



# 2025 Impact Report

Building Resilience, Empowering Communities

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

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## A Message from NEF CEO, John Ashby

2025 began with unprecedented cuts to U.S. government funding for international development programs worldwide. These cuts abruptly ended several key NEF programs, slashing incoming resources by 40% overnight. The dissolution of USAID that followed left the international development sector in turmoil. Emergency assistance was halted, disrupting services for millions of people who depended on it. Communities that had spent years building local systems and development programs saw critical support disappear almost overnight. The situation was amplified as NGOs were forced to lay off thousands of staff around the world. International assistance was forever changed.

As NEF's CEO, this year reaffirmed for me what NEF has learned throughout its 110-year history. NEF's success has always depended on three strengths: resilient communities determined to build better futures; committed partners willing to invest in those futures; and talented local staff who transform resources into lasting impact.

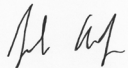
We have received some of the largest philanthropic gifts in NEF's recent history, ensuring that critical programs can continue despite the rapidly changing funding landscape. Thanks to your support, we have remained a trusted partner in all the communities where we work.

Together, we expanded access to finance, training, and enterprise development, while strengthening local systems that enable communities to move beyond just surviving and work towards sustainable livelihoods. When local organizations are equipped with the right tools and support, they create meaningful, sustained change in their communities. Our conviction that lasting change is strongest when it is locally led remains at the heart of NEF's mission and strategy.

As we look ahead, we believe the future of international development will be more locally led, more collaborative, and more sustainable. Drawing on more than 110 years of experience, NEF is committed to helping shape that future by strengthening local institutions, expanding economic opportunity, and building resilience in communities facing crisis and change.

Thank you for your partnership, your trust, and your commitment to making this work possible. Because of your support and the strength of our local teams and partners, we are pleased to share this report highlighting the success and resilience of the people we work with and support.

With Gratitude,



John Ashby, CEO



# Mission

Near East Foundation (NEF) works with local partners to enable innovative, sustainable, and community-led economic and social development across the Middle East, Africa, and the Caucasus to realize more prosperous, inclusive, and resilient communities.



## Focus Areas and Programs

NEF organizes its work around three main, interconnected focus areas designed to address both immediate needs and long-term development challenges.

First, its **inclusive economic development programs** aim to strengthen economic independence and resilience by supporting entrepreneurship, improving access to finance, and building stronger market systems, especially for marginalized groups.

Second, the foundation focuses on the **Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus**, by helping communities affected by conflict and crisis stabilize and rebuild livelihoods, restore trust, and strengthen civil society and governance systems. This work includes **water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH)** services where relevant.

Third, NEF's **agriculture and climate-resilient development efforts** work with local communities to adapt to climate change through sustainable and peaceful resource management, climate-smart and regenerative agriculture, and resilient food systems.

## Our Impact

**390,269**

people supported by NEF (includes direct/indirect beneficiaries).

**77%**

of NEF beneficiaries are women, youth, and people with disabilities.

**580**

communities strengthened.

# Building the Capacity of Locally Led Efforts for Sustainable Impact

NEF's work is grounded in a simple principle: **lasting impact is locally led.**

Across fragile and crisis-affected settings, local civil society organizations<sup>1</sup> are expected to respond quickly, adapt to changing conditions, and remain present over time. Yet many operate with limited resources and rely on short-term funding that does not support long-term growth or sustainability.

**\$6,159,262**

in grants/loans provided support to vulnerable entrepreneurs.

**73%**

of participants increased their household income.

**474**

civil society organizations increased their capacity.

**66,941**

participants improved their ability to meet their basic needs.

NEF's approach addresses this gap by working in partnership with local organizations to strengthen their sustainability, capacity, and resilience.

This is not a delivery model. It's a capacity-building model in which NEF provides:

- Technical assistance to strengthen governance, financial systems, and service delivery.
- Innovative finance, including revolving and recoverable funding, to build sustainable, locally managed financial systems.
- Skills and capacity building to support organizational growth and effectiveness.
- Networks and partnerships that connect local actors to markets, funders, and ecosystems.

**By pairing finance with technical assistance, NEF helps organizations diversify income, strengthen accountability, and expand their impact.**

**This approach creates a multiplier effect: stronger local organizations are able to reach more people, sustain services over time, and continue delivering impact beyond the life of individual projects.**

<sup>1</sup> Civil Society Organization: A nonprofit entity formed by individuals to advance social, cultural, humanitarian, or civic goals independently of government and business interests.

# Where We Work



## Administrative Offices

Near East Foundation (NEF) functions as a family of entities, which includes:

### NEF US

- Syracuse, NY
- Washington, D.C.

### NEF UK

- London

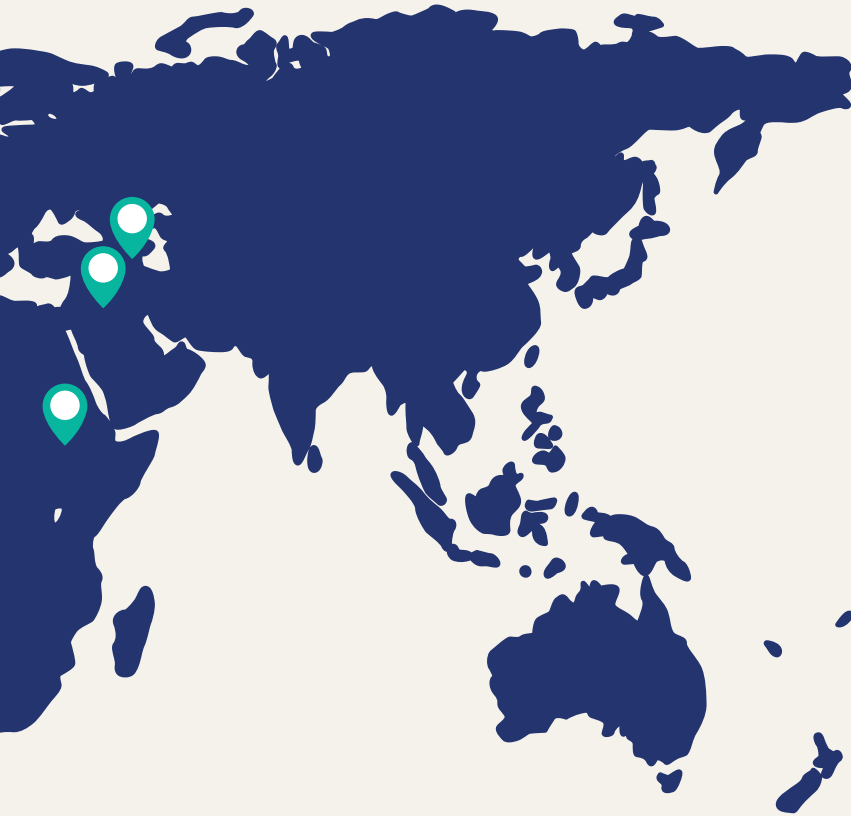
### NEF Belgium

- Brussels

Powerful, measurable improvements for individuals and communities.

193

Staff members worldwide



## Program Offices

NEF employs team members worldwide and has country offices in:

Armenia

Iraq

Jordan

Lebanon

Mali

Morocco

South Sudan

Sudan

Syria



# People We Serve

Our work is inspired and driven by the people and communities we serve.

## South Sudan


NEF's Resilience and Recovery project in South Sudan strengthened community resilience by addressing governance, livelihoods, water access, and financial support. It established locally managed Payam Level Associations to improve governance, dispute resolution, and long-term planning. Market-based support, tools, and small grants enabled over 1,100 participants to rebuild businesses, collaborate in groups, and invest in sustainable income-generating activities. Improvements in water infrastructure increased access to clean water, reduced collection time, and supported agriculture and hygiene. As a result, the supported communities became more self-reliant and more resilient to shocks such as drought, flooding, and livestock disease due to increased household income, improved food security, and better access to basic needs.



NEF's PASARC II program has addressed chronic food insecurity, limited economic opportunities, environmental degradation, and local conflict in Central Mali through an integrated, community-based approach. By strengthening agricultural systems and supporting livestock production, the program increased food availability and incomes. It expanded market participation and entrepreneurship by supporting youth-led businesses and providing large-scale training, particularly for women. PASARC also promoted sustainable natural resource management through the development of grazing lands, livestock corridors, and reforestation efforts, while resolving local conflicts through community mechanisms. These combined efforts improved household resilience, boosted productivity, and reduced vulnerability, ultimately setting communities on a path toward long-term stability, stronger livelihoods, and sustainable economic growth.



With NEF's support, Ahmad turned a small, resource-constrained farming effort into a more efficient, year-round business by adopting hydroponic lettuce production. Financial assistance enabled him to expand his setup, while hands-on training helped him refine techniques that improved consistency and quality. This combination allowed him to reliably meet the standards of local restaurants, opening steady sales channels. As production scaled and demand grew, Ahmad increased his earnings, strengthening both his business viability and his family's financial security.

 Jordan



## Morocco

With NEF's guidance, Sabi Prod women's cooperative shifted from low-value artisanal production to a more competitive and sustainable business model. By diversifying into high-value products like argan-based cosmetics and gift sets, and entering structured digital markets such as Alibaba, the cooperative expanded its reach and visibility. Improved branding and collaboration through a provincial union strengthened its market positioning. These efforts significantly increased income for members and created a more resilient, scalable business model for long-term sustainability.



Athab scaled up her business by combining financial assistance with practical training and diversification strategies. Through a loan and training in small ruminant management, she shifted from basic livestock rearing to more profitable trading and fattening activities. She further diversified by adding short-cycle retail trading and expanding her home-based clothing and cosmetics business. These efforts increased her assets and income, enabling her to grow a more sustainable livelihood while supporting her extended family. Now, Athab owns 20 sheep and 4 cows and hopes to obtain a second loan of a larger value.

 Iraq



# The NEF Model:

Knowledge 

Voice 

Enterprise 

Core among all of NEF's work is the conviction that to actively contribute to and benefit from development in their communities and countries, all people require opportunities and capacity (knowledge) to participate effectively in public and household decisions and peacebuilding (voice), and for making a safe and meaningful living (enterprise). Although the nature of our projects vary, the following are key implementation components used to achieve NEF's Knowledge, Voice, Enterprise framework.

## Strengthening Local Institutions

NEF invests in civil society organizations, cooperatives, and community-based structures as core actors in development. These institutions are supported to improve governance, expand services, and build sustainable operating models.

## Expanding Access to Finance

Access to finance remains one of the most significant barriers for vulnerable populations trying to pursue entrepreneurial ventures. NEF addresses this by partnering with local institutions to deliver community-managed revolving credit funds and innovative finance models that enable capital to be recycled and retained within communities, expanding access over time.



## Supporting Livelihoods

NEF supports entrepreneurs and small businesses through:

- Access to grants and loans
- Business training and coaching
- Financial literacy and planning
- Market access and value chain development

These services are delivered through locally embedded partners and community hubs called Siraj Centers.



## Building Resilience

NEF supports efforts by local partners to integrate climate adaptation, social protection, and economic resilience into their institutions and programming. These efforts include:

- climate-smart agriculture
- renewable energy solutions
- resilient food systems
- water and sanitation systems
- psychosocial and protection services, especially pertaining to women and youth.



# Looking Ahead

The people we serve remain at the heart of everything we do. In a year marked by funding constraints, shifting priorities, and ongoing global unrest, we have felt the challenges facing our sector, but they have only strengthened our resolve. Since 1915, the Near East Foundation has navigated periods of uncertainty and emerged stronger, guided by our clear mission and deep-rooted partnerships.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to supporting those most affected by displacement and conflict, ensuring this focus informs every aspect of our work, from program design to operational and funding decisions. By partnering with and investing in local communities, embracing innovative and scalable approaches, and prioritizing tangible outcomes, we are not only adapting to a changing world; we are moving forward with purpose to deliver lasting change where it is needed most.

## Ways to Get Involved

We need your help. Here are some ways that you can help NEF extend our reach and strengthen our impact!

- Introduce us to individuals, foundations, or companies aligned with our mission
- Amplify our work by sharing our stories within your networks
- Advocate for partnerships through your professional and corporate connections
- Share your expertise to help strengthen our programs and strategy
- Connect us to opportunities for visibility, collaboration, or thought leadership
- Stay engaged by following and spreading awareness of our impact

### \$500

provides a women-led farm with seeds and fertilizers to cultivate 5 dunams of land, or essential tools to increase agricultural productivity and income.

### \$250

funds one month of intensive vocational training in fields such as agriculture, sewing, food processing, or handicrafts.

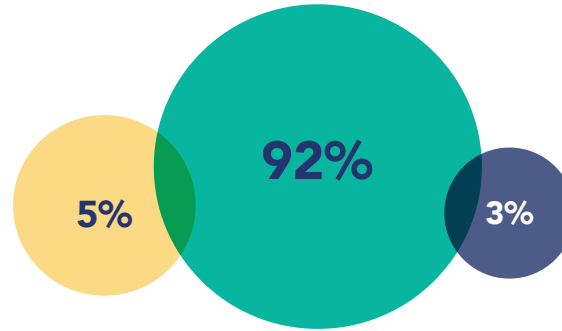
### \$100

covers business or soft-skills training for one program participant.

### \$50

provides reliable transportation for one participant to attend business training.

# Financial Overview



Operating Expenses	Program Activities	Fundraising Expenses
<b>\$1,007,109</b>	<b>\$19,883,647</b>	<b>\$664,010</b>

Direct Program Expenses: \$16,104,839

Indirect Program Expenses: \$3,778,808

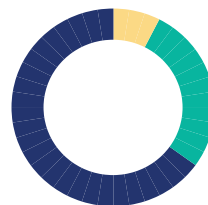


**We meet the top charity standards, so you can be assured we will make the most of your donation.**

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Total Revenue	<b>\$ 22,863,554</b>
Total Expenses	<b>\$ 21,554,766</b>

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## Revenue Sources

- 64% Governments
- 29% Private Grants & Contributions
- 7% Investment Income

## Net Assets

Beginning Balance:  
\$14,648,472

Ending Balance:  
\$15,994,409



# Board of Directors

## US Board

John Ashby, *CEO*  
Nina Bogosian Quigley, *Chair*  
Emily Rosenberg, *Vice Chair*  
Mona Eraiba, *Secretary*  
Shant Mardirossian, *Treasurer*  
Rana Gillmon  
Jeffrey Habib  
Linda Jacobs  
Charlotte Lenzner  
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Mona Eraiba  
Catherine Essoyan Hopen  
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Anthony G. Williams

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Robert Brown  
Catherine Essoyan Hopen  
Sabine Rens  
Emily Rosenberg  
Caroline Tsilikounas

## Special Thanks



### Violet Jabara Jacobs Endowment Fund:

Violet Jabara Jacobs, Founding Member, In Memoriam  
Linda K. Jacobs, Founding Member  
Nina Bogosian Quigley, Supporter  
Court Ballinger, Supporter

### Legacy Donors:

Christine Avakoff and John Poochigian, In Memoriam  
William and Elizabeth Cline, In Memoriam  
Bryan Ison, In Memoriam

## Thank you to the community of generous donors that allow NEF to make our mark on the world.

We are grateful for each and every donation received, and hope that you will continue to support NEF long into the future.

### **\$50,000+**

Nina Bogosian Quigley and the Bogosian Quigley Foundation  
Court Ballinger  
Dadourian Foundation  
Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Elsa & Peter Soderberg Charitable Foundation  
European Union  
German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ)  
IKEA Foundation  
Islamic Relief USA  
Linda K. Jacobs  
Norway Agency for Development Cooperation  
Novo Nordisk Foundation  
SNV  
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)  
Syria Recovery Trust Fund  
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)  
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)  
US Department of State - Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration

### **\$49,000 - \$10,000**

Christine and Shant Mardirossian  
Cleveland H. Dodge Foundation

Connie and Haig Mardikian  
Emily Rosenberg  
Jessica Lowery and Jeff Habib  
JoEllen Ison  
Johnson Garrett  
Judith Hunter, In Memoriam  
Karen Bedrosian-Richardson  
Liz Aslanian Lorenzoni  
Melissa B. Dodge and Mark Rutherford  
Mona Eraiba  
Rana Gillmon  
Randa El-Sayed Haffar  
Sebouh Nahabedian  
Stacey Case  
Susan and Bob Morgenthau

### **\$9,999 - \$5,000**

Cassie and Seth Hollander  
In Memoriam of Christine Avakoff and John Poochigian  
Joan Rothermel  
JoEllen and Bryan Ison  
Mario Pellegrino  
Richard and Barbara Lacy  
Susan and Wesley Hayden

### **\$4,999 - \$1,000**

Alain Kuyumjian  
Aminy Audi  
Ann Kerr

Anthony Draye  
Anthony and Elizabeth Enders  
Barbara Merguerian  
Berge and Vera Setrakian  
Carol Amirian  
Charles and Kathleen Hinkaty  
Cherine Kandalaf  
Christine and John Ashby  
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Ketan Patel  
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Michael and Agnese Meehan  
Mostafa Family Charitable Trust  
Najwa Fayoumi  
Robert Solomon  
Rosalind O'Campo  
Shahnaz Batmanghelidj and Radford Klotz  
The Sirpuhe and John Conte Foundation  
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