



NEAR EAST FOUNDATION  
Annual Report 2014

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# Near East Foundation at 100: Celebrating the Past, Shaping the Future



Near East Relief orphans at Antylas - lesson on the beach, c. 1920s.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of Near East Relief, as the Near East Foundation was known originally, which was created in 1915 to help rescue an estimated 1.5 million Armenian refugees and orphans after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire at the outbreak of World War I. Upon learning of the refugees' plight, President Woodrow Wilson asked his friend and college roommate, Cleveland Dodge, to help raise money for a rescue mission. Dodge pulled together a group of prominent businessmen and politicians to form the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief, which officially became Near East Relief after an act of Congress in 1919.

Through Near East Relief chapters in every major American city and state, thousands of ordinary citizens and school children collected supplies and donated money to a fund that raised \$117 million over 15 years to help a generation of Armenians, Greeks, and Assyrians survive genocide—including 132,000 orphaned children. Nearly 1,000 relief workers

volunteered to go to the region to offer food, medical care, and educational and vocational training for adults and children. This heroic effort marked the first great outpouring of American humanitarian assistance—giving birth to citizen philanthropy, a movement that embodies the idea that average people can make a difference to those in need in far-away places.

What began as an urgent call for humanitarian assistance a century ago has gone on to become one of the most highly respected non-governmental organizations in the world dedicated to transcending national and religious barriers to help vulnerable populations in the Middle East and Africa improve the quality of their lives. Because of its deep relationships and longstanding commitment to the region, NEF is able to work in parts of the globe where few others have been able to succeed. With 100 percent of its field staff native to the countries in which they work, NEF will continue to impact millions of lives for many years to come.

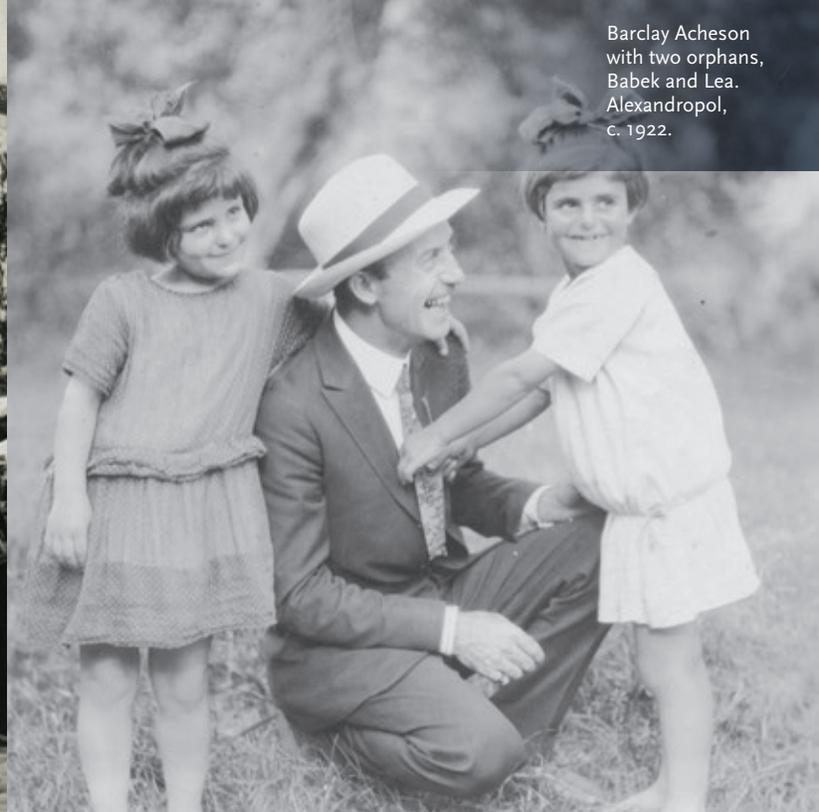
## NEAR EAST RELIEF HISTORICAL SOCIETY

In 2014, NEF created the Near East Relief Historical Society to raise awareness about this important chapter in American history. The Society is dedicated to preserving and reconstructing the relief effort's archives and sharing its remarkable history through a traveling exhibit and comprehensive online museum and archive. It will pay tribute to Near East Relief's founders and relief workers, the beneficiaries of the organization's groundbreaking work, and the humanitarian and philanthropic tradition that endures to this day. The Society's initiatives will ensure that the history of Near East Relief is safeguarded for future generations.

[www.neareastmuseum.com](http://www.neareastmuseum.com)



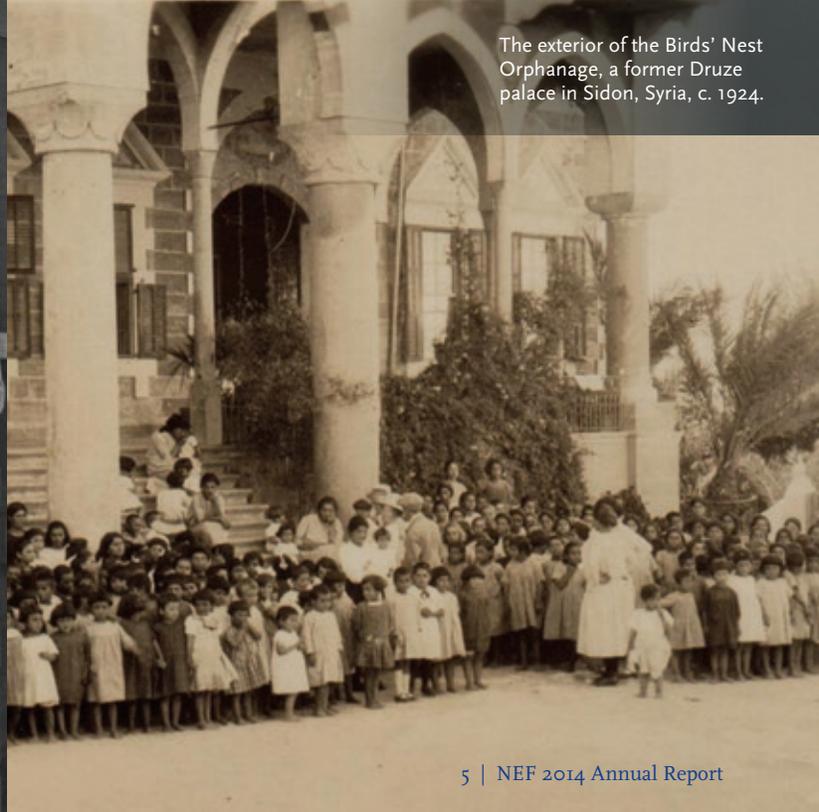
10,000 Near East Relief Orphans Greet You," Constantinople, c. 1921.



Barclay Acheson with two orphans, Babek and Lea. Alexandropol, c. 1922.



Boy shoemakers, Near East Relief orphans, in Jerusalem, c. 1923.



The exterior of the Birds' Nest Orphanage, a former Druze palace in Sidon, Syria, c. 1924.

## A Message from the Board Chair and President

The Near East Foundation was created initially to mobilize assistance for those left destitute by the Armenian Genocide. As immediate humanitarian needs gave way to longer-term concerns of self-sufficiency and resilience, the organization's early leadership and staff pioneered efforts to support communities as they rebuilt and recovered from adversity. One hundred years later, the Near East Foundation (NEF) is driven by the same purpose—to provide vulnerable and disenfranchised populations with the resources and skills needed to thrive and prosper in their own communities and economies. Today, NEF is working to create opportunities for the most vulnerable populations and to bridge divides in nine countries in the Middle East and Africa.

With your support, NEF is helping people throughout the region build better lives for themselves and their families. In Jordan, refugee women from Iraq are launching small businesses to earn an income and achieve self-sufficiency, creating a model for helping other refugees reduce their dependence on foreign aid. We will soon be expanding this work to Lebanon, where Syrian refugees have fled to escape the conflict in their own country. In the West Bank, cross-border economic partnerships between Palestinians and Israelis have resulted in millions of dollars in new income—partnerships that continue to expand due to overwhelming grassroots support. In Morocco, young people are working with local government to create hundreds of new self-sustaining businesses and jobs. Through a first-of-its kind initiative in Armenia, women survivors of domestic violence are developing entrepreneurial skills to help them achieve financial independence and break free from abusive environments.

As we witness another human tragedy unfolding across the Middle East—echoing the circumstances that led to the creation of NEF in 1915—it will take the collective effort of all of us working together to address the challenges that must be overcome to ensure our global welfare and security. On behalf



Shant Mardirossian, board chair, and Charles Benjamin, president, at Lake Sevan in Armenia.

of the Board of Directors and the entire NEF team, we thank you for being part of our work in this historic moment and for carrying on the heroic tradition of citizen philanthropy that began in America a century ago. You can be sure we are doing our best to help build a more stable, sustainable, and inclusive region of the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shant Mardirossian".

Shant Mardirossian  
Board Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charles Benjamin".

Charles Benjamin, Ph.D.  
President

## 2014: EXPERIENCE, COMMITMENT, IMPACT

In 2014, NEF contributed to peace, security, and economic growth during a year when the Middle East and Africa continued to undergo major transitions. The results of NEF's work in the region were real and immediate, with new jobs and businesses created, income increased, and greater food security provided through expanded production. The impacts of NEF's work are also long term. Partner communities have gained new skills, improved governance systems and grassroots collaboration, and grown their economies.

NEF is uniquely positioned in the field. Because it has been a trusted agent of change in the region for a century, NEF has a network of enduring partnerships that allow it to operate where few other organizations can gain access—war-torn communities of South Kordofan and Central Darfur, conflict-weary communities in northern West Bank, and jihadist-occupied areas of northern Mali. NEF staff collaborate with communities to develop creative solutions that help them overcome the complex challenges they face every day.

NEF works within four key program objectives to help these vulnerable groups address their most pressing development challenges:

- Build peace in conflict-affected communities through reconciliation, economic cooperation, and development: NEF teams focus on using the tools of economic development (e.g., value chain development, microenterprise development, sustainable natural resource management), along with livelihood and conflict management training, to promote reconciliation between groups in conflict, and the integration of “at-risk” groups (e.g., young people in peri-urban slums, ex-combatants, internally displaced people).
- Improve food security and livelihoods of family farmers through sustainable agriculture, natural resource management and climate change adaptation: NEF programs in this area focus on development and efficient use of productive assets, with an emphasis on water irrigation and non-conventional water resources. Projects utilize scenario-based planning for resilient agricultural development and natural resource management.
- Build economic and social resilience among vulnerable women through microenterprise development: NEF promotes women's economic independence and social resilience through a focus on entrepreneurship and business management, microcredit, and microfranchises. This work is based on networks that offer business and psychological support.
- Improve the participation of young people in the civic life of their communities and countries: NEF works through civil society groups to recruit, train, and organize young leaders to represent youth interests coherently and constructively and to champion actions that address youth priorities – particularly employment, which is the major preoccupation in areas where NEF currently works.

The following pages highlight NEF's work and impact in 2014.



## OUR WORK

The *Women's Economic Empowerment and Advocacy* (WEEA) pilot project is the first initiative in the country to focus specifically on providing domestic violence survivors with opportunities to earn an income and break free from their abusive environments by starting businesses and entering the workforce. NEF has partnered with the Women's Support Center, which provides counseling and shelter services, and Business Pareta, a leading Armenian business development agency, to place women in entry-level jobs or create microenterprises through start up grants and business training. Women have started microenterprises related to food preparation and processing, cosmetology, and handicrafts.

Building upon this initiative, which was funded by the Open Society Foundation-Armenia and the Bogosian Quigley Foundation, NEF-UK has just launched a follow-on project with funding from the European Union that will expand the program to reach 200 more women in the capital city of Yerevan and three rural Armenian communities.

## DIRECT IMPACT

- 54 women trained in practical business management and job readiness skills.
- 15 women have started businesses and 24 women have secured employment.
- 80 percent of participants have increased economic independence, earning up to \$350 per month (an average monthly income in Armenia).
- 90 percent of participants have increased self-confidence and a more positive outlook about their futures.

## SUCCESS STORY

Soon after 35-year-old Anahit\* learned she was pregnant, she began receiving threats from her partner and his family who wanted her to abort the child. The relentless intimidation and fear made her life unbearable, so she sought protection in a shelter run by one of the Near East Foundation's local partners in Armenia. By the time her daughter was born, Anahit had found work as a manicurist, but now that she had a new baby to provide for, she wanted something more, and joined NEF's Women's Economic Empowerment and Advocacy project. Anahit's background in cosmetology gave her a marketable skill, and through NEF's training sessions, she learned strategic planning and budgeting. With this new knowledge, she acquired a small grant from NEF to start her own laser hair removal business from home—a godsend for a new mother with a baby to care for.

*\*Anahit is a fictional name used to protect her identity.*



A woman entrepreneur prepares frozen Armenian delicacies to sell at market.



A woman creates a variety of knitted items for the small business she started with NEF training and support.



A small business owner prepares Armenian meat pastries for sale in Yerevan.



By selling her pastries at supermarkets across Yerevan, this enterprising NEF partner has achieved economic independence.



A woman entrepreneur and NEF partner proudly displays her newly established kitchenware shop in Zarqa.

## OUR WORK

In a country where millions have sought refuge from multiple conflicts, NEF is helping the largely forgotten group of Iraqi refugees who fled to Jordan over a decade ago. Most have little or no source of sustainable income and are struggling to support themselves and their families. Their protracted displacement in Jordan has depleted their savings and pushed them into increasingly impoverished neighborhoods. The *Enhancing Economic Resilience* project, funded by the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (U.S. Department of State) supports the livelihoods of more than 700 urban refugees and poor members of host communities by strengthening their safe access to income-generating opportunities in the informal sector.

## DIRECT IMPACT

- Four community-based organizations (CBOs) in the city of Zarqa now have safe spaces for women to meet and are delivering gender-sensitive enterprise development programming. CBOs

report improved capacity to respond to the needs of refugees and to create stronger cohesion and harmony between Iraqis and Jordanians.

- 800 women and youth, including young men, were trained in microenterprise development and provided with access to startup capital, business coaching, peer networks, and marketing opportunities.
- 350 Iraqis have used project-provided cash support and vocational training to invest in livelihood activities that include automotive repairs, computer maintenance, tailoring, making beauty products, informal retail/trading, carpet weaving, massage, and art.
- 360 Jordanians have established or expanded enterprises in business sectors that include cheese production, beekeeping, raising chickens, clothes-trading, home-based beauty salons, handicrafts, photography, mushroom production, selling pre-paid mobile cards, sewing, catering, and chocolate making.

## SUCCESS STORY

Seven years ago, 29 year-old Dalia fled from Iraq to Zarqa, Jordan, with her husband and two children. They had to live in a two-room house because her husband's illness prevented him from working. Dalia loved to sew, but without a sewing machine she could not make enough clothes by hand to earn a profit.

With cash assistance from NEF, Dalia bought two sewing machines and some fabric to begin her business. She learned how to get a good price for material, do bookkeeping, keep production records, and calculate profits. To her surprise, she also learned she could actually make more money by keeping her prices low and selling more product—a valuable lesson that has quadrupled her income. She hopes to increase her production as soon as she is able to buy a faster sewing machine.



Young Iraqi refugees learn barbering skills.



A displaced Iraqi woman sews apparel items in her own small workshop established with NEF support.



A young Iraqi in Jordan works in his own metal workshop established with NEF training and support.



Women gather to discuss their experiences running small enterprises at a business council meeting in Zarqa.



After the recent occupation of northern Mali, Moussa was able to restore his rice farm with NEF support.

## OUR WORK

NEF is providing support to more than 160,000 people affected by conflict and climate change in northern Mali. Through the USAID-funded *Restoring the Economic Capacity of Populations Affected by Conflict* project, NEF is working with communities to meet immediate needs and begin to recover core livelihood activities. Through the *Food Security and Resilience to Climate Change and Conflict* project funded by the Embassy of the Netherlands, NEF continues to work with 200 communities in Mali to improve food security, sustainable natural resource management, and conflict resolution to build resilience against climate change and instability. In 2014, two additional projects were launched: *Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Change* funded by the UK Department for International Development that will reach 750,000 people in Mali and Senegal over four years, and the *Water Resource Management and Security* project funded by the Rain Foundation.

## DIRECT IMPACT

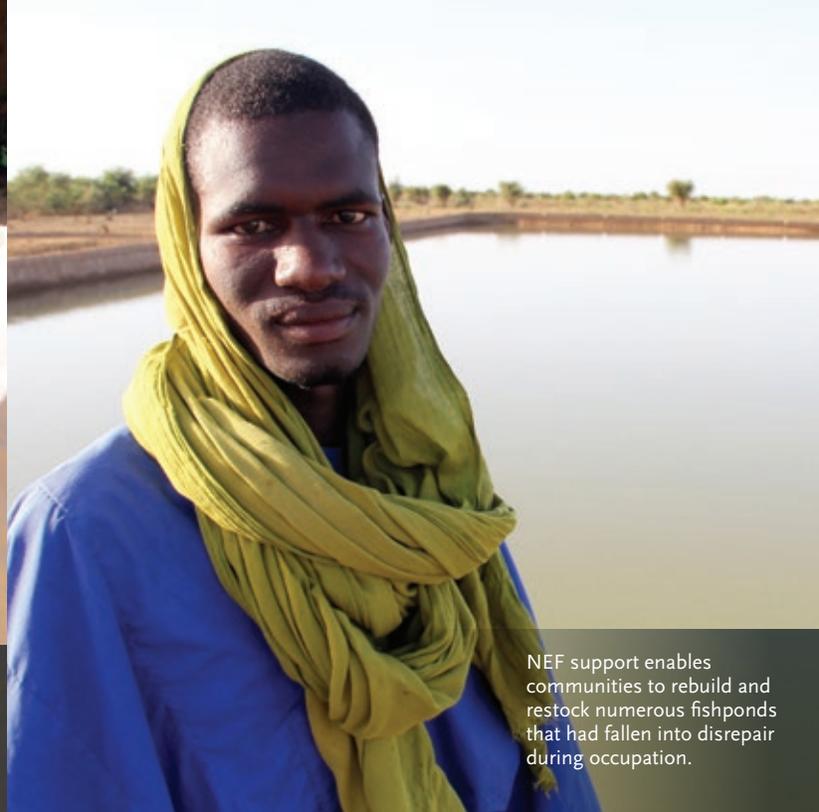
- With seed and agricultural tools provided by NEF, more than 42,000 people re-launched farm activities; nearly 10,000 women produced 13,250 tons of vegetables in 43 market gardens; and due to the rehabilitation of 305 hectares of irrigation infrastructure, 9,330 farmers produced rice for food and income.
- 18,000 people benefited from livestock wells, pasture improvement, and feed distribution for 317,500 animals. And after 11 fishponds were rehabilitated and restocked, nearly 4,900 villagers resumed fish production.
- With cash and food grants totaling \$620,000, more than 4,000 individuals—3,150 of them women—restarted income-generating activities.
- Food security (measured by the number of months of food accessibility in vulnerable households) has increased by up to 10 months in project areas.

## SUCCESS STORY

Teresa lives in the town of Douentza in the central region of Mopti. A great cook, she makes fried cakes on the side of the road and creates delicious home-cooked meals, rice, and sauces to sell to her neighbors. Life, however, hasn't been easy for Teresa, who lost her husband, her business, and her elderly mother during the political crisis in 2012. By the end of the crisis, she found herself head of a household of seven children with no means of support. Luckily, she was able to slowly rebuild her life with the help of NEF training and a small grant, which enabled her to restart her business and feed her family.



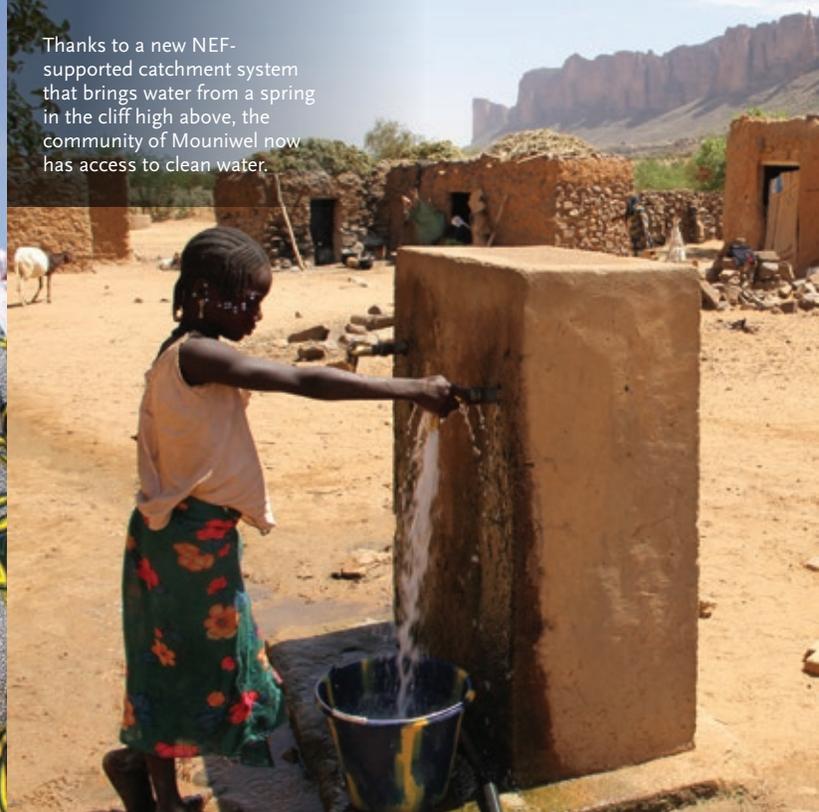
With NEF help, Hamaye was able to reestablish his carpentry workshop after it had been pillaged by separatists.



NEF support enables communities to rebuild and restock numerous fishponds that had fallen into disrepair during occupation.



Members of a women's cooperative are now able to produce adequate food for consumption and sale.



Thanks to a new NEF-supported catchment system that brings water from a spring in the cliff high above, the community of Mouniwele now has access to clean water.



Cleaning and protecting the village spring water increases efficiency and agricultural production in Laayat, eastern Morocco.

## OUR WORK

In 2014, NEF completed the youth component of the multi-year *Local Governance Project* (LGP) undertaken with RTI International and funded through USAID. In a region where youth feel increasingly disenfranchised from political processes, the project succeeded in building bridges between youth and local government. NEF created nine Youth Councils within 12 major municipalities to facilitate the participation of 15- to 25-year olds in community affairs and to encourage youth, elected officials, and civil servants to work together. Building on this momentum and working through the Youth Councils, NEF also launched the Middle East Partnership Initiative-funded *Empowering Youth through Entrepreneurship in Morocco* project to create 250 youth-run microenterprises. This year, NEF also

restarted work to promote quality primary education in Morocco and promote collaboration between Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) and state actors in partnership with CARE and the World Bank.

## DIRECT IMPACT

- More than 1,000 youth benefitted from 53 training sessions in leadership, project management, communications, and conflict resolution.
- 10,000 youth participated in 167 events organized in conjunction with local officials (forums, open houses, roundtables, and conferences).
- Local governments adopted Communal Plans for Youth, 14 meetings were organized with representatives of local youth councils and youth Parliamentarians, and a coalition

of youth emerged—the Moroccan Association in Support of Local Youth Councils.

- 17 small grants were awarded that supported 99 community improvement projects and such youth prioritized-initiatives as cleanup campaigns, library renovations, and employability training.
- According to a final survey, 70 percent of youth and 85 percent of elected officials felt LGP activities significantly impacted their communities.



Increased water availability from a new solar pump improves agriculture in Garfait, eastern Morocco.



Moroccan schoolchildren pose for a photo in the High Atlas Mountains.



Young people learn about their municipality at the first-ever local government open house in Sale.



A nursery created with the PTA generates income for school maintenance in southern Morocco.



## OUR WORK

NEF works with Palestinians and Israelis to build relationships of trust and mutual understanding through cross-border, grassroots economic cooperation initiatives. NEF completed the first phase of the USAID-funded *Olive Oil Without Borders* project, reaching 1,900 Palestinian and Israeli olive oil producers to increase production, improve quality, and strengthen competitiveness over a three-year period. NEF launched a second three-year phase that will reach an additional 2,000 producers and continued the USAID-funded *Planting the Future: Youth Agribusiness Partnerships* project to promote economic cooperation for 120 young Palestinian and Israeli entrepreneurs to establish business partnerships in the agricultural sector. NEF is also building women's economic and social resilience through the *Palestinian Women's Microenterprise Development* project funded by the Rangoonwala Foundation.

## DIRECT IMPACT

- Olive farmers and oil producers continued to take advantage of a cross-border trade policy developed in 2013 through the *Olive Oil Without Borders* project, which opened the border to olive oil trade for the first time in 10 years. As a result, 3,600 metric tons of Palestinian oil was sold to Israeli companies, with an estimated \$20 million value to oil producers.
- Nearly 2,000 Palestinians and Israelis participated in more than 460 cross-border training activities designed to improve olive oil production and build support for peace. In spite of renewed conflict and tensions in 2014, more than 60 percent of participants expressed positive perceptions of their neighbors.
- 18 olive oil mills were renovated in Palestine and Israel, and mill owners participated in training to improve olive oil quality and quantity.

- 80 Palestinian and Israeli youth came together in cross-border workshops to focus on entrepreneurship development in the agricultural sectors.
- Women entrepreneurs started or expanded 95 new businesses, creating 250 jobs. Entrepreneurs report increased self-confidence and respect in their communities and enjoy better lives for themselves and their families.

## SUCCESS STORY

Huwaida invested her husband's small retirement fund into building a greenhouse. But that was all she could do because securing funding from financial institutions is not an option for most Palestinian women. Then through NEF she received business training and \$300 in startup capital. With that small grant in hand, she bought 1,900 tomato seedlings as well as wire and metal hooks to support the growing plants. Now Huwaida harvests a bumper crop, picking 70 boxes of tomatoes every month.



Women beekeepers check their hives in the northern West Bank.



An NEF partner participates in a soil preparation workshop to help increase olive production in her orchard.



NEF helps olive mill owners increase profits by improving quality.



A new Palestinian entrepreneur is growing her egg business by reinvesting its profits.



## OUR WORK

NEF continues to help 25 communities in Central Darfur reduce local-level conflicts and rebuild livelihoods. In 2014, NEF completed the highly successful *Resources, Economic Security and Peace* project supported by the Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund. Reaching 80,000 people, NEF trained 365 local leaders in new conflict resolution strategies and brought together diverse ethnic groups, assisting them to manage their area's natural resources to increase income sustainably and build collaboration. Food security and economic recovery are the focus of the ongoing *Resources, Livelihoods and Security* project, funded by USAID/OFDA, which is helping conflict-affected people re-establish agriculture and livestock systems and develop small businesses.

## DIRECT IMPACT

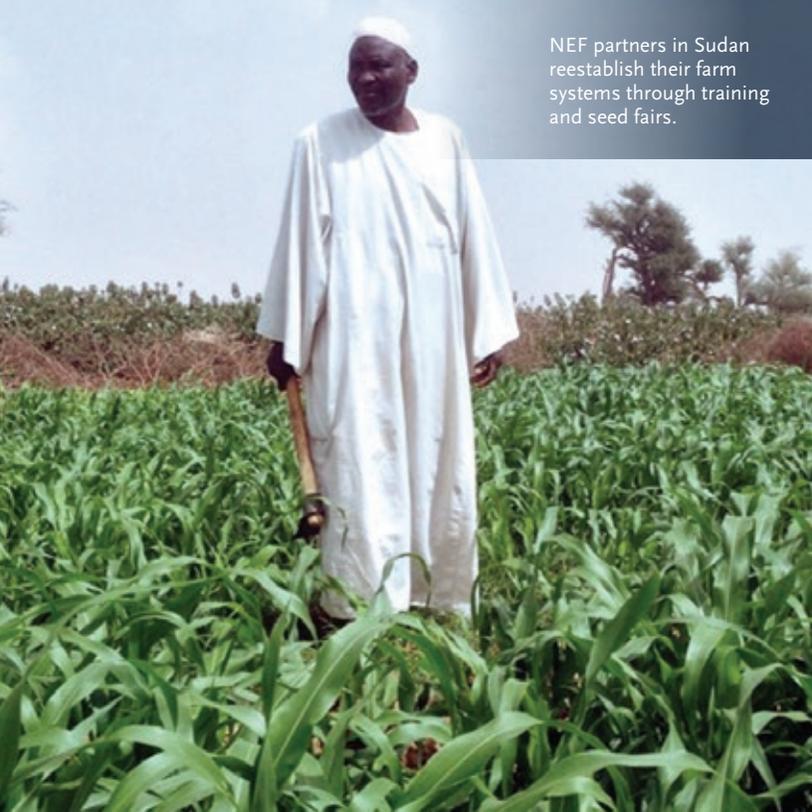
- As a result of local conflict management mechanisms, incidents of violence in project areas were significantly reduced. One hundred percent of people in a recent survey reported that project activities restored trust and confidence.
- Emergence of Tribes for Peace in Darfur, a youth group with 500 members from 35 ethnic groups who advocate for reconciliation across the state.
- Upgrading of the Nertiti dam doubled its capacity, improving the water supply for 50,000 people and reducing friction between farmers and pastoralists who have been in competition for use of this limited resource.
- 7,000 farmers benefited from seeds, tools, and agricultural training.
- 2,330 people (45 percent women) were trained in basic business skills, and more than 900 received start-up grants for microenterprises ranging from small grocery stores, restaurants, market gardens, food processing, water delivery, brick-making, and entertainment businesses. Entrepreneurs earn up to \$600 per month, vastly improving living standards for their families and boosting their local economies.
- Improved pastures sustained 78,000 animals; 25 NEF-trained and equipped paraveterinary technicians treated livestock for common diseases.



An NEF trainer reviews a program participant's business plan in Darfur.



A supra-village organization meets to manage shared natural resources and inter-community conflict in Darfur.



NEF partners in Sudan reestablish their farm systems through training and seed fairs.



NEF support helps hundreds of displaced people in Darfur rebuild their livelihoods through microenterprises such as this.

# Financial Report – Fiscal Year 2014

## Statement of Financial Position at June 30, 2014

### ASSETS

Cash and equivalents	721,754
Grants and Contracts receivable	586,968
Accounts and loans receivable	286,532
Investments, at fair value	3,921,425
Prepaid expenses	22,190
Fixed assets net	149,180
	<u>5,688,049</u>

### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

#### Current Liabilities

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	477,054
Deferred revenue	548,939
Total liabilities	<u>1,025,993</u>

#### Net Assets

Unrestricted	1,499,650
Temporarily restricted	50,617
Permanently restricted	3,111,789
Total net assets	<u>4,662,056</u>
Total	<u>5,688,049</u>

## Statement of Activities Year ended June 30, 2014

### REVENUES AND OTHER SUPPORT

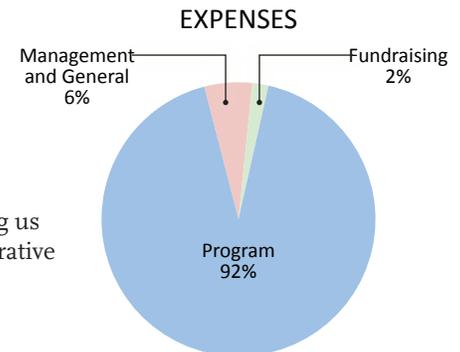
Contributions	425,349
Government	6,387,552
Private Grants	32,350
In Kind Contributions	33,731
Investment income	551,224
Program related	8,495
Other income	3,868
	<u>7,442,569</u>

### EXPENSES

Program Services	6,395,380
Management and General	424,577
Fundraising	107,586
Foreign Currency Adjustment	(19,018)
	<u>6,908,525</u>

Net Surplus/(Deficit)	<u>534,044</u>
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In 2014, 92 percent of our funding went directly to supporting people in need. Through fundraising and cost-saving efforts, we doubled our budget from the previous year—allowing us to help more vulnerable communities. NEF is committed to superior financial and administrative management, which ensures our ability to deliver support today and into the future.



# Thank You!

The Near East Foundation expresses deep gratitude to its supporters and partner organizations around the world for helping to improve the lives of the most vulnerable and impoverished people in the Middle East and North Africa.

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