Near East Foundation
Annual Report 2016
Dear Friends,

One year has passed since we last updated you on the work of the Near East Foundation (NEF)—and what a year it has been for our nation and the world. As we continue to deal with the largest humanitarian crisis since WWII, persistent political and social turmoil, and decreasing humanitarian assistance, there are legitimate reasons to feel discouraged. Yet, in spite of these challenges—and perhaps because of them, NEF’s work has never been more relevant or important than it is today. We remain dedicated to the people and communities we serve, bringing creative solutions to poverty, displacement, and vulnerability. 2016 was a year of great achievement and steady progress for NEF.

There are many humanitarian organizations responding to the same issues and crises as NEF. However, what distinguishes NEF from the others and allows it to have a significant impact is how we go about our work: developing long-term relationships with communities, working hand-in-hand with them to confront the challenges they face, and creating lasting opportunities for families to improve their lives and livelihoods in spite of adversity.

We believe NEF’s community-led initiatives empower vulnerable individuals—often through improvements in their abilities to earn a safe and dignified living—and pave the way for them to thrive and contribute to their communities and economies well into the future. The success of our programs is possible because NEF teams work on the ground, side-by-side, with refugee and other underserved populations to help them develop sustainable solutions and create opportunity from within.

Over the past few years, NEF has continued to raise the bar for itself, its programs, and its impact. While the environment in which we operate is often challenging, we are pleased to report NEF is entering the next fiscal year with a robust portfolio of significant initiatives and in a strong financial position to implement them effectively. This positive forecast has been made possible by your generosity, and we hope you will take great pride in knowing your support has directly contributed to improving the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in the world. For that we thank you.

As NEF enters a new chapter of growth, we are committed to working toward meaningful change in the communities in which we work. Without question, the continued support of our donors and partners is key to helping NEF reach its goal of sustaining progress, in spite of adversity, in the years to come.

With sincere gratitude,

Robert J. Solomon
Board Chairman

Charles Benjamin, Ph.D.
President
Who We Are

Our Mission
The Near East Foundation helps transform the lives of vulnerable people each year by building more sustainable, prosperous, and inclusive communities in the Middle East, Caucuses, and Africa through education, community organizing, and economic development initiatives.

Our Vision
To address the immediate needs of vulnerable, conflict-affected people while enabling their self-sufficiency and economic resilience.

NEF focuses its efforts on three main program areas:

Microenterprise Development
Microenterprise development is one of the most effective ways to create jobs and generate income for disadvantaged communities in the region, while also improving the economy as a whole. NEF promotes the economic independence and social resilience of vulnerable individuals who must overcome social barriers, lack of job skills or business management experience, and limited access to credit through entrepreneurship, microcredit, and peer networks.

Peacebuilding through Economic Cooperation
Many of the communities where NEF works are characterized by recurring conflict. NEF’s approach to build peace in these communities focuses on core livelihood issues in a given area and helps populations find mutual interests to benefit through economic cooperation. By focusing on these issues, NEF frames conflict mitigation and reconciliation in terms of practical and immediate concerns for average citizens.

Natural Resource Management and Adaptation to Climate Change
NEF enables communities to use their resources more efficiently to better adapt to and prepare for shocks caused by a rapidly changing climate. By harnessing nonconventional water resources, introducing water-efficient crops, and adopting improved irrigation technologies, NEF is increasing local capacity to manage agriculture and natural resources sustainably in the long-term.

Near East Foundation UK
NEF UK was established in 2012 to advance the shared values and mission of NEF. Guided by an independent Board of Directors, NEF UK shares a common vision and approach to building more sustainable, prosperous, and inclusive communities through economic development, community organizing, and education.

Current programs include improving children’s access to primary school in Morocco, helping survivors of gender-based violence in Armenia gain economic independence, introducing WASH (access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene) to vulnerable communities in Sudan, and supporting aspiring women entrepreneurs in Palestine to grow their businesses.

For more information visit: www.neareast.org/uk
Where We Work

NEF’s innovative and cost-effective programs are led and staffed by established local teams who partner with local organizations to find homegrown solutions to their development problems.

NEF currently has active projects in eight countries: Armenia, Jordan, Lebanon, Mali, Morocco, the Palestinian Territories, Senegal, and Sudan. Teams based in Syracuse (New York) and London (England) provide program development, communications, project management, and administrative support.

**NEF’s grassroots approach helps to make it a unique and impactful partner.**
RESPONDING TO THE REFUGEE CRISIS

“We left everything behind, we came here with nothing.”
– Fattoum, a Syrian refugee now living in Lebanon

NEF was founded in 1915 as a response to the Armenian Genocide to help hundreds of thousands of displaced Armenians, Assyrians, and Anatolian Greeks that were persecuted after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Today, as the conflict in the Middle East continues and humanitarian aid declines, our experiences and lessons learned from our work more than a century ago are now more relevant than ever.

With the Syrian crisis entering its sixth year, there are now an estimated 4.8 million men, women, and children who have fled Syria to neighboring countries for safety. The conflict has far-reaching humanitarian consequences on both refugees and the countries hosting them.

A mother carries her child on her back after being displaced from their home after World War I. Beirut, c. 1922. Nellie Miller Mann Collection.

Vicky, a Syrian refugee now living in Lebanon, stands with her daughter. Vicky started at-home catering to earn an income after receiving training and cash assistance from NEF.
Jordan and Lebanon

In response to this on-going crisis, NEF works with both refugees and affected host communities in Jordan and Lebanon to develop inclusive opportunities that enable them to earn a living and build resilience against future shocks in a manner that preserves their dignity, autonomy, and safety. NEF’s programs strengthen the capacity of both communities to recover from crisis and emerge from poverty through business and economic development, employability training, vocational training tied to local markets, financial literacy, and cash assistance.

NEF’s refugee assistance programs are funded by the U.S. Department of State-Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM), City and Guilds, MEDAIR, Bogosian Quigley Foundation, Global Giving Foundation, and the Cleveland H. Dodge Foundation.

“Wherever I went, doors closed in my face. But then, I went to the Near East Foundation and they helped me. I know how to work, but I lacked the equipment and the materials because I had no money. I chose to make confectionaries from home and I was surprised by the number of customers I found. NEF helped me regain self-confidence and peace of mind, which I had lost coming from a war zone. They help women to see that they have an important role and a right to participate in society.”

— Rokan, Syrian refugee living in Lebanon with her husband and daughter

“NEF’s financial support helped me to start my clothing business and has helped me to contribute to the household expenses, especially my daughter’s schooling expenses. The training that was provided on developing a business plan taught me to rethink how to calculate the cost of goods, and also helped me to get rid of shyness when dealing with customers and suppliers.”

— Ghousoun, a Jordanian woman who attended NEF’s business development trainings

2016 HIGHLIGHTS

- 82% of Syrian refugees reported a higher household income after participating in NEF’s project.
- 63% of Syrian women report increased self-confidence and control over their lives.
- 1,085 Iraqi and Syrian refugees have benefitted from business and employability trainings and cash assistance.
- 914 new businesses were launched in Jordan and Lebanon (651 by women)—91% of which have plans to expand.
MICROENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

While providing economic development, employability and vocational training, cash assistance, and social networking for refugees and other vulnerable individuals drives NEF’s work in Jordan and Lebanon, NEF also helps to improve the economic opportunity of rural and urban poor, disenfranchised youth, and victims of domestic violence in Armenia, Morocco, Sudan, and Palestine.

NEF takes a community-based approach to inclusive economic development by working with and through local associations to create such platforms as ongoing training programs, business incubators, and start-up funds to help economically marginalized people gain the business skills and resources they need to start small businesses of their own.

Nelly, a Palestinian entrepreneur, expanded her at-home catering business to a dine-in cafeteria after attending NEF’s business development trainings. Photo credit: Tamara Abdul on behalf of the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women.
**Armenia**

Domestic violence and conservative gendered norms are widespread in Armenia, where 66 percent of women have reported being assaulted by their domestic partners. NEF helps women survivors of gender-based violence achieve economic independence through vocational training, entrepreneurship skill building, and business and financial support to help them launch small businesses. Working with community associations in four regions, NEF has organized policy roundtables and public forums to raise awareness and start dialogue around gender-based violence, protection strategies, and gender equality.

NEF’s microenterprise work in Armenia is funded by the European Union.

“The training equipped me with the confidence and skills I needed to turn my passion for baking into a profession. I now earn enough of an income to support my children and myself. Today, instead of dwelling on the difficulties I have experienced in my life, I focus on the successes I have achieved.”

— Armenian woman who participated in NEF’s small business development training

**2016 HIGHLIGHTS**
- 330 new jobs were created for women.
- 242 women launched or significantly expanded their businesses.
- 408 women attended business development trainings; 317 developed business plans.

**Palestine**

Although women are key players in the Palestinian economy, Palestine has one of the lowest female labor participation rates in the world. Hindered by social norms, limited access to financial resources, and lack of institutional support, the role of women in the economy is largely informal and uncompensated. In addition to helping Palestinian women launch start-up businesses in rural areas, NEF focuses on the “missing middle” of women who have existing businesses ready to be taken to scale.

NEF works in partnership with the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women and with the support of the Oak Foundation and the Trafigura Foundation. The Rangoonwala Foundation supports NEF’s work in women’s microenterprise and microfranchising.

“Every woman should have a specific goal and vision and depend on herself to achieve her goals and dreams. If a woman starts her business and she fails, that does not mean she should give up! She should learn from her experiences and start again.”

— Fatmeh, who went from being a cafeteria chef to a restaurant owner with NEF’s help

**2016 HIGHLIGHTS**
- 129 women developed business plans; 128 received grants to support their businesses.
- 91 women developed career/learning plans and CVs.
- 90% of survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) reported improved agency, self-reliance, economic independence, and reduced GBV.

Photo credit: Tamara Abdul on behalf of the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women.
Morocco

With more than 50 percent of Morocco’s young working-age population out of school and out of work, youth unemployment is a serious concern. Working with youth councils in two coastal provinces, NEF is organizing business training programs, incubators, and support networks to help young people start their own businesses in the formal sector. The businesses launched are not only contributing to Morocco’s economy and creating jobs, but also introducing unique and technologically advanced services including an urgent care clinic, an herbal and organic personal care store, art centers, a dental prosthesis clinic, physiotherapy centers, interior design firms, event production companies, and a music recording studio.

“I didn’t know about the training and coaching sessions when I joined. I initially joined for the financial support, but I was surprised by how much I learned through the other trainings. Being selected to join the Rashma microfranchise has been the most amazing part of the project. My business has helped me feel more independent. I am happy.”

— Saida, a young entrepreneur who after successfully launching her own clothing shop partnered with other project participants to launch the project’s first microfranchise, Rashma

NEF’s microenterprise work in Morocco is funded by the U.S. State Department’s Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI).

“'I learned so much about the process of creating a business—the necessary administrative papers for registration, techniques for marketing, and how to handle clients.'”

— Kamal, a young doctor from Casablanca who opened up his own clinic in El Jadida that provides services in general medicine and medical emergencies

2016 HIGHLIGHTS
- 486 youth were trained in microenterprise development.
- 349 developed or improved their business plans.
- 250 youth launched their businesses in a variety of sectors.
- 85% of youth said that starting their own project made them more financially independent.
Sudan

Recurring conflict in Sudan has destroyed economic institutions, markets, and jobs, leaving an overwhelming portion of the population in poverty. Unemployment continues to be one of the major issues facing women in the region. To facilitate economic recovery, NEF is working with women in South Kordofan to develop women’s cooperative associations that support women’s involvement in the cultivation and economic benefit of non-wood forest products such as gum arabic and honey.

2016 HIGHLIGHTS
• 282 individuals received business development trainings (222 women).
• 13 inter-village women associations established.
• 5,573 community members (4,187 women) have benefitted from women-led associations being established and trainings in microenterprise development, specifically in the non-wood sector.

“Because of NEF’s trainings I learned how to expand my business activities outside of my village, and I am now able to conduct transactions with the rural financing institution in my area. This helped me to buy large quantities of my product so that I can meet my demand.”

— Zainab, a non-wood forest product producer from Manhalla village who expanded her business after attending NEF’s business management training

NEF’s microenterprise work in Sudan is funded by Comic Relief, European Union, UNDP, and AECOM.

Microenterprise Development by the Numbers

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<th>OUTCOME</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Women: 1,090</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth: 299</td>
<td>Youth: 152</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grants provided to help expand or start businesses</strong></td>
<td><strong>New jobs created</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,535</td>
<td>693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women: 443</td>
<td>Women: 443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth: 250</td>
<td>Youth: 250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Small businesses started or recovered (post-conflict)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Households with increased income</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,390</td>
<td>5,390</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

People trained in business development, financial literacy, or vocational skills
Business plans developed by women and youth
Grants provided to help expand or start businesses
Small businesses started or recovered (post-conflict)
New jobs created
Households with increased income
Conflict is the backdrop to daily life in many of the communities where NEF works. While conflict expresses itself in many ways—warfare, competition over natural resources, occupied lands, or disaffection—poverty is a significant underlying cause and a consequence. From Sudan to Palestine, where years of conflict continue to shape everyday life, NEF’s peace-building programs simultaneously strengthen economic cooperation and development and promote reconciliation among groups in conflict.

Building peace requires opportunities for collaboration around issues of common concern and mutual benefit that will help break down barriers, build relationships and trust, and establish a foundation to achieve and sustain peace. As a vehicle to reduce conflict, NEF facilitates grassroots economic cooperation by introducing innovative approaches to reconciliation through value chain development, collaborative natural resource management, and economic reintegration of internally displaced people and ex-combatants.

Dolev (right), an Israeli beneficiary from NEF’s Youth Agribusiness Project, with Yasser (left), his Palestinian colleague, on the farmland they cultivate together.
Palestine

In Palestine, thousands of families depend on the olive oil industry. Through the Olive Oil Without Borders (OOWB) program, NEF has worked with more than 3,400 olive oil stakeholders across 58 communities in Israel and Palestine. By providing training, technical support, modern equipment, and opportunities for cross-border dialogue, strategic planning, and trade, NEF helps build relationships for collaboration and trust through the development of the region’s olive sector—and broader economy.

NEF expanded this work into additional sectors, working with Israeli and Palestinian youth to start joint cross-border agricultural businesses. In doing so, they create jobs, generate income, and grow local markets while gaining hands-on experience in business cooperation and conflict management.

NEF’s peacebuilding work in Palestine is funded by USAID.

“OOWB is one of the most important projects in the region, because it enables Palestinian and Israeli farmers to sit together and share the problems and challenges we face in the olive field. This is important for small farmers and producers as now, together, we can produce a higher quality of olive oil so that we can compete in the global market. This also gave me a chance to get to know the Palestinian people, travel to their villages, and discover their culture. This is the first time we have been able to come together as farmers – not as soldiers or settlers.”

— Ayala Noy Meer, an Israeli olive mill operator

“The cooperation between us has been really great; we help one another. The project team helped me with gaps in my overall business acumen... my marketing abilities and how to acquire the raw materials I need more cost-effectively. I thought that they [the Israelis] liked to do things on their own and had no interest in working with us, but my view changed when I saw how they wanted to work and collaborate with us.”

— Masha’al, a Palestinian entrepreneur, who developed a healthy coffee-alternative out of date seeds with her Israeli business partner, Etai

2016 HIGHLIGHTS

- 1,242 Israelis and Palestinians participated in trainings and events to build mass support for peace and reconciliation.
- 53 joint business plans developed.
- 117 Palestinian and Israeli youth are involved in joint economic cooperation partnerships.
- 84% of OOWB participants say they have an increased positive perception of the ‘other.’

Photo credit: USAID
Sudan

In Central Darfur, NEF works with ethnically and economically diverse communities in Darfur and South Kordofan to introduce new tools—such as “supra-village” associations, local conventions, and land use management plans—for sharing natural resources more effectively and for promoting inclusive and sustainable economic and social development.

NEF-supported communities have been able to work together to improve natural resources through a variety of initiatives, including community water sources, demarcation of animal migration corridors, and enrichment of pasture areas used for grazing.

NEF’s peacebuilding work in Sudan is funded by the European Union and UNDP.

2016 HIGHLIGHTS
- 138 people have participated in trainings to build support for peace and reconciliation.
- 93 community leaders trained in mediation and conflict prevention.
- 500 villagers have attended events that focus on the important role women play in raising awareness about peace.

“I personally have benefited from the trainings and applied what I have learned about reconciliation, mediation, and negotiation. Yesterday in a meeting with two conflicting parties in a small nearby village, me and Sheikh Sharif were able to convince both sides to waive part of its properties to the other, we had to convince them to give up a little in order to give way to peace which should be above everything.”

— Amdha, one of the head administrative figures in his village of Alabbasiya in South Kordofan State
Beyond achieving short-term impacts, NEF helps develop local capacity, infrastructure, and institutions to manage agriculture and natural resources sustainably in the long term. NEF supports vulnerable communities—those emerging from years of devastating drought and conflict and those suffering from chronic poverty—to achieve sustainable economic recovery through agricultural production and collaborative natural resource management.

NEF builds resilience among communities through a wide variety of approaches tailored to local conditions, including: rainwater harvesting, improved irrigation, water efficient crops, community veterinarian training, seed distribution, soil and water conservation, aquatic grassland restoration, community forestry, climate-smart agriculture, decentralized climate adaptation funds, and value-chain development.
Mali and Senegal

In the unpredictable environment of the Sahel, Malian and Senegalese communities face critical challenges due to degraded environments, low productivity, crop losses, underdeveloped markets, and long-term climate change. Food security and economic growth depend on mitigating these threats. Some of the most vulnerable groups in the Sahel are smallholder farmers, who are on the frontlines of climate change yet often lack access to the information, tools, and infrastructure to successfully adapt. NEF supports these farmers and other natural resource-dependent populations through a variety of initiatives to improve food security and increase incomes.

2016 HIGHLIGHTS
- 214 community leaders trained in natural resource management techniques.
- 34 investments including market gardens, improved water points, and cereal banks have been approved and are underway.
- 435 individuals were trained in improved natural resource management and sustainable agriculture.

“The idea of building this dam came from the community, who recognized the need for reliable water. It’s hard to describe how important this project was to our village. Before, if you had come here at this time of year [October], there would already be a water crisis. Despite the fact that we just finished building the dam at the beginning of the rainy season, some farmers have already started increasing the size of their fields. We are at peace because we were looking for water and we found it.”

— Boureima Tembley, Mayor of Pelou, Mali

Communities Adapting To Climate Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People who received livelihood restoration food vouchers</th>
<th>People who have directly benefited from improved market gardens and fish ponds</th>
<th>Trees planted with ecological and economic benefits</th>
<th>People who are food secure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6,950</td>
<td>1,280</td>
<td>20,956</td>
<td>23,865</td>
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Building Resilience to Climate Change

In partnership with IIED and IED Afrique, NEF is leading an action-research and advocacy project supporting communities in Senegal and Mali to become more resilient to climate change through access to locally controlled adaptation funds. The team is working with local governments in Mali and Senegal to establish six Climate Adaption Funds of 500,000 Euro each to finance public good investments that support community-identified adaptation strategies. This initiative, the first of its kind at this scale, will help establish a mechanism for channeling global climate adaptation funds to local communities. For more information visit: www.neareast.org/braced

“The fund offers a great opportunity for poor and vulnerable countries to cope with the new global challenges of climate change.”

– Keita Aida M’Bo, Minister of Environment, Sanitation, and Sustainability in Mali
Along with implementing projects in its key programmatic areas, NEF also works to improve education in rural Morocco and access to safe and clean water in Sudan.

In the Tafileh Governorate of Jordan, NEF promotes gender equality and women’s rights by creating a network of youth forums comprised of passionate young men and women who want to evoke change in their community. When asked why she participates as a youth trainer in the program, Danya, a young woman who recently graduated with a degree in agricultural engineering said, “To raise the voices of women.” This project was funded by the Embassy of the Netherlands in Amman.

In Sudan, NEF is working to improve hygiene, sanitation, and the water supply conditions in three clusters in South Kordofan and 12 clusters in Central Darfur. NEF works with local organizations to increase their technical and management capacity to improve access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) as well as increase their ability to address management of their natural resources. This work is funded by United States Agency for International Development’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA).
DONATE TODAY

Everyone deserves the opportunity to provide for their families. Help us improve lives and foster hope for those in desperate need of a helping hand.

www.neareast.org
How You Can Get Involved

Donate.
90% of each donation goes directly to our programs benefitting poor and vulnerable people. Donations help build knowledge, strengthen voices, and create economic opportunity for those who aren't looking for a handout but a hand up. To make an impact year round, supporters can join our monthly giving club. Donations are fully tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law.

Corporate Giving.
NEF partners with Global Impact, which administers one of the world’s largest workplace giving campaigns allowing companies and their employees an opportunity to make a charitable contribution to the Near East Foundation. Let us know if you would like NEF to present at your company about being a part of its corporate giving options.

Matching Gifts.
Does your company match philanthropic donations? Many national and international companies offer matching gift programs as a way for donors to double their impact.

Become a Sponsor.
NEF is looking for sponsors for our 2017-2018 fundraising events. Being an NEF sponsor provides a marketing opportunity as sponsors are featured in front of an audience of forward thinking, market savvy, business and philanthropic minded professionals and entrepreneurs.

Planned Giving.
Are you interested in making NEF a part of your planned giving and/or philanthropic estate plans? NEF will work in partnership with you and your advisors to select the gift vehicle that best meets your financial and philanthropic goals.

Become an NEF Ambassador.
NEF is looking for dedicated, action-oriented partners to help promote its work and mission. We need your help to push forward the fight against poverty and voicelessness. NEF Ambassadors can help by spreading the word about NEF and helping others get involved, helping plan and promote NEF events, and helping NEF engage new partners and donors.

Host an NEF Introductory Event.
Introduce NEF’s work to your network of contacts, colleagues, friends, and family by hosting an introductory event at your home or at an organization where you are a member.

Follow Us.
Stay up-to-date on our latest news and success stories by following us on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, and joining our mailing list at www.neareast.org.
## Financial Summary

### Financial Report — Fiscal Year 2016

#### Statement of Financial Position at June 30, 2016

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#### REVENUES AND OTHER SUPPORT

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#### EXPENSES

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### In 2016, 90% of NEF’s funding went directly to supporting people in need.

NEF is committed to superior financial and administrative management, which ensures our ability to deliver support today and into the future.
Thank You To Our Donors
July 1 2015 – June 30 2016

$500,000 and above
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