



# Near East Foundation

## 2022 IMPACT REPORT

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# LOOKING FORWARD

2022 was a year of innovation and progress at the Near East Foundation. We launched several projects, pioneered new ways to finance programs, expanded into different locations to support more communities, and hired additional staff to increase productivity and efficiency. Momentum is building and the team is **looking forward** to what is to come.

**Together, we continue to work towards resilience, inclusion and prosperity for all.**



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\*some names throughout this report have been changed to protect the privacy and anonymity of the people we serve

## OUR MISSION

The Near East Foundation works with local partners to advance innovative, sustainable, community-led economic and social development across the Middle East, Africa, and the Caucasus in order to realize more prosperous, inclusive and resilient communities.





## 2022 IMPACT

**708,464** PEOPLE

**246** COMMUNITIES

**9** COUNTRIES

**364,699** WOMEN, **276,237** YOUTH,

**208,749** DISPLACED PEOPLE,

**70,356** DISABLED PEOPLE

**HIGH IMPACT  
PROGRAMS**

**\$21 = 1 LIFE CHANGED**

**INNOVATION:** Leading with innovation in the international development sector to ensure all communities can access and benefit from technical advances and expertise.



**Climate Innovation Incubator in Morocco**

A youth- and women-focused project was launched in 2022 in Marrakesh, Morocco to tackle climate challenges in the region. Participants competed in two hackathon events, and the best ideas were selected to move forward in a three-month business incubator. The project cultivates creativity, inspires innovation, and empowers young entrepreneurs to launch startups in the agricultural sector through business ideation, training, networking and investment.

**Refugee Impact Bond in Jordan**

Jordan hosts the world’s second highest per capita refugee population, and 90% of Syrian refugees residing there live below the poverty line. Traditionally, funding that helps refugees and host communities focuses on short-term needs and is only granted annually. The multi-year Refugee Impact Bond is innovative in its structure. It focuses on flexible implementation and long-term results that enable refugees and host communities to reduce their reliance on humanitarian aid and to regain their self-reliance.

The first cohort consisted of 823 participants who received grants through NEF’s e-wallet platform, and the selection of a second cohort began in 2023.



**Digital Banking Solutions Pilot in Jordan**

Digital banking and financial services represent an emerging opportunity for improving financial and economic inclusion of vulnerable and hard-to-reach entrepreneurs who are traditionally underserved. In Kuforsoum and Azraq, Jordan NEF paired financial literacy training with access to e-wallets, a secure financial account accessed through a smartphone app that does not require a formal bank account to open or use.

NEF partnered with one of Jordan’s largest telecom companies to create a curriculum and trained 28 individuals to become master trainers across several NEF-supported Siraj Centers in Jordan. **NEF provided 99 Jordanians (80% women) with in-person and online training** to learn how to use the e-wallet to pay for household bills, business-related costs and money transfers. The training developed in this pilot is now standard across our projects in Jordan.



**Maryam**

Maryam, a mother of four living in Jordan, worked as a plumber to provide for her family until the pandemic when she was forced to sell her tools to make ends meet. Through NEF’s Refugee Impact Bond, **Maryam learned how to run a sustainable and profitable plumbing enterprise that is more resilient to future crises.** She has taken what she learned and pays it forward by teaching other women how to run their own plumbing businesses.



**10,934**

entrepreneurs received business loans and grants through NEF to strengthen or start their small businesses

**INCLUSION:** Ensuring traditionally marginalized and vulnerable people are at the forefront of our work, so everyone can access the resources and tools they need to thrive.

### Women’s Economic Empowerment in Iraq

NEF expanded its operations to the Al Anbar Governorate in Iraq. The flagship project provides women, who experience many barriers to success, with opportunities to increase their income through small farming enterprises involving sheep and goats. Participants are taught about value chain systems, climate-smart approaches and agribusiness at Siraj Centers.

### Advancing Inclusion and Resilience in Sudan

NEF expanded its revolving credit funds (RCF) program in Sudan, which offers affordable loans to individuals living in rural areas. **Over 70% of the people who receive these loans are women who face challenges generating income through their work in agriculture.** They lack bargaining and decision-making power because of gender norms, and they typically earn significantly less than their male counterparts.

The RCF funds are managed by women-led community associations, and they help improve the prosperity, agency and inclusion of women in rural Sudan. The loans fill critical financial gaps for women, allowing them to provide for their families and amplify their voices in their communities. This approach to providing loans results in markedly greater household incomes for borrowers. And, because most borrowers repay their loans on time, the funds are available to help even more women in the community.

### Reducing Economic and Psychosocial Vulnerability in Lebanon

NEF worked through five Siraj Center hubs to help refugees and marginalized Lebanese access resources and learn skills that reduce their social and economic vulnerability, particularly by increasing the economic self-reliance of women. NEF aimed to strengthen economic resilience, reduce harmful coping mechanisms, and contribute to the increased agency through financial self-sufficiency. We also worked with local partner organizations to pair economic support with mental health support to help people cope with the effects of on-going crises in Lebanon.



NEF successfully increased access to livelihoods and protection services for **5,496** vulnerable Lebanese, refugees and other people of concern, exceeding the project target.

**90%**  
of women reported  
increased self-confidence  
and agency

**78%**  
reported  
increased income

**78%**  
reported an improved  
sense of safety and  
wellbeing

### Bushra

Bushra, a single mother living in Lebanon, fled Syria with her six children in hopes of finding a safer future. When she arrived in Lebanon, she struggled to provide basic needs for her family. Bushra received training and a grant from NEF that she used to buy a sewing machine and start her own tailoring business. **She now has the means to provide for her family, and her self-confidence has improved.** She has also been able to seek out additional care and counseling for herself and her children to heal from the effects of past trauma.



**PROSPERITY:** Supporting entrepreneurs and job seekers through financing, training, networking, advisory services, and affordable loans so people can provide for themselves and their families.

**Revolving Credit Funds in Syria**

NEF began a new project in Syria that expands technical and financial support to facilitate climate-resilient agricultural recovery in Raqqa Governorate. NEF also expanded its operations into Northern Aleppo, Syria using the Siraj model. We identified a demand for support and provided loans and business development services to 725 entrepreneurs in Northern Aleppo. In 2023, NEF will support an additional 1,000 entrepreneurs in this region.

*The Near East Foundation is the only international organization with a lending program in northeast Syria, filling a critical need for access to finance among Syrians impacted by conflict and climate-change.*



**Siraj Centers**

NEF channels much of its livelihood assistance through Siraj Centers, community-based hubs where displaced and conflict-impacted people can access services, seek out information and resources, and gain new skills in a safe and supportive environment.

Siraj Centers use a replicable model that can be located within existing local partners such as civil society organizations. **NEF provides expert knowledge, training curricula, operating procedures, and quality standards so all centers can create meaningful change in the communities they serve.** Most projects focus on women's economic and social empowerment and protection, ensuring that the most disadvantaged are prioritized.

Siraj Centers deliver in-person services and are further strengthened by Siraj Digital, a regional e-learning platform, and Siraj Market, a new business-to-business and business-to-customer platform.

**Business and Workforce Advancement to Improve Living Conditions in Iraq**

In partnership with local government and civil society organizations, NEF launched a project in the Al Anbar Governorate in Iraq with the goal of increasing incomes and job opportunities for individuals who own (or want to own) micro, small and medium enterprises.

NEF will engage 580 applicants in life skills, entrepreneurship, business development and financial literacy training courses. Participants who have the most promising work plans will be eligible to receive grants to further develop their businesses.



**47,196**

people increased their income



**44,103**

people improved their ability to cover basic needs



**Fadil**

Fadil, a 49-year-old living in Northeast Syria, is the father of nine children. He fled Syria because of the ongoing war and poor living conditions but returned when he couldn't find work or the means to support his family. Fadil was able to earn \$50 per month, but it was not enough to cover his family's basic needs.

One day, when he was at the market, he saw an advertisement for the local Siraj center and its loan and training program. He immediately applied and was later accepted. Along with business training, Fadil received a \$1200 loan, which he used to open a shop that sells groceries and other household items.

*“ I am more confident with myself, more confident with my business, and my ability to sustain it. ”*

**RESILIENCE:** Building resilience through environmental resource planning and the advancement of local centers that support their communities.



### Improving Food Security and Resilience in Mali

Our long-term, locally-led program takes a collaborative and holistic approach to strengthen communities' resilience to climate change and conflict with the goal of reducing poverty and improving food security.

The program combines climate smart agriculture with sustainable and equitable management of natural resources. NEF and its partners also support community resilience initiatives, youth civic engagement and entrepreneurship, conflict management, and has made lending finance available.

### Promoting Local Leadership and Knowledge in Mali, Sudan and South Sudan

Much of NEF's work to build resilience in rural communities focuses on supporting agricultural-led recovery and growth - particularly as communities cope with climate change impacts and conflict. Understanding the importance of local leadership and knowledge, **NEF works with agribusiness and community leaders, providing training in climate-smart agriculture and entrepreneurship.** Those leaders then extend their learning and local knowledge to other farmers and agribusiness entrepreneurs. NEF pairs these skill-building efforts with activities to improve access to seeds, tools, and technologies so farmers can recover and improve their production.



**348,762**

people improved their food security



**61,469**

people now have access to safe water



**13,500**

people increased their knowledge of hygiene practices



**116,872**

people with improved access to sanitation infrastructure

### Building Community Resilience in Armenia

NEF launched a new countrywide program in Armenia that helps local civic organizations engage with young people and other citizens more effectively, inspire volunteerism, and increase their interest and involvement in public decision-making and grassroots initiatives. **This project aims to build resilience in civic organizations, helping communities become more resilient to future conflict and shocks.**

NEF awarded grants to 24 Armenian organizations, funding various projects and positively impacting communities. Examples of these projects include improving shelters in areas affected by the Artsakh conflict, creating a summer camp in the Shirak province for children from socially vulnerable and displaced families, and establishing an organic greenhouse in the Kotayk province to provide food and eco-educational opportunities for local schoolchildren.



### Aesha

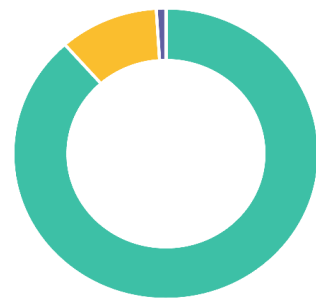
Aesha is one of thousands of local community members in Sola, Sudan who have benefited from a new, accessible water station. Women spend countless hours collecting water, which may not be high quality. Ensuring access to clean water reduces health risks while freeing their time to pursue other things. Households are making monthly contributions to ensure the station can be used for years to come.

*"I used to get tired filling one jerry can from the hand pump...and found it very difficult to fetch water from Wadi Azoum valley as it takes 1.5 hours to collect...and it has a smell. However, with this station I feel very happy...I can fill a jerry can in less than 5 minutes and I'm back home."*



## HOW WE INVESTED OUR FUNDING

\$14,320,635  
into program activities that **support communities**, fund entrepreneurial projects, improve food security, increase access to safe water, and cover basic needs



### Funding Sources

- 88.5% Governments
- 10.5% Private Contributions
- 1% Foundations

\$622,977  
into operating and management expenses to sustain a strong infrastructure and **support our expert team who makes our work possible**



### Allocation of Expenses

- 92.5% Program Activities
  - 77.5% Direct Program Services
  - 15% Indirect Program Services
- 4% Management and General
- 3.5% Fundraising

\$540,854  
into fundraising to build a strong community of dedicated donors **to grow our impact**

<b>2022 Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$14,497,841</b>
<b>2022 Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$15,484,466</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	
<i>Beginning</i>	<b>\$7,988,543</b>
<i>Ending</i>	<b>\$7,094,921</b>

NEF is committed to providing the highest levels of transparency and efficiency. See our complete fiscal year 2022 consolidated financial report by scanning here



## INVESTING IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

We work in some of the world's most challenging environments. Together with our partners, we help people move away from poverty and insecurity toward self-sufficiency and stability.

35

Projects

262

Global Staff

Lebanon  
3 projects

Morocco  
1 project

Mali  
5 projects

Sudan  
10 projects

Armenia  
3 projects

Syria  
5 projects

Iraq  
1 project

Jordan  
5 projects

South Sudan  
2 projects



## LOOKING EVEN FURTHER

Informed by our strategic plan, NEF is set to triple our impact by 2028 to support 3 million people a year. We plan to achieve this by implementing the following strategic initiatives:

- Scale our highest performing, evidence-based programs to catalyze more inclusive and resilient opportunities
- Continue to pilot ambitious projects that are developed from experience and learning, so new and impactful programming can be created and delivered
- Invest in the growth of our staff and systems to create a sustainable future for the organization
- Offer new paths and opportunities for donors to engage with our work and support the people we serve

**With your support, we can achieve this goal as we work towards a future of resilience, inclusion and prosperity for all.**

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*\* List reflects 2022*

## Funding Partners and Major Donors

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Stockholm Resilience Centre  
Syria Recovery Trust Fund  
The Chubb Charitable Foundation  
The Elsa and Peter Soderberg  
Charitable Foundation  
United Nations Population Fund  
United Nations Office for Project  
Services  
USAID Bureau for Humanitarian  
Assistance  
U.S. Department of State Bureau of  
Population, Refugees and  
Migration  
Vitol Foundation  
Whole Planet Foundation  
Eric Widmer & Meera Viswanathan

*\* List reflects 2022 donors giving \$1,000+*

## Implementation Partners

Abna Al-Sudan Development Organization  
"Agate" Rights Defense Center for Women with  
Disabilities NGO  
Anera  
Arcenciel  
Association Jeunes pour Jeunes  
Athar Association for Youth Development  
Beit el Baraka  
Blejan Ecological, Social, Business Support NGO  
Centre for Emergency and Development Support  
Emerging Business Factory  
Families Development Charity Association  
Friends of Peace and Development Organization  
Global Aid Hand  
Goris Women's Development Resource Center  
Foundation  
Iraqi Al Amal Association  
Kuforsoum Cooperative Association for Pomegranate  
Producers  
Lebanon American University  
Nama'a Association for Community Development  
Qawafil Al Khair for Relief and Development  
Sanabel Nour  
Social, Humanitarian, Economical Intervention for Local  
Development (SHEILD)  
Sudanese Red Crescent Society  
Syracuse University  
Tahfeez Association for Leadership and Development  
Taron Youth Development NGO  
Youth Cooperation Center of Dijilan NGO  
Women's Support Center - Yerevan



**THANK YOU!**



Imagine a world where *all* people  
can recover from crisis and  
overcome barriers to their success.

**Together, we are creating that world.**



[www.neareast.org](http://www.neareast.org)