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Annual Report 2023





**“OUR PARTNERS PROGRESSED
REMARKABLY, DESPITE
PROFOUND CHALLENGES.”**



COVER: LAURA RIVAS KAUFMANN; PHOTO: CAROLINE MINJOLLE & URSULA HÄNE

Dear Readers,

As we reflect on 2023, we do so with a blend of sorrow and admiration. This year has brought extraordinary hardships and profound sadness, yet it was also a year of incredible resilience and steadfast dedication on the part of our team and partners. Socio-economic and political challenges have severely impacted the communities we support. Throughout the regions where we work – Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa – vulnerable young people in particular have endured, to varying degrees, the intensifying distress of economic crises and the extreme suffering caused by war and persistent conflict.

The devastating events of 7 October 2023 and the ensuing immensely destructive war in the Gaza Strip – and parts of Lebanon – have caused a humanitarian crisis, and suffering that can hardly be described in words. The tragic loss of tens of thousands of lives, the dire situation of hostages and prisoners, and the heartbreaking impact on children and young people have deeply affected us. We have focused our efforts on strengthening resilience and supporting the mental well-being of communities, partners, and project participants throughout the Levant region. Balancing the urgency to meet immediate basic needs with long-term regional support has required a sensitive and adaptive approach from our team. Despite the overwhelming challenges, their unwavering commitment and our partners’ dedication have enabled us to continue our meaningful work in the Levant wherever it has been possible to do so.

Apart from these profound challenges, our partners progressed remarkably, driving change across various sectors and countries. We’ve witnessed significant advances in their organisational strength. We’ve seen our partners bring about systemic change: their efforts strengthen the creative sector and the development of future skills for youth; promote sustainable agriculture and green businesses to improve livelihoods; and encourage the inclusion and participation in society of particularly vulnerable young people.

This report highlights the collective achievements and ongoing efforts to create a more equitable and sustainable future, with young people at the centre. Witnessing youth gain confidence, express their thoughts, acquire new skills, and lead initiatives in such challenging circumstances has been deeply humbling.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our team and partners for their courage and dedication. Their relentless efforts have propelled change forward, even in deeply challenging situations. Together we strive for a world where every individual can thrive and contribute to their community. We remain committed to being an enabler for social change.

With our deepest gratitude and best wishes,

Suba Umathevan
CEO

Markus E. Kronauer
Chairperson



This young woman learned how to carve wooden products through the project *Hands on Wood* in Upper Egypt. These products are sold in Egypt and abroad, allowing the women to generate an income. Partner: El Nidaa

PHOTO: DROSOS

ABOUT DROSOS

Committed to unlocking young people's potential

DROSOS FOUNDATION works to ensure that young people can discover and develop to their full potential. Together with our partners, we nurture their life skills 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 play our part in enabling young people to address 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.



During the sound training course at Kan Ya Makan Rada, a centre for professional training and social integration in Fez, Morocco. Partner: Moroccan Association for Aid to Children in Precarious Situations

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

approach 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 replicating 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.

PHOTOS: INAS BOUALLLOU, KATHRIN SCHULTHEISS, ANTE BUSSMANN



These young women take part in the electrical class and the intensive technical home maintenance training run by project SHINE in Jordan. Partner: Collateral Repair Project



Young people learn how to produce their own song during a workshop in Basel, Switzerland. Partner: Association HitProducer



These young people work on a mural in Tangier, Morocco, fostering their creative expression as part of the project LABO. Partner: Live.Room

2023, a year of collaborative efforts for sustainable change amid increasing adversity

In 2023, we witnessed the partners, programmes, and projects we support driving significant advances. However, the year was also marked by unprecedented human suffering, political instability, and economic uncertainty in many of the countries where we work, particularly affecting children and young people. Our focus was on deepening our understanding of how these crises impact our partners and their work, while providing the best possible support to help them navigate these challenges and adapt their activities as needed. Safe spaces for young people's self-expression and development, along with a strong, connected civil society, have become increasingly important. We remain committed to helping our partners learn, connect, sustain, and bring about lasting positive change for and with young people. Here are some highlights of our collaborative achievements in 2023.

PHOTO: INASS BOUALLOU

2023 in numbers

8

countries are supported by DROSOS FOUNDATION

166

ongoing projects

CHF **18.4**

million spent on projects and programmes

Shifting mindsets and sectors: successes at the system level

DROSOS FOUNDATION is dedicated to creating **an environment where young people have equitable opportunities to unlock their potential and to gain skills for decent work and active participation in society. Achieving this goal involves systemic changes, engagement from various stakeholders, and often a shift in mindsets. These are some of the initiatives that have successfully contributed to these changes in 2023.**

Strengthening Egypt's handicrafts sector and increasing its social impact

In Egypt, DROSOS FOUNDATION's *Creative Economies* programme has focused on supporting the handicrafts sector since 2017. An important aspect of this support is to enhance the financial and organisational sustainability of the projects and the partner organisations by introducing new strategies and approaches along the value chain and supporting partners in accessing new markets for sustained revenue – for example through a B2B marketing approach. To better identify sector needs and gaps, in 2022 we supported a study mapping major handicraft clusters and types to assess the size of this important yet largely informal sector.

The multi-layered approach of DROSOS FOUNDATION and its partners allows the organisations to become more sustainable and, most importantly, it has multiple positive effects on the communities involved. For example, the project *Hands on Wood* by El Nidaa (the Egypt Foundation for Integrated Development) in Qena governorate, trained over 100 women to create beautiful wooden products, which now allows them to generate their own income. Going out to work at all – and doing so in the male-dominated craft of carpentry – is a huge shift for these women on a social, cultural, and economic level. The positive effects extend to their families and broader community.

The project *Bagaweeet* in the Red Sea governorate crafts exquisite clothing and home

accessories. It promotes sustainable practices through zero-waste production methods, offers qualifications to women crafters, and serves as a design hub fostering economic empowerment and community acceptance of women in the workforce.

The project *Productive Youth* by REDEC (the Community Capability Development and Environmental Protection Association), supports youth in remote villages in Qena to establish their own businesses, with a focus on reviving two indigenous crafts: Ferka (weaving) and wood crafting. Some of the young people involved work in the two dedicated workshops that were established through the project for training and production. REDEC also collaborated with a social enterprise – one that had been integrated within *Nahdet El Mahrousa*, another project funded by DROSOS – to introduce modern designs and access new markets for Ferka. This initiative not only enhanced the sustainability of the businesses involved but also provoked a shift in mindset towards integrating indigenous knowledge and heritage into the modern mar-

ket. In addition, the wood-crafting workshop provided a platform for young female artisans to challenge gender stereotypes by creating new products from locally sourced materials.

Fostering entrepreneurial pathways in Egypt

In 2023, DROSOS supported around 900 motivated youth and more than 64 start-ups and scale-ups to realise sustainable business models, growth, scalability, and social impact in Egypt. Knowledge generation, networking, and partnerships are central to the processes at each round of ideation, incubation, and acceleration. *El Garage*, a sector-specific “cultural hub” in Downtown Cairo that supports creative entrepreneurs in both handicrafts and performing arts, produced a “how to export” manual and knowledge product for handicrafts. In addition, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Egypt report was produced for another year as part of the project *Expanding the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Egypt (4Es)* implemented by the American University in Cairo Venture Lab. The report provides evidence-based analysis of the entrepreneurship ecosystem for policy-makers, practitioners, and development organisations.

The promotion of entrepreneurship to create opportunities for youth, as well as for sustainable development, also takes place in Upper Egypt. Here, the project *Masaar*, implemented by Enroot, focuses on developing interlinked initiatives in agro-food, agro-waste, and creative industries, using a market-led approach.

Equipping teachers and parents for inclusive education in Egypt

As part of the project *ICT for Inclusion*, the Egyptian organisation ADVANCE Society for Persons with Autism and Other Disabilities launched Itqadem, a digital platform to support inclusive education through technology. The platform focuses on enhancing the skills of autistic children to help them integrate more easily into mainstream schools. It provides digital interactive materials in Arabic to help parents and teachers identify and develop children's readiness for school.

Strengthened network for cultural education in Germany and Switzerland

DROSOS FOUNDATION's programme to foster access, inclusion, and participation in cultural education brought together various actors from the field of cultural education in Germany and Switzerland in a joint network. The programme's activities paved the way for continuous extensive knowledge exchange in this field. The partner organisations partici-



Learning music in a peaceful environment: Girls during a winter camp in Jerusalem. Partner: Jerusalem Youth Cultural Forum

pating in this programme worked together on a manifesto for cultural education which they published in 2023.

New impulses for education in Palestine

The project *Creative Child: Bright Future*, run by the A.M. Al-Qattan Foundation, brought novel education approaches to Palestinian schools. The project trained teachers in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) and “Mantle of the Expert” methodologies, as well as drama-in-education techniques. Teachers trained in the latter reported a significant transformation of classroom dynamics through the introduction of these techniques, which greatly increased students' active participation in their own learning process.

As part of the project *Silwan Tobdiz (Silwan Excels)*, the Jerusalemite Youth Cultural Forum initiated an extracurricular arts programme at Al Reaya School for children with disabilities. The newly established arts programme serves as a model for other special education schools in the Jerusalem area.

Building local technical expertise in Lebanon's performing arts sector

A vibrant arts and culture sector requires more than dedicated artists – it needs skilled technical professionals to create an environment in which high-quality artistic productions can

take place. Ettijahat's *Maharat* programme addresses the shortage of qualified technicians in Lebanon's performing arts sector by providing training and mentoring to interested young people. In 2023, the programme trained 71 participants in sound engineering, lighting, and stage management, with 52% of graduates securing jobs in cultural spaces in Beirut, Tripoli, and the West Bekaa. This success ensures the sector's sustainability by investing in local expertise, strengthening partnerships among the performing arts and creative industries, and underscoring the significance of the role of technicians in artistic work.

Engaging and valuing the local community in the management of World Heritage Sites in Jordan

The long-standing partnership with Sela continues to bear fruit and has further transformed the cultural resource management sector in Jordan. In 2023, Sela entered into a new partnership with the Petra Development and Tourism Regional Authority resulting into the employment of over 100 community members to maintain the World Heritage Site of Petra.

Contributing to Lebanese food security through training and infrastructure

The demand for local agricultural products continued to increase in Lebanon. Together



Aida Hassan is one of the driving forces behind the social enterprise MISHKĀ in the Qaitbey neighbourhood, in Cairo's “City of the Dead”. The women at MISHKĀ enhance their livelihood by crafting jewellery and leather products. Partner: Sultan Foundation

PHOTOS: REHAB ELDALIL; JERUSALEM YOUTH CULTURAL FORUM

with its partners, DROSOS FOUNDATION helps consolidate the Lebanese agri-food system by training farmers in modern agriculture and business practices, granting access to smart machinery, and stimulating collaboration among farmers, cooperatives, micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), government institutions, and incubators. In 2023, DROSOS FOUNDATION's support allowed its partners Fair Trade Lebanon, the American University of Beirut, the Lebanese Organization for Studies and Training, and LIFE to train 300 farmers, and select six micro-businesses for a scale-up programme. It also enabled the co-financing of a warehouse and sorting-and-packaging facility for pulses and cereals, and the commission of studies to further enhance impact and sustainability.

Ownership for Morocco's artisan community

Moroccan artisans, most of whom are rural women with limited education, typically receive a very small amount of the sale price of

their products. Middlemen and foreign businesses exploit their lack of market access, and keep the majority of the profits. The Anou cooperative aims to re-centre Morocco's craft market around the artisan, making sure that artisans have the power to decide, act, and get the financial compensation they deserve for their craft. Owned and managed by artisans, with support from two technical experts, the cooperative has thrived since partnering with DROSOS in 2020. Anou has developed technology and a peer-to-peer training model tailored for artisans, allowing them to sell directly to customers and retain the full sale price. With DROSOS' backing, Anou has raised funds to acquire and to manage a retail store in Fes and to launch the carbon-negative wool mill The Atlas Wool Supply Co. Today, Anou is a collective of over 600 artisans from cooperatives, associations, and workshops across Morocco. Beyond significantly increasing their income, Anou artisans now have the collective power to shape the future of their craft and their communities.

“WE ARE THE CRAFTSPEOPLE WHO BUILD ANOU, AND ANOU BUILDS US IN RETURN. WE THINK BETTER WITH TEN BRAINS, WE HELP EACH OTHER, WE MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER, MOBILISED BY ONE AND THE SAME OBJECTIVE. OUR SUCCESS IS INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE.”

Rachida Ousbigh, Anou Artisan Leader and president Cooperative Tigmamin



PHOTO: TEAL THOMSEN

Artisans of Association Afous Gafous from Ouarzazate, Morocco, showing their craft. Partner: Anou

Innovative approaches expanded and sustained

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. If asked, 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 success and ability to bring about lasting social change.

The **Kompetenzzentrum Leaving Care** (centre of competence for leaving care) in **Switzerland** was established in 2019 and brought the topic of leaving care to the centre of social and socio-political attention in Switzerland. DROSOS has supported the centre since its beginnings and throughout its development. In 2023, the organisation **secured funding from the Swiss government** as part of the Child and Youth Promotion Act **and a consortium of several Swiss foundations**. This gives a very positive signal for the competence centre as well as for future inter-foundation collaboration in Switzerland.

Our partner **Jugendberufshilfe Thüringen e.V.** developed tailored offers for care leavers in the rural region Kyffhäuserkreis in Thuringia, **Germany**. Convinced by the social value of the project, **the State of Thuringia took over the full financing** for the next three years.

Our partner **Fabmobil e.V.** establishes small, youth-run makerspaces in rural areas in the **German** state of Saxony. Between 2021 and 2023, **these makerspaces raised over 430,000 euros for their activities**, building a very solid foundation for their long-term sustainability.

In 2023, **Berlin-based** organisation and DROSOS partner **S27 received a visit from the Belgian royal couple**, accompanied by the Mayor of Berlin Kai Wegner, and the Berlin Senator for Education Katharina Günther-Wünsch. They experienced the atmosphere in the *Bildungsmanufaktur* (“educational factory”), where young people from a wide range of backgrounds come together to learn through a variety of activities, and thus increase their confidence. After the visit, **King Philippe expressed plans to open a Bildungsmanufaktur in Belgium**. In September 2023, **German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock visited Glashaus Prenzlau**, the other current *Bildungsmanufaktur* site. Such visits by high-ranking representatives are a valuable form of recognition for many organisations, helping to verify their approach in the eyes of possible future sponsors and partners and increase their visibility.

Long-standing DROSOS partner **Ali Zaoua Foundation was able to secure co-funding from the European Union (EU)** for its new endeavour: the first *Academy of Cultural Professions* in **Morocco** open to youth from diverse backgrounds. The academy, also supported by DROSOS FOUNDATION, was inaugurated by the EU's Ambassador to Morocco in November 2023.

In **Egypt**, **Takatof Foundation secured a collaboration with Alfanar Venture Philanthropy** for their start-up *Kendaka* to build their capacity in terms of internal systems and market access. The start-up engages women in Badr City in income opportunities through upcycling waste including glass, textiles, and plastic. In 2023, *Kendaka* has grown from 15 to 40 women working full-time, and its business model and financial plan bring in significant revenue, with the aim of breaking even by the end of the project. This is not without challenges, given the sharp economic downturn that Egypt has been witnessing since the end of 2022 and the consequent impact on businesses.

The project *JAMIL.Net*, implemented by **ERIM (Equal Rights Independent Media)**, aims to enable young **Tunisians** to become active participants in their communities. It engages young women and men in the interior and poorer governorates through a programme of media literacy, access to employment in the field of media and information management, and support to local community media. In 2023,



PHOTO: AMINE LANDOULSI

Young people taking part in the project *JAMIL.Net* in Tunisia, which aims to enhance youth media literacy and citizenship in underserved governorates of Tunisia. Partner: IREX Europe

ERIM entered into a partnership with the Tunisian National Agency for Employment and Self-Employment to provide opportunities for vulnerable youth to enrol in media-related training courses as a way to support their entry – and professional integration – into the sector.

The social enterprise Uleap attracted significant funding from the French Development Agency and IF Foundation to install photovoltaic systems on the rooftops of 17 schools in **Lebanon**. This had impacts at multiple levels: schools have better access to electricity; youth from vulnerable communities receive training and employment opportunities; and CO₂ emissions decrease.

In 2023, the two social enterprises – **B.O.T. and SE Factory** – supported through the project *Youth Employment in the Digital Sector* in **Lebanon**, continued to **improve their financial sustainability**, reaching revenues covering 76% of their costs for B.O.T. and 60% for SE Factory.

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 **bringing different stakeholders together** and creating or supporting opportunities to connect and learn from each other positively impact the outcomes we aim to achieve.

In Jordan, DROSOS partner Studio 8 brought together more than 50 artists from 25 different countries to exchange on cross-cutting themes affecting the sector as part of their IDEA Festival. During the three-day roundtable, art-

ists discussed issues such as incomplete national cultural policies and the limitations on art in education systems.

In its efforts to foster entrepreneurship in Lebanon and to bridge the gap between promising start-ups, SMEs, and angel investors, the Tripoli Entrepreneurs Club (TEC) in Lebanon launched the investment matchmaking programme *Mousharakah*. The first edition garnered interest from 200 local businesses seeking funding and support and concluded with 10 finalists pitching their ideas in front of 15 investors who collectively pledged 750,000 USD. TEC supported the young entrepreneurs with one-on-one mentorship sessions, assistance in refining busi-

ness plans, and crafting compelling pitch decks. The event fostered crucial interactions and sparked conversations that paved the way for impactful partnerships.

In Egypt, efforts to facilitate connections bear fruit: With funding from Porticus Foundation, **Nawaya will implement a new project, collaborating with Youth Egypt for Community Development – Shabab Masr, and other DROSOS partners** to amplify their impact in enhancing ecological and cooperative agriculture.

In Egypt, DROSOS' partner Wekalet Behna for Arts expanded its network and increased its collaboration with other organisations as part of its effort to strengthen the cultural scene in Alexandria. They aim to do so by supporting emerging artists and their communities, with their own arts space – a hub for exchange and creative expression – at the heart of it. As one result of these connections, Wekalet Behna conducted workshops on mobile cinema with the pro-

ject *She in Cinema*, supported by DROSOS and implemented by Appropriate Communication for Development and Fig Leaf, a film production company in Alexandria. Wekalet Behna also collaborated with Arab Digital Expression Foundation, another DROSOS partner, to establish joint cinema clubs for young people.

In Lebanon, as part of DROSOS' programme *Express Yourself – Empowerment through Performing Arts*, DROSOS contributed to the growing exchange of creative knowledge, skills, and practice. **Zoukak, one of our partners in the programme, established a physical platform for a growing community of practitioners to connect, determine needs, share creative tools, and create initiatives.** The platform was set up to work independently of Zoukak. In February 2023, **DROSOS co-hosted a round-table exchange** on the cultural and creative industry ecosystem in Lebanon, to discuss opportunities to strengthen the impact of the industry and the economic capacity of youth within a context of political, social, and economic uncertainty.

DROSOS partner **Leaders of Tomorrow in Jordan** organised FORSA EXPLORE..., a vocational and educational fair, in August 2023 in Amman. More than 2,000 young people from across Jordan attended the event and had the opportunity to interact with over 50 organisations, institutions, and international embassies.

In the framework of its programme *Employability for Vulnerable Youth in Morocco and Tunisia*, **DROSOS FOUNDATION initiated and funded common trainings for partner organisations** from both countries to exchange insights on the challenges and opportunities in developing income-generating activities as associations. The result was the emergence of a collaborative network, providing mutual support and knowledge sharing to enhance the work of these associations in their communities in both countries. Further, the network identified and **documented best practices, serving as a tool for learning and inspiration** more broadly. Another positive outcome was the **successful collective advocacy effort to include the associations in the new law on social economy in Morocco**. CARE Morocco collected input from other partner organisations within the DROSOS programme and shaped the amendment and adoption of the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) framework bill as the civil society representative to the Ministry of Tourism, Handicrafts, and Social Economy. Thanks to these efforts, the law now also includes associations and vulnerable people in the SSE model, which previously had been based solely on the legal framework and approach of cooperatives.



Round-table discussion at the multidisciplinary dance festival IDEA in Amman, Jordan. Partner: Studio 8

PHOTO: WORLDGRAPH/ARTHUR TAINURIER

“SHARING EXPERIENCES ENABLES US TO LEARN FROM OTHERS, SO WE CAN ACT MORE QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY IN THE FIELD OF ADVOCACY.”

Programme participant, *Employability for Vulnerable Youth in Morocco and Tunisia*

Our partners' work is seen and recognized

PHOTO: HELINA PELICANO



Nawaya and its traditional Egyptian recipes featured on Google Arts & Culture

Google Arts & Culture, under the patronage of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, launched *Egypt Sofret Masr* (Taste of Egypt) in collaboration with Nawaya to spotlight Egypt's rich culinary traditions. Nawaya is a growing social enterprise centred around heritage food and the **socioeconomic empowerment of women** in Abusir,

a rural area in Giza governorate. The partnership with Google Arts & Culture helps Nawaya to increase its visibility and aims to **document and preserve Egypt's diverse culinary heritage** by featuring 25 traditional dishes through 1,200 photographs captured by professional photographers across Egypt.

Farmers of the Sundried Tomatoes Project and CARE Egypt Foundation certified in *Global Good Agricultural Practices*

The *Sundried Tomatoes project* by CARE Egypt Foundation improves **economic opportunities for smallholder farmers in rural Upper Egypt** and has created seasonal jobs for hundreds of women and men. The recognition through the Global Good Agricultural Practices (Global G.A.P.) certification and additional funding of 150,000 USD from CARE USA reflects the project's commitment to advancing good agricultural practices in dealing with all stakeholders. The *Global G.A.P.* outlines international standards that act as a safeguard for **food safety, workers' health and safety, and environmental protection.**



PHOTO: CARE



PHOTO: SEBASTIAN AGNETTI

Swiss Music Price for Helvetiarockt

Helvetiarockt advocates for **gender equality and visibility for women** as well as inter-, non-binary, trans, and agender persons in popular music in Switzerland. Helvetiarockt also promotes **easy access to music** through workshops. In 2023, they won the *Swiss Special Prize*

for Music as part of the *Swiss Culture Awards 2023*, overseen by the Federal Office of Culture. DROSOS FOUNDATION has partnered with Helvetiarockt for more than five years, supporting their music workshops as well as their organisational set-up and financial sustainability.

Verstehbahnhof Fürstenberg wins the competition machen!2023

Verstehbahnhof Fürstenberg is part of the project *Explore 2.0*, funded by DROSOS and implemented by our partner *Verbund offener Werkstätten*. It is one of the project's open workshops and makerspaces, offering **learning environments for youth including free access to tools, knowledge, resources, and equipment to turn ideas into creations.** The award of first prize in *machen!2023*, organised by the Federal Government Commissioner for Eastern Germany in the category "engagement of the younger generation", underlines the organisation's important work in creating opportunities for youth in rural Eastern Germany to discover and unlock their potential.

Fabmobil, winner of the *Digitale Orte 2023* award

Digitale Orte (digital places) is an initiative by Deutsche Glasfaser and the governmental initiative *Germany – Land of Ideas*. The award recognises projects and innovations that utilise the **opportunities and potential of digitalisation in rural areas**. Fabmobil e.V., a German DROSOS partner establishing maker-spaces in close collaboration with local youth, was the 2023 winner in the category “education”.

Founder of Tiro Association for Arts wins UNESCO prize

Kassem Istanbouli, founder of DROSOS’ long-standing partner Tiro Association for Arts in Lebanon, won the 2023 *UNESCO-Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture*. **The prize promotes peace and dialogue to foster intercultural understanding, and celebrates diversity.** It is well-deserved recognition of the work that the Tiro Association for Arts does: creating empowering spaces for disadvantaged youth and building bridges through arts and culture – across communities, regions, and political and religious beliefs.



PHOTO: TIRO ASSOCIATION FOR ARTS



PHOTO: DROSOS

Global Green Skills Award for Moroccan gardening school

DROSOS partner Bouregreg Med-O-Med Gardening School in Salé, Morocco, provides a three-year skills development and **training programme in ecological gardening for unemployed youth**, including income-generating opportunities.

Bouregreg Med-O-Med was among the three prize winners in the European Training Foundation’s *Green Skills Award 2023*, out of more than 600 projects that applied from around 60 countries.

International visibility for the Wonder Cabinet

The Wonder Cabinet is a multidisciplinary entrepreneurship, creativity, and social impact enablement hub in Bethlehem, Palestine. Its project with DROSOS FOUNDATION strives to **assist marginalised young artists, artisans, craftspersons, designers, entrepreneurs, and manufacturers** in the governorate of Bethlehem towards **socio-economic independence and well-being**. In October 2023, The Wonder Cabinet received international attention through a feature in the magazine *The Architectural Review*.

Changemakers in the spotlight

It is not just our partners that receive recognition; the young people who participate in their projects to develop their skills and potential also get noticed.



PHOTO: FABIAN FROST

Young care leavers awarded Berlin Prevention Prize 2023

Careleaving Storys is a magazine containing **stories from life before, during, and after residential youth care**. It aims to give a voice to these young people, to **create more awareness and understanding** of their experiences and needs, and to bring those affected, as well as outsiders, closer together. The project was the idea of Lucia-Clara and Lee, both care leavers who participated in

AWAKE, a fellowship programme for young care leavers. It is part of DROSOS’ broader initiative *Brückensteine Careleaver* in Germany, which focuses on the transition to independent life for young people who spent part of their childhood in residential childcare (children’s homes, foster families, etc.). The important work of *Careleaving Storys* was awarded second place in the prestigious *Berlin Prevention Prize 2023*.

German Neighbourhood Prize for Kulturspäti e.V.

Wolfram Rochner, Jan Ole Sierck, Anton Esswein, and Kilian Wiest participated in the founders’ lab of *Gründungsinitiative ahoj Altenburg*. They created Kulturspäti, an **organic grocery shop** in the small German city of Altenburg, which **became a meeting place for local people**. They won the *German Neighbourhood Prize* awarded by the Free State of Thuringia for their engagement.

Best professional project for Mohammed Al-Muhtasib

Mohammed Al-Muhtasib participated in the *MASADER* programme, implemented by the Hebron Youth Development Resource Centre (YDRC). It strengthens the capacities of entrepreneurs and establishes networks between the private sector and new start-ups in Palestine. With his **innovative project *Green World***, Mohammed and his team **collect plastic, transform it into new products, and extract diesel fuel** from the waste. *Green World* won the first place in the category of “best professional projects” in UNESCO’s *TVET4Future* programme.

ThEx Award 2023 for young founder Carolin Weitke

Carolin Weitke participated in the founders’ lab of the project *Gründungsinitiative ahoj Altenburg*, implemented by Erlebe was geht gGmbH and supported by DROSOS FOUNDATION. Carolin Weitke was honoured with the *ThEx Award 2023* for her **innovative approaches and inspiring contributions** to the fashion industry.

Empowered youth and communities: voices from our projects

With the partnerships and projects DROSOS FOUNDATION supports, we aim to foster positive social change centred around young people's needs and visions. Our goal is to ensure that young people and their communities have the stability, **self-confidence, and ability to take control of their lives** and participate in different spheres of society. In our projects, we focus on young people from difficult backgrounds who face disadvantages at different stages of their lives, hindering them from unlocking their full potential. We foster their agency and leadership to create positive change. Working with these young people to develop their skills and self-efficacy, and creating awareness at multiple levels around the issues they face is key for inclusive societies. The following stories are a snapshot from projects supported by DROSOS FOUNDATION in 2023 and illustrate how transformational the right support can be, not only to a young person's life, but to entire communities.

Dribbling towards inclusion

The Egyptian Alhassan Foundation supported and trained 21 young people to form a junior wheelchair basketball team. They've been successful: the team now plays nationally and three team players represented Egypt in the Junior African Cup para-basketball tournament in 2023.

The formation of this team was part of the project *Triple C (Change Challenge to Capability)*, funded by DROSOS FOUNDATION, which supports wheelchair users younger than 16 to lead an active, positive life through an array of interventions, including sports activities.

“BASKETBALL TRAINING TIME IS THE MOST ENJOYABLE TIME OF THE WEEK.”

Abdelrahman, 14-year-old trainee at Alhassan Foundation



Members of the newly formed basketball team with project *Triple C* in Egypt. Partner: Alhassan Foundation

PHOTO: HASSAN ROSHDY PHOTOGRAPHY

More than just a job for Youssef

Youssef is a young man from Bassatine Ariana, a deprived part of Tunis, Tunisia. After an unsatisfying experience in a care centre for people with disabilities, he joined Gaïa Ferme Thérapeutique (Gaïa Therapeutical Farm). There, he received comprehensive care and completed vocational training. Through the support and accompaniment of Gaïa, he found employment in a supermarket. Gaïa Ferme Thérapeutique is a social and education centre for young people with disabilities from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, aiming to support these young people to integrate into society and find employment. Youssef not only earns an income now, the work gives him a purpose and he serves as an example for other people with disabilities, as well as employers, showing them that it is possible to work and change mentalities.

“THANKS TO THIS PROJECT, I HAVE GAINED SELF-CONFIDENCE AND FEEL USEFUL.”

Youssef



PHOTO: GAÏA THERAPEUTICAL FARM

Youssef is happy about his journey with Gaïa. Partner: Gaïa Therapeutical Farm

Mario's book encourages children in residential care

Mario works as a professional in family support in Thuringia, Germany, and lived in residential care when he was a child. With the help of the Care Leaver Centre Thuringia, which offers support for care leavers (young people who spent part of their life in residential youth or child care) and is part of DROSOS FOUNDATION's programme *Brückensteine*, Mario published his book "The Light in Me" in December 2023. The book tells the biographical stories of seven young people who lived in residential care. The stories aim to help other children and young people in similar life situations to come to terms with their own biography and recognise their own strengths and resources. The book also sensitises parents, teachers, and social workers to how to deal with affected children and young people. Jana Drobeck, caregiver at AWO AJS gGmbH Youth Care Network West Thuringia says: "The Light in Me' lovingly depicts the realities in life of children who are often not recognised in our society."

“OUR YEAR ABROAD WAS A TRANSFORMATIVE-JOURNEY TO OURSELVES, TO NEW HORIZONS AND UNLIMITED POSSIBILITIES.”

Angie and Erol, participants of *Careleaver Weltweit*



PHOTO: KREUZBERGER KINDERSTIFTUNG GAG

Angie and Erol (left and right of Annalena Baerbock) visiting German Minister for Foreign Affairs Annalena Baerbock (in the middle, wearing an off-white dress). Partner: Kreuzberger Kinderstiftung gAG

New horizons for Angie and Erol

19-year-old Angie and 17-year-old Erol from Germany realised a big dream by doing a school year abroad. This was made possible through the project *Careleaver Weltweit* (*Care Leavers Worldwide*), part of DROSOS FOUNDATION's programme *Brückensteine*, aiming to support care leavers in their transition to an independent life. For care leavers like Angie and Erol, the hurdles to taking part in this kind of experience abroad are very high, an issue which *Careleaver Weltweit* is looking to address. Wanting to help other care leavers to have the same opportunity, Angie and Erol have both joined *Careleaver Weltweit* as members of the selection committee.

Amal's* journey to stability

Amal* came to Banati, a permanent shelter in the Greater Cairo Region, at the age of 15, without any identification. Over her time at Banati, a specialised team provided comprehensive support for Amal's psychological, educational, vocational, and professional needs. She successfully obtained literacy and preparatory certificates for secondary school in 2020 and 2022 respectively, allowing her to take part in Banati's graduation programme. This programme prepares the girls living at the Banati shelter to transition to independent adult life. Amal's culinary skills flourished, enabling her to become an assistant chef in a renowned restaurant. On 8 December 2023, she graduated from Banati Foundation, equipped and backstopped with the necessary tools to leave the institution as an independent and resilient young woman.

Amal took part in the project *Sawaseyya* by Abnaa Alghad Foundation (known as Banati). The project aims to support and empower children at risk, including those living on the street and those deprived of parental care, by nurturing their talents and enabling them to reintegrate into society.

“BANATI GAVE ME LIFE.”

Amal*



PHOTO: FARIDA SALEH

Murals in Banati's hallways: children's aspirations (left) and traditional Egyptian countryside (right). Partner: Abnaa Alghad Foundation

*Names changed to protect identity



PHOTO: NABIL DARWISH

Ro'a Zawati, one of the participants of *Scenechangers*, performing in the theatre production “While we were dreaming” in Amman, Jordan. Partner: Seenaryo

Reimagining the scene

Laith* and Issa* are among the groups of youth who took theatre training courses in the project *Scenechangers* by Seenaryo. The youth created and performed a play, inspired by their lived realities, which helped them to develop new skills, such as leadership and facilitation. Both reflect positively about their experience. Laith says: “The best thing was the safety and feeling of comfort in sharing with the group. We were able to explain everything about ourselves, including embarrassing things that we normally

can't talk about.” Issa would love to go deeper into theatre: “I felt a lot of power [through the process] as we were able to express ourselves, talk about reality, and vent about all of our problems. Theatre helps me regulate my emotions.” The overarching goal of *Scenechangers* is to create new pathways for 21st-century skills development in classrooms and sustainable employment opportunities for unemployed and underemployed youth in marginalised areas of Jordan and Lebanon.

Nasser found himself in arts

Nasser takes part in individual sessions aiming to improve his life and his creative and cognitive skills at Art to Heart. These are part of the project *Possibility beyond Disability*, which aims to empower people with disabilities through arts and to enhance their active participation in society in northern Palestine. The training sessions had a positive effect on Nasser's sensory perception and visual awareness, and his ability to break patterns in dealing with colours, materials, and elements of drawing. Nasser's mother reports that since Nasser joins the trainings, she sees him happy, immersed, not struggling against strangeness, but enthusiastically sharing his inner self.



PHOTO: ART TO HEART

Nasser and his mother. Partner: Art to Heart

Skills preparing children and youth of Al Ayat for their future

The children in the villages of Baharwa and Behbet in Al Ayat, a rural area on the outskirts of Giza governorate, Egypt, like to go to school even more since art has become part of their classes. Through a partnership with DROSOS, Man Ahyaha implemented arts-based skills development curricula in these villages' two community schools to enhance students' confidence, curiosity, social skills, and mental health and to train teachers in positive discipline, child psychology, and active learning. The programme positively impacted the students' skills, behaviour, and

academic achievements and was extended to a new school based in Sohag. In 2023, Man Ahyaha and DROSOS FOUNDATION prolonged their partnership to develop a programme for adolescents, incorporating entrepreneurship and digital skills to better prepare young people from these marginalised communities for future educational and economic opportunities.

“WE WANT TO COME TO SCHOOL EVERY DAY, WE DON'T WANT TO HAVE WEEKENDS, OR VACATIONS.”

A common quote from Baharwa and Behbet community school children

PHOTO: REHAB ELDALIL



Girls in Al Ayat, Giza governorate, Egypt, enjoying some play time. Partner: Man Ahyaha

Arts and collective action to empower youth in Upper Egypt

The project *Arts for All*, implemented by Ana Masry in Upper Egypt, empowered adolescents and youth to discover their potential, pursue their dreams, and become agents of change through the arts. Ana Masry created a network among educational and cultural stakeholders to support and sustain the impact of its activities. Stakeholders worked together to create safe spaces in remote communities for youth to put their skills into practice. Youth-led initiatives, includ-

ing bringing gamification into the school curriculum, a choir group, and life-skills courses, evolved into successful income-generating activities. Several stakeholders involved in the project sustained the activities beyond the project cycle, supported financially through fees and technically through the knowledge products provided by Ana Masry. The project's success led to the *From Skills to Earning* project, also supported by DROSOS, which enhances skills and economic opportunities in cultural and educational sectors by offering services in design, photography, and documentation. Both projects lay a foundation for positive social change led and inspired by youth. Menna-Allah, an adolescent girl who participated in *Arts for All* project has many ideas: "There are many important topics to be discussed through arts, such as female circumcision, early marriage, bullying, violence, and harassment. We want to keep developing and supporting our society."

Children performing a play in their village, as part of the project *Arts for All* in Upper Egypt. Partner: Ana Masry

PHOTO: ANA MASRY



Fatma's alternative path to a creative career

18-year-old Fatma lives in Al Khalifa, a neighbourhood with important cultural heritage in Historic Cairo, Egypt. She wanted to study at the Faculty of Applied Arts in Cairo, but unfortunately she didn't have the required exam grades for admission. In 2018, she learned about DROSOS' partner Built Environment Collective (BEC) through a friend and took part in one of their field trips. BEC aims to revive the neighbourhood's culture by engaging children, young adults, and women in different heritage-related activities and trainings such as summer camps, city tours, and multi-track employability and skills development programmes. Over the years, Fatma had the opportunity to engage with arts at BEC. She joined the Athar Lina Heritage Design Thinking School Youth programme, and designed and created a textile shoe rack inspired by Ibn Tulun mosque patterns. With the encouragement and support of her mentor at BEC, Fatma got accepted at the Jameel House of Traditional Arts for a two-year-programme, advancing her skills in crafts and bringing her closer to her dream of a career in jewellery design. Committed to sharing her experience, she continues to engage with BEC, conducting community activities and events for children.

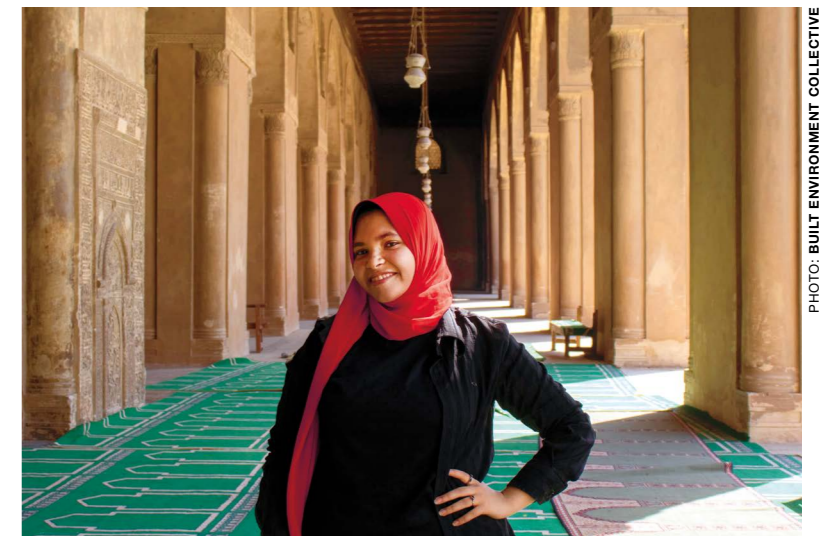


PHOTO: BUILT ENVIRONMENT COLLECTIVE

“I NOW SEE MOSQUES AS INSPIRATION FOR PATTERNS AND PRODUCTS RATHER THAN JUST SPACES FOR PRAYER.”

Fatma

Fatma posing in Historic Cairo. Partner: Built Environment Collective

PHOTO: NABDA



Aziza (in the middle, standing) with her team at Nabda fitness centre. Partner: Groupe AMH

“THE PROJECT ENABLED ME TO THINK ABOUT MY BUSINESS GLOBALLY, INCLUDING DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES.”

Aziza, founder of Nabda

Aziza founds the first inclusive gym in Morocco

When Aziza used to talk about her idea to create a gym adapted to the needs of people with different types of disabilities, the response was not very encouraging. Nevertheless, she didn't give up on her dream and in October 2023, she inaugurated her gym *Nabda* in Casablanca, the first of its kind in Morocco. Aziza is one of the young entrepreneurs supported by DROSOS partner AMH (Act, Make, Hope) and its project *Disability and Entrepreneurship*. The project provided her with technical and financial support to bring her business idea to life.

Zeina achieved her aspirations

In 2017, Zeina seized training opportunities in English and Computer Science at B.O.T, a Lebanese social enterprise providing digital services by training and employing young people from disadvantaged backgrounds as freelancers. Since then, Zeina has evolved into a supervisor, handling over 30 projects for large clients (WFP, UNDP, UNICEF). B.O.T successfully addresses women's participation in a traditionally male-dominated sector; its female workforce reached 65% in 2024. Through B.O.T.'s empowerment and flexibility Zeina has gained both professional success and personal fulfilment, as she can navigate motherhood while financially contributing to her household expenses.

“B.O.T CHANGED MY LIFE. I AM NOW NOT ONLY SUPPORTING MY FAMILY FINANCIALLY, BUT I ALSO FEEL PRODUCTIVE WHILE DOING A JOB THAT I LOVE.”

Zeina

PHOTO: B.O.T



Zeina, supervisor and former trainee at B.O.T. Partner: Alfanar

A performance organised by
Wanas El Hekayat.
Partner: Nahdet El Mahrousa

**“EL GARAGE GAVE ME
EXPOSURE TO OTHER
PROJECT IDEAS
AND OTHER CREATIVE
START-UPS IN THE
PERFORMING ARTS
INDUSTRY.”**

Zahra Abdellah, founder of
Wanas El Hekayat



Creative entrepreneurs advance social change in Egypt

Wanas El Hekayat is a start-up specialising in storytelling, workshops, and independent performances, with a particular focus on enabling women to tell their stories. Wanas El Hekayat took part in the project *El Garage* by Nahdet El Mahrousa, which supports creative entrepreneurs in Egypt. The journey of this one start-up illustrates the ripple effect and impact of the project: Wanas El Hekayat started with Nahdet El Mahrousa's ideation programme. This helped the founder to better articulate her idea and make it clear and coherent, and she learned about administrative and financial matters that she was not familiar with before. With *El Garage's* support, the start-up progressed and engaged with funders like the European Union National Institutes for Culture and Gemini Africa and extended its reach to different governorates, involving medical professionals, mainly psychologists, in workshops on sensitive topics. In 2023, Wanas El Hekayat was incubated in the UN Women Early-Stage programme, also implemented by Nahdet El Mahrousa, expanding its network and working on a podcast series for a broader audience.



Atef's story is a positive example of how the project *Journey to Resilience*, implemented by the Agricultural Services and Development Foundation in rural areas of Aswan, Egypt, impacts entire families. The project helps families improve their economic situation by enhancing their skills, for example in smart agricultural practices in poultry and palm-date value chains, and provides access to finance and opportunities to create microbusinesses through Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs). Atef started with the trainings around date palm and applied the learnings on his small parcel of land. He also became a poultry supplier in his village of Khor El Zaq. Through taking part in this project and being a member in the VSLA, Atef managed to pay off his debt that had been worrying him for a while. Atef's wife rears chickens for home consumption. His daughter is a member of one of the VSLA groups and has taken a loan to start her own business in the arts.

Atef and other farmers, as well as a researcher, during a knowledge sharing session in one of the date farms in Aswan. Partner: Agricultural Services and Development Foundation

Jamie's courage to start a business that breaks taboos

Jamie Mulcahy took part in the project *Gründungs-garage Chemnitz* in Eastern Germany. With the project's support, she successfully started her business in feminist art. Her art workshops break social taboos and represent a step towards self-determination and queer-feminist empowerment. *Gründungsgarage Chemnitz* is one of several founders' labs supported by the *Regionale Gründerinitiativen Ostdeutschland*

(Regional Founder Initiatives Eastern Germany) programme. These support local entrepreneurs with socially relevant ideas to realise their concepts.

**“I DON'T THINK I WOULD HAVE
TAKEN THIS STEP WITHOUT
YOU [GRÜNDUNGSGARAGE
CHEMNITZ]. NOW, I BELIEVE I
CAN ACHIEVE ANYTHING.”**

Jamie Mulcahy, participant of *Gründungsgarage Chemnitz*



Jamie during a workshop at *Gründungsgarage Chemnitz*.
Partner: ASA-FF e.V.

A family's journey to resilience

Thank you for your collaboration
in 2023. Together, let's continue to
drive social change – for a better
future for young people, and all of us.

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DROSOS FOUNDATION Team,
Board Members, and consultant
during our annual retreat.

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