

Annual Report



2024

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 eight programs: Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Documentary Film, Music, 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, the Writers' Room, and the Arab Documentary Photography programs.
- **Knowledge Building and Sharing:** AFAC's extensive database includes more than 22,000 applicants and 2,458 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, info-graphics, 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, Amr Ben Halim, Hani Kalouti, Roxane Zand, Oussama Rifahi, Mona Khazindar, and Rania Ashur.

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Executive Summary

The year 2024 witnessed the continued genocide of Palestinians perpetrated by Israel alongside assaults across Lebanon and Yemen, a civil war in Sudan, and the fall of dictatorship in Syria. Yet despite the high volatility, insecurity and uncertainty, the

AFAC team pulled through with determination, rolling out programs and initiatives, undertaking field visits, and ensuring a smooth running of our general grantmaking process.

2024 saw the launch and roll out of six programs: the second cycle (2024-2027) of the North Africa Cultural Program, the Arab Documentary Photography Program Alumni Fellowship, the Cultural Atelier in Yemen, the Critical Cultural Journalism, the

Netflix Women in Film – Bring Your Story to Life initiative and the Writers’ Room. Centered on skill and capacity building, these programs and initiatives are well under way to hone the skills of their beneficiaries.

At the level of grantmaking, this year was marked by an all-time record number of 2,465 applications received across all programs. We also saw our efforts in expanding access to culture come to fruition, with applications from Iraq, Sudan, Syria and Yemen doubling this year. In turn, 190 grants were given, representing 8% of the total demand. Having typically supported between 10 and 15% in previous years, this decrease of grant offering out of total demand is indicative of the overall dearth of international funds allocated to arts and culture and of a marked increase in demand from across the region.

Furthermore, two field visits were undertaken by the AFAC team, to Yemen and Iraq respectively, in view of gauging the scene up close and sparking connections with local actors.

At the level of fundraising and development, we secured the European Union’s funds for the first time in AFAC’s history, for a regional four-year project worth €4.5 million: Ecologies of Culture. Similarly, we partnered with UNESCO for a Yemen-specific program with a budget of \$1M over two years, while Netflix renewed their support for a phase 2 of our previous collaboration to empower young women filmmakers. Also, and



in a new collaboration, For Freedoms came on board of the Arab Documentary Photography Program (ADPP) as a co-funder.

Moreover, all of our long-standing partners and donors (OSF, Ford Foundation, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs) renewed their support to AFAC this past period.



Grantmaking and Juries 2024



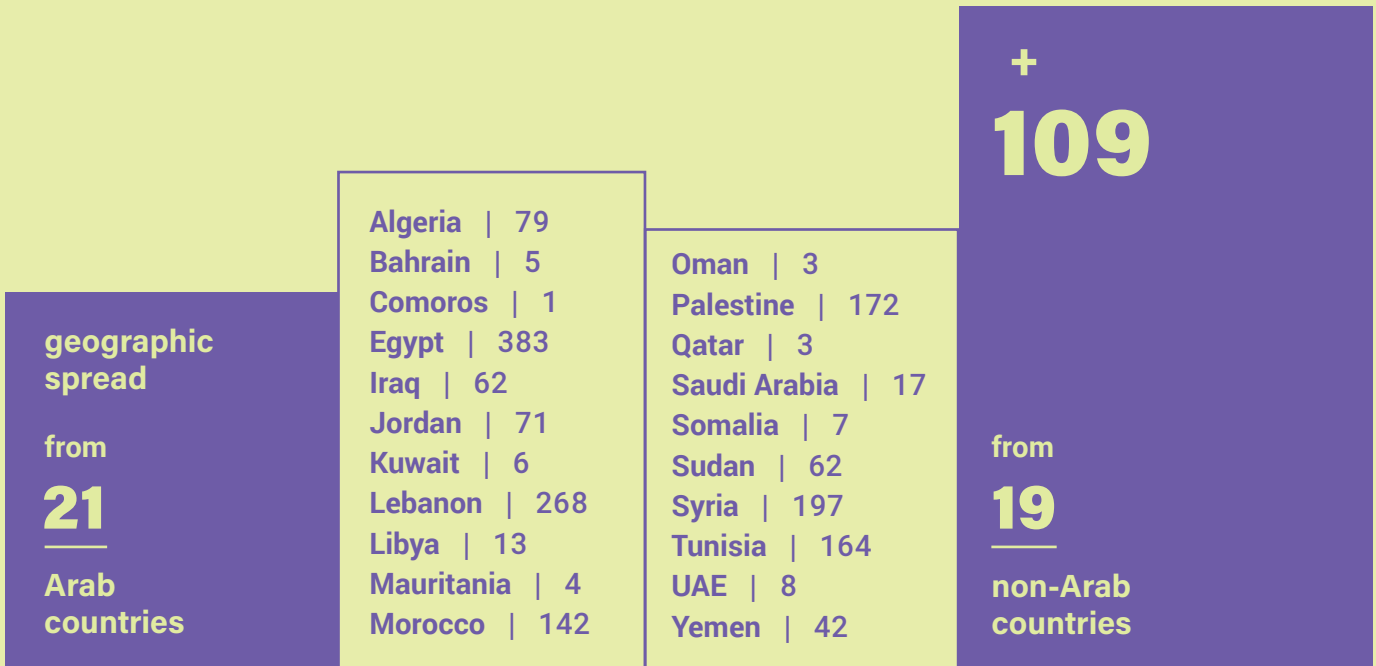
Core Grant Programs



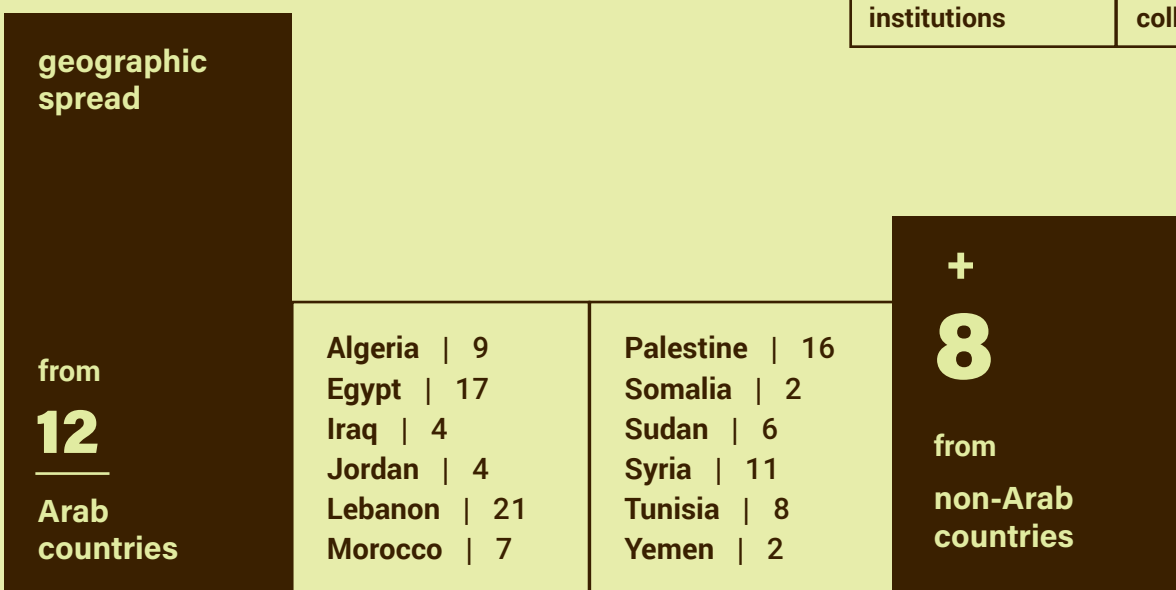
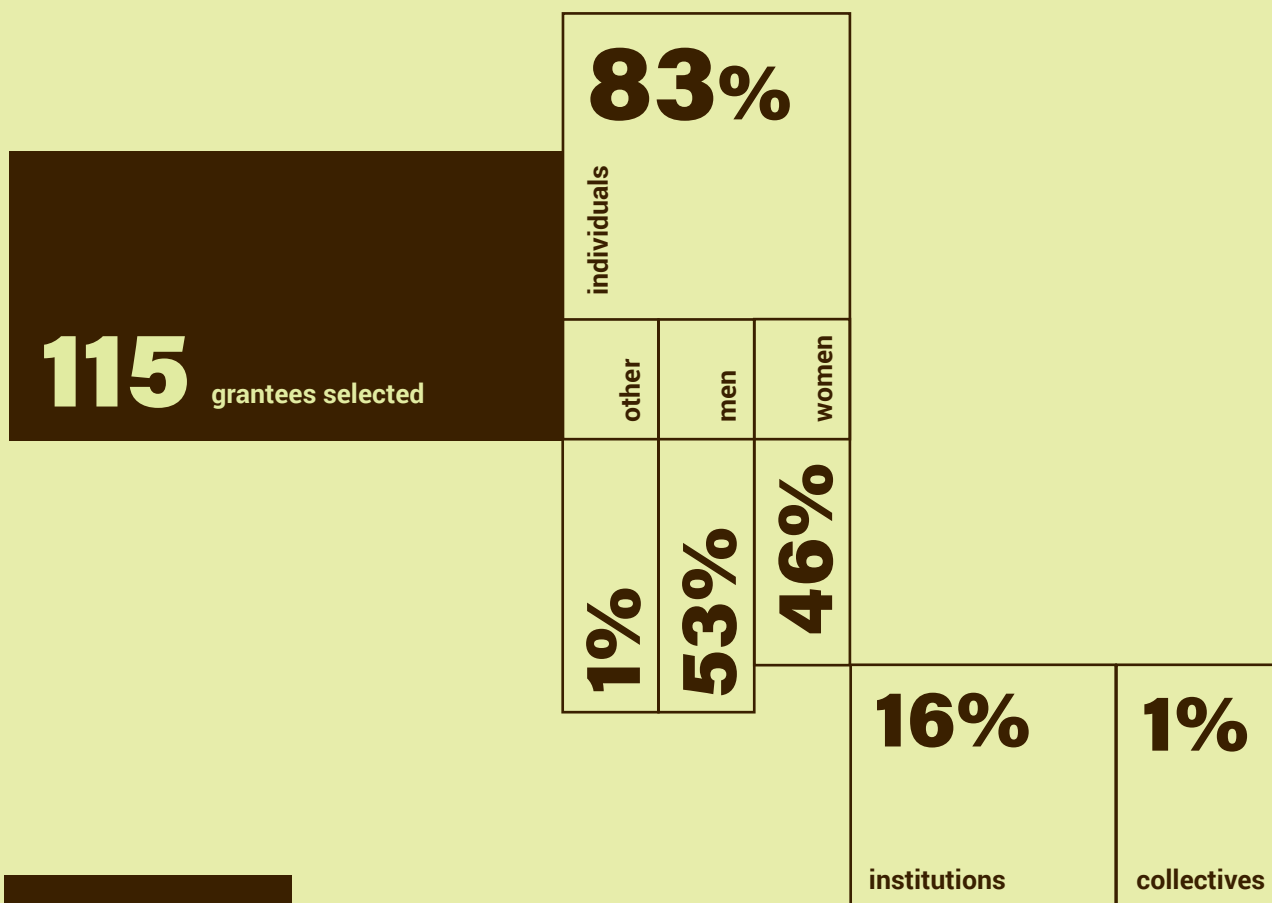
<p>Open Feb. 1 Close April 4 176 applications from 21 countries CALL</p>	<p>Open Feb. 1 Close April 4 276 applications from 30 countries CALL</p>	<p>Open Feb. 1 Close April 4 278 applications from 24 countries CALL</p>	<p>Open Feb. 1 Close April 4 254 applications from 14 countries CALL</p>
Performing Arts	Visual Arts	Creative and Critical Writings	Documentary Film

<p>Open April 15 Close June 14 236 applications from 27 countries CALL</p>	<p>Open April 15 Close June 14 255 applications from 25 countries CALL</p>	<p>Open April 15 Close June 14 343 applications from 18 countries CALL</p>
Training and Regional Events	Music	Cinema

Applications Statistics

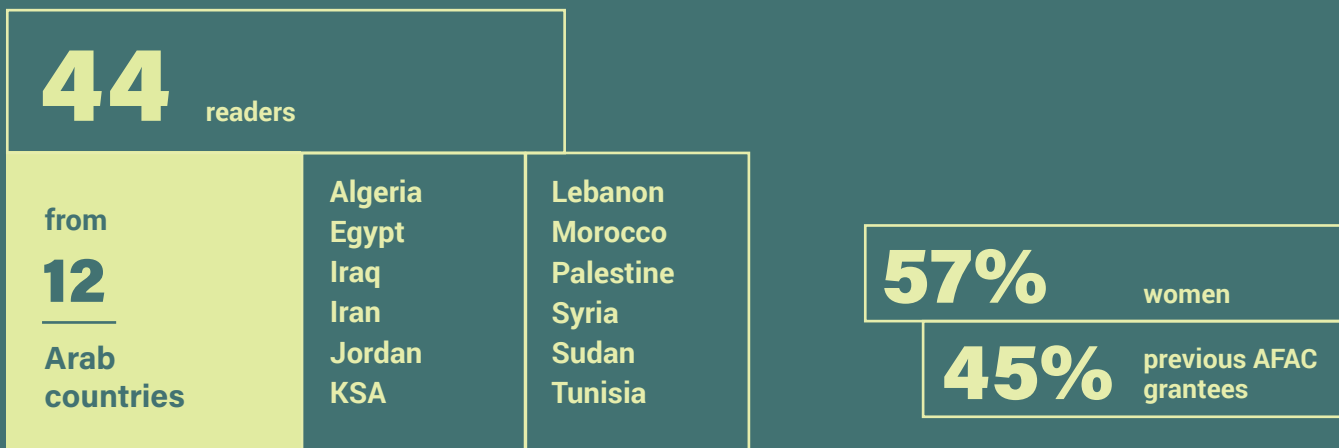


Grantees Statistics





Readers 2024



Visual Arts

Nuha Innab (Palestine)
 Malak Helmy (Egypt)
 Hicham Bouzid (Morocco)
 Reem Aljeally (Sudan)
 Vartan Avakian (Lebanon)
 Tony Chakar (Lebanon)



Performing Arts

George Bajalia (Palestine)
 Mounzer Baalbaki (Lebanon)
 Mey Seifan (Syria)
 Kamal Khalladi (Morocco)



Creative and Critical Writings

Hammour Ziadeh (Sudan)
 Soukayna Habiballah (Morocco)
 Rasha Abbas (Syria)
 Amr Ezzat (Egypt)
 Rana Issa (Lebanon)
 Maan Abu Taleb (Jordan)



Documentary Film

Layla Aoudj (Algeria)
 Alia Ayman (Egypt)
 Rana Jarbou (Saudi Arabia)
 Elhum Shakerifar (Iran)
 Carine Doumit (Lebanon)
 Joude Gorani (Syria)



Training and Regional Events

Omayma Shafi (Egypt)
 Sarah Kuhail (Palestine)
 Mehdi Azdem (Morocco)
 Reem Khattab (Syria)



Music

Oum (Morocco)
 Fadi El Abdallah (Lebanon)
 Natik Awayez (Iraq)
 Layale Chaker (Lebanon)
 Huda Asfour (Palestine)
 Raed Yassine (Lebanon)



Cinema - shorts

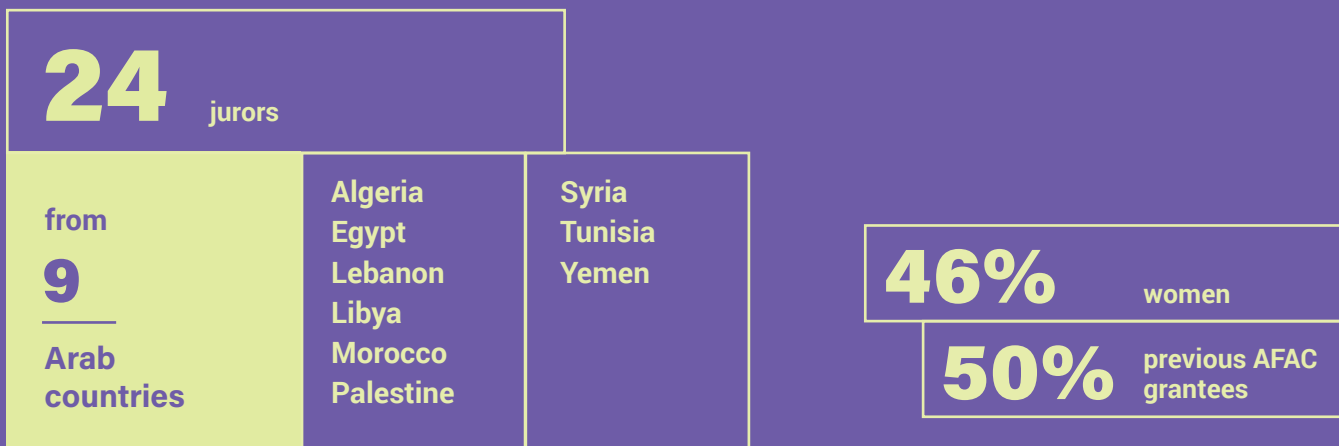
Dima Azar (Jordan)
 Lina Chaabane (Tunisia)
 Salim Albeik (Palestine)
 Mohammed Taymour (Egypt)



Cinema - features

Jinane Dagher (Lebanon)
 Fatma Cherif (Tunisia)
 Mohmmad Hoogla-Kalfat (Egypt)
 Hauvick Habechian (Lebanon)

Jurors 2024



Visual Arts

Maha Maamoun (Egypt)
Nadia Kaabe-Linke (Tunisia)
Khaled Bouzidi (Algeria)



Performing Arts

Cyrine Gannoun (Tunisia)
Nanda Mohammad (Syria)
Taoufiq Izzeddiou (Morocco)



Creative and Critical Writings

Farouk Mardam Bey (Syria)
Ghazi Gheblawi (Libya)
Mansoura Ez Eldine (Egypt)



Documentary Film

Azza Chaabouni (Tunisia)
Mohammad Shawky
Hassan (Egypt)
Karim Aitouna (Morocco)



Training and Regional Events

Layal Ftouni (Lebanon)
Nour ElSafouri (Egypt)
Belhassen Handous (Tunisia)



Music

Sarah El Miniawy (Egypt)
Imed Alibi (Tunisia)
Tareq Rantisi (Palestine)



Cinema - shorts

Rania Rafei (Lebanon)
Amr Gamal (Yemen)
Youssef Shazli (Egypt)



Cinema - features

Yasmine Zohdi (Egypt)
Georges Hachem (Lebanon)
Nadim Cheikhrouha (Tunisia)

Jury Statements

Jury statements encapsulate the essence of our jurors' deliberations and impressions, and stand as a testament of the trends and novelties of the Arab arts and culture scene in a given year.

Visual Arts Jury	<p>"We noted a trend emphasizing the urgency of personal and critical research and publishing that focused on significant moments in our cultural histories, and how their strong yet sublimated power speaks to our present. Strong artistic statements that responded to concerns ringing throughout our expanded cultural landscapes, or otherwise following singular and intimate pursuits, left equally strong impressions on us, and their relentless persistence shaped our selection process."</p>	Performing Arts Jury	<p>"Though we considered the priorities and challenges facing the Arab region, our main focus was on the quality of projects in terms of innovation and feasibility. We are pleased that the final selections represent a diverse range of geographic areas."</p>
Documentary Film Jury	<p>"The jury was impressed with the diversity of cinematic languages and the depth of research and artistic treatment within the submitted projects. The vast majority of submissions tackled political and social realities, often from the filmmakers' personal perspectives that extend beyond the self to engage with the family, communities, and spaces they inhabit. We also noticed the continuing interest in engaging with the archive, not only as a collection of documents but rather as a hegemonic instrument of historiography and a site of negotiation and resistance."</p>	Cinema Features Jury	<p>"While the majority tackle pressing social and political issues in the filmmakers' respective countries, what's truly remarkable is the fresh perspective adopted by most of them. When navigating increasingly complex realities that surpass our capacity for comprehension—often defying even the limits of our imagination—sometimes the most effective way to address the implications and repercussions is not direct confrontation but rather a piercing sideways glance. This, we were delighted to find, is what many of this year's projects attempt to do."</p>

Cinema Shorts Jury	<p>“This year’s submissions showcased the bold vision and creativity of filmmakers across the region. We were particularly impressed by the courage in storytelling, the strong female presence, and the clear connection many projects had to current realities. Some projects proposed innovative forms, blending cinema with contemporary art, reflecting a strong desire to experiment, document, and archive. The overall quality of submissions points to a promising future for regional cinema.”</p>	Creative and Critical	Writings Jury	
	Music Jury			<p>“In making selections, we aimed to strike a balance between providing support for young voices and for those exploring new sonic territories. We wanted to pay attention to more vital and essential needs and initiatives given the ongoing genocide and the intensification of colonial agendas in the region, as well as to recognize and support projects from diverse parts of the region to honor the variety of artistic expression in different cultural contexts. We also decided to support organizations with a track record of impact within their communities, ranging from those working to preserve archives to initiatives driven by community-focused organizations with the potential to create lasting cultural and social value.”</p>

Themes, Approaches, and Artistic Languages

The historical stakes for organizing how we interact, think, and produce feel like they have never been higher.

Amid the unrelenting colonial violence unleashed on Gaza over the last year, which is slowly escalating in the West Bank, and has expanded into Lebanon, the thinkers, practitioners, artists, researchers in the region who have been selected to receive support through AFAC's general grantmaking have ventured politically forceful ways to continue to think the now.

Culture and the arts in times of war transpires through many of the projects supported across different disciplines this year. In Training and Regional Events, *Culture and Journalism in Times of War* by Romman Culture examines the shifting dynamics of art and culture before and after Israel began its genocide in Gaza. Through comprehensive research and mentorship, it empowers emerging writers while exploring themes of resilience and adaptation across literature, cinema, music, visual arts, and performance. In Performing Arts, *Guernica-Gaza* by Ashtar Theatre from Palestine is a play that delves into the psychological impact on those who witness war and cannot escape it. The Creative and Critical Writings book project *Greater than a Pumpkin Seed* by Monzer Salah from Sudan is a collection of texts as diverse as existence and life, reflecting the horrors and challenges people face in life. It includes stories about labyrinths, wars, childhoods, and loves. In Documentary Film, *Another Day Shall Come* by Aida Kaadan from Palestine is an audio-visual portrait of stifled Palestinians living in Israel during its genocide in Gaza. It features a collection of anonymous voices, edited into scenes shot in Palestine over four seasons, encapsulating 75 years of identity deprivation and marginalization from both cinematic representation and

the broader Palestinian narrative. In Documentary Photography, *Tadween* by Mosab Abushama from Sudan is a documentation of life in war, exploring how people adapt and coexist amid conflict and examining how war has affected their way of life.

While some projects address the now, others revisit the past and its lingering impact. Revisiting histories by rethinking historical narratives was a recurring theme in many projects this year. The documentary film

The Day of Wrath: Tales from Tripoli by Rania Rafei from Lebanon blends fiction and documentary to highlight five moments of uprising during various historical eras of the city of Tripoli, Lebanon. In looking at these events, the film tries to reflect on the transformations that have shaped the city. Another documentary film, *Speak Image, Speak* by Pary El-Qalqili from Palestine, sets out to narrate a disobedient cinematic counter memory of Palestinian history in Germany. In



Training and Regional Events, *History workshops as practice of solidarity and liberation, bridging solidarity movements between Egypt and Morocco, between World War I and the present* by Alia Mossallam from Egypt explores moments of solidarity through a collective act of historical research and history-telling. Conducted as a series of site-specific history workshops, the project traces the journeys and struggles of North African workers on Europe's World War I battlefronts. The workshops aim to decolonize both the archive and the process of historical research by centering community and solidarity in its approach.

Another way projects dig into the past is through uncovering archives, in order to preserve collective memory and endangered narratives.

In Music, *Yemen's Musical Memory* by Rafeq Al-Akori from Yemen aims to preserve and disseminate Yemeni musical heritage by documenting a collection of 78 RPM records produced by international and domestic companies in Aden between 1935 and 1960. The records, widely regarded as a pillar in the country's national musical memory, represent an early 20th century musical archive that captures the sounds of Sanaa, Aden, Lahij, and Hadramaut. Another music project, *Zita*, is an interdisciplinary performance carried out by Imed Rezqui, blending music, vocals, and theater to present 15 rediscovered traditional songs from northwestern Tunisian musical heritage.

In Creative and Critical Writings, the stories in the collection *M. K. and Her Sisters - Silent Voices from the Black Decade* by Imene Amara from Algeria revolve around the systematic marginalization, targeting, and killing of women for gender-related reasons during Algeria's Black Decade. The stories document and narrate fictional portraits of unknown victims, drawn from newspaper clippings that mentioned scant details about them.

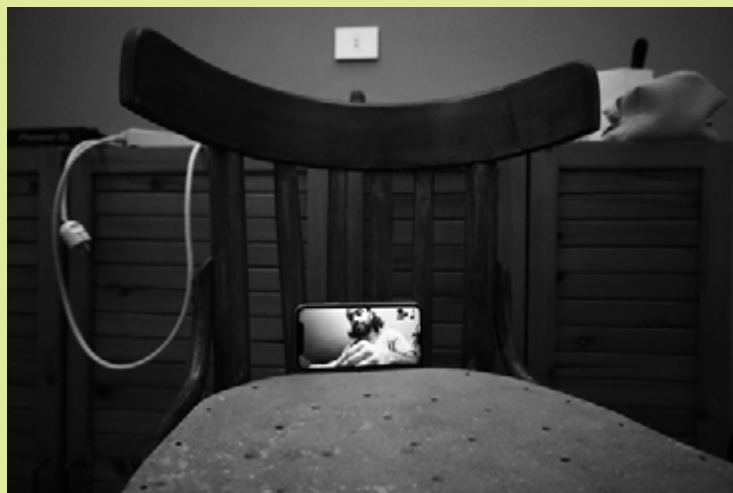
Diving further inward into the personal, some projects explore family as a window to the self and the world. The Visual Arts project *The Legacy of Light* by Sofiane Bakouri from Algeria explores memory and identity through

a family archive. Using the photographer's late father's camera to connect with the past, the project sees the artist search for the sites in his father's photos and capture new ones in order to examine familial relationships, traumas and the potential for healing that art can provide. In Cinema, the film *Sink* by Zain Duraie from Jordan tells the story of Nadia who, suffocated by motherhood and her mundane life, sees her existence slowly changing when she finds herself sinking into her teenage son's undiagnosed mental illness.

Many of this year's supported projects address gender and diversity in novel and bold ways. In Cinema, *Chentian* by Suha Arraf from Palestine is a film about the power women have which they sometimes do not realize exists in them, until they are given the chance to discover it. Only then can they believe in themselves, and in the fact that they can make a difference. In Creative and Critical Writings, Moroccan researcher Jamal Abarnous' project *The Erotic Body in Traditional Amazigh Poetry* is a critical study that



dives into traditional Amazigh poetry, focusing on the presence of the erotic body within its texts. It explores the meanings embedded in this presence and examines the cultural structures that allowed such expression to emerge. This poetry challenges the constraints and conventions of speech in traditional, conservative Amazigh society, where strict gender segregation is prevalent. In



Performing Arts, *A Story of...* by Laila Soliman from Egypt explores women's experiences with fertility through a multidisciplinary performance that includes belly dance, spoken word, music, scenography and video. The performance will present interviews and research alongside the staging of a solo dance performance and women voicing their experiences. Another Performing Arts project, *Ahlam Meshabka* by Rasha Ernest from Egypt aims to establish the *Ahlam Meshabka* performing arts troupe as an inclusive group for people with physical disabilities. *Ahlam Meshabka* seeks to produce performances that celebrate diversity, challenge stereotypes about artists, and promote inclusivity. In documentary photography, *Foresight* by Amera Elnaal from Libya tells the story of Libya's blind population through the stories of Amera's own parents, herself and her four siblings, shedding light on how disabled people are unfairly treated.

Migration and exile also permeate several projects across our programs. The documentary photography project *Two Songs of Diaspora* follows Sara Kontar and Ameen Abo Kaseem — displaced visual storytellers — as they navigate the complexities of home, exile, and self-discovery, seeking common ground through an exchange of photo letters. Their journey unfolds between Syria and the diaspora, transcending borders. In Cinema, *In the Belly of the Ground* by Dina Mimi and Maya Al Khaldi is an intimate approach to the directors' relationship with exiled villages in Palestine. The directors examine this relationship through stories of its walls, floors, mosaics, and folktales. It is a way for them to bring these structures back to life. The Documentary film *Seeds of Soul* by Farah Abou Kharroub from Palestine brings forth a new treatment to the longing for one's home. In 1948, Farah dreams about a sunny day in Palestine with her grandmother, sharing watermelon in the backyard. The idyllic scene turns ominous as shadows, fire and an unsettling atmosphere invade. Awakening in Prague to a buzzing phone, Farah is faced with alarming news about Palestine. Amid protests, she grapples with fear, anxiety, and a longing for home.

Casting the light on the climate crisis and its impact, some of the projects supported this year bring forth new angles and perspectives. In Visual Arts, Egyptian visual storyteller Mohamed Mahdy's *Here, the Doors Don't Know Me* is inspired by the plight of fishermen. It tries to capture their stories, collaborate with the community, and preserve their memories through photographs and their handwritten last letters. As the sea-faring community loses their homes, their shared narratives become a testament to their resilience and unity. Another project from Egypt, in Creative and Critical Writings, *Adventures in Natural Reserves*, is a collection of stories for children aged eight to 12 that promotes environmental

awareness and a love for nature. While the stories weave together into an overarching plot, each one can be read on its own. The stories feature an environmental researcher's family living near a border natural reserve, dedicated to documenting and conserving endangered species. The documentary photography project *In Flow with Water* by Yaqeen Yamani from Palestine explores people's relationship to the water, specifically in Jericho, Palestine. While land is often thought of as a key part of Palestinian resistance, water is also a key part of the struggle for freedom. Yaqeen uses photography and text works to document how this relationship is shifting and being challenged within the wider impacts of occupation and gentrification.





Professional, Institutional, and Programmatic Support



Professional, Institutional, and Programmatic Support

Arab Documentary Photography Program (ADPP)

With the Arab Documentary Photography Program’s 10th year coming to a close, we celebrated the milestones that it has achieved during the past decade, advocating for pressing topics, nurturing a growing community of more than 100 Arab documentary photographers, and engaging with audiences regionally as well as internationally.



The year 2024 was particularly eventful for the program. The 10th cycle of ADPP Emerging Photographers were announced in April; the grantees of the first iteration of the ADPP Alumni Fellowship, in support of the program’s alums, were announced during the same period; the 11th cycle call opened in July and spanned for two months; the second call for the Fellowship opened in November; and two workshops bringing together emerging photographers under the ADPP 10th cycle took place in April and November respectively – the first in-person in Beirut, and the second online.

CALL

Open July 24

Close Sept 12

228 applications received

198 for emerging photographers

30 for fellowship

18 countries

ADPP 2024 Readers

Dalia Khamissy (Lebanon)
Hrair Sarkissian (Syria)
Rola Khayyat (Lebanon)
Sara Sallam (Egypt)

ADPP 2024 Jurors

Heba Hage-Felder (Lebanon)
Kristen Lubben (USA)
Nariman El-Mofty (Egypt)

14 grantees selected

8 emerging photographers

6 fellows

Excerpt from the
ADPP Jury Statement

“It’s remarkable that Fellowship and Mentorship applications showcase boldness in critiquing parachuting journalism and seek novel ways to transcend traditional news media. We see this in how works dissect language, revisit narratives, and complement stories with personal and archival substance. Some of the applications look inwards, focusing on mental health, body image, and invisible scars related to personal, social and political tragedies. We appreciate the maturity in some projects narrating dispossession and diaspora in the aftermath of scarcity, deliberate negligence and wars. There are also creative attempts at juxtaposing generations and events through the use of archives, diaries and multiple art forms to extend the image. Having the courage to explore multimedia is commendable but sometimes, this seemed to curtail the coherence of the storytelling. We appreciate the efforts to engage diverse audiences and expose in dignified ways, what is intimate or taboo. We are thrilled by the freshness of themes, the poetic visual language, and going beyond trendy topics.”

HEAR FROM
THE JURORS

For its 10th edition, the program welcomed back mentors Randa Shaath and Peter Van Agtmael who accompanied participants under the ADPP for Emerging Photographers, and introduced two new mentors, Nadia Bseiso and Abdo Shanan, both ADPP alumni. On the other hand, the recipients of the Alumni Fellowship were accompanied by ADPP long-standing mentors Tanya Habjouqa and Eric Gottesman.

Following a first in-person workshop in Beirut in April 2024, the ADPP online workshop spanned from November 25 to 27, 2024. During these three days, the photographers presented their projects to the program’s four mentors, received detailed feedback and will finalize their photo projects in view of the third and final workshop set for February 2025. The workshops were complemented by monthly meetings as well as masterclasses given by the ADPP Alumni Fellows.

The projects of the 10th ADPP cycle’s emerging photographers address conflicts and war times, social and collective memory, loss and grief as well as exile and migration. From southern Lebanon, Nader Bahsoun navigates the tension between the notions of freedom and struggle and the feeling of exile within one’s own country in his project *Southern Birds*. *What Do Fathers Leave Behind?* by Sadiq Al-Harasi from Yemen is a visual documentation of the emotional vestiges in our lives of loss. Egyptian visual storyteller Ali Zaraay’s *Crawling on Dust* is a documentary project focused on how urban expansion in the Nile Delta has blocked the nomadic bedouin family of Haj Hani from moving about. From Libya, Amera Elnaal, in her photo project *Foresight*, tells the story of Libya’s blind population through the stories of her own parents, herself and her four siblings, shedding light on how disabled people are unfairly treated. *Do Not Forget the Colors* by



Hana Gamal from Egypt explores notions of grief, change and loss, born out of a desire to heal and restore a lost sense of belonging to the city Hana calls home. *Tadween* by Mosab Abushama from Sudan documents stories, diaries, and events unfolding in the life of Sudanese citizens during the current war era. From Palestine, *In Flow with Water* by Yaqeen Yamani is a documentary photography project exploring people's relationship to the water, specifically in Jericho. Another Palestinian project holder chose to remain anonymous for safety reasons.

On their part, this year's Fellows began working on their projects, which tackle notions of space and liberation, exile and displacement, and intimate topics such as motherhood and traumas. Some plan to release photo books, while others propose workshops and exhibitions. From Palestine, *Landing* by Maen Hammad is a long-term documentary project and hypothesis around liberation, youthfulness, and space. The photo-book is a deep-dive into the world of Palestinian skateboarding and a manifesto on the interplay between skateboarding and liberation against architectures of control. *Imagine me like a country of love* by Thana Farooq from Yemen traverses the emotional and physical landscapes of returning to a homeland forever changed by the passage of time and the shadows of war. *A Million Times* by Syrian visual storyteller Eyad Abou Kasem is a book that aims to capture the experiences of people forced to leave their home countries due to repression, conflict, persecution, and violence and undertake a journey to Europe to seek asylum. In *Two Songs of Diaspora*, Sara Kontar and Ameen Abo Kaseem craft collective narratives in diaspora, revealing the power of photography in bringing people together. Two workshops completed this year's Fellowship projects: In *Wonderland* by Heba Khalifa from Egypt offers



a seven-month journey to seven photographers who are dealing with childhood or war-related traumas, while *Permission to Narrate: Articulating Motherhood through Photography* by Lina Khalid is a visual storytelling workshop with a group of mothers from Jordan that seeks to explore different definitions of motherhood as a means to instill the practice of self-documentation.

Both the ADPP for Emerging Photographers cycle 10 and the Fellowship cycle 1 are set to close in early 2025.

Also, the 2025 ADPP jurors will select up to 10 grantees for ADPP cycle 11 for Emerging Photographers, and up to 6 Fellows for the second iteration of the Alumni Fellowship.



North Africa Cultural Program (NACP)



The second cycle (2024-2027) of the North Africa Cultural Program (NACP) launched on January 16, 2024. The launch event and press conference, held in Tunis in the presence of the program partners and the AFAC team, gathered key representatives of the local press as well as figures of the Tunisian arts and culture and diplomatic scenes.

The call for applications for the program's two funds, the National Cultural Opportunities Fund (NCOF) and the Regional Competitive Creativity Fund (RCCF), opened on January 4, 2024 and spanned until March 5. At the close of the call, 233 applications were received for the two funds and the various support schemes under each.



The North Africa Cultural Program Cycle II offers two funding schemes with several grant schemes under each:

The NCOF is designed to support new applicants and previous NCOF grantees as follows:

FOR NEW APPLICANTS:
Institutional and/or Programmatic Grant

1- **Institutional Support** for institutional strengthening aimed to develop internal capabilities.

2- **Programmatic Support** for projects and programs, including but not limited to residencies, conferences, research, documentation, publications, digital and exhibition platforms, events and festivals, capacity building for artistic and technical skills, or re-granting.

FOR PREVIOUS NCOF GRANTEES: Continuity Grant and Local Alliances & Collaborations Grant

1- **Continuity Grant**, allowing previous NCOF grantees to build on the foundations established during the initial implementation phase. This may encompass support for aspects related to institutional strengthening and/or programmatic development.

2- **Local Alliances & Collaborations Grant**, dedicated to support collaborations or alliances between a minimum of 3 entities from the same country, of which a minimum of 2 are previous NCOF grantees. This support intends to enable connections leading to the development of collaborative activities aimed at addressing shared needs and advocating for common goals on local levels.





The RCCF focuses on two distinct collaborative schemes aiming to support existing partnerships and encourage new collaborations through the Seed Funding Grant and Established Collaborations Grant:

1- **Seed Funding Grant**, offering support for new partnerships with the required time, resources, and expertise to collaboratively craft their proposals. The program aims at financing and accompanying the collaborations' first steps, including research and project development, to ensure that the partner organizations jointly establish the foundations to collaboratively manage a larger 2-year grant, and implement the project successfully.

2- **Established Collaborations Grant**, designed for pre-existing collaborations among arts and culture organizations, or those that can demonstrate a strong and successful track record of regional and international collaborations. This grant is intended to strengthen ongoing collaborative projects by providing support for their expansion, sustainability, and greater impact.

In concurrence with the call, the AFAC team planned a series of field visits to Egypt, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia (in addition to online encounters with Libyan entities) between the months of January and February, to promote the program. These visits aimed to expand the program's reach, inform prospective applicants about the diverse opportunities that it offers, and establish a foundation for meaningful projects and future collaborations.

10	sessions
5	countries
9	cities

500+	attendees
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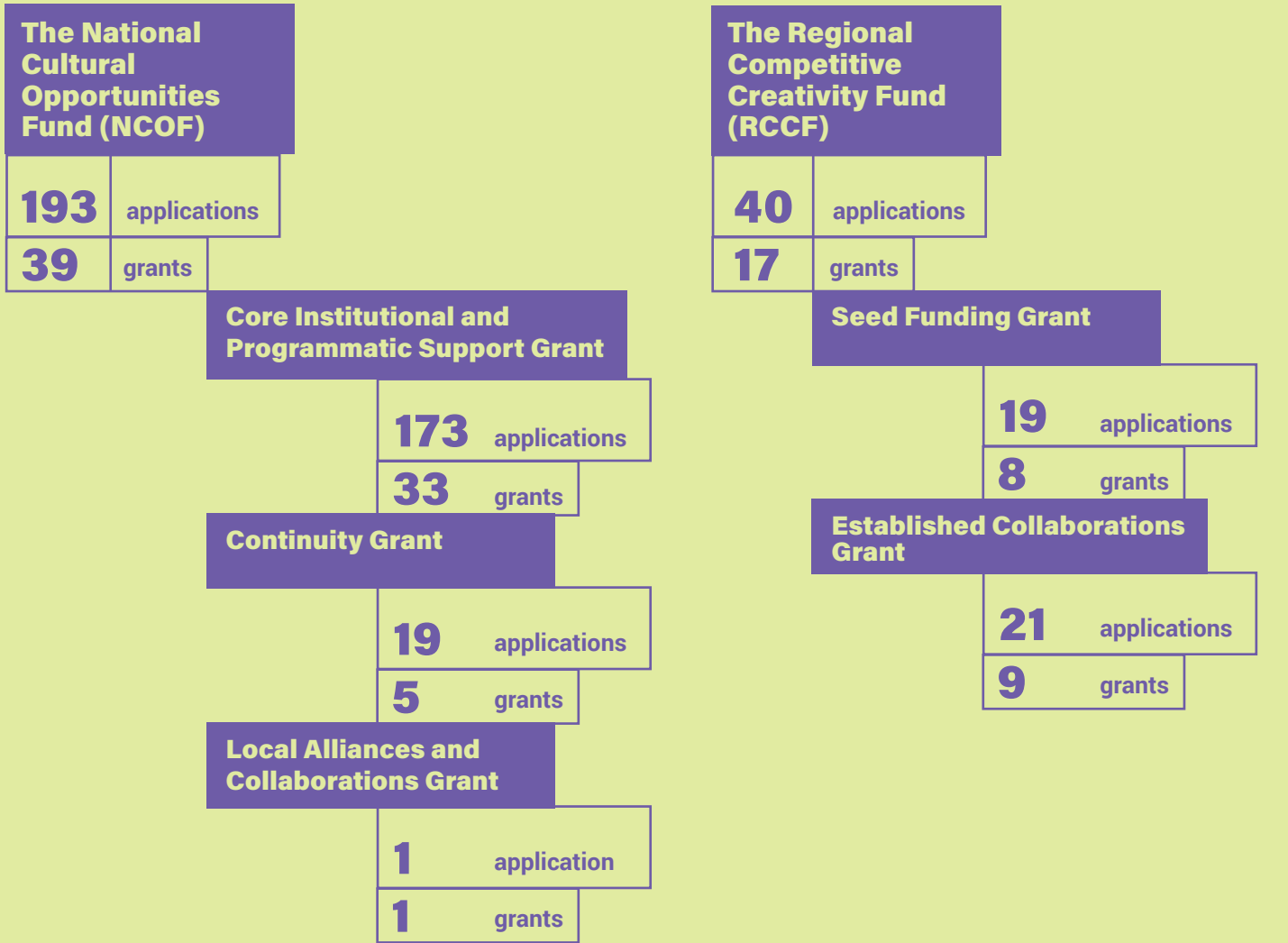
During the summer, the NACP team at AFAC held introductory calls with all grantee entities to inform them about the program’s requirements, and understand their needs. In November, representatives from seventeen entities involved in eight collaborative projects funded by the North Africa Cultural Program’s Seed Funding grant convened in Tunis for a workshop to establish strong collaborative foundations and implement sustainable partnership strategies. Emphasizing technical aspects such as finance, project management, and monitoring and evaluation, the workshop was designed to provide participants with advanced knowledge and practical skills for the development of their projects.

Furthermore, throughout this year, consultants from the program’s partner, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), conducted a Partner Risk Assessment for AFAC to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the partnership and mitigate potential risks. Following a first assessment of NACP Cycle I, the consultants proceeded by identifying and evaluating any new risks that could impact the partnership. In September 2024, the consultants issued a report including recommendations such as creating a comprehensive risk mitigation plan, and outlining specific measures to address potential threats and contingency plans for unforeseen situations. The consultants emphasized the importance of strengthening communication and collaboration between SDC and AFAC, ensuring both parties remained aligned in their efforts. They also recommended the implementation of regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress and identify emerging risks.

Moving forward, the focus in early 2025 will be on entities receiving NCOF grants. The Organizational Mapping Tool will be utilized to assess the needs and capacities of NACP grantees through one-on-one meetings and questionnaires for each organization receiving core support grants. The information gathered will be used to tailor further program support. As such, a first capacity building workshop will be held in the second half of 2025.

For pilot collaborative projects receiving Seed Funding grants, mentorship sessions will start in 2025 to accompany the projects’ partners in planning for and designing proposals for a larger collaborative project. Following an evaluation by an independent jury committee, five larger projects will be selected by mid-2025 for two-year support.





\$4.26	million in grants over 3 years
81	entities supported under the program

			6	jury committees
			18	jurors
NACP Jurors				
NCOF - Libya Leila Tayeb Hadia Gana Fatma Ghandour	NCOF - Egypt Therese Gobriel Marwa Seoudi Bassem Yousri	NCOF - Morocco Maria Daif Rajae Slimani Othman Nejmeddine		
NCOF - Algeria: Lydia Haddag Rachid Briki Salah Badis	NCOF - Tunisia Soumaya Gharsallah Bohra Triki Beya Othmani	RCCF Laila Hourani (Syria) Omar Berrada (Morocco) Samia Labidi (Tunisia)		

Below are excerpts from the various NACP jury statements:

NACP - NCOF - Algeria	<p>“The projects that captured our attention and received votes were those that exhibited strength in vision and presentation, in addition to an innovative approach to the Algerian cultural landscape. We also favored projects that proposed an effective use of the grant to structure their institutions and foster long-term relationships within their community.”</p>		
NACP - NCOF - Egypt	<p>“The number of applications from outside the capital and major cities reflects these institutions’ desire to advance the cultural scene and promote decentralization. The diversity and volume of the applications also highlights the challenges faced by the cultural sector at various levels, and emphasizes the importance of the provision of long-term support by this program.”</p>	NACP - NCOF - Libya	<p>“It was essential for us to recognize and support those with extensive experience and a proven track record of success, as well as those who have already made significant contributions by expanding their work in support of active cultural and artistic institutions and individuals on the ground.</p> <p>We also took into consideration local specificity in institutional and programming support for peripheral cities, cross-referencing selections with a map to ensure diversity and sustainability within the communities they serve.”</p>
NACP - NCOF - Morocco	<p>“At the heart of our deliberations were deep considerations of the needs of the cultural scene. Our engagement during the process was to guarantee that the projects are not merely concentrated in major urban centers, but that they rather reflect the richness and diversity of cultural initiatives from across Morocco. We also gave particular attention to the management capacities of the grantee entities, ensuring they were able to manage human and financial resources efficiently.”</p>	NACP - NCOF - Tunisia	<p>“The responses to the call showed the intellectual and artistic vitality of Tunisian civil society. In light of the quality of the submitted applications, selecting projects to support was not an easy task, a testament to the professionalism of Tunisia’s cultural actors and a reflection of their creativity.”</p>
		NACP - NCOF - RCCF	<p>“We noted a certain degree of anger in the applications – a reckoning with the extent to which the fields of art and academia are imbricated in the world’s harmful geopolitical imbalances. These artists and cultural organizers understand the necessity of shedding old dependencies and the value of South-South collaboration, be it within the region or beyond.”</p>

The Cultural Atelier in Yemen

The Cultural Atelier in Yemen is a special program, designed and implemented by AFAC, in partnership with UNESCO as part of the Youth Employment through Heritage and Culture project funded by the European Union. The two-year program (2024-2026) is dedicated to the strengthening of civil society organizations (CSOs) working in arts and culture across Yemen. It offers the participating organizations the space and accompaniment to assess their resources and their connection to their audiences and stakeholders, explore new income-generating avenues, develop their creative and cultural programs, and draw inspiration from peer institutions facing similar challenges and opportunities in other sectors and regions.

The Cultural Atelier in Yemen is a new, tailored iteration of the Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship (ACE) program, run by AFAC over 2019-2022 in response to an increasingly complex landscape for arts and culture institutions in the Arab region characterized by the shrinking of resources globally, the shift in donors' agendas, and the quasi-inexistence of governmental support. Additionally, it builds on the 2021 AFAC-UNESCO partnership through which a training program for Yemeni CSOs was implemented as part of the EU-funded project Promoting Livelihood Opportunities for Urban Youth in Yemen.

CALL

Open May 28

Close July 23

53 applications received

34% from Aden

34% from Sanaa

also from Hadramout, Abyan, Socotra, Taz, Haddah

16 CSOs selected for support

The Cultural Atelier in Yemen Jurors

Safaa Alwatari (Yemen)
Abeer Alhadrami (Yemen)
Fatin Farhat (Palestine)

Cultural Atelier in Yemen Jury

"A key highlight for the jury was the dedication of these institutions to leveraging art as a tool for economic and social empowerment within their communities, despite limited resources and support. The prominent presence of women in leadership and managerial positions was particularly commendable and a positive indicator of the growing participation of women in the cultural sphere."



The program's first workshop was initially scheduled to start in October, but was postponed due to the volatile situation in Lebanon and Yemen. The selected list of 16 CSOs active in Aden, Taz, Hadramout and Socotra was announced in December, and the training program is set to kick off in 2025 with workshops planned to take place in February, April and July.

Women in Film - Bring Your Story to Life

The second phase of the Women in Film: An Introduction to the Creative Process, a program in partnership with Netflix, launched in early September under Women in Film – Bring Your Story to Life. The call spanned until October 1, 2024 and garnered 124 applications.

The initiative supports the making of short fiction films by Arab women filmmakers residing in Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Each film project will receive a maximum budget of \$25,000 to bring their story to life. Additionally, the program offers virtual consultations in script writing, producing, directing, cinematography and editing. The projects will have post-production support sessions in Saudi Arabia.

The applications underwent an administrative review by the AFAC grants management team, and were submitted to three jurors – Jordanian producer, screenwriter and script editor Nadia Eleiwat, Egyptian filmmaker Nada Riyadh and Lebanese production designer Pamela Ghanime – for review. The jurors met in end-November to deliberate over the submitted film works, in view of selecting five projects for support.

A team of mentors will accompany the winning projects until completion.

69 submitted film projects



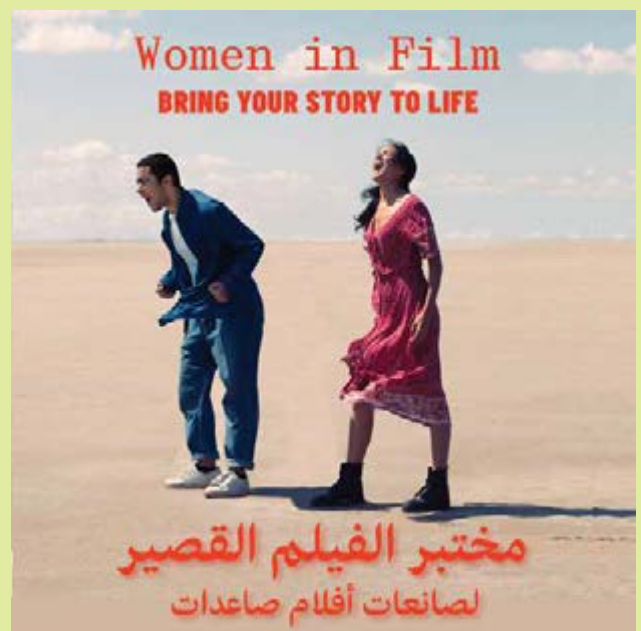
55% from Egypt

32% from Jordan

6% from UAE

4% from KSA

3% from Kuwait



55 individual applications

64% from Egypt

14% from Jordan

13% from KSA

7% from UAE

2% from Kuwait

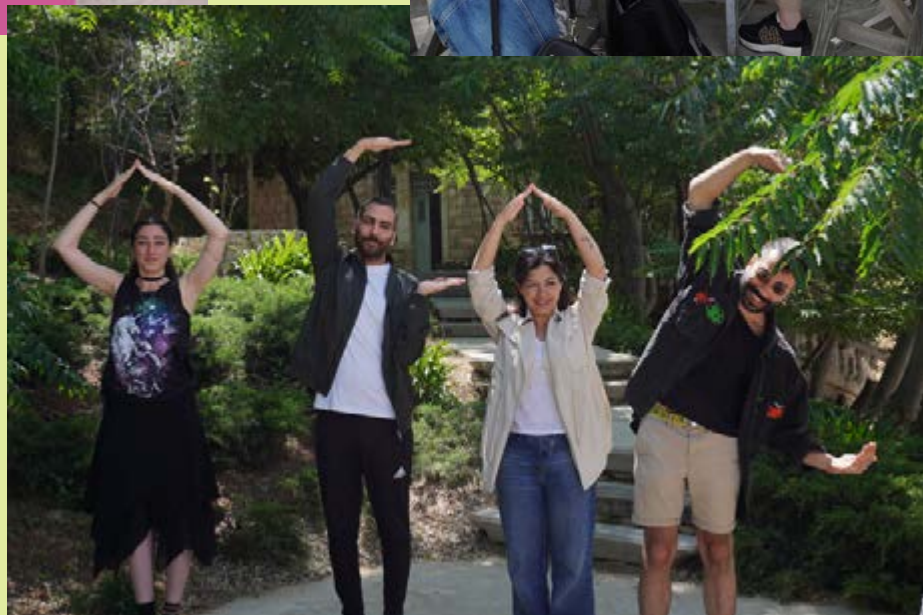
Writers' Room

Five limited series projects were completed as part of the Writers' Room program, in partnership with OSN.

AFAC and OSN launched this program to support series creators in the Arab region in the development of full limited series. Adopting the writers' room methodology, the program brought together the holders of selected projects to collaborate on the writing process from the brainstorming and character development stage, to creating finished written episodes.

Throughout the three residencies – held in February, May and August respectively – participants explored character creation and story development, familiarized themselves with tools used in a writers' room, and honed their skills in giving and receiving constructive feedback.

A meeting was held between AFAC and OSN in early November, during which the final limited series projects were submitted to the broadcasting network. OSN might in turn select series projects for production within their network.



About the series projects:



Dyouf by Saleh Saadi (Palestine)

Shadi, having to move back to his Bedouin village in Occupied Palestine, gets dragged into helping his mother run a guesthouse in their family home.

Dyof is a 30-minute dramedy with six episodes in its first season. In each episode, we meet new guests who come into the family’s home and set the tone of the episode.

students have an app that they use to challenge each other anonymously to do various tasks. What starts as a friendly game of dare becomes their way to meddle in each others’ lives, sometimes for the better but most of the time for the worse. We follow them and their struggles in a raw, non-filtered manner – like polaroids.



Men Home la Hon by Marie-Louise Elia, Julien Kobersy and Jean-Claude Boulos (Lebanon)

Bankrupt and back to square one, a mid-30’s university lecturer finds himself back in the chaos of his cramped parents’ home in the suburbs of Beirut.

As he navigates the lunacy of the shrinking living space filled with parental interference, sibling rivalry, and maladaptive daydreams, he embarks on a comedic and heartfelt journey to reclaim his independence and sanity.



The Art of Surviving by the late Tamer Abdulhamid and Noha Hussein (Egypt)

A cynical and disheartened young man is diagnosed with cancer, only for the illness to save his life.



The Day of Your Meeting by Reda Benazzouza (Morocco)

Malak, a lawyer unafraid to cross professional lines in her pursuit of justice, has put together a specialized, four-person team to follow up on cases of missing children. Driven by authorities’ inaction, Malak takes matters into her own hands, going undercover as a child trafficker, a move that throws her into the heart of a nefarious underworld.



Polaroid by Basant Ghonemy (Egypt)

In an all-girls junior high school class, the

Critical Cultural Journalism

Launched in 2023, the Critical Cultural Journalism (CCJ) training program, in partnership with Febrayer network (a network of independent regional media organizations: Al-Jumhuriya, Megaphone, Mada Masr, and Sowt), aims to revive the role of cultural journalism in creating a critical discourse around cultural productions and facilitating audience access and engagement with cultural products.

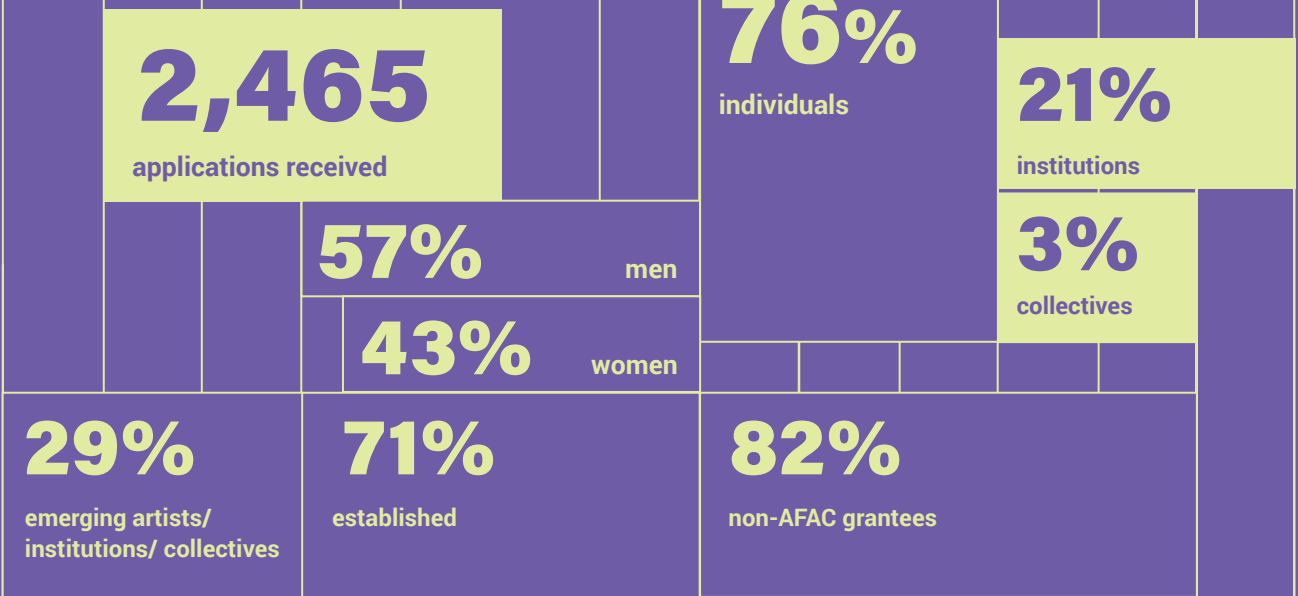
In February 2024, the CCJ program launched a course titled “Cultural Critique: Currents, Texts, and Questions” by Zeina Halabi. In April, another course on Critique Writing and how to write a critical review started, led by instructors Shadi Lewis, May Talmasani, Rashed Issa, Ismail Fayed, and Fairuz Karawiya. A Music Writing course was also offered by Maan Abu Taleb in July, in addition to a TV Series Critique course by Hilal Chouman in September, a History course by Khaled Fahmy in October and a Film Criticism course by Iqbal Zalilah in November.

The CCJ training camp was postponed twice (in June and September) due to the situation in Palestine and Lebanon, before being canceled altogether. By early 2025, each of the participating students will work on and submit a graduation project that will in turn be edited by one of the program’s editors in view of being published on an online platform.

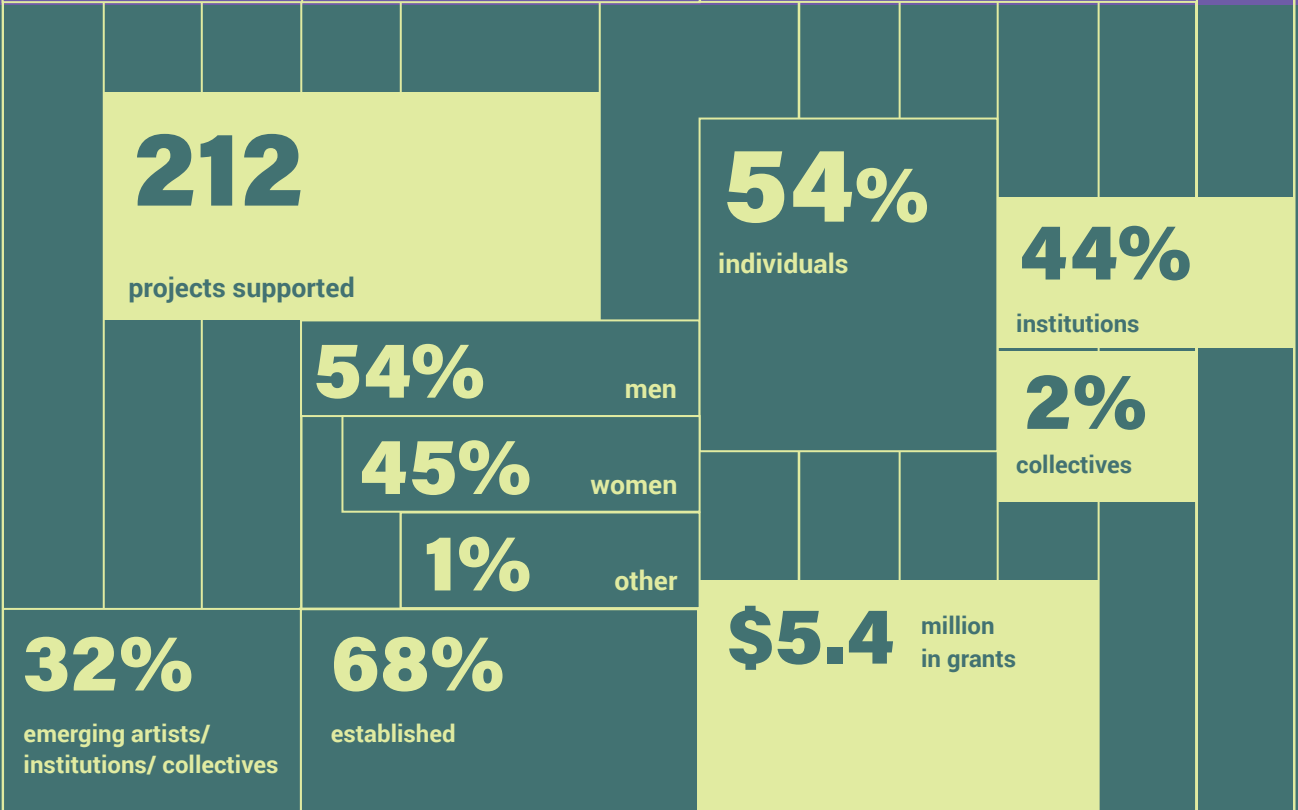


The Year in Numbers

Applications Statistics



Grantees Statistics



Statistics 2007-2024



Field Visits 2024



Field Visits 2024

In 2024, we conducted two field visits; one to Yemen in order to lay the groundwork for The Cultural Atelier in Yemen, and the other to Iraq to explore avenues of collaboration in the area of film. Field visits to the countries where we operate are a key element of our approach. These visits enable us to engage directly with local artists and stakeholders, better understand their needs, and tailor our programs accordingly. This on-the-ground presence ensures that our initiatives remain responsive, context-specific, and aligned with the evolving realities of each sub-region.

Aden, Yemen

May 20-25, 2024

This visit to Yemen was viewed as an essential component of The Cultural Atelier in Yemen program’s inception phase, complementing the internal work on developing the program’s vision and designing the training curriculum. The visit aimed at meeting local institutions and practitioners, discussing their challenges and needs, discovering the cultural scene up close, and exploring potential opportunities and collaborations.

The AFAC team, represented by Rima Mismar, AFAC’s Executive Director, and Cathy Khatat, AFAC’s Senior Grants Manager, met with different artists and cultural practitioners and visited 3 local institutions, in addition to the main partners in Yemen for The Cultural Atelier in Yemen - UNESCO and SMEPS - and Aden’s mayor.

The impact of the war and the political situation is evident across the city and even more so on the cultural scene. The lack of infrastructure, cultural spaces, and consistent access to basic needs such as electricity and internet are persistent challenges caused by the war. Despite these difficulties, Aden - and Yemen as a whole - has a rich cultural heritage that remains underrepresented due to years of conflict and social conservatism. It warrants focused attention to better understand its unique context and history and to envision meaningful possibilities for Yemeni artists in the future.



**Baghdad, Iraq
July 5-8, 2024**

AFAC’s first field visit to Baghdad came in response to an invitation by the Syndicate of Iraqi Artists. Rima Mismar, AFAC’s Executive Director, Cathy Khattar, AFAC’s Senior Grants Manager, and Soleil Gharbieh, AFAC’s Cinema, Documentary Film and Music Grants Manager, met with various stakeholders and institutions of the arts and culture scene in Baghdad, and conducted two information sessions for potential applicants.

The visit allowed the AFAC team to have an informed and critical view of the situation on the ground, in view of potentially sparking partnerships and/or tailored initiatives.

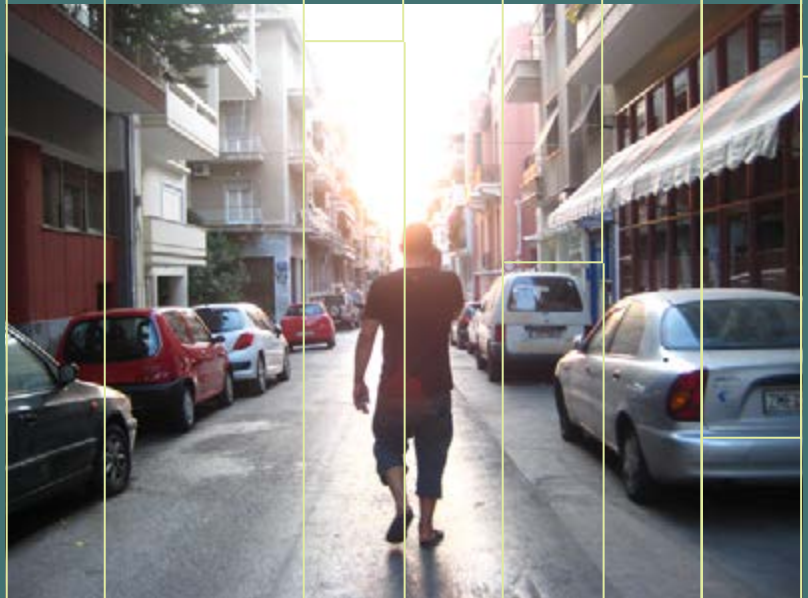
The visit highlighted the determination of the artists and activists encountered to sustain their work and creative efforts despite the harsh circumstances and the lasting effects of years of war.

However, several challenges and needs remain to be addressed:

- Securing financial support for various initiatives, whether to sustain existing cultural spaces or to support their programming and production efforts.
- Establishing targeted support mechanisms guided by a clear strategic vision to ensure that resources are invested effectively, contributing to capacity building and the growth of the contemporary artistic scene.
- Providing training and capacity-building opportunities across various fields, particularly in the film sector, documentary photography, and visual arts.



Emergency Support



Solidarity through Arts and Culture – Support for Displaced Communities in Lebanon

As Lebanon faced an urgent humanitarian crisis perpetrated by Israel’s war on the country in the last quarter of 2024, which led to large-scale displacement and deepened the socio-economic challenges that many communities were already experiencing, local grassroots cultural initiatives have become essential actors in responding to these challenges, working at the intersection of humanitarian support and community support.

The arts, with their power to heal and connect, offer much needed vehicles to address trauma, anxiety, and social fragmentation. This intervention by AFAC aimed to support grassroots cultural organizations in Lebanon to deliver arts-based psychosocial support activities tailored to displaced individuals. The focus was on inclusive programming that supports emotional well-being, and rebuilds community bonds across diverse groups without discrimination based on age, gender, or religious background.

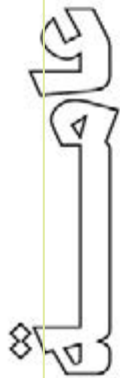
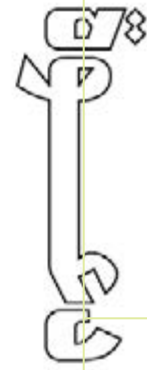
This intervention offered financial support to grassroots cultural initiatives already engaged in providing psychosocial support to displaced communities in Lebanon. These included Metro Al Madina, Bahh, Psytactix, Dar Onboz and the Musicians’ Initiative.

Financial support to these organizations helped them increase their resources and operations to expand their outreach and deepen their impact. It enabled them to extend their work to more displaced communities and offer mobile creative spaces that bring arts activities directly to displaced populations living in informal camps, schools and remote locations.



Outreach

OPEN



CALL



AFAC in the News

The year 2024 was replete with regional as well as international press articles about AFAC’s programs, films, initiatives and other news.

January 16, 2024	L'économiste Maghrébin North Africa	
	PCAN : Nouveau cycle culturel en Afrique du Nord avec le soutien de la coopération Suisse	
	January 23, 2024	Broadcast ProME Pan-Arab
		OSN and Arab Fund for Arts and Culture announce 'Writers' Room' winners
January 29, 2024		
	Campaign Middle East Pan-Arab	
	OSN and AFAC unveils writers programme to help Arab storytelling	
	February 6, 2024	
	Le Matin Morocco	
	Fonds arabe pour les arts et la culture: Appel à candidatures pour le 2e cycle du Programme culturel pour l'Afrique du Nord	
	February 26, 2024	
	Arab News Pan-Arab	
	Film training for young Arab women garners praise, but parity remains 'a challenge'	
	February 26, 2024	
	The National News UAE	
	'Truly inspiring': Netflix training initiative for young Arab women is hailed a success	
April 21, 2024		
	Cairo Scene Egypt	
	Arab Fund for Arts & Culture Selects 8 Photographers for Mentorship	

April 25, 2024

L'Agenda Culturel | Lebanon

Capturer l'humain, le social et le politique : Annonce des photographes et des boursiers du Programme arabe de photographie documentaire pour 2024

September 2, 2024

Zawya | Pan-Arab

Netflix partners with AFAC to launch pan-regional initiative for emerging Arab women filmmakers

September 2, 2024

Esquire | Pan-Arab

Netflix teams up with AFAC to encourage Arab Female Filmmakers

September 2, 2024

The National | UAE

Netflix announces short film initiative for female Arab directors

September 3, 2024

BroadcastProME | UAE

Netflix and Arab Fund for Arts and Culture launch short film initiative

September 3, 2024

Arab News | Pan-Arab

Arab Fund for Arts and Culture 'glad to expand our support to filmmakers'

September 15, 2024

Cairo Scene | Egypt

Exploring AFAC & Netflix's "Women in Film" Mentorship Programme

November 25, 2024

La Presse de Tunisie | Tunisia

Lancement de la 2e phase du programme régional culturel NACP: Une cohorte et des créations

Grantee Testimonials

From grantees across the region, below are samples of how our support resonated:

Mashal Kawasmi

AFAC's Grant has helped us immensely, not only to produce this film but by giving us the chance to have normalcy in these crazy times. This project was needed not to get our stories out, but for us to take care of each other. The Palestinian Cinema scene is very small and is one of the most affected since the war. Many professionals in the field haven't left their houses since October 7th and you can only imagine the state we have been living in. Having a boot camp for a few days has sprouted some new life and a sense of normalcy.

Sareen Hairabedian

AFAC was the first funder that believed in this project, and opened up doors to many other funding opportunities. The second fund that we received from AFAC was a production fund, which allowed us to have the resources to film in unexpected times and situations due to the war that erupted in the region.

Malakat Records

The grant not only provided necessary financial backing but through the prestige of the grant, AFAC enhanced Malakat's credibility in a highly competitive field, placing us alongside established regional entities.

Adham Zidan

In what ways has AFAC's grant not been useful! It allowed me to create as I wanted to, in the time that I needed to, without industrial pressures. It was exceptionally understanding when things fell through or timelines were pushed. I am very grateful!

Hussien Fawzy

Upon AFAC's announcement of my grant, I received several offers from publishers, even before completing the first draft of my book. AFAC's promotion and dissemination of my project were invaluable for different aspects of my work, particularly given the complexities and challenges of the publishing sector in Egypt.

Sudan Film Factory

I'm reaching out with a heart full of gratitude for the incredible support you've shown to Sudan Film Factory and our projects. Your partnership has meant the world to us, and we're so thankful for the trust, encouragement, wisdom and patience you've shared along the way.

Your support means more to us than words can express.

Alia Mossallam

Where would we be if we couldn't imagine a different world and how could we even imagine it without the worlds you create and have been creating. The spaces you literally carve out of the rubble.

Awards and Recognition

Our grantees continued to receive international recognition, winning awards and participating in festivals.

Three documentary films supported by AFAC participated in the 2024 edition of the Copenhagen International Documentary Festival (CPH:DOX): *Tell Them About Us* by Rand Beiruty (Jordan), *Bye Bye Tiberias* by Lina Soualem (Palestine) and *The Mother of All Lies* by Asmae El Moudir (Morocco).



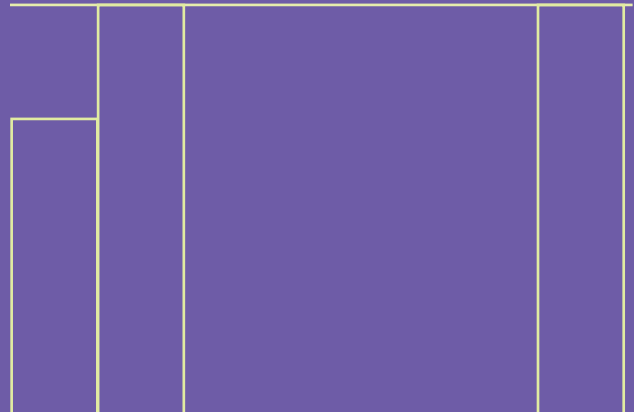
Tunisian ADPP Alumnus Zied Ben Romdhane was selected as a regional winner of the 2024 World Press Photo Contest.

ADPP Gaza-based photographer Samar Abu Elouf won the International Women’s Media Foundation-IWMF 2024 Anja Niedringhaus Courage in Photojournalism Award and the Judges’ Special Recognition under the “Picture of the Year” (POY), in recognition of the impacting power of the image. Samar was also selected among over 200 nominees to take part in World Press Photo’s renowned educational program, the Joop Swart Masterclass 2024.

ADPP photographer Rehab Eldalil (Egypt) was named Foam Talent 2024-2025, and will participate in the biennial Foam Talent mentorship program.

Two of our supported documentary films held their premiere in the 2024 edition of the Visions du Réel festival: *Behind the Sun* by Dhia Jerbi (Tunisia) and *We Are Inside* by Farah Kassem (Lebanon).

The Mother of All Lies by Asmae El Moudir (Morocco) took part in the Sundance Film Festival in January, under the Spotlight section.



The Brink of Dreams by Nada Riyadh and Ayman El Amir (Egypt) picked up the L’oeil d’or (best documentary film award) while Palestinian filmmaker Mahdi Fleifel’s film *To a Land Unknown* received a 9-minute standing ovation during its premiere at the Cannes International Film Festival in May.

Films in progress *The Myth of Mahmoud* by Mayar Hamdan and Shaima Al Tamimi and *My Father’s House* by Mahdi Fleifel also received prizes as part of their participation in the Palestinian delegation presentation at Cannes Docs.



Three ADPP photographers showcased their work at Les Rencontres d'Arles: Mohammed Mahdy, Maen Hammad, and the collective of photographers Aka Tawla.



Agora by Ala Eddine Slim and Red Path by Lotfi Achour, two Tunisian films supported by AFAC, were shown at the Locarno Film Festival in Switzerland in July. Agora was programmed in the Concorso Internazionale category, while Red Path was part of the Concorso Cineasti del Presente.

Five of our supported films premiered at the Venice International Film Festival: Perfumed With Mint (Muhammed Hamdy); Sudan, Remember Us (Hind Meddeb); Aicha (Mehdi Barsaoui); Happy Holidays (Scandar Copti); and Seeking Haven for Mr. Rambo (Khaled Mansour).

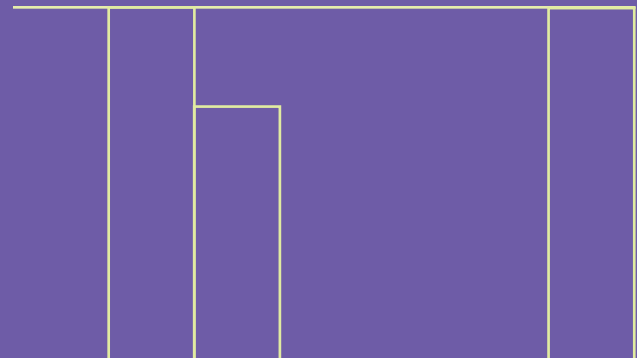
Four films we have supported headed to the Toronto International Film Festival for their North American debut: Happy Holidays by Scandar Copti, To a Land Unknown by Mahdi Fleifel, Perfumed with Mint by Muhammed Hamdy, and Sudan, Remember Us by Hind Meddeb.

Three of our supported films competed at the BFI London Film Festival:

Thank You for Banking with Us by Laila Abbas, To a Land Unknown by Mahdi Fleifel, and Who Do I Belong to by Myriam Joobeur.



The experimental theater performance The War Maker by Husam Abed won two awards: an honorary diploma at the A Puppet is a Human too festival in Warsaw, Poland, and the Tibor Sekeli Award for delivering the most humane message at the International Puppet Theatre Festival in Zagreb, Croatia.



Egyptian ADPP photographer Rehab Eldalil won the 2024 Impacts Environmental Photography Award, which will assist her in the ongoing development of a project focusing on the flora and fauna of Egypt and indigenous cultural histories.



Six films participated in the Cairo International Film Festival: *Moondove* by Karim Kassem (Lebanon), *Abo Zaabal 89* by Bassam Mortada (Egypt), *Simo* by Aziz Zoromba (Egypt) while three films in the making took part in the Cairo Films Connection industry section of the festival: *You Don't Die Twice* by Ager Oueslati (Algeria), *Dry Sky* by Ibrahim Omar (Sudan) and *My Dream is to Fly* by Asmaa Gamal (Egypt).

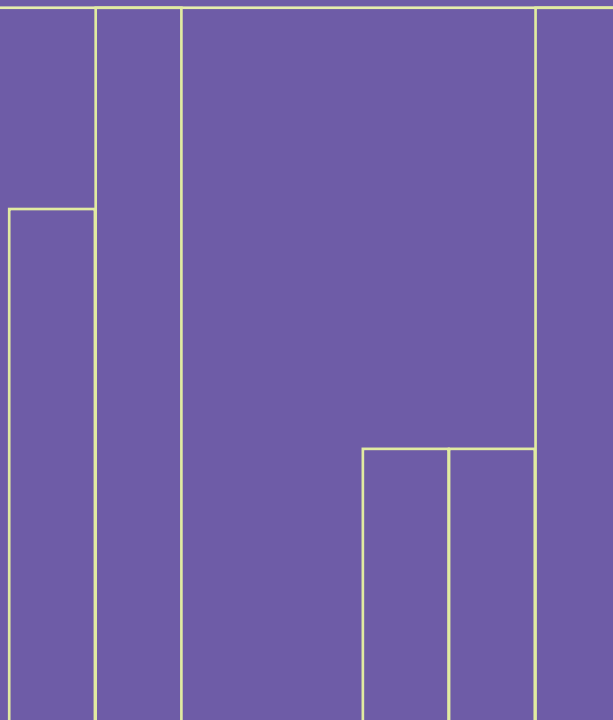
Seven films headed to Marrakech Film Festival: *Happy Holidays* by Scandar Copti (Palestine); *Perfumed with Mint* by Muhammed Hamdy (Egypt); *Silent Storms* by Dania Reymond-Boughenou (Algeria); *Sudan, Remember Us* by Hind Meddeb (Tunisia); *The Brink of Dreams* by Nada Riyadh, Ayman El Amir (Egypt); *To a Land Unknown* by Mahdi Fleifel (Palestine); and *Who Do I Belong to* by Meryam Joobeur (Tunisia).

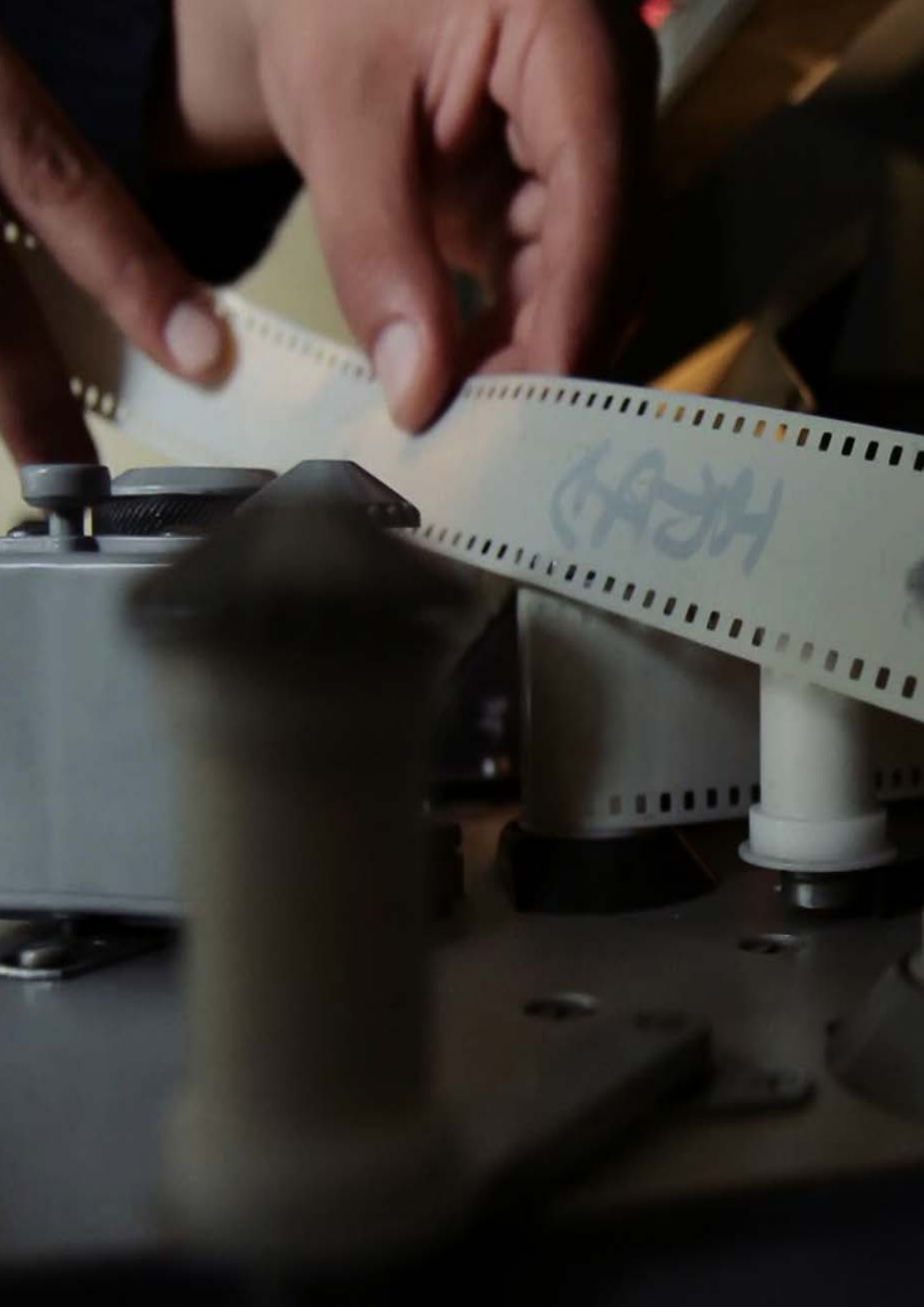
The Red Sea Film Festival featured six AFAC-supported films: *To a Land Unknown* by Mahdi Fleifel (Palestine); *Songs of Adam* by Oday Rasheed (Iraq); *Seeking Haven for Mr. Rambo* (Egypt); *Red Path* by Lotfi Ashour (Tunisia); *Aicha* by Mehdi Barsaoui (Tunisia); and *Agora* by Ala Eddine Slim (Tunisia).

Nine of our supported documentary films set off to the IDFA festival in Amsterdam: *Abo Zaabal 89* by Bassam Mortada (world premiere, Luminous section), *Yella Baba!* by Angie Obeid (Luminous section), *The Brink of Dreams* by Nada Riyadh and Ayman El Amir (Best of Fests section), *We Are Inside* by Farah Kassem (Best of Fests section), *Sudan, Remember Us* by Hind Meddeb (Best of Fests section), *Off Frame* by Muhanad Yaqubi (Top 10 section). In addition, three films in the making took part in IDFA Forum: *Concrete Land* by Asmahan Bkerat, *Do You Love Me* by Lana Daher, and *Dry Sky* by Ibrahim Omar.



The Carthage Film Festival showcased a record of seventeen AFAC-supported films.





Fundraising and Development

Fundraising and Development

Compared to the uncertainty that marked 2023, and despite the extremely volatile political and security conditions in the region, the landscape of



resource mobilization at the end of 2024 looks slightly clearer. We have maintained ongoing talks with all our longstanding partners, resulting in several positive outcomes. The Open Society Foundations (OSF) has pledged a total of \$6 million, offering a more structured commitment. The Ford Foundation, with whom we concluded our previous agreement at the end of 2023, has reaffirmed its engagement by providing \$490,600K, alongside an emergency top-up of \$100K to support organizations assisting the displaced in Lebanon.



The German MFA has contributed €54,500 to the CCJ initiative, reflecting their continued commitment to supporting our work. The DOEN Foundation, on its part, has renewed its support with a contribution of \$476,310; while the Swiss Agency for Development and

Cooperation (SDC) has commenced a new four-year phase (2024–2027) of the North Africa Cultural Program, committing \$5.777 million. The Prince Claus Fund continues its support of the Arab Documentary Photography Program (ADPP), providing \$163,500 under the current agreement. Additionally, the Norwegian MFA has continued their support with \$184,695 allocated to general grants, complemented by a top-up of \$36,200 as an emergency relief fund for cultural organizations working with the displaced communities.

Furthermore, our proposal to UNESCO for a capacity-building program in Yemen, titled The Cultural Atelier in Yemen, was selected for funding. The program, designed to strengthen Yemeni arts and culture organizations through training and mentorship, will receive a total of \$946,125 over two years.

The year 2024 also saw a major success with the award of a €4.5M bid from EuropeAid for the Ecologies of Culture project, set to be implemented from 2025 to 2029. The proposed program consists of three interconnected components aimed at strengthening cultural ecosystems and addressing global challenges. Creative Placemaking (C1) uses arts and culture projects to enhance and transform the physical and social landscapes of local communities, fostering a deeper connection to their environment. Creative Labs (C2) facilitates collaboration between the cultural sector and other industries to co-create and innovate, producing new content and resources

that address global issues. Lastly, Creative Caravans (C3) raises public awareness of these issues by circulating and disseminating cultural works and media content, both physically and virtually. Ecologies of Culture will be led by AFAC in collaboration with Oxfam, Echos Elektrik, and Megaphone, and will be carried out across nine countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, and Syria.

In terms of continued partnerships with the private sector, Netflix has renewed its support with a grant of \$298,367 for the second iteration of the Women in Film program, aimed at supporting young women filmmakers. Meanwhile, OSN has continued its support of the Writers' Room series writing program, contributing the remaining \$91,575 to the initiative.

Financial Allocations



Financial Allocations

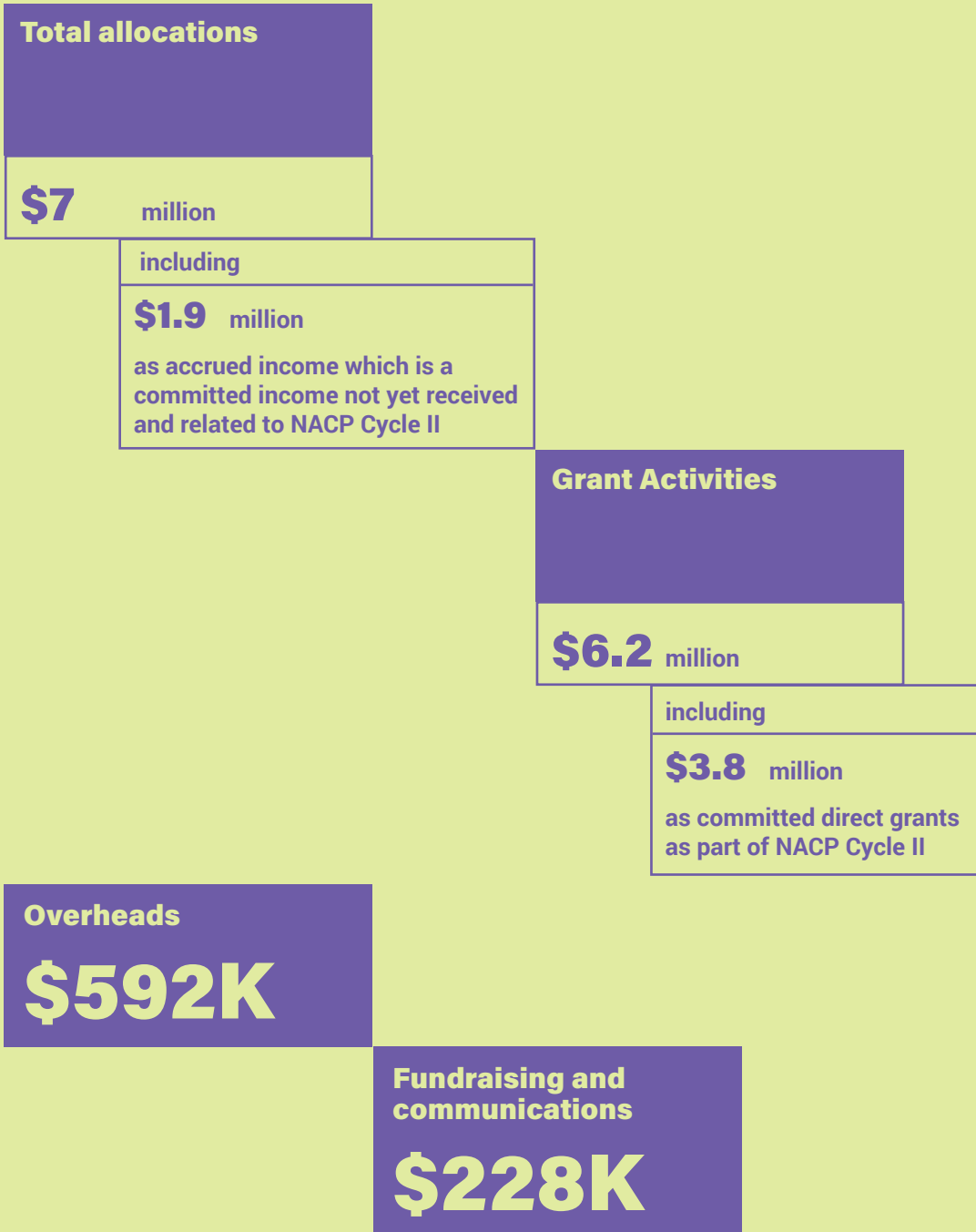
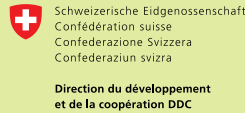




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AFAC is registered in Lebanon under decree 6388 dated 24 September 2011, as the Lebanese branch of the foundation AFAC, registered in Zug, Canton of Zug, Switzerland on 23 June 2006, under article 80 of the Swiss Civil Code. Previously, AFAC was registered 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.



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