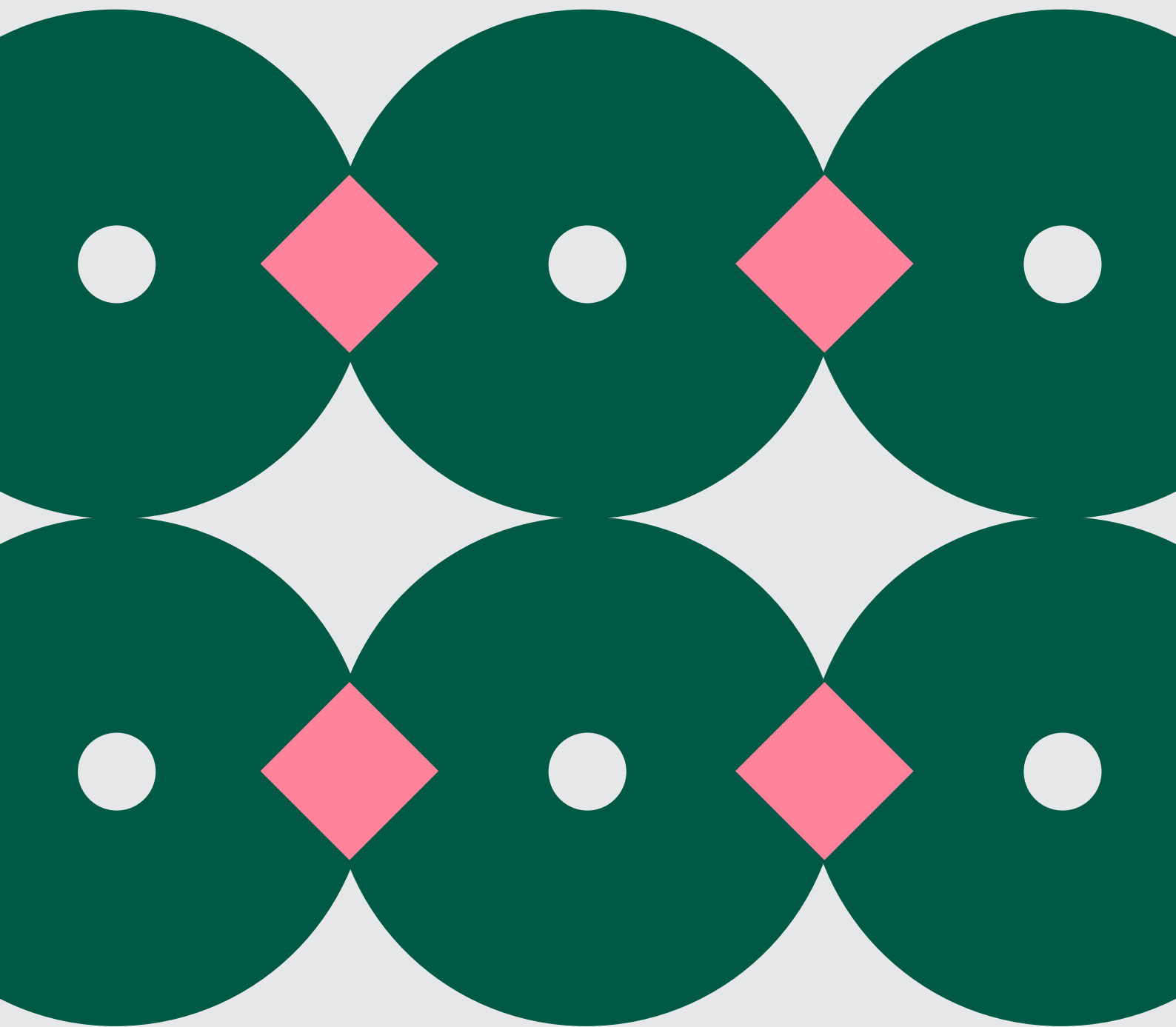


AFAC Annual Report 2021



AFAC ARAB FUND FOR
ARTS AND CULTURE
الصندوق العربي
للثقافة والفنون





About AFAC

The Arab Fund for Arts and Culture - AFAC was founded in 2007 through the initiative of Arab cultural activists as an independent foundation to support individual artists, writers, researchers, intellectuals, as well as organizations from the Arab region working in the field of arts and culture. Since its launch, AFAC's programs have steadily expanded to cover cinema, documentary film, documentary photography, visual and performing arts, music, creative and critical writings, research on the arts, entrepreneurship, trainings and regional events. Based in Beirut, AFAC works with artists and organizations all over the Arab region and the rest of the world.

Our vision

AFAC strives to build a flourishing cultural and artistic scene across the Arab region that contributes to establishing open and vibrant societies, where young and seasoned voices engage with each other in the wake of the massive transformations being witnessed by the region.

In such a context, AFAC seeks for works of art and culture to contribute to the following goals:

- Take advantage of the grey areas and collapse of self-evident certitudes in our region to spur fresh thinking and innovative visions of the future.
- Search for tools to bear witness to the hopes and hindrances our region is living through, with techniques that go past traditional documentation to create new forms of experimentation in writing and ways of dealing with the image.
- Rediscover the complexity and diversity of our societies, and search for marginalized narratives in both the near and distant pasts.
- Promote engagement between Arab societies and their diasporas, especially after such a large number of Arab artists have become refugees or been forced into exile across the world, which has reflected on them personally and the art they produce, as well as on the various societies they are now working in.
- Expand the space for civic engagement through the offerings of intellectuals, artists, researchers and civil society organizations; a space for dialogue, questioning, critical reflection, and tolerance.

How we work

AFAC follows three core principles in its work:

1. Autonomy: AFAC is keen on diversifying its funding sources allowing us autonomy to work towards realizing our vision.
2. Transparency: AFAC adheres to transparency at every stage of work, beginning from the grants application forms which are accessible and open to all, up until the selection process itself, which is the responsibility of a committee of jurors chosen annually for each category.
3. Dynamism: AFAC carries out periodic evaluations of its work, taking into consideration deliberations between jurors, social and political changes, and the new creative genres that accompany them, which allow us to be constantly prepared to evolve or modify our programs.

Strategic Areas of Work

Supporting the production of cultural and artistic work lies at the core of AFAC's work. Since our inception, numerous changes have taken place in our funding programs in response to the needs, gaps, and emergence of new forms of expression and storytelling. The fund for supporting novelists has transformed into encouraging other genres of creative writing, while the support for documentary filmmaking has expanded, adding a dedicated program for enhancing documentary photography.

The support that AFAC offers is not restricted to cultural and artistic work; it extends to cover research on the arts, to secure appropriate channels of distribution and to guarantee the sustainability of pioneering cultural organizations in the Arab world, whether by way of financial support or through training and mentorship. In accordance with this, AFAC's work is divided into five strategic areas: providing grants, developing training programs, building and sharing knowledge, broadening the pool of supporters for the arts, and cultivating appreciation for and engagement with contemporary arts and culture productions by connecting them with audiences.

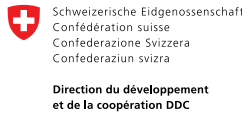
- Grants: AFAC offers close to two hundred grants every year through open calls to submit applications. These grants are spread over nine programs: Performing Arts, Visual Arts, the AFAC Documentary Program, Music, the Research on the Arts Program, Creative and Critical Writings, Training and Regional Events, Cinema, and the Arab Documentary Photography Program.
- Training and Mentorship: In addition to the grants, AFAC sets up programs that offer training and mentorship to develop missing skills and practices, as is the case with the Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship and the Arab Documentary Photography programs.
- Knowledge Building and Sharing: AFAC's extensive database includes more than 16,000 applicants and 1,923 funded projects, which has made it into a considerable source of information on cultural trends, modes of artistic production, social impact, geographic contexts, and all the relevant statistics. AFAC shares this information through reports, infographics, grantees' stories and studies that it commissions.
- Broadening the Pool of Supporters for the Arts: AFAC is committed to strengthening philanthropy for the arts, and to working with the private sector to promote the spirit of entrepreneurship in the field of cultural and artistic production. Our aim is to expand and diversify sources of funding for artists, writers, intellectuals and researchers, as well as organizations that present artistic and cultural content.
- Building Audiences: AFAC seeks to cultivate appreciation for and engagement with arts and culture production to reinforce the transformational power of creative expression.

Board of Trustees:

AFAC is privileged to have an esteemed Board of Trustees made up of the following members:

Dr. Ghassan Salamé, Dr. Nabil Qaddumi, Dr. Suzanne Wettenschwiler, Hani Kalouti, Sawsan Al-Fahoum Jafar, Abia Lahoud, Amr Ben Halim, Elias Khoury, Farouk Mardam Bey, Roxane Zand, Ouassama Rifahi, Mona Khazindar, and Rania Ashur.

Institutional Donors:



Donors from the Private Sector:



Individual Donors:

AFAC is grateful for the generous contributions of the following individual donors:

Nabil Qaddumi - Rania Ashur - Amr Ben Halim - Yazid Anani - Crowdfunding campaign Dance for Beirut

* AFAC is also most grateful to a number of philanthropists who prefer to remain undisclosed.

Programs' Partners:



AFAC is registered in Lebanon under decree 6388 dated 24 September 2011, as the Lebanese branch of the foundation AFAC, registered in Zug, Canton of Zug, Switzerland on 23 June 2006, under article 80 of the Swiss Civil Code. Previously, AFAC was registered in Jordan as the Jordanian branch of the foundation AFAC, under registration number 2099, dated 11 April 2007. AFAC is audited yearly by PricewaterhouseCoopers in Zurich, Switzerland.

Design: Studio Safar



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Introduction



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Culture in a Time of Crisis

Engaging with culture in a time of crisis can be challenging. If 2020 tested people's resilience, 2021 continued to demand focus, perseverance and a will to continue doing good. 2021 also came to prove that culture is a powerful vector for social connection: at a time when people were physically separated from one another, culture brought them together. People engaged online with literature, film, music, as well as live performances and talks. Artists, cultural practitioners and institutions found a way to create collaboratively and in solidarity, albeit feelings of anxiety, uncertainty and bewilderment.

However, even as we continue to rely on culture to get us through the crisis, culture itself is vulnerable to it. The impact of the pandemic on artists, creators and cultural institutions continues to put a strain on all cultural initiatives globally. In the Arab region specifically, where State support is nearly nonexistent, the cultural sector continued to search for ways to recover from the previous year's disastrous repercussions.

While 2021 was an unforgettable year across the globe and contained world-changing and paradigm-shifting events everywhere, Lebanon witnessed the surfacing of particularly difficult challenges. The public deficit, which had been years in the making, placing Lebanon at the third-highest public debt ratio in the world, threw the country into an accelerating fiscal crash. In a country whose currency was pegged to the US Dollar for thirty years, informal exchange rates meant that the Lebanese Lira lost over 90 percent of its value, with a growing inflation rate of over 144% (in September 2021). The direct result of this on the population is the decrease in real purchasing power, loss of jobs, deprivation of savings, closure of businesses, and growing poverty rates already surpassing 80% of the population (in December 2021).

With subsidies lifted on essential goods such as fuel, the country also witnessed an unprecedented fuel shortage that affected electricity supply and transportation, which became increasingly inaccessible and scarce. This put great pressure on middle- and lower-income households, refugee and migrant communities, and persons living on fixed incomes (i.e. pensioners), with the hardships likely to increase.

In the midst of the deteriorating economic situation and living conditions, there is a real fear that artists and cultural practitioners, as well as arts and culture organizations and spaces, will not be able to survive these conditions leading

to loss of livelihood, weakening of the vital scene, loss of the cultural social fabric, and migration. In a country with little to no public funding for the arts and culture, most artists and practitioners, institutions, spaces, and their workers rely on grants earmarked for specific projects and activities. With the inability to produce and host events, exchange ideas and creations, engage communities and the public, or even find the time necessary to think or create, most in the sector have lost their sources of funding and are faced with further economic instability affecting them, their families, and surrounding socio-economic environments and networks.

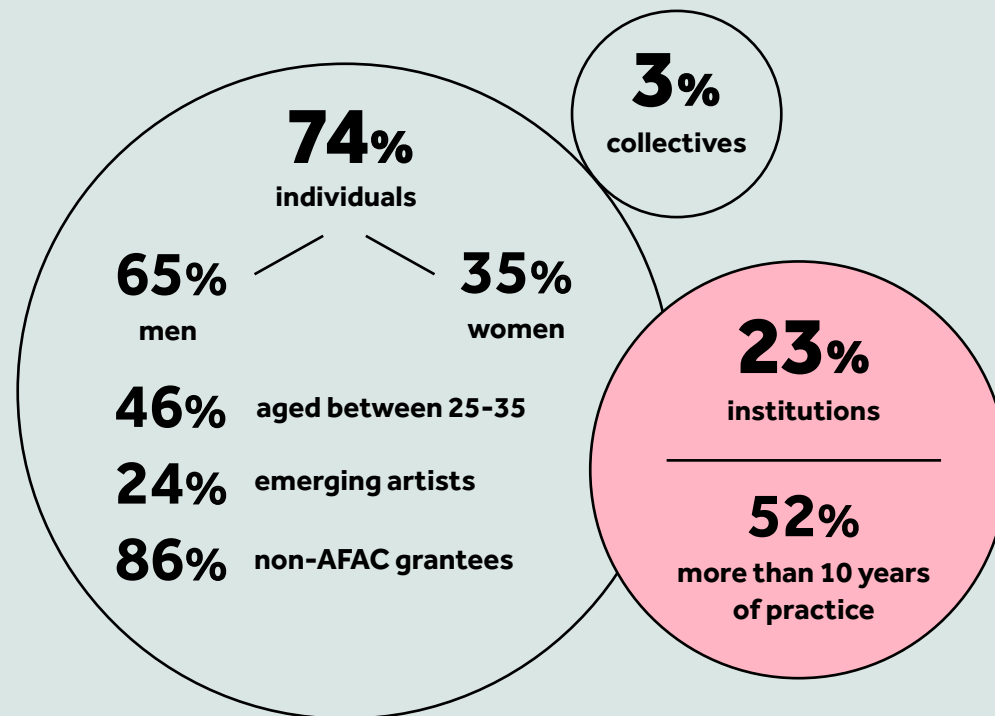
Like many other cultural institutions, AFAC was affected by the decaying infrastructure in Lebanon.

Yet true to its mission and despite all the challenges, AFAC maintained focus and increased its efforts for supporting the cultural fabric in the Arab region through its nine general grants programs (Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Creative and Critical Writings, the AFAC Documentary Program, the Arab Documentary Photography Program, Research on the Arts, Training and Regional Events, Music, and Cinema). In addition, capacity building programs and collaborations initiatives like the Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship (ACE) and the North Africa Cultural Program (NACP) continued their activities in hybrid form, carrying out online and in-person workshops and gatherings.

Grants and Juries 2021

Culture is the key to accessing the collective vision of what’s possible. This is why, through our general grant-making catered to individual artists and arts and culture institutions, we continued in 2021 to support and nurture the region’s cultural vitality and resilience through the ongoing moments of crisis and uncertainty.

application statistics 2021



geographic spread

19

Arab countries

48 | Algeria
2 | Bahrain
299 | Egypt
53 | Iraq
52 | Jordan

3 | Kuwait
337 | Lebanon
7 | Libya
5 | Mauritania
138 | Morocco

4 | Oman
153 | Palestine
15 | Saudi Arabia
2 | Somalia

26 | Sudan
135 | Syria
148 | Tunisia
3 | UAE
33 | Yemen



65

non-Arab countries

grantee statistics 2021

186

15

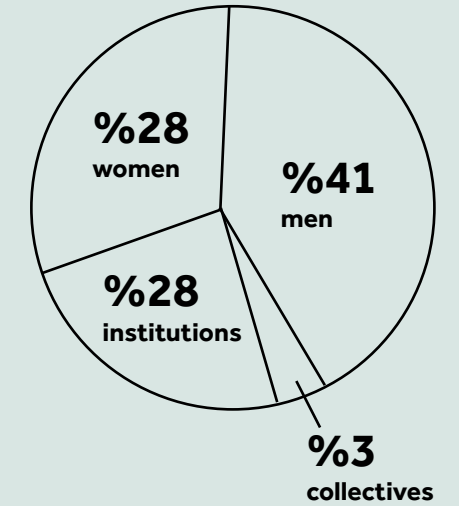
29%
of grantees are from

21%
of grantees are from

10%
of grantees are from

selected grantees

Arab countries



total applications to date (2007-2021)

16,592

total grantees to date (2007-2021)

1,923

2021 Granting Schedule

application statistics

9

programs

2

cycles

1

yearly call

1,430

applications for
general programs



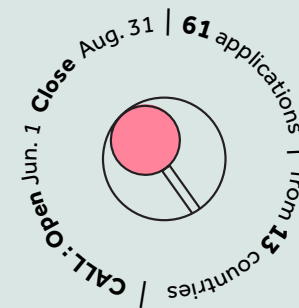
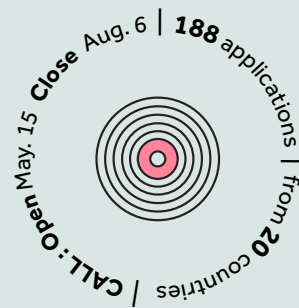
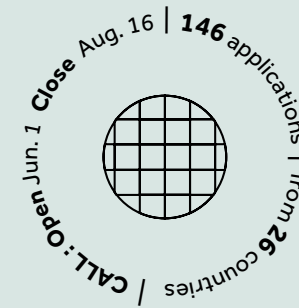
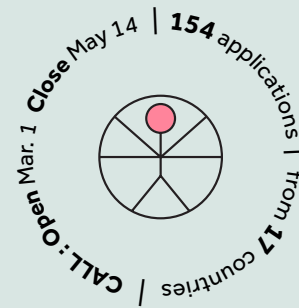
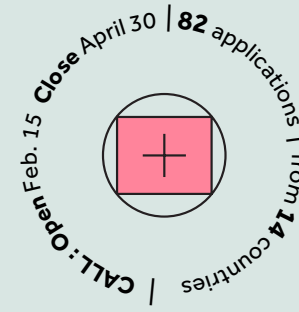
98

Lebanon
Solidarity Fund



1,528

total applications





Juror Testimonies

Following online jury meetings for the first cycle, AFAC conducted in-person jury meetings in Beirut for some of the second grants cycle programs, namely Cinema and Training and Regional Events, while the Music and Research on the Arts juries occurred online. All four jury meetings were held between October and November, with results announced in mid-December.

As testified by our twenty-nine 2021 jurors:

"We saw projects that spoke directly about global issues that are playing out in the region, and classical topics for documentary photography: migration, urbanization, and conflict. But we also saw many others that explored issues in surprising new ways, often indirectly: feminism, harassment, patriarchal societies, economies, youth questioning the future, oppression, water, art, health, queer issues, history, archives. Particularly in the context of the pandemic, many documentary photographers turned to intimate issues within the home or even within the self." (ADPP)

"The ongoing pandemic and its social and political shockwaves have been exacerbated by and intertwined with several local and national crises across the region causing a series of bottleneck situations for many cultural actors and visual arts practitioners. Whilst understanding the incredible resilience of our region, this has nonetheless impacted our discussion and thorough debates leading up to the list of awardees." (VA)

"Several proposals came forward with new forms holding the potential to be developed. This phenomenon demonstrates a will to steer away from the prevalent conceptual models, and to rethink the common forms of artistic expression, through the use of experimental tools inspired by virtual reality and artificial intelligence." (PA)

"The promising projects express different forms of interest in interpreting the cultural periphery, as they include collecting oral history, writing alter-biographies, and composing open texts that aim to analyze cultural phenomena." (CCW)

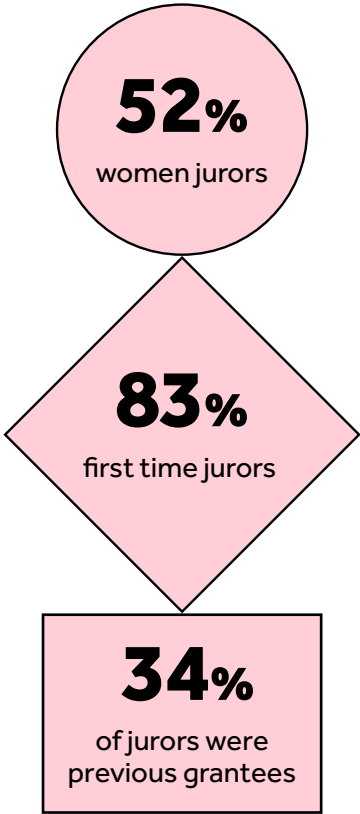
"Many of the projects revealed original forms in storytelling to reflect on our histories and also proposed innovative and daring visual tools in the representation of singular characters that constitute the plurality of our societies." (ADP)

"The Jury felt the creative momentum of applicants. A new generation of activities and of cultural stakeholders is on the rise, covering different aspects of the creative process and linking the proposed projects to either personal or social stories. The sense of community is common, reflecting the need of peers to gather again after a long period of isolation due to Covid restrictions." (TR)

"We were very impressed by the quality of the applications and proud to notice that we have so much talent, especially among the new generation of musicians." (Music)

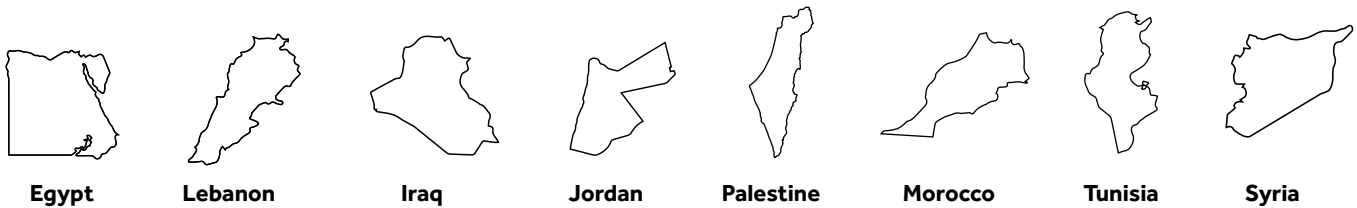
"The terms "resistance" and "resilience" populated many proposals, indicating the role of cultural production within the anticipated winds of social and political change in the region." (RAP)

"The highlight of the jury deliberations was the discovery of new talents; the high percentage of first works among the selected feature films is testament to the continuous dynamism in cinema, considering the challenges the region is going through." (Cinema)



juror statistics

8 countries





Emergency Funds

Our emergency initiatives have been vital in rallying the cultural sector in Lebanon and across the Arab region, by offering much-needed unrestricted and swift support that allowed beneficiaries to continue to create in the current strenuous circumstances.

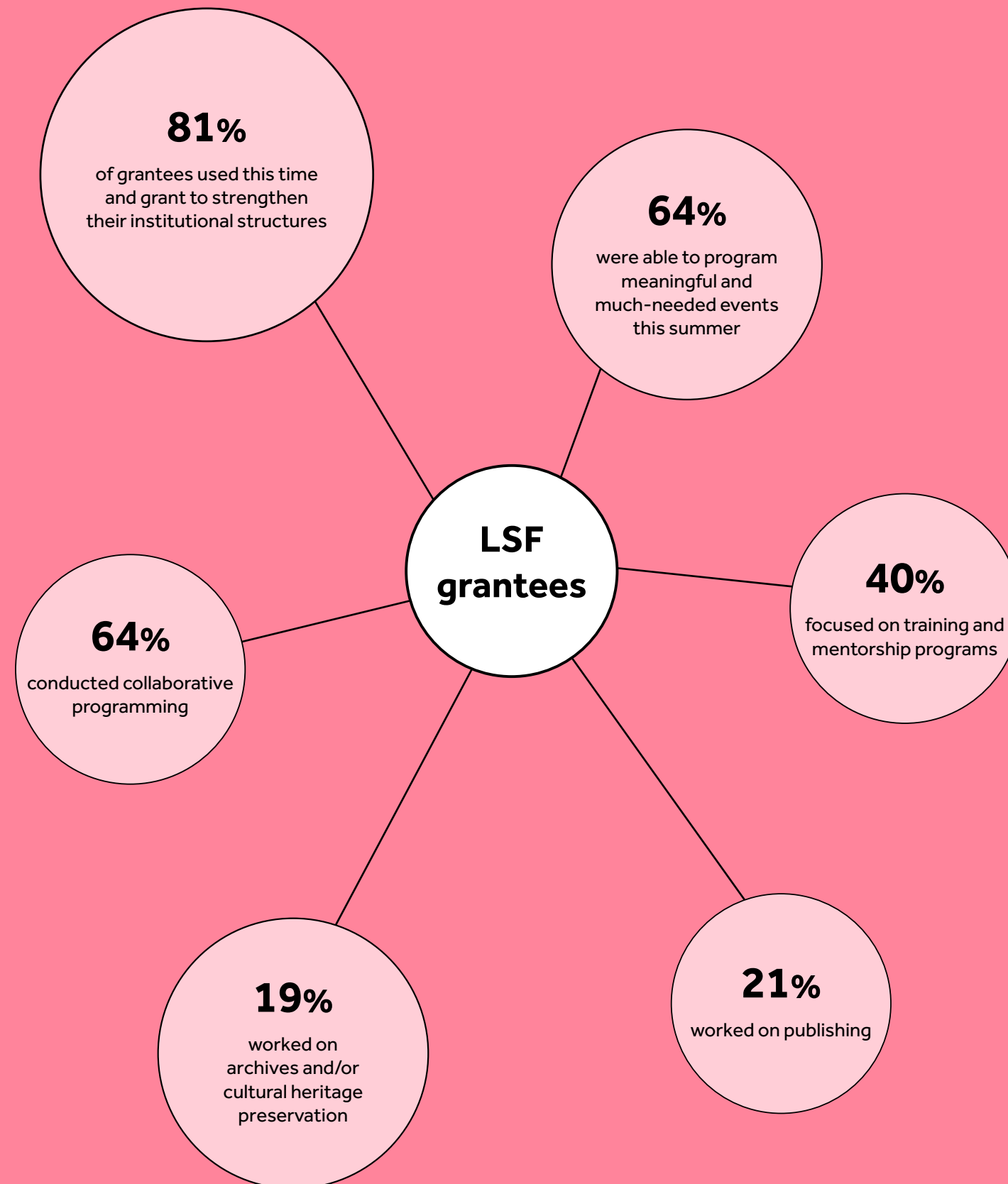
Lebanon Solidarity Fund

The Lebanon Solidarity Fund for Arts and Culture Structures (Round 1), which was launched in May 2020, extended un-earmarked institutional support to 23 structures to guarantee they survive and have the time needed to recreate themselves amidst economic changes and difficulties. By December 2021, 20 out of the 23 grantees had closed their grants. Twelve of them also benefited from programmatic support from the Lebanon Solidarity Fund for Arts and Culture Institutions and Spaces, launched in January 2021 (Round 2). This second round of support was designed after the August 4 explosion at the port of Beirut and allowed institutions and spaces to apply for one or a combination of two support schemes to reconstruct and rehabilitate spaces and collections affected by the blast; retain and sustain teams and spaces as well as cover other core institutional needs; and/or conduct artistic and cultural programming that is relevant and engages the wider community of artists and practitioners.

Regardless of the type of support they received, the 43 grantees of the second round used this opportunity to not only repair the damages from the blast but also strengthen their teams and production and to program meaningful public activities. In doing so, they also had to fight against the growing emigration of artists within and from Lebanon to retain and protect team members, skills, and know-how as well as face threats of erasure or closure. Their physical and economic recovery was accompanied by the urgency to re-think their modes of operation and production and

the articulation of new priorities for the sector as a whole in order to remain part of the cultural landscape. These changes were evident in the choices and directions grantees took by focusing on mentorship and training as a way of preserving skills and sharing knowledge, looking at ways to digitize and preserve their archives and collections contributing to collective narratives and shared local heritage, and engaging in collaborations and new formats of producing, programming, and distributing cultural thought and works. More importantly, the majority of grantees from both rounds also focused on finding ways to persist and continue in the face of compound crises and obstacles, whether through equitable redistribution of salaries, purchasing important equipment and software to streamline production and work, or paying rent and bills to safeguard spaces of gathering.

While it is still early to have a clear assessment of the impact of the Lebanon Solidarity Fund on the Lebanese cultural landscape, the multitude of meaningful cultural events programmed by grantees in the summer of 2021 is proof that the support scheme succeeded in assisting the sector in providing jobs, meeting audiences with relevant socio-political questions and thought, and positioning itself as an integral part of the country's economy. All 54 grantees from both rounds will convene in the first quarter of 2022 for a first in a series of meetings meant to provide space to share and discuss learnings from the past two years and find collective ways of moving forward. The knowledge derived from these meetings will also be used for an evaluation that will be conducted by an external evaluator to assess the impact of this emergency support on the sector as a whole.



AFAC-Netflix Hardship Fund in Support of the Arab Region's Film & TV Community

Following a first collaboration between AFAC and Netflix on a hardship fund dedicated to Lebanese and Lebanon-based below-the-line film and television crew, the two organizations launched a second phase of the AFAC-Netflix Hardship Fund, aiming to support those operating in the region's film and TV industry, most impacted by the pandemic. Valued at \$480K, this emergency relief fund was designed to provide financial support to this sector, in the form of individual grants of \$2K each.

beneficiaries

240

beneficiaries

97%

beneficiaries

are freelancers in the film and television sector

12

Arab countries

Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen

jun.

jul.

9 - 15

call for applications

492

applications received

from

17

countries

These emergency support schemes, along with the Artist Support Grant launched by AFAC in May 2020 in support of Arab artists across the region, have been instrumental in sustaining the vitality of the region's creative sector in times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Artists and entities in Lebanon and across the region were offered a safety net to continue to reflect, create, and maintain their productivity despite the challenges that the pandemic restrictions presented.



Capacity Building and Collaborations

Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship (ACE)

With the finalization of all three workshops and mentorship sessions, the third cycle of the Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship program (ACE 2021) has neared completion.

WORKSHOP #1

feb. mar.

08 - 01

online

speakers from

Egypt, Kenya, India, the United States and Lebanon

themes

design thinking practices, techniques of storytelling, the design of effective communications strategies, and the tenets of financial resilience

WORKSHOP #2

jun. jun.

02 - 18

online

speakers from

UK, Kenya, Palestine and Jordan

themes

design thinking, communication strategies as well as financial and budget management techniques

WORKSHOP #3

nov. nov.

01 - 05

Amman, Jordan

speakers from

Tunisia, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, Brazil, Netherlands, the United States and UK

themes

resource mobilization including assets and business models, ethics in project financing, diversity of business and impact models, community engagement strategies and audience development, as well as leadership and management styles

The training of trainers component of the program continued in 2021 with the six co-pilots following a leadership training program led by Robert Wolfe, and accompanying ACE program facilitator Moukhtar Kocache in the various mentorship sessions and needs assessment meetings with the grantee entities.

The eight entities of this third ACE cycle (B'sarya for Arts, En Toutes Lettres, Koon, Cinema Akil, Dar Qandeel for Culture and Arts, WaraQ Foundation for Arts and Culture, Cinémathèque de Tanger and Romooz Foundation) will continue working on their respective incentive grant projects, which will need to be finalized by the end of 2022.

Furthermore, the ACE series of expert videos continued to expand, with [Leila Mroueh on Social Enterprise](#), and [Sam Conniff on Professional Rule-Breaking](#). Three additional videos, by Leandro Valiati, Amany Alhadka and Hatem Imam, are being finalized, in addition to the trailer of the ACE 2021 third workshop.

ACE: An Invaluable Model for the Region

Initially conceived as a three-year program including three cycles, the implementation of ACE was disrupted by the pandemic. The second and third cycles had to be organized mostly online, with the participants meeting in-person only once during the whole cycle. Switching to online mode naturally had its advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, AFAC was able to program a bigger number of interventions by experts from all over the world. Inviting all contributors in person would have not been logistically and financially viable, so the online format allowed an increase of activities and at a lower cost than usual. On the other hand, however, losing the in-person component affected the program as a whole and compromised the evaluation that was planned for the end of the third cycle.

Despite all the challenges faced in the last couple of years, ACE has been successful in achieving its objectives and the model is proving to be suitable for replication in specific sectors, regions and scales. In fact, following the end of the third cycle, AFAC was approached by UNESCO with a request to design and lead a training program using the same structure as ACE, but adapted to Yemen and the specificity of its local arts and culture institutions, their needs and challenges. ACE Yemen completed its first workshop in November 2021 and second workshop in December 2021 with 9 participating institutions, who, as confirmed by UNESCO, had expressed the need for access

to the program. The second workshop was followed by mentorship sessions with the program's participants. In parallel, a Capacity Assessment Report, a body of research that addressed the state of the creative industries in Yemen, through identifying opportunities and challenges, mapping out the cultural landscape, examining UNESCO's contribution and exploring new suggestions for potential sustainable investment, has been completed and released.



Another example that is testament to the relevance and impact of ACE is the case of SJ Productions, a music production company established in 2012 in Palestine, with the objective of developing a music environment that represents Palestinian music and reflects its creative potential globally. As a result of their participation in the first cycle of ACE in 2018, SJ Productions were able to write up a business plan for the company and to renovate their recording studio, making it the only state of the art music studio in Palestine, offering their services and expertise to a burgeoning local music scene. Following the first cycle of ACE, SJ Productions began a collaboration with Drosos Foundation, through which they replicated the principles of the ACE program, adapted to the music sector in Palestine.

The experience gained from the first three cycles and the different success stories reaffirm the need for institutional training programs in the arts and culture sector in the Arab region and their potential impact in countries where State support is absent and cultural practitioners are obliged

to take on the roles of project creator, leader, business model developer, programmer, to name a few.

Moreover, the first three cycles of ACE have resulted in a substantial collection of quality papers, course plans and lectures by international experts around the core topics tackled by ACE: design thinking, storytelling, communication, positioning, and financial resilience, among others. This collection is a valuable resource that will be compiled, edited and made available for future cycles of ACE and the interested public, as a tailored curriculum that can be consulted by arts and culture practitioners in the Arab region, thus maximizing the number of future beneficiaries and ensuring a continuous impact through a much needed knowledge sharing program.

As such, AFAC is planning an extension of the program, with a fourth cycle at the end of which all ACE alumni will convene in a conference to share experiences, learnings and to network for possible collaborative projects; compile all material courses related to the program in a publication; and in parallel to the fourth cycle, AFAC will invite external experts to evaluate the program and its impact.

The Arab Documentary Photography Program (ADPP)

In the beginning of 2021, the ADPP bilingual website was launched with a special highlight on the program's sixth edition's projects. In parallel to the website launch, the seventh cycle of the program was completed virtually, and the eighth cycle began with a first physical workshop in Amman.

Following a first workshop held in February, and a second one in June, [the seventh cycle of ADPP](#) grantees finalized their photo stories, which were uploaded on the ADPP website in October.

On their part, [the eighth ADPP group of ten photographers](#) hailing from 6 Arab countries, convened in their first workshop in Amman from October 13 to 16. This physical encounter allowed the ADPP grantees to meet each other and their mentors as well as the teaching assistants. The grantees also had the opportunity to visit the Mohammad and Mahera Abu Ghazaleh Foundation for Art & Culture (MMAG Foundation) and their resident artists. They also presented their works during the workshop, in addition to being presented with an international body of work by their mentors.

The second workshop of the eighth cycle is foreseen for May 2022, and will be preceded by online mentorship sessions.

Concurrently, the commissioned research on ADPP has been relaunched and updated by adding the data of the latest two groups of ADPP grantees (2020 and 2021). This extensive body of research is dedicated to a critical study and observation of the program's achievements and impact within the wider international and Arab landscape of photography practices. Envisioned as a publication, the ADPP research is set to be finalized in spring 2022.

Research on the Arts Program (RAP)

Following the announcement of the [11 research projects](#) supported by the third cycle of our Research on the Arts Program (RAP) in the third week of January, the 11 grantees – individual researchers, teams, collectives and institutions – convened in [a virtual workshop](#) that took place from February 2 to 10, 2021. They were joined by members of the RAP jury committee as well as members of the AFAC and ACSS grants management teams.

During the course of the year, the AFAC grants management team followed up with the grantees to ensure a smooth running of their projects.

Concurrently, as agreed with the ACSS team, work is under way for an overall evaluation of the RAP, set to take place in the course of 2022. A working group composed of previous jurors will evaluate the program and its regional role by the end of 2022.

North Africa Cultural Program: A Boost at the Core

The North Africa Cultural Program (NACP) is the result of an international bid put out by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) which AFAC applied to and won in mid-2018. The program is dedicated to the five countries of North Africa - namely Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya - and comprises two support schemes, a National Fund and a Regional Fund. Together, the two funds aim to strengthen independent arts and culture entities (institutions, collectives, networks, spaces...), encourage regional collaborations, and focus on supporting distribution, circulation and dissemination of artistic works in all fields.

NACP Lab 2021

In line with the program's objectives and mission to foster new collaborative spaces between the various participating entities, AFAC launched an innovative leadership and networking skills program, the NACP Lab 2021, which ran from April 7 to June 23.

The NACP Lab 2021 was configured as a series of online sessions tailored to expand the individual and organizational capacities of cultural managers and entities operating within the NACP network.

These series of sessions – divided into three clusters, namely organizational, leadership and collaborative, and addressing topics of high relevance such as storytelling, people skills, and creative problem solving – provided the tools and space to discuss, share, and learn with peers from other leading cultural organizations currently operating in North Africa. Together, they tackled challenges and opportunities that the arts and culture sector is facing in these times of global uncertainty.

NACP Online Platform Updates

In an effort to consolidate all NACP institutions, their work, achievements and milestones under one umbrella, an online platform is currently being finalized for the program, the first phase of which is set to be completed and launched in the first quarter of 2022.

This platform serves as a rich library that documents the inspiring works of 40 different entities and projects (28 institutions and 12 collaborative projects) over a very critical period in time during its operation in parallel to the pandemic. Concurrently, it will serve as a pool of insightful resources on the status of arts and culture in North Africa through the diverse field experiences offered by the implementation of the program grants.

This live and experiential resource invites researchers, critics and writers to dive into its content as it gathers reflections and case studies from a wide palette of arts and culture organizations and initiatives shaping the North African arts and culture scene.

National Fund Entities Convention

A convention bringing together all entities under the National Fund in Beirut will feature a curated program that is inclusive of the entities' needs and aspirations as expressed in the country meetings. The meeting, scheduled for March 2022, will also be a chance for these cultural entities to meet their peers in Beirut and spark conversations and potential collaborations.



Field Visits and Country Meetings |
Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia

The NACP team at AFAC held visits to Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia from end-September to end-October. The visits allowed for first in-person encounters with more than 30 entities from both the National and the Regional Funds, to discuss updates on the implementation of their activities, as well as challenges and opportunities, and to assess the timeline for the remaining projects. In addition, one General Country Meeting was organized in each of Cairo, Casablanca and Tunis. These general meetings allowed for the activation of each country's network, the discussion of high-level synergies between the various entities, and the understanding of sector specifics in each country.



EGYPT

02 cities 11 visits

01 general meeting
in Cairo

highlights

- The need for more localized emergency funds.
- The need for more active networking.
- The challenge of publicizing in light of the security challenges.
- The need to collaborate for the creation of new marketing strategies.
- A wish to discuss the shift to digitization and its impact.

MOROCCO

05 cities 12 visits

01 general meeting
in Casablanca

highlights

- How do Moroccan cultural entities tackle stability and sustainability in such challenging times?
- How can cultural structures equip teams and build their capacity while they are constantly facing risks of discontinuity?
- International funding v/s local funding: how to put policies in place to establish the foundations for stronger local funding in Morocco?
- How can the cultural entities in Morocco influence the international donor priorities to incorporate their interests and needs?
- The expanding need for adaptation to the digital sphere- at what cost, and for whom?

TUNISIA

05 cities 16 visits

01 general meeting
in Tunis

01 reception at the
Swiss Ambassador's
residence

highlights

- Pressure from public authorities leading organizations to seek sustainable operational models.
- The need to be better equipped with managerial and organizational skills, especially for post-revolution ventures.
- The need for increased access to new media and sharing good practices and transfer of knowledge among organizations that are experienced in the field of digitization.
- The need for decentralized cooperation supporting partnerships with organizations outside of Tunis.

Institutional Strengthening



Team Expansion

The efforts to strategically expand the AFAC team have resulted in 2021 in the recruitment of Deputy Director Maral Mikirditsian, Consultant for Development and Fundraising Naim Rammal, and Grants Manager Lama Mawla.

Maral, who joined AFAC in mid-June, brings onboard a forward-looking vision and a firm determination. She previously co-founded Studio Safar, worked at Dar El Nimer, and has headed the TUMO Studios educational program in Armenia over the past 5 years.

Naim joined AFAC in mid-August. Having previously occupied the position of Acting Chief Operating Officer at Abu Dhabi Music and Arts Foundation – ADMAF, Naim’s solid experience in the sector comes in handy as he sets about to design a new strategy and course of action for fundraising and development, in the framework of the AFAC Strategy 2023-2025.

Lama, on her part, who was handling the Lebanon Solidarity Fund on a freelance basis, joined the AFAC

grants management team in September, taking over the management of the Visual Arts and Performing Arts grants programs, while continuing to manage the Lebanon Solidarity Fund.

With this expansion, the AFAC team now consists of thirteen members, who work in synergy to steer AFAC’s ongoing development and chart its future growth.

AFAC’s 15th Anniversary

In anticipation of AFAC’s 15th anniversary, management and team members held several brainstorming sessions throughout the year to evaluate the learnings of the past years and define the main pillars of AFAC’s strategy for 2023-2025, which will be finalized in the second quarter of 2022

The action plan resulting from the strategy, as well as the activities subscribed under AFAC’s 15th anniversary, will be implemented over the course of 2022.



Outreach

A Wider Reach in Communication

We continued to maximize our digital platforms in 2021, making strategic use of the various tools and features at hand to reach and engage with wider audiences.

On social media, we pursued our communication strategy, which employed tactics to boost engagement and widen reach, while retaining our followers with the regular publication of dynamic, rich and relevant content.

In terms of communication outputs, the [AFAC Annual Report 2020](#) was published in a dynamic digital format in both English and Arabic. Encompassing the activities and initiatives of an unprecedented year, the report boasts insightful numbers pertaining to AFAC's general grant-making and emergency support schemes, in addition to voice capsules from the various 2020 jurors, capturing their observations and comments on the evaluated projects following the virtual jury meetings.

AFAC's regional media reach continued to make strides in 2021, following the increase in media exposure of 2020.

55%

increase in
engagement

+175%

engagement
on stories

74,857

followers
across all AFAC's social
media platforms

25-34

prominent age group
on the two social media
platforms

facebook

40.6%

increase in
Facebook page's reach

1,242,491

Facebook reach

instagram

8.7%

increase in
Instagram page's reach

86,205

Instagram reach





Grantees News and Recognition

Despite the heavy repercussions that 2021 carried over from the year before, news of awards and recognition continued to flow in from our grantees, which we disseminated across our platforms.

“The Devil’s Drivers” by **Mohammed Abugeth**; “Costa Brava, Lebanon” by **Mounia Akl**; and “The Gravedigger’s Wife” by **Khadar Ahmed** featured among the line-up of the Toronto International Film Festival TIFF (2021)

Eliane Raheb won the ‘Teddy Award for Feature Film’ at Berlinale for her film ‘Miguel’s War’

NACP Grantee **Le 18 Marrakech’s Awal/Adam** 2021 residency program was completed at the Dades valley

NACP Regional Fund grantee **La Fabrique Art Studio** celebrated Women’s History Month in March with live performances by female DJs, as well as the launch of the Hip Hop Academy for Girls

“Republic of Silence” by **Diana ElJeiroudi**; “Costa Brava, Lebanon” by **Mounia Akl**; “Hanging Gardens” by **Ahmed Yassin Al Daradji**; “The Mother of All Lies” by **Asmae El Moudir**; and “The Stranger” by **Ameer Fakher Eldin** sailed to Venice, taking part in the festival’s various sections

Mehdi M. Barsaoui won the ‘Best Actor Award’ at the Cesar Awards for his film “A Son”

“The River” by Lebanese filmmaker **Ghassan Salhab** held its world premiere at the 74th Locarno International Film Festival

“Galb’Echaouf” by **Abdessamad El Montassir**, and “Little Palestine: Diary of a Siege” by **Abdallah Al-Khatib** premiered at the Visions du Reel 2021

Eight AFAC-supported films screened at the El Gouna Film Festival: “The Sea Ahead” by **Ely Dagher**; “Costa Brava, Lebanon” by **Mounia Akl**; “My Father Killed Bourguiba” by **Fatma Riahi**; “Women of My Life” by **Zahraa Ghandour**; “Hanging Gardens” by **Ahmed Yassin Al Daradji**; “Abo Zaabal 1989” by **Bassam Mortada**; “Nothing About My Mother” by **Latifa Doghri**; and “They Planted Strange Trees” by **Hind Shoufani**

Libyan film “The Colonel’s Stray Dogs” by **Khalid Shamis** premiered at the Canadian International Documentary Festival - Hot Docs

“Souad” by **Ayten Amin** won the ‘Best Actress Award’ at the Tribeca Film Festival



Abdessamad El Montassir won the 'Best Documentary Short Film Award' at the Sharjah Film Platform 4 for his film 'Galb'Echaouf'

Eleven films will take part in the Red Sea Film Festival in early December: "Communion" by **Nejib Belkadhi**; "Beirut Hold'em" by **Michel Kammoun**; "Take me to the Cinema" by **Albaqer Jaafar**; "Europa" by **Haider Rashid**; "Memory Box" by **Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige**; "The Gravedigger's Wife" by **Khadar Ahmed**; "The Sea Ahead" by **Ely Dagher**; "The Stranger" by **Ameer Fakher Eldin**; "Fragments from Heaven" by **Adnane Baraka**; "Seeking Haven for Mr. Rambo" by **Khaled Mansour**; and "The Day of Wrath: Tales from Tripoli" by **Rania Rafei**

The performance "The Path of the Sun or the Bare Life" by **Mohamed Ali Ltaief** played at Al Medersa Al Ashouria, as a residency outcome with NACP National Fund grantee **L'Art Rue** (Tunisia)

Ahmed Yassin Aldaradji won a prize at CineGouna for his films 'Hanging Gardens'

The documentary film "Suspended Wives" by Moroccan director **Merieme Addou** premiered at DOK.fest Munich

Zahraa Ghandour won a prize at CineGouna for her film 'Women of My Life'

Mounia Akl won the NETPAC award at TIFF and the Green Award as well as the FIPRESCI Prize at Gouna Film Festival for her film "Costa Brava, Lebanon"

Four films played Cannes 2021: "The Gravedigger's Wife" by **Khadar Ahmed**; "Europa" by **Haider Rashid**; "Little Palestine, Diary of a Siege" by **Abdallah Al-Khatib**; and "The Sea Ahead" by **Ely Dagher**

NACP National Fund grantee **Libya Culture and Media Organization's media arm Hun FM** organized a day-long celebration of World Radio Day

Six films participated in the International Documentary Festival Amsterdam - IDFA: "Homemade Stories" by **Nidal Al Dibs**; "Galb'Echaouf" by **Abdessamad El Montassir**; "Little Palestine: Diary of a Siege" by **Abdallah Al-Khatib**; "Abu Zaabal 1989" by **Bassam Mortada**; "Land of Women" by **Nada Riyadh**; and "The Mother of All Lies" by **Asmae El Moudir**

M'hammed Kilito presented "Among You" in Paris as part of the 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair

NACP grantee project **CLUSTER** released its "Mapping Urban Heritage in Tunis: Four walking itineraries in the old city" publication

Medrar launched the 10th edition of the Cairo Video Festival

Diana ElJeiroudi received an honourable mention and the 'Goethe Goethe Institut Film Prize' at DOK Leipzig for her film 'Republic of Silence'

Eleven films showcased at the Cairo International Film Festival: "Then Came Dark" by **Marie-Rose Osta**; "I Might Not Normally Share This" by **Noura A. Rahman**; "Memory Box" by **Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige**; "Fiasco" by **Nicolas Houry**; "Our River, Our Sky" by **Maysoon Pachachi**; "The River" by **Ghassan Salhab**; "Death of a Virgin and the Sin of Not Living" by **George Peter Barbari**; "The Stranger" by **Ameer Fakher Eldin**; "Life After Siham" by **Namir Abdel Messeeh**; "Bye Bye Tiberias" by **Lina Soualem**; and "On the Hill" by **Belhassen Handous**

Hind Shoufani won a prize at CineGouna for her film 'They Planted Strange Trees'

Ahmad Ghossein won the 'Karama Feather Award for Best Fiction Film' for his film 'All This Victory'

"Souad" by **Ayten Amin**; "Europa" by **Haider Rashid**; "Costa Brava, Lebanon" by **Mounia Akl**; "The Stranger" by **Ameer Fakher Eldin**; and "The Gravedigger's Wife" by **Khadar Ahmed** entered the Oscars 2022 race in the First Entry of the International Feature Film category

Maysaa Almumin received a 'Special Mention' at Maskoon Festival for her film 'J'ai le Cafard'

Asmae El Moudir won the 'Atlas Prize for Post-Production' at Marrakesh International Film Festival for her film 'The Mother of All Lies'

"Omar Amiralay: Sorrow, Time, Silence" by **Hala Al-Abdallah**; "Costa Brava, Lebanon" by **Mounia Akl**; "The Sea Ahead" by **Ely Dagher**; "Memory Box" by **Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige**; "Little Palestine: Diary of a Siege" by **Abdallah Al-Khatib**; and "The Gravedigger's Wife" by **Khadar Ahmed** were featured at the British Film Institute (BFI) London Film Festival

Three AFAC-supported films by women filmmakers took part in DOK Leipzig: "Republic of Silence" by **Diana ElJeiroudi**; "Conversations with Siro" by **Dima El-Horr**; and "Ceuta's Gate" by **Randa Maroufi**

Lebanese singer **Sabine Salamé** released her single “Dej Dej Ta3 Ta3”

Roger Anis, Randa Shaath, Sima Ajlyakin, Fathi Hawas, Heba Khalifa, Mohamed Mahdy, Sima Diab, and Hamada Elrasam took part in Cairo Photo Week’s “Depth Off Field” hybrid event

Nadine AlKoudsi was featured among the 12 Women Photographers to Watch in 2021, by the Photographic Museum of Humanity

Rehab El Dalil was featured in the National Geographic

Eight films participated at the 32nd edition of the Journées Cinématographiques de Carthage: “The Gravedigger’s Wife” by Khadar Ahmed; “How My Grandmother Became a Chair” by **Nicolas Fattouh**; “Miguel’s War” by **Eliane Raheb**; “Little Palestine: Diary of a Siege” by **Abdallah Al-Khatib**; “Costa Brava, Lebanon” by **Mounia Akl**; “Freedom Fields” by **Naziha Arebi**; “The Colonel’s Stray Dogs” by **Khalid Shamis**; and “Prisoner and Jailer” by **Muhannad Lamin**

Abdo Shanan, Salih Basheer, Lola Khalfa, Nada Harib, and Seif Kousmat showcased works in a collective exhibition at Institut du Monde Arabe

The album “Electro Zebala” by **Rafik Rezine** from Algeria was released

Myriam Boulos was nominated to join the Magnum Photos collective

Mohammed Alkouch, Amina Kadous, Lina Khalid, M’hammed Kilito, Nadine AlKoudsi, Tamara Saade, Manu Ferneini took part in the Gulf Photo Plus “Chemistry of Feeling” community exhibition

“Memory Box”, by **Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige**; “Death of a Virgin, and the Sin of Not Living” by **George Peter Barbari**; “Miguel’s War” by **Eliane Raheb**; and “Souad” by **Ayten Amin** were featured in the line-up of the 2021 Berlin International Film Festival – Berlinale

The Tunisian **Dendri Stambeli Movement’s** new album BORI was released digitally

Syrian oudist and composer **Mohannad Nasser** released his album “Al Hamra”

Tunisian kanun player and composer **Hana Boukhris’** debut album “My Muse” was launched

Egypt-based **Tarkeeza platform for digital learning and capacity building in music management**, launched its Beta version as part of the North Africa Cultural Program





Fundraising and Development



Around the globe, questions around resources (accessibility, expenditure, long-term impact) have intensified this year in the wake of the discoveries and shifts that we continue to experience as a result of/in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic. The sheer volume of webinars, roundtables, discussions, research and evaluations conducted to answer or rather question the way forward is indicative of a turning point that the world is witnessing, as well as of a need to reset and examine. With the current moment deeming the present and near future vulnerable and precarious, big institutions and foundations are rallying efforts to try and understand the impact, shortcomings, channels, and areas of their investments over the past decades. A renewed realization of long-standing systemic barriers prevails: inequality and inequity; absence of basic human rights;

absence of social security, bringing to the foreground the question: What is at the core? Markets? People? Planet?

Equally, the question of the digital culture and new value chains is on the rise today more than ever. As we start to experience new artistic and aesthetic formats, the need to define new cultural commons, while acknowledging and respecting cultural differences; re-design human boundaries (what is human and what will never be); and question universalism as an ideology becomes pressing.

The rise of these new sensibilities paves the way for new ways of thinking, working, and collaborating, while posing the risk of desperately seeking to stabilize an unstable situation through creating a hyper-reality where the questioning is no more than a pretext to reaffirm usefulness.

At the crossroads of all of that questioning and revisioning, our efforts in mobilizing resources during the year 2021 were split between securing our targets for the year on the one hand and actively engaging in discussions about new possible allies on the other hand, alongside examining the shifts that are happening in the fundraising landscape. Despite all the shifts globally and the extreme situation locally and regionally, AFAC did not lose any of its main donors and partners. The first half of the year 2021 was busy with cultivating new connections as well as maintaining long-standing supporters. Three new partners were brought on board: Netflix, Apple, and UNESCO. The partnership with Netflix that started in 2020 on an emergency fund (AFAC – Netflix Hardship Fund) for film workers in Lebanon was upgraded through 2021 to include support to our film programs through a creative equity fund of \$250K. Additionally, a new edition of the AFAC – Netflix Hardship Fund, worth \$500K, was launched, this time dedicated to the Arab region. On its part, Apple supported AFAC with a general donation of \$50K for 2021, with discussions about a longer-term partnership ongoing. A partnership with UNESCO Yemen was established on developing an ACE-like training program focused on small arts and culture entities and collectives in Yemen, for a total support of \$55K.

Our efforts in mobilizing resources are closely connected with: our work on the new strategy and rethinking our work for the next three years; our efforts to further implement institutional strengthening at the level of developing internal control systems and board governance; and growing the team with new expertise, all to ensure that AFAC has the necessary infrastructure to achieve a leap in fundraising.



Financial Allocations

Total Allocations:	Overheads:
\$6,221,304	\$533,944
Grant Activities:	Difference of Exchange:
\$4,625,644	\$116,104
Fundraising and Communications:	
\$229,490	





Photo Credits

pp. 2-3: Maen Hammad, "Landing", ADPP, Palestine, 2020

p. 6: Amina Kadous, "White Gold", ADPP, Egypt, 2020

p. 8: Tarek Aitmeddour, "Le Bal", PA, Algeria, 2021

p. 13 : Farah Khelil, "Effet de Serre", VA, Tunisia, 2019

pp. 14-15: Amina Kadous, "White Gold", ADPP, Egypt, 2020

p. 17: Farah Khelil, "Effet de Serre", VA, Tunisia, 2019

pp. 18-19: Mohammad Shawky Hassan, "Shall I Compare You to a Summer's Day?", VA, Egypt, 2019

p. 23: Lina Alabed, "Ibrahim: A Fate to Define", Cinema, Palestine, 2016

p. 25: Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship Workshop in Amman, November 2021

p. 27: Touda Bouanani, "Woman, Arab, and... Filmmaker", RAP, Morocco, 2020

p. 28: NACP Field Visit to Theatre Nomade, Morocco, 2021

p. 30: AFAC team with Chairman Ghassan Salamé

p. 31: Tarek Aitmeddour, "Le Bal", PA, Algeria, 2021

pp. 34-35: Roger Anis, "Oh Mysterious Nile... Will You Be Immortal!", ADPP, Egypt, 2020

p. 37: Diana El Jeiroudi, "Republic of Silence", Cinema, Syria, 2010

p. 41: Rehab Eldalil, "The Longing of the Stranger Whose Path Has Been Broken", ADPP, Egypt, 2020

pp. 42-43: Amina Kadous, "White Gold", ADPP, Egypt, 2020

p. 44: Maen Hammad, "Landing", ADPP, Palestine, 2020

p. 45: Husam Abed, "The War Maker", PA, Jordan, 2020

pp. 46-47: Roger Anis, "Oh Mysterious Nile... Will You Be Immortal!", ADPP, Egypt, 2020

pp. 48-49: Rehab Eldalil, "The Longing of the Stranger Whose Path Has Been Broken", ADPP, Egypt, 2020

p. 51: Roger Anis, "Oh Mysterious Nile... Will You Be Immortal!", ADPP, Egypt, 2020





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