives, particularly during election periods, dominate online discourse, eroding trust and deepening societal divides.

Several structural and cultural factors contribute to this crisis. The absence of clear legal frameworks, weak regulatory institutions, and limited cooperation among stakeholders have allowed hate speech to spread unchecked. Years of conflict and societal fragmentation have normalized hostile and exclusionary rhetoric, especially against vulnerable communities such as migrants.

Media literacy levels remain critically low, leaving youth highly susceptible to manipulation and misinformation. While a handful of fact-checking and awareness initiatives exist, their impact is diluted by fragmentation and the absence of a unifying platform.

As Libya prepares for a new electoral phase under **UN Security Council Resolution 2755 (2024)**, strengthening digital resilience has become a democratic necessity. Initiatives that combine civic education, digital literacy, and community dialogue are vital to protecting public discourse and rebuilding trust.

Ideation and Prototyping

During the *Libya 2030* Future Lab Design Thinking workshops, the team explored how to counter digital polarization through participatory innovation.

Mapping the ecosystem of actors, target audiences, and behaviors around hate speech revealed one insight: any sustainable solution had to go beyond fact-checking, it needed to **educate, engage, and empower**.

From dozens of ideas, including influencer-led campaigns, youth ambassador programs, and interactive learning modules, emerged the concept of **Bedaya** ("Beginning"): a hybrid initiative that merges civic education with digital storytelling.

A prototype followed, including workshop outlines, social media visuals, and interface sketches, tested with 20 young participants. Their feedback shaped the final approach: to use local language, relatable symbols, and interactive elements instead of static information. The result was a platform that feels authentically Libyan, combining digital creativity with civic purpose.

The Solution

Bedaya Platform is a comprehensive initiative integrating online education, creative digital campaigns, and offline community engagement to build a more democratic digital culture.

Core Components: Online sessions focusing on democratic participation, electoral processes, and media literacy. Production of graphics, short videos, and content templates addressing hate speech and misinformation. The flagship campaign, Peace Builders, highlights youth as agents of positive change. Local events with fact-checking initiatives to raise awareness of electoral disinformation and promote constructive civic dialogue. A digital space for young people to share stories, perspectives, and local initiatives, transforming social media into a platform for collaboration.

Already active with over **94,000 followers**, Bedaya's established digital presence ensures visibility, credibility, and immediate impact.

In the short term, the initiative strengthens awareness among youth and promotes constructive dialogue across Libya's regions. In the long term, it contributes to a more resilient digital public sphere, empowering young people, women, and marginalized communities to take ownership of their country's democratic future and foster lasting social cohesion.

Vision for Libya 2030

By 2030, we envision a Libya where young people are critical thinkers,

active citizens, and stewards of responsible digital discourse.

Through initiatives like Bedaya, the country's online spaces can evolve from breeding grounds for division into engines of civic learning, democratic participation, and national unity. In this future, digital platforms amplify inclusion rather than hate — shaping a Libya that listens, learns, and grows together.

Maram Fituri, Dua Gadoura, Suad Kashlout participants of the Libya 2030 Future Lab Design Thinking Workshop (West Region).

VI

Artistic Perspectives

Op-Ed

Visual arts are far more than a form of entertainment; through them, nations have risen, civilizations have been built, and societies have advanced and become more refined.

Art speaks to the heart and stirs emotion. It has always been a beacon of enlightenment, a call to build and progress, a true partner in development, and one of the most powerful tools for elevating people and guiding nations toward greatness.

The noblest values remain rooted and alive because of what great historical artworks embody and preserve. And the future, too, is shaped by the movement of the arts and all forms of creative expression, and by how present and active they remain within society.

On this foundation, visual arts in Libya - past, present, and future - stand as a guarantee of influence, renewal, and cultural growth. They will continue to inspire Libya's promising youth through their collective creative power, advancing the country toward achieving its vision for 2030.

Bio

Dr. Abdalkareem Kndeer is a Libyan academic and visual arts educator whose work bridges art, education, and culture. A former Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Media at the University of Tripoli, he continues to inspire dialogue around creativity, heritage, and the role of the arts in shaping Libya's cultural identity.

The Institution

By Mahmoud Al-fatahli

Bio

Mahmoud Al-fatahli a digital artist and co-founder of Desert Monkeys, passionate about creativity in all its forms, from illustration to visual storytelling.

Instaram: @moodigfx

AS THE "INSTITUTION", WE'RE ASSIGNED TO PUT UP NEW POLICIES TO HELP THE PEOPLE OF OUR BELOVED COUNTY



AND TODAY WE'RE GONNA TAKE ON OUR BLESSED YOUTH, WHO ARE GONNA BE THE CORNERSTONE TO OUR FUTURE.



AS WE APPROCH 2030 AND THE WORLD IS DEVELOPING INTO A NEW ERA OF INNOVATION WE SHOULD FUND WORKSHOPS IN SCHOOLS THAT TEACH TYPEWRITING ON THE COMPUTER TO FIGHT ILLITERACY WHILE KEEPING UP WITH THIS "WORLD WIDE WEB" ERA



WE CAN ALSO INVEST ON THOSE NEW "IBM" COMPUTERS, TO HELP WITH THE WORKSHOPS AND SCHOOLS TOGETHER



CHANCELLOR?



SUCH GREAT IDEAS FROM YOUTHFULL FACES SUCH AS YOURS

CHANCELLOR*

رئيس الهيئة



NOW WE CAN KEEP GOING AND ADDRESS THE REST OF THE AGENDA...

CHANCELLOR*

رئيس الهيئة





THE INSTITUTION TALKS ABOUT THE MARRIAGE FUND



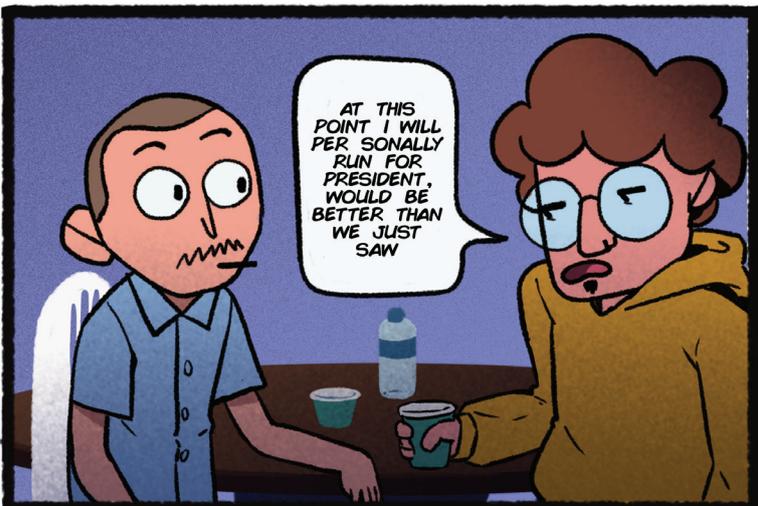
AT LEAST WE'RE GETTING THE "HONEYMOON" FUNDING OUT OF ALL ROLLER-COASTER



FOR THE LOVE OF GOD !!



WHAT WAS THAT!

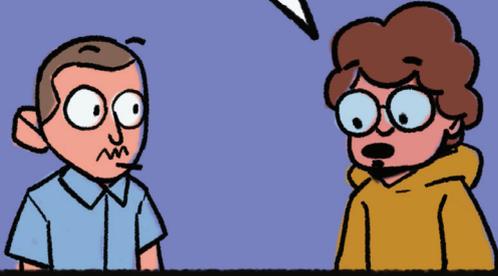


AT THIS POINT I WILL PER SONALLY RUN FOR PRESIDENT. WOULD BE BETTER THAN WE JUST SAW



BUT WE HAVE BASICALLY ZERO KNOWLEDGE ON HOW TO RUN A COUNTRY

CHANGE DOESN'T START WITH EXPERIENCE - IT STARTS WITH INTENTION. YOU DON'T HAVE TO HOLD A POSITION TO MAKE AN IMPACT. EVEN CHOOSING LEADERS WHO CARE ABOUT OUR GENERATION IS ALREADY A STEP TOWARD SHAPING THE FUTURE.



YEEEEAAAHH, I DON'T KNOW, IT'S NOT LIKE WE FIND PEOPLE LIKE THAT FALLING FROM THE



GREETINGS!



MAY I TAKE A MINUTE FROM YOUR TIME, TO ASK WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO WIN YOUR VOTE

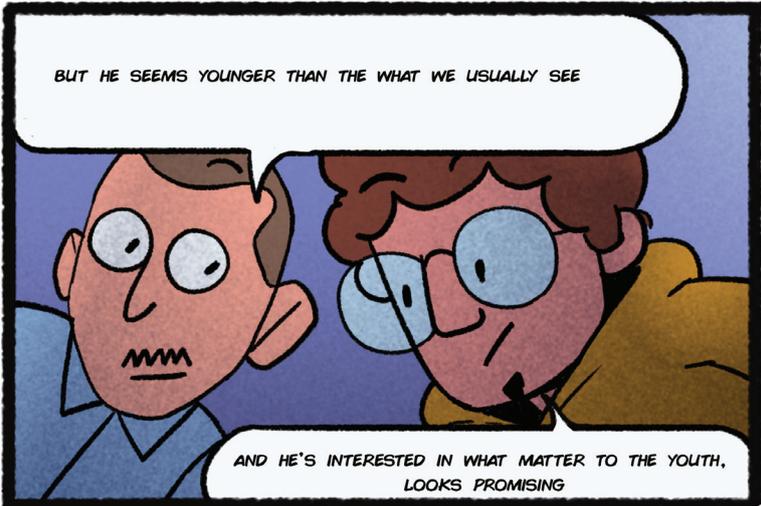


WHERE DID THIS GUY COME FROM?



FEELS LIKE HE WAS SPYING ON US..

BUT HE SEEMS YOUNGER THAN THE WHAT WE USUALLY SEE



AND HE'S INTERESTED IN WHAT MATTER TO THE YOUTH, LOOKS PROMISING

SURE, BUT WOULD LIKE TO ASK WHAT ARE YOU EXACTKY RUNNING FOR?



STUDENT UNION PRESIDENT!



Leave Us the Homeland

By Dr.h.c. Iqbal Abdulrahman Farhat Al Maghribi

In a time when the land of Libya trembled under the roar of cannons, and the lullabies of grandmothers were lost amid the smoke of gunpowder, small voices rose above the sound of war:

No to war. Yes to life.

This is our story: the story of Libya's children, born from the womb of pain, telling of innocence lost and hope that refused to die.

A School, a Dream Deferred

It began as faint whispers from a dark corner, children caught between fear and fragility.

A boy remembers his father's promise of a blue schoolbag, as blue as the sky.

A girl remembers her mother laughing as she baked bread, before silence took her away.

"Why does war take the dolls?" asks a small boy, lifting his toy toward the sky. "Why doesn't it take the guns instead?"

Salim murmurs sadly, recalling his grandmother's words:

"She used to say that when clouds cry, flowers bloom. But now the clouds cry, and nothing grows except smoke."

Amal replies softly, her voice carrying the sorrow of a generation:

"We are not afraid of hardship. We are afraid that life will be stolen from us, that our homeland will be taken away."

The Shoe and the Blanket: The Price of Illusions

Among the children sits a lonely mother, holding a folded baby blanket and a worn man's shoe. Her voice trembles with a pain words cannot contain.

She used to tell her son that the homeland is a kind mother, that he would sleep in peace because "Libya is the watching eye."

The boy grew up on his mother's lullaby, believing that carrying a rifle was the path to manhood.

With a quivering voice she says,

"He joined the armed groups. They told him, 'You are fighting for your country.'

But the country wasn't there.

And he died — deceived."

All that remains is a child's blanket and a man's shoe, a man who thought he was saving his homeland, only to be killed in its name.

In her silent cry, she places all of Libya in the heart of the Merciful, praying that no more children will have to know such loss.

Libya Speaks: Enough Destruction

Out of this pain, the voice of Libya itself emerges, a heart still beating, a mother wounded but unbroken.

In a trembling yet resolute voice, she says:

"I am Libya. I am not a land to be slaughtered for power.

I am a homeland that embraces, not expels.

I build, I do not destroy."

She calls upon her children to return to what they once were:

"I did not ask you to carry weapons, but to carry books.

I did not ask for your death, but for your life."

She pleads with them to plant olive trees instead of landmines, to build fortresses of knowledge instead of trenches, to scatter flowers instead of shells.

The Children's Promise

Then the children step forward, one by one, representing all of Libya's cities.

A boy from Tripoli says:

"I am from Tripoli, the city of light and culture.

I will sow love into my land and build my future through knowledge."

A girl from Benghazi declares:

“No guns. We are all brothers and sisters.

That is what life teaches.”

A boy from Sebha promises:

“I will plant goodness and hope instead of fear.

I will protect my homeland with knowledge, not with the sword.”

The children gather around a glowing map of Libya and raise their voices in one strong chorus:

“We are one — East and West, South and North.

We reject war and destruction.

We will extinguish the fire of cannons and draw our path with pens.”

This Is How We Built the Homeland

In the final scene, after the sad music fades, a melody of hope begins to rise.

All the children return, but this time, they wear the clothes of the future: the doctor, the engineer, the teacher, the police officer, each carrying the flag of their city.

They stand together before a map of Libya, now bright with schools, towers, and fields, and they cry out in one united voice that shakes the heart:

“This is how we built the homeland!”

It is the message of Libya’s children to the world:

That they are the light that will dispel the darkness of war.

That their innocence is the seed from which life will return to a wounded nation.

The future of Libya will be built with pens and books, not with rifles and guns.

Bio

Dr. h.c. Iqbal Abdulrahman Farhat Al Maghribi is a Libyan artist, writer, and journalist from Tripoli. A graduate of Fine Arts, she is committed to human rights, peace, and cultural expression. She was awarded an honorary doctorate (Dr. h.c.) by the Manara International Organization for Peace Ambassadors and the International Organization for UN Volunteers.

Future, In Focus

By Sarah Sahboun

“ Through these images, I show my vision of hope and a better future within our reach, built every day by people through dedication and the desire to learn. ”



© Sarah Sahboun

Picture 1: I chose this photo to show empowerment through resilience. The bright light against the worn wall shows that hope is always active and within reach—my vision for our country's future.



© Sarah Sahboun

Picture 2: This photo represents limitless opportunity and inclusion. The vast blue sky, framed by the old buildings, symbolizes that the horizon for our future is infinitely open, assuring there's space for everyone.



© Sarah Sahboun

Picture 3: This photo highlights how a simple connection sparks empowerment. Seeing people engage with old books shows that real participation comes from sharing knowledge. This everyday exchange shapes our country's future.



© Sarah Sahboun

Picture 4: Individual commitment to grow and learn is what matters most for our country's future. The people busy browsing at the book fair are the simplest proof of that commitment.

Bio

Sarah Sahboun

is a Libyan photographer and Software Engineering graduate whose visual work captures the beauty of everyday life and the subtle emotions within it. Alongside her passion for photography, she is deeply interested in UX design, a field she began pursuing after her team won the Best Mobile Application Award during a specialized development program, an achievement that inspired her to merge creativity with technology.

Instagram:
[@sarrasjournal](https://www.instagram.com/sarrasjournal)

A Place That Fits Me

By: Abdelsattar Al-Mabrouk Masoud

This artwork highlights the importance of inclusion and social diversity, as well as the challenges faced by young people today.

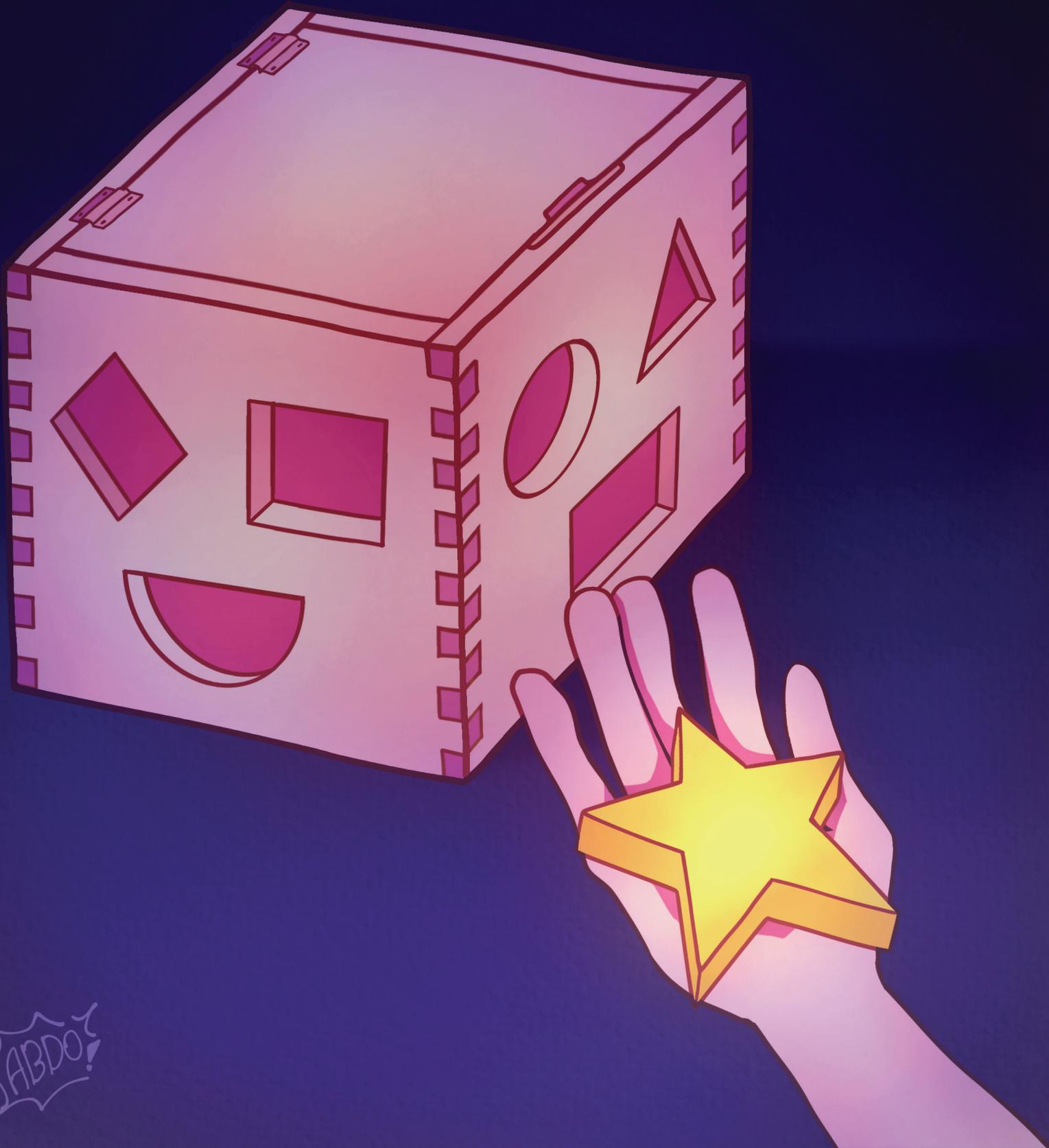
The cube symbolizes a society that is rigid and exclusive: one that accepts only predefined molds and rejects whatever does not fit within them.

The star represents the individual who cannot find a place that suits them within this limited system. Many young people today feel like that star, they possess energy, creativity, and new ideas, but are met with the fixed molds of tradition and conformity.

Bio

Abdo Masoud is a Libyan visual artist and illustrator whose work explores themes of identity, emotion, and social commentary through bold, expressive line art and collage.

Instagram: @art.bdo



ABDO

Paths of Renaissance

By Wafa Abdelsaid

A homeland of pride, though time may turn harsh,
And its steps grow heavy, may God grant it steadfastness.

If it stumbles upon the roads of its awakening,
Souls rise to lift it, clearing away the gloom.

The hearts of its people are bound by love,
Their hands together raised as its banners.

As long as a determined people protect its soil,
There is no fear, as long as loyal guardians stand watch.

Peace be upon this proud homeland of dignity,
That resists time and its trials with resolve.

O land of greatness, source of inspiration,
O qibla of history and dreams.

If the days pass through hardship,
You bloom still, despite the pain.

You shall remain noble as long as your people unite,
And their spirits embrace in peace.

With truth we guard your vows and rise,
Preserving your path with perfect faithfulness.

And if all others around us should divide,
We shall remain of one heart, never apart.

دروب النهضة

كتابة وفاء عبدالسعيد

وطنُ العزِّ إن جَارَ الزمانُ وصارتنا
خطاهُ يُقاله زادهُ اللهُ ثباتنا

إذا ما تعزَّزَ فيهِ دروبُ نهوضه
نهضتْ له الأرواحُ تُجلى الغماتنا

تآخَتْ قلوبُ الناسِ فيهِ محبتهِ
فصارتْ أياديهمُ بهِ راياتنا

وما دامَ شعبُ العزمِ يحمى أرضه
فلا خوفٌ - ما داموا لها حُرّاسا وُفأة

سلامٌ على وطنِ الكرامةِ شامخٍ
يُقاومُ بالعزمِ الزمانَ وعاداتنا

وطنُ الغلا، يا منبعَ الإلهامِ
يا قبلةَ التاريخِ والأحلامِ

إنْ صرَّتِ الأيامُ بالعثراتِ
زدتْ ازدهارًا رغمَ ما بالامِ

تبقى عزيزًا ما توحدَ شعبه
وتعانقتْ أرواحه بسلامِ

بالصدقِ نحميكِ العهدَ ونرتقى
ونصونُ دربكِ بالوفاءِ التامِ

فإذا تفرَّقَ كلُّ جمعٍ حولنا
نبقى على قلبٍ... بلا أنقسامِ
وفاءً وطن

VII

**Foresight: Libya's Future
and the New Social
Contract**

Strategic Foresight: What Libya Owes Its People

By Isra Mohamed



Photo © Abolfazl Ranjbar, shadows and rockets in Iran

In 2025, Libya stands at a crossroads. Political fragmentation, institutional weakness, and civic frustration remain daily realities. Yet beneath this surface of crisis, thousands of young Libyans are imagining a different horizon, one where participation,

inclusion, and trust define the renewal of their country.

For more than a decade, Libyans have been told that rebuilding the nation means holding elections, drafting constitutions, and negotiating power.

But the foundation of a stable and democratic Libya lies deeper. It begins with reimagining the social contract, the moral and civic understanding that defines what the state owes its people, and what citizens owe to one another.

Years of centralized power and exclusion created a culture of dependency rather than citizenship. The revolution opened a window for renewal, but the years that followed often replaced one form of control with another, armed, fragmented, and self-interested. The price has been trust. Rebuilding that trust requires more than institutions; it requires a new civic ethic that restores the dignity of participation, recognizes diversity as strength, and rebuilds solidarity across Libya's regions.

Signals of Change

Even in times of uncertainty, subtle transformations are taking place. Across the country, young people are using digital platforms not only for protest but for dialogue, civic campaigns, and community action. From Derna's cultural sites to Tripoli's neighbourhoods, communities are mobilizing to protect their shared heritage as part of a collective identity.

Women are increasingly moving from symbolic participation to positions of real influence, taking

leadership roles in negotiations, local initiatives, and national debates. In parallel, innovation is quietly flourishing as social enterprises, youth-driven workshops, and design-thinking projects offer practical solutions to problems that once seemed intractable.

These emerging dynamics may still be fragile, but they carry the potential to reshape Libya's civic landscape if nurtured and supported. They are the "weak signals" of a new generation testing the boundaries of possibility.

Strategic Foresight: Scenarios for 2030

Looking ahead, Libya's trajectory could unfold along three broad paths, each reflecting the choices and priorities made today.

1. Fragmented Libya (Stagnation Scenario)

In this future, Libya remains caught in cycles of fragmentation. Institutions continue to compete rather than cooperate, elections are repeatedly postponed, and citizens grow increasingly detached from public life. Young people, disillusioned and restless, channel their energy into migration or silence. The result is a slow erosion of civic trust and a generation disengaged from

shaping its nation's destiny.

2. Negotiated Path (Reform Scenario)

In this more moderate scenario, limited reforms bring partial stability. Local councils and civil society organizations begin to rebuild trust with international support. Progress is visible but uneven, and deep reforms in education, the economy, and justice remain unfinished. Libya moves forward, but cautiously and too slowly to match the urgency of its people's aspirations.

3. Civic Resurgence (Transformation Scenario)

The third path is one of renewal. Transformation is driven from the bottom up, with youth, women, and marginalized groups leading in policy and public discourse. Civic education, digital participation, and cross-regional dialogue become the cornerstones of a new political culture. Libya begins to embody a model of resilience-led democratization in the MENA region, imperfect but real.

Among these pathways, only the third holds the promise of genuine transformation. It is not the easiest, but it is the only one that turns participation from a slogan into a system, a living framework in which young Libyans can design, decide,

and drive change.

From Reform to Renewal

The coming decade will test Libya's capacity to turn potential into purpose. By 2030, more than two-thirds of the population will be under 35. Investing in this generation, in their education, civic engagement, and sense of agency, is no longer a policy choice but a national imperative.

Governance in Libya must begin not in ministries or parliaments, but within communities. Local councils, when empowered, can become laboratories for democratic accountability. Protecting cultural heritage is not simply conservation; it is an act of reclaiming identity, dignity, and shared memory.

True inclusion must extend beyond rhetoric. It means ensuring that women, minorities, and historically marginalized regions are part of decision-making processes. The Libya of 2030 must be built on representation that is both horizontal and vertical, one that balances the voices of all regions while amplifying those of youth and women across them.

What a Future Libya Owes Its People

The future Libya owes its people three things.

First: Justice that is lived, not promised.

Justice is not only the work of courts and laws but of fairness in opportunity, access, and accountability. A young person in Sebha should have the same chance to learn, work, and participate as someone in Tripoli or Benghazi. Justice begins when geography no longer determines destiny.

Second: Participation that is meaningful, not symbolic.

Libya's youth are not a generation to be managed; they are the country's most valuable resource. Participation means more than consultation; it means co-creation. It means building systems that listen, adapt, and respond. When young people see their voices reflected in policies and institutions, they begin to believe again in democracy.

Third: A vision that is shared, not imposed.

Libya's diversity of tribes, regions, languages, and beliefs is not a weakness but the blueprint of a more inclusive state. A shared vision does not erase differences; it organizes them under a common purpose, a nation that belongs to all its people.

If the past decade has taught us anything, it is that peace without participation is fragile, and progress without inclusion is temporary. The path to 2030 will not be easy. But it will be worth it if Libya can finally replace fear with trust, silence with dialogue, and survival with belonging.

The Libya 2030 generation is already proving that this transformation has begun. Through their ideas, their projects, and their courage, they are building a new civic imagination, one that sees Libya not as divided territories but as shared responsibility.

The question now is not whether change is possible. It is whether we will have the wisdom to listen to those already shaping it.

Personal Reflection

Libya 2030 was born from a simple question I could not let go of: what if the future of our country was written by those who will live in it?

I wanted to see what happens when young Libyans from East, West, and South sit together not to debate the past, but to design the future. What emerged was more than a project; it was a community of thinkers, dreamers, and doers who proved that civic imagination is Libya's strongest form of resilience.

Design Thinking and Foresight have always been my favourite strategies in my academic, professional, and personal life for solving complex problems and imagining better futures. Because when people begin to visualize a possible, beautiful future, something shifts: they gain energy, confidence, and a sense of purpose. That spark is what Libya 2030 was meant to ignite.

I wanted to give young Libyans that sense of possibility, to show them that their ideas matter, that they can shape their country's path, and that doors can open if they keep pushing.

As Helmut Schmidt once said, "Who does not speak will not be heard." To the Libyan youth, I say: speak, act, and show yourselves. Because if you don't, others will continue to decide over your heads.

Your voice carries weight. You deserve to stand with confidence, with sovereignty, and with unity, not as second-class citizens of a divided world, but as the rightful authors of Libya's next chapter. It is time to reclaim your narrative, your dignity, and your future.

Bio

Isra Mohamed is a political scientist and economist with a Master's degree in Governance and Human Rights from Leuphana University. She previously worked in Germany in parliamentary affairs and policy research, including positions at the Hamburg Parliament and the Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt Foundation. As the founder of the Libyan German Association and initiator of the Libya 2030 project, she works at the intersection of human rights, youth participation, and democratic governance.

Imprint & Acknowledgements



Libya 2030 Perspectives

A Publication on Youth Participation, Inclusion, and Pathways to Change by Libyan Youth

Supported by:

ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen) through the zivik Funding Programme, funded by the German Federal Foreign Office (AA)

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Hamburg, Berlin, Germany

Tripoli, Libya

Date of Publication:

December 2025

Acknowledgements

This publication would not have been possible without the commitment, creativity, and insight of over one hundred young Libyans who took part in the Libya 2030 Future Lab.

Our heartfelt thanks go to all participants, artists, and contributors who shared their perspectives and helped shape this publication.

We also extend our appreciation to our partners at ifa/zivik and the German Federal Foreign Office for their trust and continued support, and to the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Libya for its collaboration and encouragement in bringing this vision to life.

This publication does not necessarily reflect the views of the Libyan German Association or its partners. The opinions expressed are solely those of the individual authors.



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Libya

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