



**“WE ARE MOVING INTO A
NEW PHASE OF LEARNING AND
KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE,
EXPLORING NEW APPROACHES
AND PARTNERSHIPS.”**



Dear Readers,

The mounting global challenges in 2022 have once again illustrated that resilience and the ability to adapt to change are crucial skills to navigate life in the 21st century. The war in Ukraine came on top of already difficult economic and political situations, impacting all countries in the scope of DROSOS FOUNDATION's work directly or indirectly. This has created significant financial, economic, and social challenges – for our partners, for young people and their communities, as well as for our team members.

Our top priorities consisted in ensuring the continuity of our projects and supporting our partners and team members in coping with these challenges. At the same time, 2022 presented opportunities to continually drive change and create a favourable environment for young people to fully realise their potential. The reforms and efforts made by some governments to advance gender equality and inclusion for people with disabilities provide a robust foundation upon which to further develop our activities. We intend to build on this momentum to further enhance social and economic inclusion. The growing interest and local demand for green and sustainable economies nurture our existing activities, and encourage us to develop new, promising initiatives and partnerships. These initiatives have the potential to create long-term employment and income opportunities for young people.

While sustaining our mission and starting new projects and partnerships, we have launched an internal process of organisational alignment that engages the entire DROSOS team. Our journey of change is driven by refining our work, tools, and processes, sharing knowledge effectively, and further enhancing the impacts of our programmes, projects, and partnerships. This internal change has already sparked collaboration across regions and fostered a culture of learning. We believe that this learning culture provides us with a solid foundation, supporting us in continually adapting to a changing world, and in strengthening our forward-thinking. As we approach our 20th anniversary in 2025, we are moving into a new phase of learning and knowledge exchange, exploring new approaches and partnerships to maximise our impact. At the same time, we will continue to build on our strengths and remain close to our partners, target groups and their contexts.

Our heartfelt gratitude goes to all our partners and team members. It is through your unwavering support, dedication, and collaboration that we have been able to make a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals and communities. Together, we will continue to drive positive social change, transform lives, and build a more inclusive and prosperous future for all.

Suba Umathevan
CEO

Markus E. Kronauer
Chairperson

Youth from refugee camps and other disadvantaged neighbourhoods in North Lebanon can take vocational training, catch-up on their education and get access to personal and psychological support.
Partner: Drops Community Progress



Committed to unlocking young people's potential

DROSOS FOUNDATION works to ensure that young people can discover and develop their full potential. Together with our partners, we nurture their life and professional skills to pave their way to economic independence and to support them in becoming purposeful and mindful contributors to the world around them. Furthermore, we aim to remove inequalities and hurdles to social inclusion and economic empowerment. Through our work, we strive to contribute our part in enabling young people in addressing current and future challenges.

DROSOS FOUNDATION is operating in eight countries and has offices in four locations.



Background

DROSOS FOUNDATION was formally established in Zurich in 2003 on behalf of Christa Gelpke-Engelhorn. It started its operations in 2005. DROSOS FOUNDATION is a private grant-making foundation constituted under Swiss law and is registered as a charitable institution. It is subject to supervision by the Federal Supervisory Authority for Foundations in Bern, Switzerland.

● ethos

DROSOS FOUNDATION is a member of Ethos, and is committed to promoting sustainability and positive social change both through the management of its financial capital, and through the projects and programmes financed with it.



Children produce their own beats as part of the open workshops organised through project *Explore* in Brandenburg, Germany. The project aims to lower entry barriers for young people to take part in open learning environments. Partner: Verbund offener Werkstätten



These young artists show the skills they learned as part of the project *Ana Fanane* (I am an artist) during a public performance in Morocco. Partner: Gorara Association for Arts and Culture



Vision and approach

We envision a world where young people can realise their full potential and where they have equal opportunities.

This is why we promote projects and programmes that help disadvantaged adolescents, young adults and career starters to acquire life and professional skills. One of our main goals is to increase economic empowerment and resilience for and with young people. Youth who are aware of their potential, skills and expertise are less prone to the dangers of social exclusion, neglect, discrimination, exploitation and radicalisation.

Depending on the context, the needs and opportunities of young people vary. Therefore, we take a human-centred ap-

proach when supporting projects and designing programmes. We seek to support young people in their personal development and in accessing education and decent employment opportunities, as well as in realising their entrepreneurial ideas and driving social innovation.

For a holistic and lasting impact, we support initiatives that contribute to creating the required frameworks and conditions at the individual, community, organisational and systemic levels. It takes collective effort and continuous learning and adaption to support young people in becoming active and fulfilled members of society, shaping their own future.

Key characteristics of DROSOS FOUNDATION

- Long-standing experience and expertise in **promoting life skills and economic independence for disadvantaged youth and vulnerable communities**
- **Proximity:** We are close to our target groups and partners, and collaborate as equals, with mutual respect and an empowering approach. Our employees are acquainted with the different country contexts in which we operate, and highly qualified to facilitate local collaborations.
- **Sustainability:** We seek to ensure that our support has a long-lasting impact well beyond the end of our funding. To this extent, we empower our partner organisations with **organisational development** and capacity building as needed.
- **Innovation:** We place strong emphasis on implementing new and innovative ideas, as well as replicating and scaling up successful initiatives.
- **Networks:** We promote collaboration between partner organisations and various stakeholders in the wider ecosystem, such as other NGOs and foundations, national authorities and the private sector. This enables knowledge sharing and learning, sustainable financing, and the replication and scaling up of project work.
- **Inclusion:** We encourage inclusive approaches and youth leadership, giving voice and power to our target groups.
- **Systems change:** We seek to amplify impact by aligning projects considering larger societal issues.



Young creative entrepreneurs from the handicrafts sector and supported through the project *El Garage* showcase their work during a networking summit in Cairo, Egypt. Partner: Nahdet El Mahrousa



2022, a year of far-reaching successes despite difficult circumstances

The contexts we and our partners navigate have become increasingly challenging in 2022. Youth unemployment in the Middle East and North Africa is among the highest in the world. Skyrocketing inflation rates and high food prices in many countries of this region have pushed people into poverty.

Vulnerable populations and low-income households are particularly affected. Food insecurity, early school dropouts, increased early marriage and child labour are among the expected consequences. And with all this also comes the poor mental health state of many children and youth due to the consequences of the pandemic, political unrest, and challenging social environments.



The rich cultural heritage in Jordan presents opportunities for employment to local youth. DROSOS partner Sela has developed specific educational offers for young people in Petra, enabling them to have better access to decent work in this sector. Partner: Sela for Vocational Training and Protection of Heritage

Despite this difficult context, not only for our target groups but also for our partners, we have been able to achieve remarkable results at the system, organisational and individual levels – thanks to the dedication and commitment of our partners and team members across regions. We concentrated our efforts around the areas of social innovation and entrepreneurship, promoting economic and social inclusion as well as the related skills development, with a focus on youth from disadvantaged

backgrounds. Believing in innovative ideas and supporting these over the years is bearing fruit as we see these projects attracting other donors or becoming self-sustainable. We identified new opportunities for youth employment and skills development, and continued to support the growth of sectors and approaches with the potential to bring about lasting, systemic impact.

2022 in numbers

8

countries are supported by
DROSOS FOUNDATION

202

ongoing projects

CHF 22.8

million paid out for
projects and programmes

Shifting mindsets and sectors: successes at the system level

DROSOS FOUNDATION is committed to creating **an environment in which young people have equal opportunities** to discover and unlock their potential and learn the needed skills for decent work perspectives and active participation in society. Creating such an environment requires change at the system level, engagement of different parties, and often the shift of mindsets. Here are some successful initiatives that contributed to such shifts in 2022.

Transforming leaving care

In the past four years, DROSOS has played a pioneering role in the field of leaving care. As one of the first private foundations in Germany and Switzerland, we addressed the issue holistically with a substantial multi-year programmatic funding scheme. The success of this work can be seen today in the fact that the term “care leaver” is gaining more and more recognition among different stakeholders, and that young people with a care background are being considered as a special needs group in new programmes, funding approaches and even governmental responsibilities. These dynamics can also be observed in Egypt, through the work and

awareness creation efforts led by DROSOS partner Wataneya Society. The coordinated efforts by the various leaving care programme partners and DROSOS in terms of knowledge generation and transfer as well as networking, have been widely recognized by stakeholders from academia, politics, administration, and care leaver representatives. In November 2022, the *Zukunftscamp* (future camp) conference in Erfurt, organised as part of DROSOS’ programme *Brückensteine* in Germany, brought together more than 100 people including persons with care experience, professionals including social workers, and representatives from public institutions, other foundations, and DROSOS to

discuss the evaluation of the programme as well as ideas for the future. The programme’s approach to actively involving care leavers themselves and providing opportunities and platforms for them to co-design the solutions to their challenges is an important success factor.

Bringing creativity to Jordan’s schools

With the project *Creativity in the Classroom*, which trains teachers in drama-in-education and creative facilitation techniques, the National Centre for Culture and Arts (NCCA) has contributed to shifting education methodologies in Jordan’s public schools – away from a didactic learning approach towards learning through inquiry. The project was highly valued by the Ministry of Education and culminated in a national conference held in November 2022 which shed light on the role of creativity in the classroom to give students an opportunity to enhance their life skills.



United for the same cause: participants of the conference *Zukunftscamp* organised by the DROSOS initiated programme *Brückensteine* aiming to improve the situation of care leavers in Germany.

Creating a favourable environment for young entrepreneurs

DROSOS has been a key actor in the creation and support of community spaces and knowledge generation for entrepreneurs in Egypt. Two community spaces, Startup Haus Cairo and KMT House, have become financially independent thanks to years of support from DROSOS FOUNDATION and investment in viable business models. Today, they offer support to entrepreneurs in various sectors. To provide empirical data and insights on entrepreneurship at the national level, DROSOS FOUNDATION has been partnering with the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation of the School of Business at the American University in Cairo (AUC) for several years. As a result of this collaboration, in 2022 another edition of the yearly [Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report](#) providing evidence-based analysis of the entrepreneurship ecosystem in Egypt was produced and published.

Document for change – mapping the cultural sector in Palestine

Cultural activities and industries have the potential to create employment and generate income in developing and emerging economies like Palestine. Cultural expressions and products are also important vehicles for social change and reinterpretation of values. However, evidence-based data that measures their impact is missing in Palestine. This is why, in collaboration with UNESCO and the Ministry of Culture, DROSOS FOUNDATION conducted a study to assess the contribution of the cultural sector in Palestine to economic and social development. The study offers valuable analysis to potential donors and key stakeholders in the sector, encompassing set indicators, existing resources, and identified gaps. It was published in November 2022 and serves as a starting point and benchmark to further develop and build on the opportunities that these industries present.

Shifting the archaeological job market in Jordan

In Jordan, DROSOS has created a local offer of decent work and contributed to the transformation of the archaeology and cultural resource management (CRM) sector. This has been achieved as a result of two projects implemented by Sela for Training and Protection of Heritage. Archaeological excavations and conservation projects have continually created employment opportunities in Jordan. However, much of the expert and well-paid work was often carried out by foreign staff, while local staff was employed more informally, without social security and with only low wages. Sela has been changing these cir-



These students catch up on their education and get ready to enter the job market at the Second Chance Centre in Morocco. Partner: Al Jisr Association



Learning how to offer their services online provides these students in Gaza with interesting income opportunities. Partner: The University College of Applied Sciences Technology Incubator (UCASTI)

cumstances by creating a model to reorganise archaeological and historical monument conservation work in Jordan in a sustainable way. The first project built a new legal framework including the creation of different job profiles, and transformed the practice of employers in the conservation, documentation and restoration work of archaeological sites. Local youth gained access to on-the-job training and thus qualified for regular jobs in the sector. Employers have begun offering qualified youth employment contracts with attractive conditions. The follow-up project that started in 2022 capitalises on past experiences to institutionalise a scalable training and employ-

ment model that will be sustainably accessible for more youth in the future. Both projects fostered public-private partnerships through Sela's collaboration with two of the main stakeholders in the sector, the Department of Antiquities (under the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities) and the Petra Development and Tourism Regional Authority (PDTRA).

Online work – a solution to unemployment

Online freelancing helps young people to access the labour market abroad or in other regions when the local demand is scarce, for example, due to low economic growth or

other limiting factors. In Palestine, due to restrictions on movement, online freelancing presents particularly important opportunities for young people to generate income and offer their services without needing to travel. DROSOS has been promoting online freelancing as a sustainable income stream, and is supporting online freelancing training and skills-building through several projects. After a successful pilot project in the West Bank, DROSOS FOUNDATION is pursuing its commitment to online freelancing as a tool for Youth Economic Empowerment also in Gaza, by partnering with the University College of Applied Sciences Technology Incubator (UCASTI). In addition to conducting training and coaching sessions for young people, UCASTI generates more awareness for online freelancing as a viable employment option, trains university representatives and

professors on how to introduce online freelancing models to their students, and has built an online platform for freelancers. The project's outcomes underline the immense opportunities and benefits that online freelancing can bring to Palestinian youth in the Gaza Strip.

Similar efforts took place in Lebanon: DROSOS FOUNDATION partners with Alfanar Venture Philanthropy and two social enterprises (B.O.T. and SE Factory) to upskill young people in the digital sector, and create opportunities for them to access the labour market by working as digital freelancers. The project provides financial support and capacity-building in business development for the two promising social enterprises, allowing them to improve their financial sustainability, scale their impact across the country and tackle the high youth unemployment rate.

PHOTO: AMINE LANDOULSI



Innovative approaches expanded and scaled

We promote innovative approaches that have the potential to contribute to the long-term solution of social problems. Often, DROSOS FOUNDATION is the main funder in the initial phase and supports the partner in the build-up and implementation of the approach. A successful first phase subsequently leads, in the best case, to interest and funding from other donors, allowing our partners to maintain, further develop and scale their activities in the long-term.

The following example illustrates how DROSOS projects can be successfully upscaled to increase their impact: the **Tripoli Entrepreneurs Club (TEC) in Lebanon won a 4-year project** with the French Development Agency to replicate the project activities they do with DROSOS' support in the neighbourhoods of Tripoli and Saida. TEC addresses the skills gap between graduates looking for jobs in the innovation sector and the market needs of start-ups and small businesses, counteracting the "brain drain" in northern Lebanon.

DROSOS' partner **Quillo e.V.** in Germany **gained long-term funding from the Ministry of Brandenburg's Regional Anchor Points in Rural Areas** program that will cover their entire personnel costs until 2024 and possibly even further. Additionally, they have established a strategic partnership with the State Association of Daycare and School Development Associations Berlin-Brandenburg, and secured their co-fi-

nancing. Quillo e.V. conducts music theatre workshops for children and young people in rural areas of Brandenburg.

The start-up laboratory **Ahoj Altenburg** in Germany **secured a new funding partner, the Kinnings Foundation**, after having developed their fundraising capability with the help of DROSOS. This partnership brings 250,000 EUR of funding over the next three years, allowing the initiative to increase their staff. Ahoj Altenburg supports young entrepreneurs in developing and implementing their ideas for running their own businesses.

What started as a small pilot project funded by DROSOS in 2010 in empowering the inhabitants of a disadvantaged neighbourhood in Tangier, Morocco, has become a well-established organisation delivering and promoting an innovative community development approach based on facilitators operating in working-class neighbourhoods. Thanks to DROSOS's long-term support, **Tamkeen** was able to **formalise its approach** and signed partnerships with the Ministry of National Education as well as Fondation Botnar.

A few years ago, DROSOS FOUNDATION supported the **Al Jisr** association in Morocco to start a **new approach to the socio-economic integration** of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and create the Second Chance Center, inspired by a model used in Marseille. This centre accompanies young NEET between 15 and 30 years old living in precarious condi-



As part of the project *Tunisia Digital Factory*, young Tunisian graduates from disadvantaged backgrounds learn coding and other technical skills to find a job in the information technology sector, either as employees or as freelancers. Partner: GoMyCode

tions in the city of Casablanca to catch up on their education and learn skills helping them to enter the job market. The systemic approach considers the various factors, including psychosocial empowerment, that can have an impact on the path to socio-professional integration. Al Jisr capitalised on its experiences and developed the “youth employment skills pathway”, **servicing as a model and reference** for their approach to socio-economic integration for youth. Other associations are now using the model, and Al Jisr managed to **secure funding from national and international donors** (National Initiative for Human Development INDH, German Society for International Cooperation GIZ, and the U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative MEPI).

Open Start-up Tunisia aims to create a strong entrepreneurial culture in Tunisia, especially around universities, supporting youth in venturing into entrepreneurship and its opportunities. The project offers a 12-week pre-incubation programme for students and fresh graduates to work on their ideas while supported by mentors and experts. DROSOS was the first organisation to support the initiative. In 2022, Open Startup Tunisia was able to **fundraise its first million USD**, and announced the **expansion of its activities to the MENA region**.

In Fayoum Governorate, Egypt, our partner **Shabab Masr** (Egypt Youth Organisation) worked with small farmers and producers to **introduce a new model of cooperatives**. Since the start of the project in 2019, 12 cooperatives have been established, allowing the producers to work collectively, produce more, and thus earn more income. Particular to the model in Fayoum is that the cooperatives are registered as Limited Liability Companies (LLC), but they operate according to the values and principles of a coopera-

tive. The legal form was chosen as it is more practical and suitable for the market dynamic. DROSOS FOUNDATION supported Shabab Masr as a **sole funder to pilot the model** – with success: the Ministry of Social Solidarity and other donors have **financially supported Shabab Masr to replicate the model** in other projects.

VeryNile started as a **small initiative** to clean up the Nile from plastic and raise community awareness about the negative environmental impact of plastic waste. The youth-led initiative emerged from the *Sustainability Innovation Lab* project led by Bassita and supported by DROSOS FOUNDATION. Today, **VeryNile** is a full-fledged project with enormous potential for creating employment for marginalised communities, engaging the private sector and government alike. Over 100 fishermen generate important supplementary income through their involvement in the plastic collection from the Nile. In parallel, 30 youth, a great percentage of whom are women, are engaged in jobs based on recycling and upcycling plastic into a variety of products. Based on the successful model implemented with DROSOS FOUNDATION, **VeryNile** received **additional funding from the Coca Cola Foundation and the Canadian Embassy** and **expanded to Assiut in Upper Egypt**.

DROSOS FOUNDATION was the **first donor to support GoMyCode** (GMC), a Tunisian organisation aiming to democratise education by empowering technology enthusiasts to learn tech skills and address high youth unemployment rates. After making a name for themselves in Tunisia, they have also received recognition internationally. In 2022, **GMC raised 8 million USD** thanks to a fundraising round led by AfricInvest Group and PROPARCO with the participation of Wamda Capital.



Ensured sustainability and organisational development

Sustainability is particularly important to us as a foundation — both in terms of the lasting impact of our projects and for our target groups, as well as for the organisational sustainability of the project partners beyond our support. We accompany our partners in various areas of their organisational development depending on their needs and stage in their life cycle. With this approach, we aim to support our partners' long-term existence and ability to bring about lasting social change.

DROSOS FOUNDATION explores the possibility of **self-generating revenues with its partners** whenever conducive. We support partners in developing business models without affecting their social, not-for-profit mandate or identity. For instance, the **Palestinian Circus School started to generate income** thanks to the development of a **hybrid model** combining social and business aspects. They changed their organisational structure following this model, merging elements of the non-profit sector with a

private sector approach. This change allows them to effectively cater to both donors and the business community, and to re-invest their proceeds in future activities.

Our project with DROPS in Lebanon, which supported youth from Bedawi and Nahr el Bared refugee camps with mentoring and training, ended in August 2022. As a result of the capacity-building interventions linked to DROSOS' organisational development support, **DROPS secured funding from GIZ** (German Society for International Cooperation) for their 2023/2024 youth professional programme.

FORSA is a dynamic platform developed by Leaders of Tomorrow (LoT) in Jordan. It **provides educational advice, training, capacity building, and skills development opportunities** for young people living in the Middle East and North Africa, most of it free of charge. More than 100,000 youth use the platform each day. Through the collaboration with DROSOS, LoT transformed the business model of the platform, resulting in it being 60% self-sustainable.



Green entrepreneurs interacting at the Green Bazaar networking event organised by DROSOS in Cairo, Egypt.

Fostering learning, exchange and networks

Facilitating exchange and learning among our partners as well as other stakeholders in the sector is becoming increasingly important to DROSOS FOUNDATION. We believe that by bringing different stakeholders together and creating platforms for them to connect and learn from each other, we can increase our impact.

In Morocco, DROSOS FOUNDATION set up a **capacity building training** in its programme involving partners focussing on creativity in order to create action plans and skills mapping tools to strengthen the programme members. Moreover, the design of several management tools contributed to enhancing the autonomy of its members. 90% of the participants have shared events and calls for application with other members and 60% have created connections and exchanges with DROSOS partners.

In November 2022, DROSOS FOUNDATION brought together different partners, stakeholders from private and public sectors as well as entrepreneurs at the Green Bazaar Event held at Startup Haus Cairo in Egypt. The two-day event aimed to facilitate **exchange**

and **knowledge sharing** about combining youth empowerment with the promotion of **green economies**. The event consisted of panel discussions around green practices in agribusiness, upcycling and waste reduction featuring examples and approaches of different initiatives supported by DROSOS FOUNDATION, as well as an exhibition where DROSOS implementing partners, and other startups, showcased their green businesses.

DROSOS FOUNDATION supported the **SkillShare initiative** in Switzerland, which promotes networking among non-profit organisations to share knowledge and experience. The initiative saw 137 people from 96 organisations participate in knowledge exchange in 2022. The project *Monitoring Tool* began in the fall of 2022 as part of the initiative, offering an Excel tool for free download to evaluate monitoring data from projects. This tool will be especially useful for small organisations in Germany and Switzerland and has been developed with the help of recognised experts. The tool records participation, calculates core values, and converts data into graphics to help organisations set up data monitoring systems.



These are some of the people behind the platform FORSA, a skill-building and counselling platform for young people living in the Middle East and North Africa. Partner: Leaders of Tomorrow, Jordan

Empowered youth: the foundation for a bright future

With the projects we support, we aim to ensure that young people have the stability, self-confidence and ability to take control of their lives and feel included in society.

And that in the longer term, they can actively contribute to positive change in their environment. Working with youth to develop this stability and self-efficacy is key to their social inclusion and builds the foundation for successful economic inclusion.

The following stories illustrate how transformational the right support and empowerment can be to a young person's life.

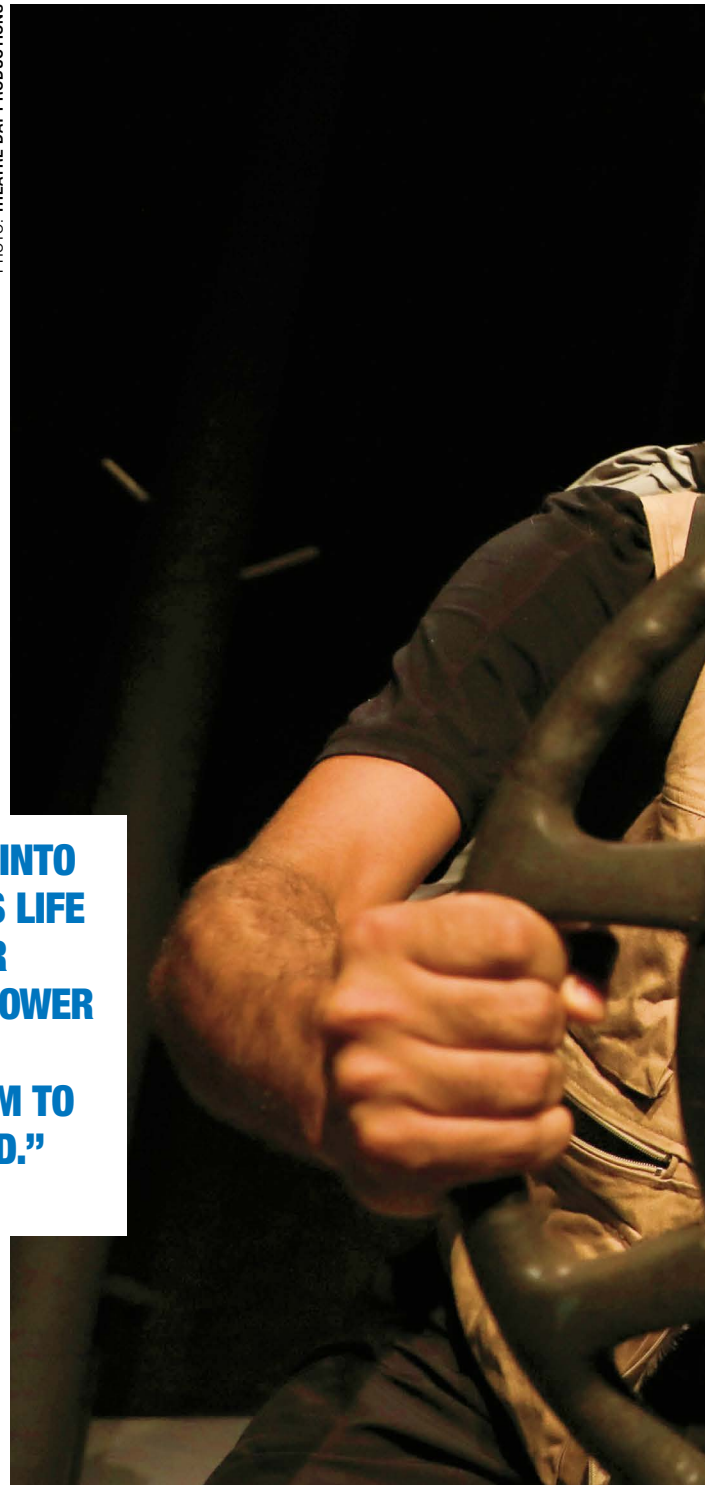
The healing power of theatre: Yasin's story

Yasin's testimony illustrates the power of creative activities such as theatre and the impact they can have on the personal development and well-being of young people. Yasin grew up in a very isolated area in a village in Gaza and lived many hardships in life. He had no friends until, as a child, he participated in a drama workshop by DROSOS partner Theatre Day Productions / Ayyam Al Masrah. This was a turning point in his life. He continued with theatre despite the resistance from his family, and used it as a means to process traumatising experiences from his childhood. Today, he is an actor and drama teacher in the community projects of Ayyam Al Masrah. In the drama performances, he raises topics and issues from the community to trigger conversations and dialogues in order to find solutions to social challenges.

“THEATRE TRANSFORMED ME INTO A PERSON WHO UNDERSTANDS LIFE AND SEES OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE. IT GIVES ME THE POWER TO SPEAK ABOUT EVERYTHING CLOGGED INSIDE. THE FREEDOM TO SPEAK LETS ME FEEL RELIEVED.”

Yasin

PHOTO: THEATRE DAY PRODUCTIONS



Re-writing his story: transformation through music

Juan*, an adolescent living in Switzerland, was in an integration school when he first participated in a workshop by Hitproducer in the framework of the project *Groove Room* supported by DROSOS FOUNDATION. Hitproducer partners with social institutions to teach young people in difficult situations the basics of digital and analogue music production. Juan was accompanied by a young music coach. Over time, he reflected a lot on his texts and modified his language to be less assaultive and more respectful,

and demonstrated a lot of leadership. He became an assistant coach for other workshops. In 2022, he started an apprenticeship in the IT field and continues to keep in contact with the project, regularly seeking support with his music, which he presents in competitions. Juan's impressive transformation is an example of how important and impactful a supportive, empowering and safe environment is for young people's development.

**name changed to protect the identity of the person*



Yasin performing in "The Story is Sick", a play about the relations between men and women from the beginning of humankind until now. Yasin says that if we want to understand the nature of issues between men and women and especially the painful situation of women, we need to dig deep and hear the stories from both perspectives – male and female.

Shereen steps up for girls' rights to education

When Shereen was eight years old, she was brought to a care home. There, she experienced both physical and psychological violence and abuse. She describes it as a 'prison' and the time spent there a 'nightmare'. Also, during her life in the care home, Shereen noticed that girls were not particularly encouraged to pursue higher education due to financial considerations and stigma. Finding support from a social worker, Shereen decided to pursue higher education anyway and was eventually introduced to Wataneya Society, a DROSOS partner aiming to

improve the situation of care leavers in Egypt. She gained extensive leadership skills by participating in Wataneya Society's programme *Mobader* which aims to empower and engage care leavers in providing practical solutions to issues related to the alternative care system and children and youth without parental care. Through the initiative, Shereen designed and implemented a campaign to promote education for girls in care homes, attracting and engaging other young women within the care system in addressing pressing needs.



Shereen presents her campaign supporting girls' education in care homes in Egypt. Partner: Wataneya Society

Step-by-step to success – Ferdijan enters the Swiss labour market

Ferdijan, a 20-year-old Afghan living in Switzerland, participated in a programme proposed by the project *VIP (Vers une Insertion Professionnelle* which means "On the road to employment"), developed by our partner OSEO Fribourg. Through this programme, Ferdijan has developed French skills that allow him to start an apprenticeship. This is a very big achievement for him since since arriving in Switzerland five years ago. *VIP* applies a socio-pedagogical approach to support young people who struggle to enter the labour market due to a lack of education, work experience or personal maturity. The programme helps them to establish a daily routine, build self-confidence, and develop the basic competencies needed for socio-professional integration. DROSOS has a special focus on projects and partners who work with young people with particularly challenging backgrounds, some of whom have already experienced multiple setbacks and have fallen through many gaps in other institutions. For these youth, success and impact often come in small steps, such as simply being able to attend a program regularly.

From abuse to accomplishment: Nadine's musical journey

Nadine is a rising musical star, and a violinist residing at Banati Foundation in Giza governorate, Egypt. A child of abuse, Nadine came to Banati 10 years ago where she received support, protection, education and the chance to partake in different workshops. Music has always been close to her heart and allowed her to unleash her potential and gain confidence. She was encouraged by Banati and her music instructor to deepen her obvious talent. She summoned her courage and applied to the Academy of Arts. In 2022, she was accepted into the higher institute of Arab Music.

"IF IT WEREN'T FOR BANATI, I WOULDN'T HAVE KNOWN THAT I HAD THIS TALENT WITHIN ME."

Nadine

Our partners' work is seen and recognized



PHOTO: DEBORA SCHORN

Ahoj Altenburg wins ThEx Award

DROSOS-funded start-up laboratory Ahoj Altenburg received the ThEx Award in the category **Impulse Generator** with a prize of 5,000 EUR. ThEx awards successful founders, entrepreneurs and successors in Thuringia, Germany.

PowHER Award for Crescenda

During the Basel Entrepreneurship Gala in November 2022, Crescenda was honoured for its **pioneering work to promote female entrepreneurship** among women with migration and refugee backgrounds in Switzerland.



PHOTO: JÖRG GLÄSCHER

Social enterprise B.O.T. wins Alfanar Award

Alfanar honoured Marianne Bitar, founder of the digital services enterprise B.O.T., for her **remarkable achievement in providing regular income opportunities** to more than 350 youth from low-income communities in Lebanon and Jordan.

Werkstatt Quillo nominated for Commerzbank Foundation's Zukunftsgut award

After three years of DROSOS support, the *Werkstatt Quillo* project is widely recognised as a **model project for music education in rural areas**. In 2022, the project was nominated for the *Zukunftsgut* award, Germany's first and most highly endowed prize for institutional cultural education.

International recognition and awards for Al Kasaba Theatre

The Palestinian Al Kasaba Theatre supports young actors and directors, and **enables children and youth to practice creative expression** through its cultural hub and incubator initiative supported by DROSOS. In 2022, Al Kasaba received several awards for its productions, scripts, and actors at theatre festivals in Jordan, Tunisia, Palestine, and Iraq.

Verstehbahnhof one of the winners of the 2022 Germany, Land of Ideas award.

Verstehbahnhof is a makerspace that teaches self-determined use of technologies, **empowers young people to participate in shaping digital society** and uses a community-oriented infrastructure to solve pressing problems: for example, people printed facial visors for medical professionals during the pandemic or gave online German courses to Ukrainian refugees.

Changemakers in the spotlight

Not only our partners receive attention, but also the young people who participate in their projects and develop their skills and potential.

PHOTO: GEISTESBLITZ LOKALLABOR LÖBAU



Lokallabor Löbau – a winning team

The young people running the makerspace *Lokallabor Löbau* received several awards in 2022, including the **Children for a Better World Award** and the **Innovation Award for Further Education of the Free State of Saxony**. *Lokallabor Löbau* is one of several makerspaces which came to life thanks to a project by Fabmobil e.V.. The project supports young people

living in rural areas of Germany in enhancing their digital skills. After the makerspaces are established, the youth operate them in a self-organised way. The *Lokallabor's* energetic activities such as the fully-booked VR for Seniors tour, which brings technological knowledge into nursing homes, have made them **a prime example of youth empowerment** and community engagement.

Young athlete receives Sports Orange Corners Programme Award and turns his passion into an enterprise

Lahcen El Mejdoubi is passionate about cycling and participated in the DROSOS-funded initiative *Intilaqa*, an education and work integration programme through sports by Tibu Africa. “*Intilaqa* allowed me not only to enhance my primary learning and develop my language skills, but also to calibrate my goals,” he says. In 2022, **he won a seed fund by the Sports Orange Corners Programme**, allowing him to **launch his own startup MJ Bike Morocco**, a social enterprise aiming to make cycling accessible and promote sustainable transportation in Morocco.

PHOTO: TIBU AFRICA



Breaking boundaries: Young Egyptian filmmaking students show their work at international Film Festivals

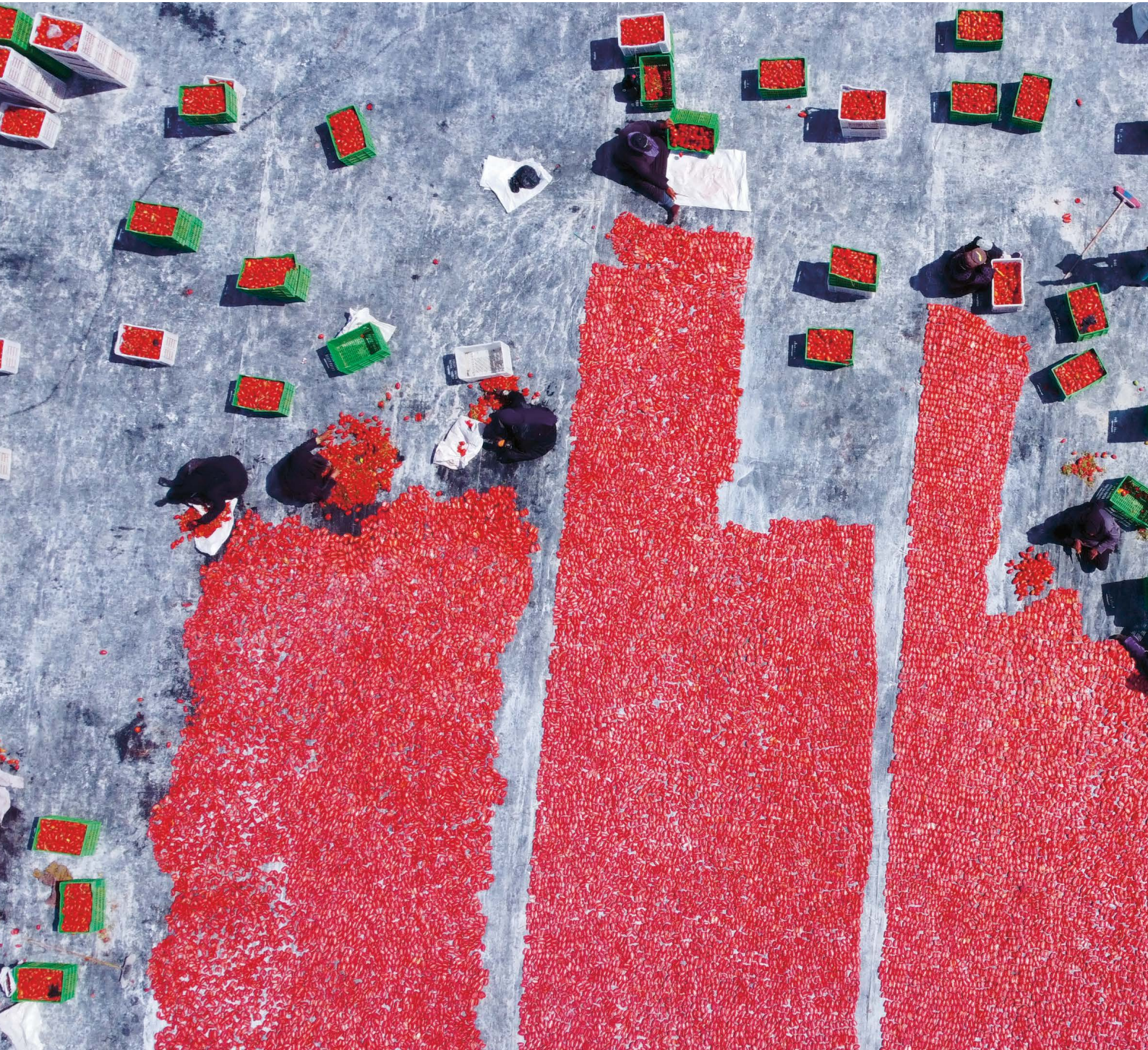
The two films *People of the Sea* by Zahraa Yacoub and *Ashura* by Asmaa Yacoub were chosen for the **short film competition at Carthage Film Festival in Tunisia and Rabat Film Festival in Morocco**. Both films deal with Nubian culture: *People of the Sea* is a narrative linked to an ancient Nubian legend, and *Ashura* is a documentary telling the story of a Nubian food recipe that is prepared with specific rituals. The two young women are enhancing their filmmaking skills through the project *She in Cinema* by our partner Appropriate Communication for Development ACT.

Rising star: talented rapper shines with his performance at the Spotify Arabia x Visa For Music afterparty

YVZID is a young rap artist that took part in *M'ARTSY*, a pilot project designed to promote financial independence for 12 young artists interested in slam, hip-hop and theatre in Morocco. He has benefited from tailored training that helps him to produce his own songs and distribute them. The performance at the Spotify event allowed him to **gain visibility and make connections** with potential music producers.

Driving change through social innovation, entrepreneurship and self-employment

Aerial shot of sundried tomatoes drying facilities in Luxor. The project creates hundreds of seasonal jobs for women in Upper Egypt. Partner: CARE Egypt Foundation



DROSOS supports entrepreneurial ideas for social innovation and contributes to creating a favourable environment at the ecosystem level. We put a special emphasis on **social enterprises and organisations providing opportunities for youth employment and income generation** in their local context. Further, through our partners, we support young people with the potential for (self)-employment to concretise their ideas and drive social change. The following examples highlight some of the achievements in this area in 2022.

Turning a crisis into an opportunity

Under the current energy crisis in Lebanon, public entities are shifting to solar energy and installing photovoltaic systems. However, local expertise to install and manage solar panels is lacking. Turning this need into an opportunity for young people, DROSOS FOUNDATION supports Uleap, a social enterprise recently established by IECD. Uleap is specialised in training electrotechnicians and installing photovoltaic systems, and thus fills this gap in expertise and creates much-needed job opportunities for young people. Apart from reducing CO₂ emissions, the project also has a positive impact on gender equality, with a high percentage of women among those trained.

A green solution to unemployment and food scarcity

In Tunisia, where food sovereignty is at risk and water is scarce, permaculture can be part of addressing these issues, and at the same time provide job opportunities for young people. This is what our partner, the Tunisian Association of Permaculture (ATP), is aiming for with the *Plante Ta Ferme* (Plant Your Farm) project. The goal is to promote the profession of farmer-entrepreneur, valorise abandoned agricultural land, and create 50 permaculture farms run by unemployed youth. By the end of 2022, ATP had trained 25 farmer-entrepreneurs in permaculture techniques, created the first network of permaculture farmers in Tunisia, and established the annual Farmers' Seed Festival.

Improving livelihoods through agribusiness in Upper Egypt

The *Sundried Tomatoes* project implemented by CARE Egypt has brought better economic opportunities for smallholder farmers in Qena and Luxor. Prior to the project, these farmers used to sell their tomatoes at a low price to local intermediaries who then made most of the profit. With the introduction of contractual farming and the creation of a social enterprise facility, the project provided alternative marketing channels for the farmers, created additional seasonal jobs for hundreds of women and men to produce sundried tomatoes, and managed to gain contracts with six companies to export the produce to international markets.

The Agricultural Services and Development Foundation (ASDF) took an innovative approach with the *Poultry By Young Women* project funded by DROSOS FOUNDATION: it combined village savings and loans associations (VSLA) to enhance the financial inclusion of marginalised women with a focus on improving poultry value chains in the region. Through strategic links and partnerships with the private sector and key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Agriculture's Veterinary Department, the project changed the poultry sector in Asswan and managed to create sustainable economic opportunities for young women there.



PHOTO: MOHANAD DIAB

Both projects established partnerships with the private sector in agriculture, which contributed to the success and sustainability of the initiatives. This type of partnership helped the small-scale farmers to export their sun-dried tomatoes to Europe and Latin America. As for ASDF, the private sector was key in securing the sourcing of quality chicks and vaccines, and providing valuable insights to finding quality poultry forages at low cost.

A new approach to building the next generation of social entrepreneurs

In Palestine, DROSOS supported the establishment of The Mountain (Al Jabal), a social business incubator in the middle of nature that recruits, incubates, and develops passionate young entrepreneurs from disadvantaged backgrounds with creative ideas. It enables them to convert their passion and ideas into viable and investable businesses. Al Jabal’s firm belief is that self-awareness development contributes to the long-term and sustainable development of individuals as well as businesses and society. In July 2022, Al Jabal, under the patronage of the Minister of Entrepreneurship and Empowerment, shared their experience and knowledge with a wider audience, and presented the Al Jabal methodology. The methodology, which was developed with the support of DROSOS, employs yoga, meditation, and individual personal support in aiding the participants to discover their passion and preferences, develops business ideas from their passions, and provides business training as well as presentation and pitching skills.

The Mountain project in numbers

- 19 out of 20 of its financially supported start-ups are still in the market and expanding.
- 1 start-up won a six-digit (USD) angel investment.
- 36 direct and 600 indirect jobs were created.



PHOTO: UNDERCOVER PRODUCTIONS TEAM



Mohammad at an event during his time working for TEC.



PHOTO: AL JABAL BUSINESS INCUBATOR

Young entrepreneurs during a pitching summit of *The Mountain* project in Palestine. Partner: Al Jabal Business Incubator

Mohammad during his participation at the Tripoli Entrepreneurs Club (TEC) bootcamp.



PHOTO: UNDERCOVER PRODUCTIONS TEAM

How Mohammad became a sought-after technology expert

Mohammad grew up in a small village in the North of Lebanon with limited opportunities. During his teenage years, he took up multiple summer jobs to make ends meet. It was one of these jobs, in a computer maintenance shop, that sparked his passion for technology. He learned programming and went to university. During his first year of university, Mohammad stumbled upon an entrepreneurship competition on Facebook and applied. It was a bootcamp by Tripoli Entrepreneurs Club (TEC), part of a project supported by DROSOS FOUNDATION. The intensive start-up acceleration programme changed his life. It provided him with a completely new environment, new ways of thinking, new connections, and lots of exposure. He realised that he could take control of his future. He took part in another programme by TEC while pursuing his bachelor's degree, and worked with TEC as Digital Technology Consultant. Currently, still based in Lebanon, he freelances as Digital Technology Consultant and holds the position of Chief Technical Officer for a highly promising Tech company in the UAE and the GCC region. He is also pursuing his Master's

degree at Arizona State University. Mohammad's growth-oriented mindset, willingness to learn, and curious, creative, and exploratory approach to life have helped him overcome numerous challenges and reach new heights in his career. He wants to bring about positive change in the tech community in Lebanon, and change the lives of other youth living there.

TEC's 2022 Startup Skills project results

- **110 students** (59 female students) took part in trainings.
- **109 students** were placed in internships.
- **74 graduates** found a job in a related field.

Overall, with DROSOS support, **partners in Lebanon** promoting self-employment and entrepreneurship provided **training to nearly 1,100 students and young entrepreneurs** in 2022. As a result, over **850 of them have accessed the job market** with paid internships, as regular employees, as freelancers, or through strengthening their businesses.



Overcoming barriers for people with disabilities

People with disabilities (PWDs) are still coming across various obstacles in life, although the majority of countries in the world have ratified the UN Convention of Rights and Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). In line with our overall goal to unlock the potential of young people, we have been working together with our partners for many years to specifically address the challenges facing young people with disabilities, and facilitate their social and economic inclusion. **DROSOS FOUNDATION has been fostering dialogue and exchange on disability more widely** with actors in civil society, government and development partners. In 2022, DROSOS developed an advocacy strategy with policy makers, civil society organisations and people with disabilities in Egypt, that will be implemented by some of our partners as of 2023.

The following examples highlight some of DROSOS FOUNDATION's and its partners' contributions to improving the situation for people with disabilities in 2022.

Inclusive education for children with multiple disabilities through the Ayadi Initiative

With the support of DROSOS FOUNDATION, Nida Society has been working on the inclusion of children with multiple disabilities in

education since 2018. In partnership with Perkins International Academy and with the support of DROSOS FOUNDATION, Nida developed and accredited a child-centered learning programme for children with multiple disabilities. The project succeeded in integrating these children in public schools, by creating over 14 model classrooms across Egypt, serving as examples of inclusive education, and by training teachers and social workers under the um-

brella of the Ministries of Education and Solidarity. To document the project learnings and share the knowledge among relevant stakeholders, the Guide for the Rehabilitation and Education of Children with Multiple Disabilities and Deaf-Blindness: "Ayadi Initiative" – A Model from Egypt by Dr. Heba Kotb, Associate Professor of Practice, Psychology, American University of Cairo, was developed and published at the end of 2022.



Through an initiative supported by DROSOS FOUNDATION, the Palestinian Performing Arts Network established a group of theatre performers with various disabilities at Al-Harah Theater. The group presented its performance "Half the Picture" at the International Day for People with Disabilities.

Facts & figures

1 in 6

people live with a disability¹

Disability

is constructed in relation to social and environmental barriers that people with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments are facing.²

Unemployment

People with disabilities tend to experience high unemployment and earn less than those without disabilities.³

Enabling expertise for supporting visually impaired individuals

In response to the dearth of professionals well-versed in supporting visually impaired individuals at the educational and social levels, the Egyptian Baseera Foundation, developed and tailored a curriculum for low-vision therapists. DROSOS FOUNDATION supported the project and Baseera partnered with faculty members from West Michigan University to design and develop the education programme with international standards. Baseera was also looking for partnerships with local academic institutions to implement this first-of-its-kind diploma in Egypt. Two protocols were signed as a result of these efforts: one with ESLSCA University Egypt, enabling programme delivery in English since October 2022, and another with the Ain Shams University (ASU) to implement the diploma in Arabic. This strategic collaboration aims to further expand access to the programme among the wider Egyptian population, including government and public officials.

Holistic approaches for successful professional integration

Experiences in different projects DROSOS FOUNDATION has supported have shown that holistic, needs-based approaches for the professional integration of people with disabilities are crucial to a successful employment process. As an example, the project *Le Coin Anaïs* in Morocco trains people with mental disabilities to work in restaurants and provides a transition to mainstream employment via an adaptation period. After the training programme, the project participants have the possibility to work in a protected environment within the solidarity restaurant, allowing them to gain practical experience and ensuring a smooth transition between training and working in a company. *Le Coin Anaïs* as well as other partners such as The Moroccan Association for People with Disabilities (Groupe AMH), use the “personalised social support” approach, which makes it possible to deploy support with multi-disciplinary teams (social, medico-social and health) but also to work with the people and institutions surrounding the PWDs (family, companies, state agencies) to ensure a smooth and successful training and professional integration.



Ruba at her workplace.

Ruba's journey to inclusive employment

Ruba was born with a hearing impairment and lives in Amman Governorate, Jordan. She uses sign language and a hearing aid. Due to her disability, she faced a lot of rejection in her quest for employment. In September 2021, Ruba joined the *Inclusive Employment in Jordan* project by Humanity & Inclusion (HI), supported by DROSOS FOUNDATION. She received culinary arts training at Ammon Academy, honing her skills in the kitchen. Although she gained many skills through the training, Ruba was not able to find a job, or only limited offers as a kitchen steward, for which she could not use her full potential. The turning point came when Ruba took part in an inclusive employment job fair organised by HI and two other organisations in November 2021. HI introduced her to an international hotel chain. She was invited for an interview, got accepted and has been working there as a Pastry Commis since then.

HI has been accompanying and supporting Ruba on her path, also in close collaboration with her employer. Ruba has taken computer skills and English courses, to better meet the hotel's requirements and equip Ruba with vital skills such as understanding recipes, using equipment and materials in English, and utilising the e-mail system Outlook for effective communication.

Today, Ruba is an esteemed employee at the hotel, defying limitations and embracing her career aspirations.

The Inclusive Employment in Jordan 2022 numbers:

- 55 young persons with disabilities benefitted from employability and soft skills training, as well as mentorship for their jobs (36 women, 19 men).
- 50 young persons with disabilities obtained access to jobs in various sectors.
- 12 young persons with disabilities received sub-grants and established home-based businesses.
- 90% of young persons with disabilities were satisfied with the services they received.

1 Source: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health#:~:text=Over%201%20billion%20people%20are%20estimated%20to%20live,difficulties%20in%20functioning%2C%20often%20requiring%20%20healthcare%20services.> Accessed, 17.05.2023

2 According to the UN Convention of Rights and Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

3 Source: International Day of Persons with Disabilities: How disability affects labour market outcomes – ILOSTAT Accessed, 17.05.2023

Advancing gender equality through economic empowerment

Still today, young women face many inequalities and barriers to leading a self-determined life, and much of their potential remains unused. While youth unemployment rates are among the highest in the world in many of the countries where DROSOS FOUNDATION operates, the rates for young women are even higher, often significantly. This is why we pay particular attention to including a gender lens in our projects. Together with our partners, we create opportunities for young women to learn, participate and lead. Although economic empowerment is mostly at the core of the interventions, the social benefits coming with it are huge. Many young women report that the projects have changed their lives at several levels. They are more confident, have ideas and plans to further develop their business activities, and very often, they lead change in their communities and become role models for the women and girls around them.

Facts & figures¹

14%

only is the **labour force participation rate** of women in Jordan

3 times higher

is the youth **unemployment rate** for young women vs. young men in Egypt

Almost 1 in 4

young women in Tunisia is unemployed

¹ Source: Country profiles – ILOSTAT – accessed 20.06.2023

5 highlights of women empowerment in 2022

1 The first women-led Jordanian Training Centre for Plumbers was launched in May 2022 in Russeifeh, a neighbourhood of Zarqa. To exercise their new profession in a more effective way, the women plumbers established a female plumbing association with the support of DROSOS partner Future Pioneers for Empowering Communities' Members in the Environmental and Educational Field. With the launch of the training centre, they are now able to offer certified courses to other women interested in the plumbing profession, as well as young men. This huge milestone is one of the results of the project *Empowering Women through Vocational Training* that DROSOS FOUNDATION has supported since 2019.



2 With the *Women in Agriculture* project in Aswan governorate implemented by Om Habibeh Foundation, **733 women gained access to paid labour** by learning how to effectively use their rooftops and backyards to grow vegetables. Apart from generating extra income, the women increased their agency and decision-making, as well as their general awareness of environmental matters. 73% of the participating women did not have any job opportunities before starting with the project. In the future, DROSOS will support Om Habibeh Foundation to replicate the successful initiative in other locations.



3 **80% of the 1,549 women** trained through DROSOS FOUNDATION's project *Beit Sawa* with Beity Association **have been able to find work** as assistant social workers in private or public structures. The project ended in 2022 and supported economically and socially marginalised women in Tunisia through vocational training. The support also included activities such as theatre and assistance in legal support and finding housing to facilitate their social reintegration. Many of the women had experienced violence, and slowly rebuilt their lives with the support of the project.

4 **Mounira participated in the business development training programme** offered by the Lebanese League for Women in Business with the project *Support for Women Entrepreneurs*. There, she developed her strategy and business plan while learning about food safety, packaging and marketing. She created the brand Mounira's Chocolate, with the help of experts. During the 3-year support of the programme, her orders have increased fourfold.



5 Thanks to the culinary arts training programme offered by Al-Qantara Center for Human Resources Development in the remote southern governorate of Ma'an, Jordan, Maha was able to **land a job at an international hotel chain** in Petra as a **chef** – something she thought would remain an unattainable dream. Despite lacking a high school certificate, Maha followed her love for cooking and desserts, and honed her skills in the kitchen. Through her hard work and dedication, she was able to turn her passion for food into a rewarding career in the hospitality sector. Maha's success story is a testament to the power of following one's passion and never giving up on one's dreams.

She has become a role model for other young women in Ma'an, and encourages her peers to pursue their passions.





DROSOS FOUNDATION Team and Board members during our annual retreat.

Thank you for your collaboration
in 2022. Together, let's continue to
drive social change – for a better
future for young people, and all of us.

Contact

Zurich

DROSOS FOUNDATION
Obstgartenstrasse 19
8006 Zurich | Switzerland
info@drosos.org
T +41 43 300 54 00

Cairo

DROSOS FOUNDATION
26 Orabi Street
Apt. 21 Maadi
11431 Cairo | Egypt
cairo@drosos.org
T +20 2 2378 2459

Casablanca

DROSOS FOUNDATION
2, rue Pierre et Marie Curie,
Appt n°8
20070 Casablanca | Morocco
casablanca@drosos.org
T +212 522 36 49 06

Ramallah

DROSOS FOUNDATION
4 Mikkawi Building
Mai Ziadeh St.
Ramallah | Palestine
ramallah@drosos.org
T +970 2 2971661

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info@drosos.org
www.drosos.org
[www.linkedin.com/company/
drosos-foundation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/drosos-foundation)

**(...) DROSOS FOUNDATION
is committed to unlocking young
people's potential.**