

Cultural Life in Amman Is it really boring?

How do youngsters in Amman spend their leisure time? A question that was raised in my head after hearing one of them saying that life in Amman is boring!!!! Also what makes me interested in that issue the large number of youngsters that spend most of their free time in café for shisha or just hanging out in their cars with their heads outside the windows!!!

According to the UNICEF report "Too much leisure time" that was published in 2002: One third of all young Jordanians complain about having too much leisure time, particularly young males from the northern and southern region.



With about more than 50 different entertaining place (museums, cultural centers, galleries, contemporary art spaces, fitness centers, cinemas).

Yes, that is not enough for about 40% of the population which represent the single largest population group aged from 12-30 years old- National Youth Strategy of Jordan 2005/2009-, but really there is something missing, so let us investigate that directly from the people themselves.

Lina Ejeilat – blogger, I'm in the deep with the independent musical scene, I attend most of the concert but I don't like to pay, also I sometimes go to film screening.

Also *Rasha Bino – Student*, agreed with Lina "We have a very rich cultural life in Amman; I'm in a place every day. In the past, I did not used to know but by now, because of my work I know everything. The problem is not in the events themselves, but young people in my age do not search, I hardly can convince them to come with me, consider there is a lot of clubs, and youth centers to spend leisure time in something useful.

Hoda Ibrahim – Sales rep. said that she is living in Zarqa but her work is in Amman so she spend a lot of time for transportation only, most of the concerts or the activities took place in Amman which makes it hard for me to attend, she added. So I spend my free time either sleeping or watching TV.

Samer Mansour – young Journalist, seemed to be more moderate, Jordanian youth spend most of their time in cafes and popular modern or in parks and gardens, where they can see each other and smoking Shisha, playing cards etc.....

This does not apply to every young Jordanian There are those who spend time reading or discussing a particular topic or current issues, but they are the elite educated people and often remain somehow isolated from society.

Rana Sweis –Jordanians are unfortunately not readers, they don't read for their leisure, we have

an oral culture; it's about the community, chatting over coffee.



Is it a problem of lack of events or miscommunication?

Dr. Thomas Lier – Director of the Goethe institute, The issue of boring here is relative, Amman still young city that needs more time to make root for culture and it shouldn't be compared to Cairo, there is no opera house, but there is still a lot of things that is going on in the city, we can say there is lack of promotion.

Abdel Aziz Abu Gazala – Sculptor, What we need is to establish a strong relationship between cultural places and among the public. Some centers are open only during the events & then closed which considered a break in the relationship with visitors. Also we need places that are a venue of personal freedom and freedom of expression, a place to escape from the monotony of life and bored.

Khuzima Jaber – PR & Event Manger, Culture must be part of the people's lives and that is why "Darat Al Funun" arranges arts education programs to teach simplified artistic taste without mentioning the difficult theories and there is growing interest from young people now, we call on them to draw even without being

professional artists just to fulfill their internal satisfaction.

One of the things that we need to face is that the press doesn't address cultural subject the way that it makes it closer to the community.

Also by making a small survey among the daily newspapers that is published in Amman, it was noticed that all of them have got cultural supplementary & all of them tends to the criticism & going in depth which can't be understand by normal readers, except for "Al Ghad" newspapers that deals with cultural life in a simple way that makes it closer to the reader but it is still one among the others.

And on the side of private media, Amman has got two guides; w2go & Jordan today but they concentrated on the tourist aspects.



Really what makes me happy about the coming days is what Mr. Raed Asfour told me that "El Balad theater" is planning to issue a monthly newsletter that will be specialized in the cultural life & youth initiatives including articles, photos, short reviews about artists, exhibitions....etc., which will certainly create a good connection between the cultural places & the audiences.

Ahmed Esmat - Egypt

Resources:

- 1- "The Youth Survey report"
published by UNICEF
Jordan in 2002.
- 2- "National Youth Strategy for
Jordan 2005-2009" report.