

2022

# **POWERING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Synergos in the Arab World:  
Fourteen Years of Impact





Since 2008, Synergos has built the Arab world's largest network of social entrepreneurs – these are agents of change that combine innovation and business skills to meet pressing needs of their communities and countries.



Synergos is a global nonprofit organization that brings people together to solve complex problems of poverty and create opportunities for individuals and communities to thrive.

Despite the region's potential, too many people across the Arab World face poverty, inequity, and other development problems. Unemployment is dangerously high, particularly among youth. Women's economic participation in the region is among the lowest in the world. Health disparities, social exclusion, and environmental degradation affect many communities.

We provide leadership building, financial support, training, and networking opportunities to help them sustain and scale up innovations in a variety of sectors – including youth employment, economic development, education, health, energy and the environment, sanitation, arts and culture, and social inclusion.

**Together, our series of social entrepreneurs have created thousands of jobs and are reaching millions of people by providing services to improve livelihoods and strengthen communities.**

# Powering Social Entrepreneurship: Impact to date



## 145 Pioneers

- Established social entrepreneurs whose initiatives demonstrate results and growth potential. The program helps them scale up, create jobs, and expand their social impact.
- Empowered a network of social entrepreneurs across the Arab World who are pioneering original solutions to some of the most stubborn social and economic problems facing their communities. To date, we have distributed over \$3 million in grants to pioneers.



## 376 Start-ups

- Start-up social entrepreneurs who have an innovative idea and the capability to bring it to reality. The program helps them get their initiatives off the ground.
- Our network also includes Start-ups: early-stage initiatives with social impact potential. Launched in 2011, this element of the program has proven effective in Egypt and Palestine, with promise for replication elsewhere. To date, more than 50 start-ups have been awarded seed funding.



## 3,652 Volunteers

- Young men and women who are making the transition from education to employment. The program builds their employment skills and connects them to volunteer opportunities.
- Our program improves the employability of youth volunteers in Egypt and Palestine by providing them with skills trainings, networking spaces, and access to work opportunities with social entrepreneurs and start-ups.



**We have raised \$9 million in funding for our program.**



Our work has helped hundreds of entrepreneurs collaborate with others inside and outside their communities. We also guide them to think more systemically – all with the goal of scaling up their reach and impact.



**Rana Dajani**  
**Social Entrepreneur &**  
**Founder, 'We Love Reading'**

A native of Jordan, Rana Dajani started We Love Reading after returning home upon completing a PhD in the United States, where her two young daughters had benefited from a local library reading program. She noticed that such programs didn't exist in Jordan, and decided to do something about it. Since its founding in 2006, We Love Reading has reached more than 16,000 children and trained 750 adults in reading aloud. The program has been replicated in more than 800 libraries across 30 countries



**Kamal Mouzawak**  
**Social Entrepreneur &**  
**Founder, 'Souk el-Tayeb'**

Kamal Mouzawak founded Souk El Tayeb in 2004 as an experimental farmers market featuring produce from small-scale farmers and producers. It has since grown into a mature organization working at the national and international level to promote and preserve culinary traditions, rural heritage and the natural environment. Souk El Tayeb's vision is to celebrate the food and traditions that unite communities and support small-scale farmers and the culture of sustainable agriculture.



**Yousef al-Deek**  
**Social Entrepreneur &**  
**Founder, 'Palestinian Social**  
**Cinema Arts Association**  
**(PSCAA)'**

Yousef al-Deek is reviving the lost tradition of cinema in Palestine rendered obsolete after years of occupation and economic deterioration. The PSCAA, founded in 2007, brings films to the poorest segments of Palestinian society. Yousef and his band of volunteers screen films that represent the complexity of life, not only in Palestine but also in other countries, and often touch upon taboo topics as a way to provoke introspection and social dialogue.

# HOW IT WORKS:

	<b>Avg. cost</b>	<b>Financial</b>	<b>Strategic</b>	<b>Networking</b>	<b>Learning</b>	<b>Mentorship</b>
<b>Pioneer</b>	\$25,000 to 40,000	Unrestricted financial awards	Customized capacity plan building	Annual convenings with peer network	Sector-specific workshops	Access to Synergos leaders and mentorship
<b>Start-up</b>	\$3,000	Opportunity to apply for seed funding	One-week intensive training on starting a social enterprise	Networking events with other social innovators	One-day workshops on key topics	Mentoring from established entrepreneurs
<b>Volunteer</b>	\$250		Training on how to be an effective volunteer	Invitations to social entrepreneurship events	Targeted training for job readiness	Opportunity to become a 'trainer of trainers'

# WHY SYNERGOS?

## Replicable, effective model.

A tested model that promotes entrepreneurship as a vehicle for social and economic change and helps youth access jobs or self-employment.

## Profound regional presence.

The largest cohesive, established network of social entrepreneurs, civil society leaders, philanthropists, and business leaders in the region.

## Trusted by partners of all sizes.

Synergos has partnered with local supporters, international donors, and individual philanthropists. Our partners and collaborators include the likes of Ashoka, the Aspen Institute, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Microsoft, Porticus, and the Skoll Foundation. We are proud to unite a range of partners, with varying resources, who are committed to expanding social entrepreneurship in the region.

## Empowering at every level.

Our program supports entrepreneurs at every stage, from promising young people seeking experience, to established social ventures wanting to scale up.

## A proven approach to social change.

We use bridging leadership, inner work, systems thinking, and collaboration to overcome poverty and enable individuals and communities to thrive. Our social innovators have created thousands of jobs and improved millions of lives across the region.



## WHAT'S NEXT?

Based on the work we've done and the extensive network we've built, we believe there is great potential to replicate these initiatives and incubate impactful collaborations to advance social innovation, entrepreneurship, and youth engagement across the MENA region. Synergos seeks to replicate our program model in several other Arab countries, as well as globally. We also envision the creation of a Center for Social Entrepreneurship in the region, as a platform to stimulate and expand social entrepreneurship, engage leading institutions in this space, and channel investments to high-impact initiatives.

Having successfully expanded the program in Egypt, Synergos is replicating in Palestine, Jordan, and Tunisia. With a sharpened focus on job-creating social enterprises and start-ups, we aim to stimulate new markets and create even more jobs. Because today's volunteers are tomorrow's social innovators, expanding our volunteer program and increasing youth participation is at the top of our list. And, as the network grows, we'll deepen our alumni engagement through mentorships, partnerships, and sector-specific trainings.



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*For more information about our work, please  
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