2020 Brought Extraordinary Challenges: a GLOBAL PANDEMIC, ECONOMIC CRises, NATURAL DISASTERS, CONFLICT and CIVIL UNREST leading to a DANGEROUS RISE in INEQUALITY, FOOD INSECURITY, and POVERTY. - but - THANKS TO OUR DONORS the NEAR EAST FOUNDATION has MET THIS MOMENT with ADAPTATION, RESILIENCE, INNOVATION and CONTINUED IMPACT.
It is due to your immeasurable commitment and generosity of spirit that I am able to report proudly that 2020 was a critical year of meaningful impact. In a year where our global community experienced extreme hardship and overwhelming loss, you helped NEF to make sure that communities most marginalized and affected by the impacts of far-reaching economic and health crises are not forgotten.

2020 was a year of adaptation, resilience, innovation, and impact — providing direct support to 878,246 people. The disruptions we faced challenged us to become ever more creative in our programmatic approach and operational efficiency. This has ensured that we can provide critical services to marginalized communities across the Middle East, northern Africa, and Caucasus, while maintaining progress in protecting livelihoods, improving incomes, ensuring food security, and preserving healthy communities.

Building on our 106 years of experience straddling the humanitarian aid/development nexus, we remain focused on community-centered, sustainable programs that move people from a reliance on short-term emergency aid toward long-term self-sufficiency.

It is unquestionable that the support of our donors and partners has enabled us to realize our mission during times of great need. I hope you will share a sense of pride in the achievements made by our collective action over the past year.

Thank you for your commitment to a better and more equitable future.

With sincere gratitude,

Charlie Benjamin
NEF President & CEO
Locally Led Development

We draw on more than 100 years of experience creating locally led and owned solutions to improve livelihoods and governance. 99% of our team are local to the communities they support.

Partnering for Progress

NEF partners with local and international private, public, and civil society actors to make a sustained impact on underserved communities. In 2020, we partnered with more than 400 local organizations, building their capacity to deliver effective livelihoods services.

Ensuring Inclusivity

We prioritize the empowerment and protection of women, youth, people with disabilities, displaced populations, and other marginalized groups across our programs.
Shaping Brighter Futures

We believe that all people should have equal opportunities to build and sustain safe, dignified lives. To achieve this vision, we help people and communities move beyond survival by providing them with resources and tools to achieve a better future.

2020 Impact

Through community-driven action, NEF’s programs support marginalized and disenfranchised people across three interlinked program areas.

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<td>NEF builds economic and social resilience through entrepreneurship, employment, microfinance, peer mentoring, and social support.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peacebuilding and Stabilization</td>
<td>NEF supports economic recovery and facilitates peace and stability in conflict and post-conflict communities through civic engagement and economic cooperation.</td>
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<td>Climate Resilient Development</td>
<td>NEF facilitates climate adaptation, governance, and resilience-building to improve food security, livelihoods, and natural resources management.</td>
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$12.9 M Funds Raised
21 Projects Supported
878,246 Lives Changed

Every $14 Raised = 1 Life Changed
Responding in Times of Crisis

Global Pandemic
At the outset of the pandemic, we collaborated with local partners, health committees, and governments to incorporate COVID-19 education and safety protocols into existing initiatives. Our team launched business adaptation & recovery initiatives and an online training platform to help small entrepreneurs protect their livelihoods by ensuring business continuity, rapid adaptation, and enterprise resilience.

Conflict in Armenia
After the outbreak of the Nagorno-Karabakh war, we launched a rapid response program to build the capacity of local NGOs and community facilities in Syunik, Gegharkunik, and Yerevan to address emergency needs. So far, we have helped 623 conflict-affected people through the distribution of food, hygiene kits, warm clothing, bedding, financial support, and other essential items and services.

Beirut Port Explosion
After a damaging explosion shook Lebanon’s capital, we mobilized with local partners to support small business recovery, shelter rehabilitation, and employment in vulnerable, impacted communities. We’ve helped 130 small businesses to recover losses and resume business activities. 130 skilled workers are also supported to recover lost materials and secure employment, working on repair projects in impacted areas. Our response evolves as we address the impact of the explosion in addition to the ongoing economic and refugee crisis in Lebanon.

Food Crisis in Sudan
To address the food and health crisis in Sudan, we worked with partners to distribute more than 28,000 metric tons of food in South Kordofan and to support women’s vegetable production and sale. In parallel, we worked with the Ministry of Health to activate local hygiene committees, upgrade water/sanitation infrastructure, and provide training and protective gear against COVID-19.

As crises struck NEF partner communities, we leveraged our networks, local knowledge, and tested tools to support critical emergency responses and early recovery.
Building Economic & Social Resilience

Creating Stronger Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

NEF takes a whole systems approach to building healthy entrepreneurial ecosystems, working with the private sector, financial sector, academia, government agencies, and professional associations. In Morocco, we worked with business incubators, Emerging Business Factory and Creative Hub, along with other key stakeholders to improve business services offered to more than 260 enterprises, including 50 youth-led “gazelles” (high growth potential businesses). This effort created more than 350 full-time jobs and has mobilized $3.5M in business finance and investment.

Across Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon NEF’s Siraj Centers offer tested and adaptable services for foundational business development and enterprise acceleration, with an eye toward diversifying and strengthening the market – last year creating 3,069 new jobs. A network of 15 Centers across the region now operate under a shared set of principles, share information and learning, generate wider evidence of impact, and are paving the way for programmatic self-sufficiency.

Inclusive Finance

Access to finance is a barrier to growth for many vulnerable entrepreneurs and is critically needed to reduce poverty and reliance on humanitarian aid. NEF designs tailored lending products for hard-to-reach, vulnerable entrepreneurs in dynamic, high threat environments. In parallel, we offer business strengthening services, peer-to-peer mentorship, and small group coaching to support business growth, loan repayment, and women’s leadership.

In 2020, NEF’s community revolving credit fund in Jordan made 82 loans to vulnerable Jordanians, with a 100% repayment rate. In Morocco, we worked with local partners to launch a first-of-its-kind digital financing platform, Tamwil, for entrepreneurs looking for business financing. In Northeast Syria, we launched a community-based revolving fund to support business growth for 480 entrepreneurs. And in Mali, we created an agricultural value chain credit fund, ensuring access to finance for 3,364 small-scale producers and processors in key agricultural value chains.

13,906 people with increased income through business expansion
18,934 people trained in financial literacy and business management
4,003 full-time jobs created or secured
Tamam’s Kitchen | Jordan

Tamam received an interest free loan to expand her kitchen and cooking business. “With the additional money, I upgraded my kitchen’s dining room. This enabled me to secure a contract with Azraq Hostel which will bring more customers and tour groups to my kitchen to cook and eat traditional foods.” She also participated in business trainings to develop her skills in marketing and financial planning. Tamam has gone on to become an instructor for more than just tourists: she now coaches three other women in NEF’s projects who want to start their own food processing businesses.

Going Digital

In April 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, NEF expanded its business services to include Siraj Digital - an e-learning platform. Since its launch, we have worked with 11 local partners to co-deliver virtual trainings, graduating 3,372 entrepreneurs in Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Morocco. Siraj Digital is available in Arabic, English, and French and uses technology that is accessible to vulnerable people in complex environments to encourage uptake and wide-scale use.

Nadra’s Grocers | Lebanon

“My life has changed permanently and my children witnessed the change in our way of life. I am proof that a woman can work and help her family.” said Nadra, reflecting on her life after starting her own grocery store. Nadra dreamed of starting her own business to earn enough money to support her children. Her entrepreneurial spirit led her to a NEF Siraj Center where she was helped to make her dream a reality.
Hygiène Pro Services | Morocco

Ranya (center) co-founded Hygiène Pro, a pest control business, with Jaouad (right) in 2018. Even though Ranya and Jaouad offered unique products and services, their business struggled. They worked with NEF to review their business plan, identify key challenges, and make a plan for growth. As a result, NEF helped them redesign marketing materials, provided one-on-one training on marketing techniques, and facilitated market linkages.

When COVID-19 hit, Ranya and Jaouad were faced with new challenges. NEF supported them in developing adaptation strategies to help Hygiène Pro expand its services to respond to the health measures instituted by authorities. Hygiène Pro now offers full disinfection services, approved by the Moroccan Ministry of Health, for businesses reopening after the lockdown in Morocco. Despite the challenging economic times, Hygiène Pro has seen business growth and the addition of new clients, including service contracts with four tourist establishments and food factories.

“With help from NEF, we [Hygiène Pro] were able to secure certificates, create a marketing plan, and expand our services to help enforce health measures and protect against COVID-19.”

- RANYA
Protecting against Climate Shocks

Small-scale agriculture is the primary source of food for rural communities in the Sahel. Smallholders grow crops to provide their families with essential nutrition - but reliable access to water, seeds, and agricultural tools remains a challenge. Increased levels of insecurity and fragility caused by government instability, conflict, and a rapidly changing climate have worsened food security and harmed livelihoods.

NEF partners with civil society, local governments, and communities to develop community-driven initiatives to build climate resilience, protect resource-based livelihoods, and improve food security.

In Mali, we work across 80 communities to support local climate adaptation projects that have improved food security for 114,884 people. In Sudan, we support sustainable agriculture production to protect natural resources and increase food self-sufficiency, reaching 390,778 people in North and South Kordofan.

Community Driven Climate Adaptation

538,066 individuals with improved food security and resilience to climate change

410,140 people with access to safe water

4,160 WASH kits distributed

4,160 WASH kits distributed
Fatoumata, a mother of eight, was eager to improve her income. “I learned a lot from the training workshops and advice from the livestock service officers on best practices. I bought a bull at 150,000 Central African Francs (CAF) and fattened it to resell it for 300,000 CFA, making a 92,000 profit. I could not have made this kind of money in one year of selling mangoes and peanuts.”

Inclusive and Resilient Agricultural Value Chains

NEF works with local associations to advance women’s livelihoods and strengthen their role in agriculture-based livelihoods. We help women strengthen their collective bargaining power and improve their incomes through access to finance, markets, and business management skills.

In Mali, we have supported 9,217 people to adopt more productive, market-oriented, and climate-adapted production and processing practices – improving income and food security in rice, livestock, shallot, non-timber forest products (NTFP), fonio, and sesame value chains. In Sudan, NEF has mobilized 12 women’s cooperatives working in the production of NTFPs and other cash crops such as hibiscus – supporting 2,392 individuals (1,798 women) to improve production, processing, and market access.

Collaborative Natural Resource Management

In Mali, we engage community leaders to develop local conventions and land-use management plans to improve food security, sustainable natural resource management, and conflict mitigation. Last year, we helped communities adopt sustainable management plans and eco-efficient practices to benefit over 43,781 hectares of productive land. We have also formed five Forest Brigades, training 210 people, including women, on forest regeneration, restoration, water and soil conservation and protection. In Sudan, we rehabilitated 85 water points and established 34 water and sanitation committees, training members on improved water management and hygiene practices.

Fatoumata | Mali

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Creating Pathways for Recovery

Creating Opportunities for Economic Recovery

NEF is expanding opportunities among displaced people, returnees, and host communities to accelerate economic recovery, enable safe and voluntary returns, rebuild economies, and build resilience against destabilization. Through its Siraj Centers, NEF is working in conflict-affected communities to create market-driven opportunities for economic participation with the aim of helping people recover their income to meet basic needs and strengthen their local economies.

Key to economic recovery is engaging disenfranchised youth. In Iraq, NEF supports vocational and employability training for 265 young Iraqis in trades linked to rehabilitation of community assets like information and communications technology and local vocational training schools.

In Syria, NEF improved livelihood opportunities and the economic resilience of 2,460 smallholder agricultural producers and food processors. These efforts improved the income of farmers and producers by 712%, on average.

Rebuilding Food Systems

In many conflict-affected communities, food systems have eroded and remain underdeveloped, informal, and unstructured – leading to heightened vulnerability and conflict. NEF works with smallholder farmers and food processors across these communities to rebuild and reinforce food systems to improve production, harvesting, supply chains, and consumption - creating new opportunities for economic recovery and resilience.

In Mali, Sudan, and Syria, we work with women producers in the agriculture sector to improve the processing and packaging quality of their products and to access fairer and more profitable sales channels. Last year, these efforts improved the income of 12,677 conflict-affected people.

340 local organizations with improved capacity for livelihoods services
1,069 infrastructure repairs and upgrades made
5,400 marginalized youth received skills training and social support
Shaha | Syria

“I used to struggle selling my food products using traditional methods. I’ve now seen a big improvement after learning new skills,” said Shaha. After Shaha’s husband was killed in a bombing, she became the sole supporter for their four children. Shaha joined NEF’s food processing training program to improve her income. She learned new ways of processing molokhia, apricots, cherries, makdous and more - improving the quality of her product and gaining the ability to financially support her family.

Mohammed | Iraq

Mohammed’s long-time passion and aptitude for electronics led him to open a small workshop repairing mobile phones. “A friend brought NEF’s program to my attention. I was able to register for courses to improve my skills - technical and entrepreneurial - to take my mobile phone repair workshop to the next level. I am happy with what I have achieved and that I am able to support my community.”
Looking Ahead

With the support of our partners and donors, we are committed to expanding our reach to support more vulnerable people in need, deepening our impact in the communities we serve, and ensuring sustainability through community ownership, technological innovation and new business models.

Financials

NEF is committed to providing the highest levels of transparency and efficiency. See our complete FY2020 consolidated financial report at www.neareast.org/resources/financial-reports

FUNDING SOURCES

- 85% Governments
- 10% Private Contributions
- 3% Foundations
- 2% Other

ALLOCATION OF EXPENSES

- 91% Programs
- 5% Fundraising
- 4% Management and General

2020 TOTAL REVENUE $12,997,784
2020 TOTAL EXPENSES $13,446,458
NET ASSETS
BEGINNING $6,754,351
ENDING $6,305,677
A community of generous donors makes our work possible. We are grateful for every donation we receive and we hope that you will continue to support NEF long into the future.

To see a complete list of donors for the July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020 fiscal year, please visit: www.neareast.org/2020-impact-report
A Trusted Steward of Your Philanthropy for Over 100 Years

91% of donations go directly to supporting our programs

Cost-Effective Programs
NEF delivers high impact programs while keeping our overhead costs low, making the most of your donation. Your support helps build knowledge, strengthen voices, and create economic opportunity for those that need it most.

Charity Navigator
For the 6th year, NEF earned the top 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, America's largest independent charity evaluator. This has been achieved by only 11% of charities in the US.

Global Giving
NEF is recognized as a vetted member of the GlobalGiving community for being a trusted partner and global change-maker.

Better Business Bureau
NEF is an accredited member of the Better Business Bureau, meeting the highest standards for ethics and accountability to ensure confident charitable giving.