



# 2023 Impact Report

ALFANAR VENTURE PHILANTHROPY

# Vision

Educated children,  
employed youth &  
economically  
empowered women  
across the Arab region



# Priority Areas

Education, Employment,  
Empowerment &  
Environment



# Mission

Foster the growth of  
sustainable, scalable  
social enterprises



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A close-up portrait of Safiah AbuShanin, a woman wearing a grey hijab, looking slightly upwards and to the right with a thoughtful expression. The background is blurred, showing some architectural elements.

“

**Alfanar opened our horizons, allowing us to focus on the goals we need to achieve.**

Safiah AbuShanin  
CEO, Hands of Sitti  
Alfanar Jordan SEED Portfolio

# The Challenge

The Arab region is the only region in the world where poverty has consistently increased over the past decade. Political, social and economic instability, heightened inequality and worsening environmental conditions all contribute to this trend, creating complex challenges felt most acutely by disadvantaged groups. Women, children and refugees living in slum communities and marginalised rural areas lack the access to quality education or opportunity they need to secure productive and dignified futures.

Addressing these issues demands urgent solutions that are sustainable into the future. Using a venture philanthropy approach, Alfanar supports innovative social enterprises that are working to tackle systemic inequalities and provide opportunities to communities that need it most.

**By investing in ambitious, local social enterprises across the Arab region, we are building an ecosystem of enduring social and environmental change.**



Youth unemployment in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) consistently ranks the highest in the world



59% of children cannot read or understand an age-appropriate text by age 10



Unemployment among young women is 80% higher than among young men



The MENA region hosts the largest number of refugees and migrants in the world



Temperatures in the Arab region are increasing twice as fast as the global average due to climate change

# Welcome

2023 was a tumultuous year for the Arab world. Devastating earthquakes in Syria and Morocco, flooding in Libya, civil war in Sudan, economic crises in Egypt and Lebanon and tragic violence against families in Gaza have impacted millions of lives and exacerbated regional insecurities. Amidst difficulty and human struggle, there were glimmers of hope as social enterprises never ceased to innovate and collaborate to respond.

As Alfanar enters its 20th year, empowering enterprises for social change has proven to be a beacon of hope and stability in the face of tumult. Our venture philanthropy model provides comprehensive support to social enterprises developing innovative solutions to bolster children's education, youth employment and women's economic empowerment. By finding, funding, training and supporting the growth of the most promising social enterprises in the region, we are fostering impact for marginalised communities that continues to grow into the future.

2023 marked the second year of our current growth plan, with a goal of supporting more social enterprises and improving more lives sustainably. Thanks to your help, this has been a tremendous success. We fulfilled the pledge made at our 2022 gala and improved the lives of 107,152 women and children within 2023, representing 27% of our entire impact footprint since 2004. We delivered £1,876 million in funding and management support to 60 social enterprises, and training to an additional three social enterprises outside our portfolio. Our venture philanthropy support enabled our portfolio to not only grow its impact, but to achieve an average cost recovery rate of 66% through the sale of goods and services.

The scale of our growth and impact is a testament to the power of the venture philanthropy approach. On average, our social enterprises are able to impact 37% more lives and to self-generate 34% more sustaining revenue through our support. With the backing of institutional and individual donors, Alfanar has been able to dedicate more resources to training, management support, capacity-building and access to networks coupled with our unique, multi-year SUSTAIN grants.

2024 is slated to be the most transformative yet. We are working hard to move towards improving the lives of 150,000 women and children per year, to provide SEED support to over 55 social enterprises – of which we expect 15 to progress to our long-term SUSTAIN support programme. Our venture philanthropy activity will be fully operational through registered entities and partnerships in Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine. In parallel, we are supporting the launch of the first regional impact investment fund for the Arab world.

On behalf of the Alfanar Board and team, we thank you for believing in our mission and for supporting us to grow innovative solutions that uplift communities in need at a time when hope feels like it is being extinguished. With your help, Alfanar can continue to serve as an engine to ignite enduring and sustainable opportunity and transformational change across the Arab world.



**Lubna S. Olayan**  
Board Chair



**Myrna Atalla**  
Executive Director

# 2023 In Numbers

**£1,875,960**

Alfanar Funding & Management Support

**22,806**

Hours of Management Support Delivered

**63**

Social Enterprises Funded & Trained

**107,152**

Lives Directly Impacted



**4,143**

Women employed or launched / grew new businesses

**9,085**

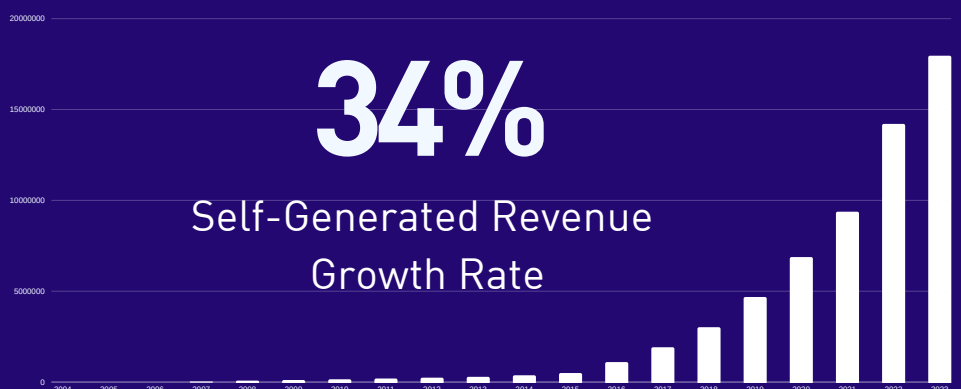
Children and youth gaining access to quality education

**66%**

Average cost recovery rate of enterprises

**£3,563,790**

Revenue Generated by Social Enterprises



# Reach & Impact

## LEBANON

### SEED Cycles

#### YELA SEED Cycle

Powered by GIZ & BMZ

##### 1st Cycle

- Beirut Bloomers
- Find a Nurse
- Plastic Lab
- Nadeera
- SIIRA

##### 2nd Cycle

- Agonista
- Code Brage
- Little Melly
- Refuse
- The Volunteer Circle

##### 3rd Cycle

- D4Communities
- Espace Fann
- Foodsight
- UDiversity
- IRAP

##### 4th Cycle

- Ahla Fawda
- Garbaliser
- Littera
- Supportful
- UWYTA

#### Management Support

Powered by Drosos

- Creative Space Beirut
- IECB
- LLWB
- Seenaryo
- Semeurs D'Avenir
- Zoukak

### SUSTAIN Portfolio

- BEDCO by March NGO
- B.O.T
- FabricAID
- L'Artisan du Liban (ADL)
- Lebanese Alternative Learning (Tabshoura)
- SE Factory

### REFUGEE Portfolio

- NaTakallam

### EMERGENCY

- Tawlet Souk el Tayeb
- ShareQ

## PALESTINE

### SEED Cycle

**Inaugural Palestine SEED Cycle**  
Powered by Alfanar & The Asfari Foundation

- Al Mofakir For Education
- Al-Reef Fair Trade
- Flowless
- Friends of Birziet
- Sawaed 19
- Sindyan Education Media
- Spark for Entrepreneurship & Innovation
- Yalla Mishwar Tourism
- Waselat Al Muffaker

### SUSTAIN Portfolio

- Flowless

### EMERGENCY

- Egyptian Food Bank

## JORDAN

### SEED Cycle

#### Impact Together

Funded by the European Union (EU), Powered by Impact Europe

- Curio
- Hands of Sitti
- Jusoor Labs
- Ketabi
- KUVRD

### SUSTAIN Portfolio

- B.O.T
- FabricAID

## EGYPT

### SEED Cycles

#### Green Employment SEED Cycle

Powered by SODIC

- Banlastic
- Bekia
- Kendaka
- Plstka Technology

#### Plastics Recycling SEED Cycle

Funded by Dow Chemicals,  
Powered by Wasteaid

- Upfuse
- Very Nile
- WMC

### SUSTAIN Portfolio

- Bright Tomorrow for Child Protection (BTCP)
- Future Eve Foundation
- Man Ahyaha
- Delta Oil

# Venture Philanthropy Approach

**For nearly two decades, Alfanar has continued to adapt its approach to effectively fuel social enterprises in the Arab world.**

2023 marked the second year of Alfanar's new investment cycle: SEED, SUSTAIN, SCALE, and SPREAD. We set ourselves four ambitious goals aimed at extending our reach and venture philanthropy support to a growing number of social enterprises across the Arab region.

Our refreshed approach enables us to provide more social enterprises access to our accelerated SEED cycle training, grants and personalised management support. From this larger pipeline, we can provide select social enterprises with business planning and assessment for our unique, multi-year SUSTAIN support package.

## Investment Cycle



### SEED

6-8 months of accelerated Alfanar Sustainable Social Enterprise Training (ASSET), financial awards and business planning



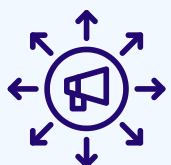
### SUSTAIN

3-5 years of patient, flexible grants and zero-interest loans, management support and bespoke Alfanar Impact Management (AIM) applications and analytics



### SCALE

5+ years of debt and equity impact investment, providing investors with financial return or social franchising support, technical assistance and access to networks



### SPREAD

A community of supporters, donors and ambassadors growing the sustainable change movement in social entrepreneurship and impact investment across the Arab world

## SUSTAIN Support Package



### Tailored Funding

Adaptable and patient capital spanning 3-5 years (often +£250K), which provides social enterprises with the stability required to concentrate on expanding and enhancing their impact and financial sustainability models



### Management Support

Highly engaged accountability support and training, study missions and market exploration trips, business planning and reforecasting, and access to our vast network of impact connectors. This ensures social enterprises have the expertise and support needed to grow and expand



### AIM

Alfanar Impact Management is our programme that develops and adapts tailored applications for each social enterprise on a business intelligence technology platform – enabling real-time tracking, visualisation and progress assessment against impact and financial targets

## A Unique Model for Lasting Impact

### Financing is crucial, but is not enough on its own.

Our commitment to providing long-term, comprehensive management support and training for social enterprises is the glue to our model and what sets us apart in the venture philanthropy space.

For every £1.00 donated to Alfanar, we add £0.63 in one-on-one management support and capacity-building to our social enterprises, which includes weekly accountability calls, monthly in-person visits, networking connections, training and business planning. This ensures that our collective contribution is not only impactful, but long-lasting.



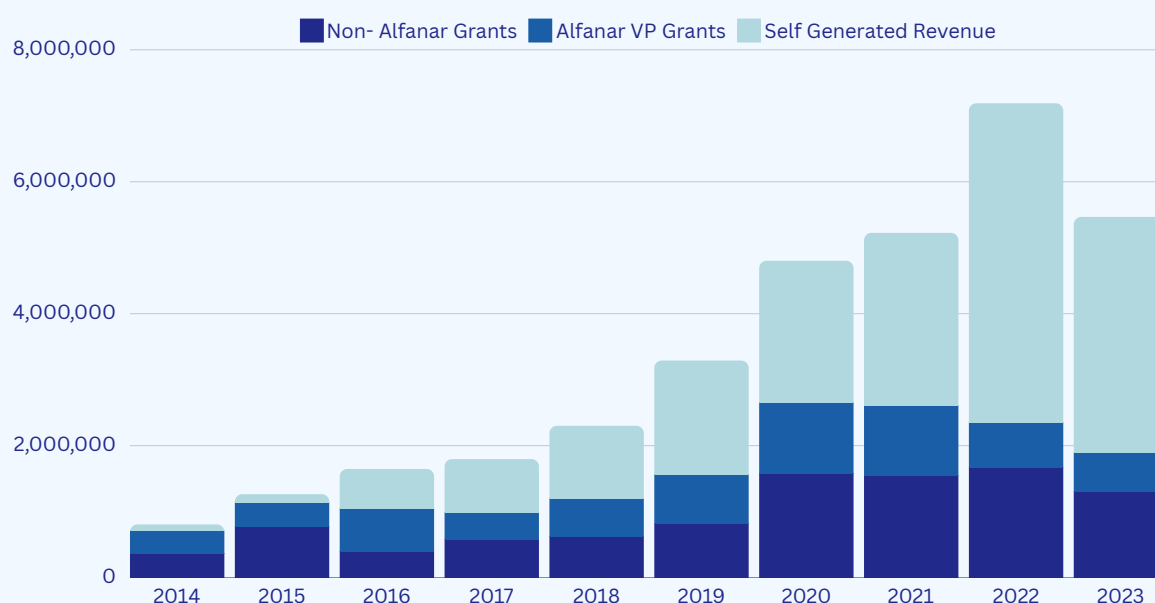
# Commitment to Financial Sustainability

Alfanar promises its partners and donors that their philanthropic donations will be strategically directed, monitored and cultivated to foster the emergence of lasting solutions in education, youth employment, women's economic empowerment and the environment. Through our venture philanthropy support, we accelerate our social enterprises' progress toward financial self-sufficiency over the life of our investment cycle. We do this through tailored funding, proactive target setting, focused management support, progress tracking and dynamic course-correcting, when needed. It is not enough to set and strive towards financial sustainability targets. We have realised over time that part of our role is to facilitate collaboration, reseller and social procurement opportunities for our social enterprises that enable the growth of self-generated revenue. Alfanar takes social enterprises in its portfolio on market exploration missions to encourage such connections with regional and international companies.

Thanks to our partnership with the fund for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises SANAD, we led a market exploration mission in June 2023 to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, taking five Lebanon portfolio social enterprises: [Bridge. Outsource. Transform \(B.O.T\)](#), [SE Factory](#), [LAL/Tabshoura](#), [L'Artisan du Liban](#) and [FabricAID](#). Ahead of the mission, we helped the enterprises assess their export readiness, strengthen e-commerce strategies, and eventually connect with relevant stakeholders at our Inaugural Riyadh Impact Connector Event, for which we were grateful to receive venue support from the King Khaled Foundation. Since 2004, Alfanar has disbursed £7,893,296 in tailored funding – grants, zero-interest loans – to our social enterprises. This funding has enabled our social enterprises to self-generate £17,961,427 in revenue through the sale of their own goods and services – more than double our strategic, philanthropic contribution.

In 2023, our social enterprises were able to recover 66% of their costs, on average, through the sale of their own goods and services. This highlights the power of our venture philanthropy approach, which shifts social enterprises, built by and for the Arab region, away from donor dependency and instead towards self-reliance and lasting change.

## Grants vs Self-Generated Revenue



The graduation of SUSTAIN social enterprises coupled with fluctuations in the value of the EGP led to a dip in total sales achieved in 2023.



# ASSET

## Alfanar Sustainable Social Enterprise Training

Budding enterprises in the Arab region are often resource-limited and need technical assistance to scale their enterprises for change. Our ASSET programme equips social enterprises in both SEED and SUSTAIN cycles across Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine with the tools needed to grow their impact and financial sustainability.

We deliver our twelve ASSET training modules through a mixture of group trainings and one-on-one mentorship to ensure that each social enterprise has outputs that are tailored and applicable to its needs.

Alfanar also works with foundations and corporate partners that are interested in delivering ASSET training to social enterprises outside of our portfolios.

### ASSET Modules

- Introduction to Social Enterprise.....
- Theory of Change.....
- Internal Governance.....
- Options for Scaling.....
- Impact Modelling.....
- Impact Measurement.....
- Financial Management.....
- Legal Structures.....
- Communications for Results.....
- Business Planning.....
- Human Resources.....
- Safeguarding.....

# AIM

## Alfanar Impact Management

For our SUSTAIN social enterprises, Alfanar develops tailored digital applications that streamline the monitoring of social impact and financial sustainability targets. Our AIM solution improves efficiency and reduces the burden of reporting for our social enterprises, turning what used to be an obligation into an essential evidence-based decision-making, management and communications tool.

# 75%

Of social enterprises in 2023 indicated that AIM helped them make better management decisions

# 88%

Of social enterprises confirmed that AIM improved their performance

A photograph of two young women sitting at a desk, looking at a laptop. The woman on the left is smiling and looking towards the camera. The woman on the right is wearing a white hijab and looking at the laptop screen. The laptop is an Acer. There are some colored pencils on the desk in front of the laptop.

“

**The financial support we received allowed us to focus on our revenue generation strategy, providing us with greater clarity and direction.**

Clementine Brown  
Co-Founder, CodeBrave  
Alfanar Lebanon SEED Portfolio

# Impact Investing

**In 2023, Alfanar continued to support the launch of one of the first impact investment funds focused on the Arab region.**

Building on 20 years of venture philanthropy in the region, the impact investment fund aims to empower visionary entrepreneurs who use their businesses to create a more sustainable and inclusive future for disadvantaged communities, especially for women, youth and children.

Set to launch in 2024, the fund's impact investment strategy aims to generate commercial returns for investors while maximising positive and measurable social and environmental impact. It will invest in ambitious, growing businesses with impact, making available multiple financial instruments, including equity, debt or hybrids. In addition to investment capital, the fund will make available non-dilutive technical assistance support to help these businesses strengthen and scale their impact, operations and revenue.

In 2023, Alfanar supported the strengthening of the impact investment fund's leadership team, honed its investment strategy and legal structure, and grew the regional pipeline of growth-stage businesses with impact using a gender lens investment focus, including the preparation of first investments. Additionally, Alfanar approved a further convertible loan to one of our investees, FabricAID, and its network of ecosystem partners; its appearance on Bahrain's [Beban Show](#) (an entrepreneur-themed reality TV show); and follow-on investment from other regional funds.





# 2023 Portfolio

Despite the challenging landscape of 2023, our social enterprises remained resolutely focused on their social and environmental missions.

**As a result of this commitment, Alfanar's social enterprises directed improved the lives of 107,152 children, youth and women within the year, delivering quality education, youth employment, women's economic empowerment and environmental innovation.**

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

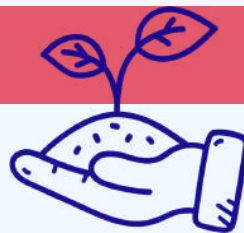


## EDUCATION

Ensuring equitable education that fosters continuous learning

Since inception, improving access to quality education for disadvantaged children has been a key part of Alfanar's mission. With over two-thirds of the Arab region's 50 million children grappling with 'learning poverty', or the inability to read and comprehend an age-appropriate text by the age of 10, Alfanar is committed to identifying, funding and fuelling social enterprises growing sustainable solutions that provide disadvantaged children access to quality education. In 2023, with generous support from SODIC, a private foundation, and individual donations, Alfanar's education social enterprises in Egypt and Lebanon enabled nearly 10,000 children to access equitable educational pathways.

## SEED



### Impact Together SEED Cycle, Funded by the European Union (EU), Powered by Impact Europe & Implemented by Alfanar\*

Curio - Supporting women entrepreneurs in underserved areas to establish preschools.

Jusoor Labs - Enabling students from all backgrounds to access an interactive learning platform that teaches science lessons, including virtual experimentation that reduces reliance on expensive equipment and laboratory spaces.

Ketabi- Establishing a secure online learning space for children that optimizes screen time for educational advancement.

### Palestine SEED Cycle, Powered by Alfanar & The Asfari Foundation

Friends of Birzeit - Enabling Palestinian students to reach tertiary education through scholarships and fellowships.

Sindyan Education Media - Creating and distributing educational digital content to children aged 4-9.

Waselat Al Muffaker - Developing educational tools and materials for children with special needs, and training both instructors and parents on how to use their systems and products.

\*For some of our projects, our funding partner works with an organisation/entity that powers the project by providing management support and oversight.

# SUSTAIN



## Egypt

### Bright Tomorrow for Child Protection (BTCP)

Based in Alexandria, BTCP provides comprehensive learning resources and services to children with neurodevelopmental disorders, with a particular focus on children with autism. Since 2018, Alfanar has helped BTCP grow its reach, especially within disadvantaged communities in Alexandria, where there are now three operating centres. In parallel, Alfanar helped BTCP create and execute a business plan aimed at developing self-generated revenue streams to ensure the long-term sustainability of its work. Having helped BTCP directly train and employ 85 therapists, treat 2,148 children with neurodevelopment disorders, and achieve 86% cost recovery through cross-subsidisation, Alfanar exited BTCP in 2023.



2023 Social Impact  
536 Children



Cost Recovery  
84%



### Man Ahyaha (MA)

MA aims to leave no child without education by building and running high-quality primary community schools in rural communities where no schools or government exist. Alfanar began its support of MA in Q4 2023, enabling the organisation to continue improving its two community schools in the Ayat, Giza area and to add a third community school in Sohag. MA trains and employs local members of the communities it operates in to serve as educators, facilitators and other school staff. In parallel, Alfanar is supporting MA to test, identify and grow at least one self-generating revenue stream within its current business plan as a way of ensuring financial independence in the long run.



2023 Social Impact: 385 children enrolled & 88 teachers trained



\*Cost recovery figures are not included for SUSTAIN social enterprises that were approved mid-year and have not yet completed one full year of Alfanar support. These figures will be reported in the 2024 report.



# SUSTAIN



## Lebanon

### Lebanese Alternative Learning (LAL) Tabshoura

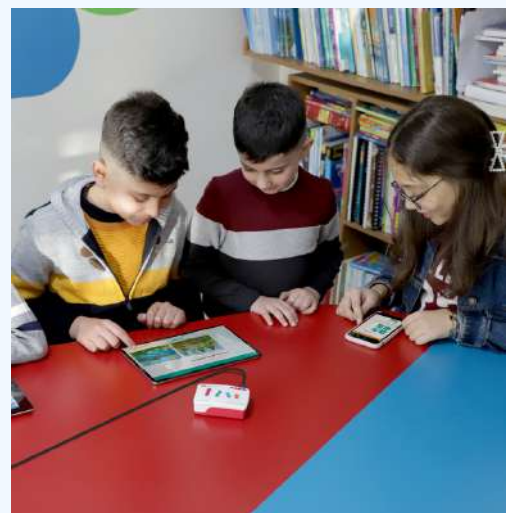
Since 2020, Alfanar has supported LAL to digitise and make the entire Lebanese primary curriculum available in Arabic, English and French to all children enrolled in school in Lebanon. This long-term goal was finally achieved in 2023 when LAL signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Education. Alfanar has also helped LAL develop and grow its revenue-generating education consulting services through LAL Solutions, facilitating useful connections through the Riyadh Market Exploration Mission.



2023 Social Impact: 8,896 students & teachers



Cost Recovery 28%



## Palestine

In response to the horrifying loss and devastation endured by children across Gaza and increasingly children in the West Bank as well, Alfanar is bringing together a consortium of education social enterprises, including LAL/Tabshoura and others, to digitise the Palestinian primary school curriculum.

We are proud to bring together and leverage the expertise of our social enterprises to begin responding to the overwhelming need of children denied basic rights, including learning, across Palestine.





## Impact Highlight I Man Ahyaha

**“I strive to create a supportive and inclusive classroom environment where every student feels valued, understood, and capable of reaching their full potential.”**

We had a child named “Youssef” at our school who was very active and often got into fights. Eventually, I discovered that the violence he displayed stemmed from a difficult home environment.

I continued to engage with Youssef, asking him about his interests. Noting his physical abilities and flexibility, I began teaching him gymnastics, which he enjoyed and even started teaching others in the community.

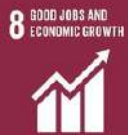
With time, he became calmer, more focused, and his academic performance improved.

Man Ahyaha trains us to prioritise building strong connections with the children in our classrooms. Because of this, we are able to help students express their needs, gain confidence and thrive socially as well as academically.

This impact extends beyond the classroom, thanks to Man Ahyaha’s focus on building community networks. Parents see themselves as partners in their child’s education, reinforcing lessons learned at school and passing them to other family members.

Being able to bring education to children while empowering our community makes me proud, and gives me hope for the future.

\*Teacher testimonial



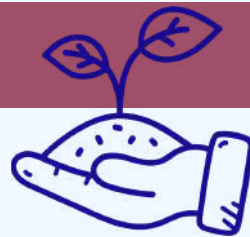
## EMPLOYMENT

Promoting economic growth through equitable opportunities for employment

With the highest youth unemployment rates globally – at 47.8% in Lebanon, 41.6% in Jordan and 42% for young women in Egypt – it is imperative to invest in lasting solutions across sectors that generate meaningful employment and livelihoods for the 100 million young people living in the Arab region.

Alfanar works to identify and support bold social enterprises that are upskilling, training, and creating access to steady and dignified employment opportunities for the region's youth. In 2023, with generous support from GIZ, Drosos, L'Oreal and private individual donors, Alfanar's SUSTAIN employment portfolio generated steady jobs and livelihoods for 479 youth, of which 269 (56%) were women.

## SEED



### Lebanon YELA (Youth Employment For Lebanon), Powered by GIZ

#### 1st Cycle

Beirut Bloomers - Supporting local artisans across Lebanon through funding, marketing, resale and design support.

Find A Nurse - Facilitating employment for qualified home care providers.

Nadeera - Enabling municipalities to reduce waste management costs by restoring value in discarded materials and alleviating health and environmental issues through waste management plans.

Plastic Lab - Upcycling plastic waste into valuable and educational items.

Siira - Providing accessible mental health support to vulnerable communities.

#### 2nd Cycle

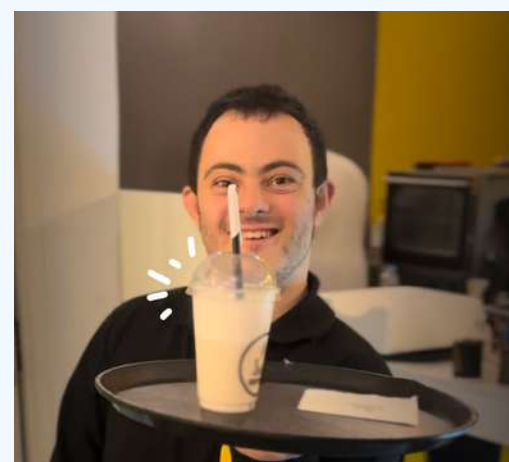
Agonista - Economically empowering individuals with different needs by providing them with safe and steady employment in their coffee shops.

Code Brave - Delivering classes in coding, robotics and other tech-related topics to teachers and students.

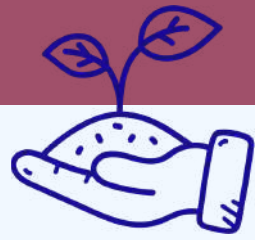
Little Melly - Providing meals for children between 6 months to 6 years through subscriptions and pharmacies.

Refuse- Offering community-based waste management services and creating employment for those in need.

The Volunteer Circle - A skill-sharing platform that matches volunteers with NGOs, start-ups, and local businesses.



## SEED



### 3rd Cycle

D4Communities - Creating public and communal spaces that provide dignity, shelter, and security for local communities across Lebanon.

Espace Fann - Democratising art education in Lebanon by making it accessible and affordable for all.

Foodsight - Connecting agro-food businesses with multinational freelance experts and international service providers through an online marketplace.

IRAP - Specialising in the educational care and social integration of deaf children and young people.

UDiversity - Providing vocational training in cooking, food packaging, hospitality, character building, and social communication skills.

### 4th Cycle

Ahla Fawda - Promoting circular economic and eco-awareness, offering waste processing services and running green educational outreach.

Garbaliser - Addressing the environmental issue of excessive chemical fertiliser use by creating a natural liquid fertiliser from organic green waste.

Littera - Bridging educational gaps by creating accessible and engaging learning lessons.

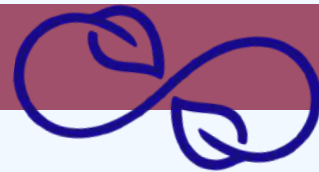
Supportful - Reducing brain drain across Lebanese by connecting youth to remote software engineering jobs with international tech companies.

UWYTA - Creating work opportunities for vulnerable women in upcycling.

### Jordan Education and Employment SEED Cycle, Funded by the EU, Powered by Impact Europe

KUVRD: Economically empowering Palestinian and Syrian refugees to design, produce and sell apparel that features and celebrates their local culture and heritage.

## SUSTAIN



### Lebanon

#### Bridge.Outsource.Transform (B.O.T)

The first impact outsourcing platform in the Arab region is enabling youth from low-income communities to access digital freelance work, including specialist work in artificial intelligence data annotation in Arabic. With Alfanar's support, B.O.T has expanded its operations from Lebanon to Jordan and is proactively developing its business contracts in the Gulf and beyond.



2023 Social Impact  
337 youth employed  
(64% women)



Cost Recovery  
81%



# SUSTAIN



## SE Factory

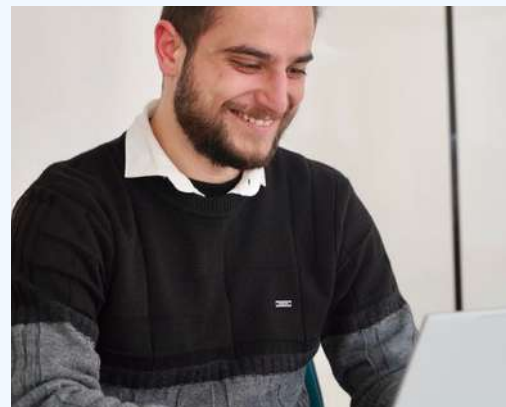
SE Factory provides intensive coding bootcamps to underprivileged youth across Lebanon, enabling them to develop the skills needed to secure steady employment in full stack web development and coding. Following bootcamp graduation, SE Factory facilitates employment opportunities with corporates in Lebanon and beyond. With Alfanar's support, SE Factory has not only created introductory trainings, but has also developed new streams of self-generated revenue through HR Factory, a specialised back-office service.



**2023 Social Impact**  
283 youth employed & trained



**Cost Recovery**  
34%



## BEDCO

BEDCO is a social enterprise that economically empowers and employs marginalised youth from Jabal Mohsen and Bab el Debbaneh (neighbouring areas in the Tripoli area that are often embroiled in confessional violence and tension) through training and income-generating opportunities, especially in the construction sector. In addition to growing the number of work opportunities for youth, Alfanar is supporting BEDCO to improve cost recovery through sales, to develop an adaptable training programme, and to create a digital impact management system to better monitor performance.



**2023 Social Impact**  
75 youth trained & employed



**Cost Recovery**  
22%



## NaTakallam

NaTakallam is creating dignified employment for refugees through the online economy as Arabic-language translators, interpreters and conversation partners. Since 2016, Alfanar has supported NaTakallam's growth and assisted with the development of a new digital platform.



**2023 Social Impact**  
34 refugees employed



**Cost Recovery**  
101%



## ProAble

Alfanar has supported ProAble since 2022 to advance disability rights through a twofold approach: an online academy specialising in disability inclusion training, and a recruitment platform dedicated to facilitating employment for individuals with disabilities.



**2023 Social Impact**  
128 people employed & trained



**Cost Recovery**  
13%





## Impact Highlight I ProAble

**Mazen refuses to let his multiple sclerosis (MS) diagnosis stop him from pursuing his goals.**

As a husband and father of two, Mazen is determined to provide for his family. However, the combination of a difficult job market, especially in the wake of Lebanon's economic crisis, and the impact of MS has frequently left him jobless.

By connecting with ProAble, Mazen found hope and new opportunities for his career.

ProAble is a social enterprise that advances disability rights through an online academy specialising in disability inclusion training, as well as a recruitment platform that facilitates employment for individuals with disabilities.

Thanks to ProAble, Mazen was able to obtain dignified employment and provide for his family. Beyond securing employment, ProAble has empowered Mazen to advance his career goals and feel supported and accepted in the workplace.

Alfanar has supported ProAble since 2022 as part of our GIZ-funded employment portfolio. The social enterprise has received funding and technical assistance through our ASSET training programme, alongside business development support. In 2023, ProAble employed and trained 128 individuals across Lebanon, and our support will help the enterprise as it continues to lead disability inclusion efforts in the country and the wider Arab region.

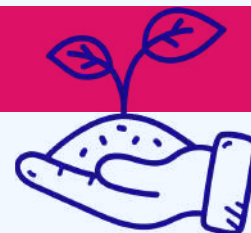


## EMPOWERMENT

Cultivating gender equality within impoverished communities

Despite certain advancements for women's employment in the Arab region, especially in the fields of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) and entrepreneurship, steep barriers remain. The lack of women in formal employment continues to hamper economies, with only 29% of women formally employed in Lebanon, 18% in Palestine, 16% in Egypt and 13% in Jordan. Alfanar fosters the growth of social enterprises that enable women to access steady income-generating opportunities and dignified employment. In 2023, thanks to the continued belief and support of The Global Fund for Widows, the Egyptian Refining Company (ERC) and private individuals, Alfanar's SUSTAIN empowerment portfolio improved the take-home income and livelihoods of 4,143 women and their families, of which 3,698 were widows and female breadwinners.

## SEED



**Jordan Education and Employment SEED Cycle, funded by the EU, powered by Impact Europe**

Hands of Sitti - Developing fashion product lines, from embroidery to soaps, that create dignified employment within refugee and displaced communities.

**Palestine Inaugural SEED Cycle, powered by Alfanar and The Asfari Foundation**

Al-Reef for Agriculture - Economically empowering female farmers through cooperative agriculture production and fair-trade promotion.

Sawaed 19 - Matching young people with volunteer opportunities across Palestine..

Spark for Entrepreneurship & Innovation - Supporting farmers in Gaza and beyond to adopt smart, sustainable farming methods.

Yalla Mishwar Tourism - Promoting and growing ethical tourism in Nablus.



# SUSTAIN



## Egypt

### Future Eve Foundation (FEF)

Since 2012, Alfanar, The Global Fund for Widows and FEF have worked together to establish, develop and grow The Amal Project for Widows' Empowerment across 108 villages in Egypt, reaching over 22,000 widows. Meaning 'hope' in Arabic, The Amal Project is a multi-faceted programme, implemented by FEF, that aims to economically empower widows and female breadwinners through financial and vocational training, access to social microfinance and participation in Widows Savings and Loan Associations (WISALAs). FEF has expanded its reach significantly and with Alfanar's support, has strengthened its financial management and developed more effective monitoring and impact measurement systems. In 2024, support from an implementation consortium will allow Amal to reach widows in additional governorates in Egypt and in new countries, namely Lebanon and Palestine.



 **2023 Social Impact**  
3,689 widows & female breadwinners

 **Cost Recovery**  
120%

## Lebanon

### L'Artisan du Liban

One of Lebanon's oldest social enterprises, ADL aims to economically empower disadvantaged local artisans, most of whom are women, by facilitating more sales of their handmade textiles and accessories. To date, ADL has supported more than 1,000 artisans across Lebanon, mostly located in remote rural areas, and has saved four crafts from extinction. In addition to enabling ADL to support more artisans from disadvantaged communities, Alfanar is also providing management support to strengthen the organisation's long-term financial sustainability.



 **2023 Social Impact**  
134 artisans employed

 **Cost Recovery**  
96%





## Impact Highlight | Hands of Sitti

**“Working with Sitti Soap was a defining moment for me. They helped me stand firmly and become self-reliant.”**

Often shy at first, Muna reveals her extroverted side once you ask her about her work. Her enthusiasm is clear as she discusses her daily tasks and the community she works with.

Muna is 50 years old and is a soap artisan for Hands of Sitti. As the breadwinner for her family of 10, and without Jordanian citizenship, working with Hands of Sitti has enabled her to provide a dignified life for herself and her family.

Hands of Sitti is a social enterprise that aims to empower refugees through income generation and fair work opportunities through the creation of bath and body products, apparel and other collections. Refugees are given training and employment that can help them attain financial security.

In 2023, Alfanar welcomed Hands of Sitti to our first SEED Cycle in Jordan, powered by Impact Europe and funded by the EU. Over the course of several months, Hands of Sitti, alongside four other social enterprises, were equipped with the tools and training needed to scale their impact, strengthen their operations and grow their financial sustainability.

With Alfanar’s training, Hands of Sitti has increased their impact and ability to support refugee and displaced communities.

\*Pseudonym used





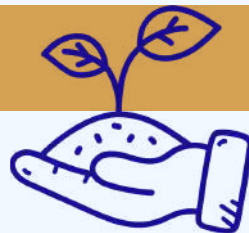
## ENVIRONMENT

Fostering the establishment of eco-friendly consumption and production patterns

The Arab world is facing significant climate change impacts, with temperatures increasing higher and faster than the global average, and more frequent heat waves threatening crop production and food security. The region is also the most water-stressed in the world, consuming more than it can currently replenish.

In response to these challenges, Alfanar has been backing frontline social enterprises that recognise the imperative for both a social and environmental response to climate impacts. In 2023, we had support from private individuals, SODIC, The Asfari Foundation, the SEMD Programme – powered by GFA Consulting and the Swiss Development Corporation (SDC), WasteAid and Dow Chemicals, GIZ. Our SUSTAIN environmental portfolio recycled 84 tonnes of used clothing, which resulted in a CO2 emission reduction of 302 tonnes. In turn, the lives of 71,380 vulnerable individuals were improved through employment and access to affordable recycled goods. Additionally, we launched our first SEED cycles focused on identifying and supporting green social enterprises benefiting disadvantaged communities, paving the path for increased venture philanthropy support in this area.

## SEED



### Egypt Plastic Recycling Opportunities (PRO) Cycle, Powered by WasteAid & Dow Chemicals

Upfuse - Transforming disposed plastic and other waste into high-end products.

VeryNile - Creating up-cycled products, such as pouches and laptop sleeves, from PET single-use plastic bags that are donated from households or collected from the Nile.

Waste Management Control (WMC) - Developing and deploying smart solutions that help people generate income and understand the importance of recycling.

### Egypt Green Employment SEED Cycle, Powered by SODIC

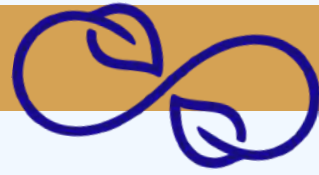
Banlastic - Rewarding customers for recycling their solid waste through an app, with discount coupons on services like restaurants and medical services.

Bekia - Reducing carbon emissions by teaching families how to sort waste from landfills.

Kendaka - Upcycling glass, used-plastic, weaving and textile-crochet into functional and creative products.

Plstka Technology - Rewards customers for recycling their solid waste through an app, with discount coupons on real services like restaurants and medical services.

# SUSTAIN



## Lebanon & Jordan

### FabricAID

Originally established in Lebanon, now growing in Jordan and exploring expansion opportunities to Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, FabricAID is now the largest second-hand clothing collector in the Arab region. It works to ensure that every family can afford decent, quality clothing and that the fashion industry reduces its negative impact on society and the environment. FabricAID resolves inefficiencies in the second-hand clothing market by improving the efficiency of used clothing donations, resale, exchange and upcycling through multiple offerings, namely thrift, barter, vintage shops and an upcycled brand. Since 2018, Alfanar's grant, equity and convertible loan financing coupled with management support has enabled FabricAID to scale from a team of 9 to 143, from serving 1,088 to over 71,380 clients, paving the way for impact investment and further impact and sales growth.



**2023 Social Impact**  
143 employed & 71,380 customers



**Cost Recovery**  
42%



### FabricAID Spotlight: The Beban Show

Represented by Egypt Country Director Shenouda Bissada, Alfanar served as a judge on entrepreneurship-themed reality TV show The Beban Show. The third season, episode 9, aired on 6 March 2024, featuring Alfanar as a social enterprise and FabricAID as a contestant pitching for further investment. Alfanar confirmed its investment during this episode and helped encourage further investment from The HOPE Fund to support FabricAID with the expansion of their operations to Bahrain.

# SUSTAIN



## Egypt

### Delta Oil

Delta Oil collects used cooking oil (UCO) from disadvantaged communities across the Alexandria and The Delta in exchange for payment, food baskets or social services after selling the UCO to biodiesel companies. Alfanar progressed Delta Oil to business planning and approved long-term SUSTAIN funding in Q3 2023. This will enable the social purpose company to expand across Egypt, employing 3,000 disadvantaged women as local collectors and, in turn, enabling over 300,000 families to access additional income and food packages in exchange for UCO. Alfanar is supporting Delta Oil to develop a transformation plan and a monitoring and evaluation framework that will help them to accurately measure their social impact over the life of the investment

"With our help, women in rural areas are learning about the importance of recycling used cooking oil, the proper use and disposal of cooking oil, and participating in a sustainable project that economically empowers them and supports the environment."  
- Sherif Foda, Alfanar Trustee



## Palestine

### Flowless

Flowless is headed by an innovative team that is tackling climate change while empowering vulnerable communities. It has devised a hardware/software solution that helps smallholder farmers and municipalities detect and reduce water leakages through greater knowledge and adjusted behaviour. Alfanar's long-term SUSTAIN support, approved in Q3 2023, aims to scale the organisation's impact and sales.



## Impact Highlight | Flowless

Located in the West Bank, Salfeet's population has grown to over 15,000 residents, putting significant stress on the town's main water supply, the Salfeet Municipality Water System.

The current system has been dependent on human intervention for site inspection, particularly in monitoring water quality and consumption tracking. This has led to inefficient and delayed operations, underscoring the need for automation.

Flowless is a social enterprise that has created a smart system to monitor water supply and control operations. This automated system collects real-time data on water supply and water quality, monitoring water flows for active leak detections and controlling pump operations and reservoirs.

**Thanks to the successful implementation of the Flowless system, Salfeet has managed to decrease losses in their water network, saving 10 million litres of fresh water monthly.**

Alfanar supported Flowless through its Inaugural Palestine SEED Cycle in 2022/23, enabling them to scale their impact and strengthen operations. In 2023, Alfanar approved Flowless for multi-year SUSTAIN support, where we will help the team to scale and better track and assess their impact while growing sales in Palestine, Jordan and beyond.



# EMERGENCY

## Lebanon

In 2023, Alfanar made the final disbursements to Souk Al Tayeb and ShareQ as part of the culmination of our Emergency Lebanon Appeal. The appeal was originally set up to provide emergency support, reconstruction support and hunger relief to the thousands of families who were displaced and impacted by the 4 August 2020 Beirut Port explosion. Subsequently, the campaign was able to lengthen the duration of its support to families thanks to coordination with a private foundation. Together, support to these social enterprises enabled the delivery of 278,684 hot and vacuum-sealed meals, 2,520 food boxes as well as the creation of 66 kitchen staff positions and 67 food distribution jobs.

## Palestine

Since the end of 2023, Alfanar has endeavoured to build a coalition of partners committed to responding to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza as well as the increasing difficulty faced by women, youth and children in the West Bank.

**“In the face of unimaginable human suffering as we have seen unfold in Gaza for many months, it is imperative that we in the sustainable development space bring to bear our networks and capacities to respond,” – Myrna Atalla, Executive Director.**

We are proud to have partnered with our 2023 zakat donors and Osman Consulting and to work with the Egyptian Food Bank to provide 6,464 families in Gaza with dried food and water boxes. Our two shipments were delivered on 25 November 2023 and 28 February 2024.

By the end of the year, we were incredibly dismayed that four of the eight social enterprises we had worked with during our 2022/23 Palestine SEED cycle had ceased operating. To help salvage and sustain the social enterprise ecosystem across the West Bank, we began developing an Emergency Support Programme for Social Enterprises to deliver crisis management and reforecasting support to social enterprises whose operations have been disrupted.

Leveraging Alfanar’s focus and experience in children’s education, we are bringing together a consortium of education social enterprises to help digitise the Palestinian primary school curriculum, pilot its use in the West Bank and prepare for further dissemination as soon as it is possible to do so with children in Gaza. We will be working with funding partners in 2024 to fund and deliver this programme as efficiently and as effectively as possible.



# OUTREACH

In 2023, Alfanar participated in numerous conferences, interviews and public engagements aimed at building awareness of social investment and growing the venture philanthropy movement in the Arab region.

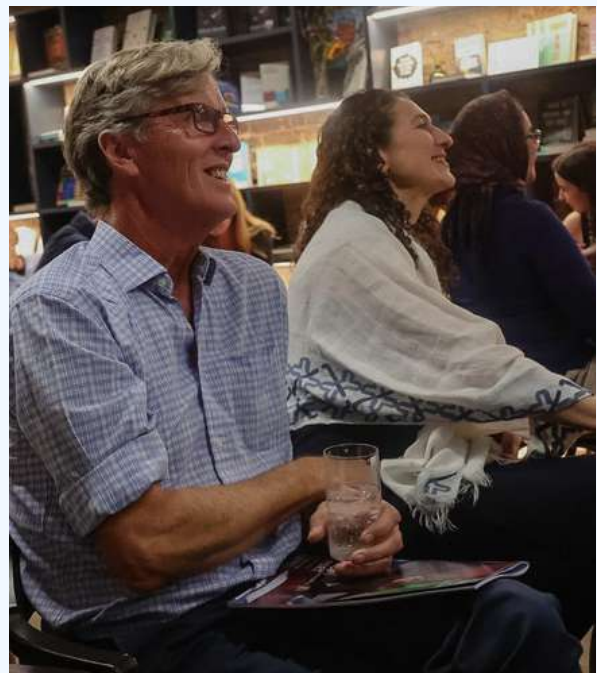
Notable highlights included:

- SEMD Regional Roundtables in Cairo and Amman
- Venture Philanthropy Teach-In at The Conduit in London in September 2023, with 75 guests
- The Arab Foundation Forum 2023 Annual Meeting Day 1 Plenary in September 2023: [The Future of Philanthropy – How Will the Sector Look in 2040?](#)
- Impact Europe Live Panel in Torino in November 2023: [What does it take to make impact during conflict?](#)

Alfanar's practical experience in supporting social enterprises in the Arab region to overcome a myriad of challenges and achieve lasting impact was further on display in podcasts with The Impact Room and Amaly Legacy and in articles published by The Innovating Justice Fund, Machine Lab, Egon Zehnder and Barclay's Guide to Giving. Links to these discussions and publications are available on Alfanar's website.



Alfanar Executive Director Myrna Atalla speaking at an Impact Europe panel about how venture philanthropy can address the needs of communities during times of crisis, and the value of investing in a long-term strategic approach.



Over 70 stakeholders joined our Executive Director, Myrna Atalla, at The Conduit in London for a discussion on Alfanar's 20-year journey driving sustainable impact in the Arab region through venture philanthropy.



# LUMINARY INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

We hosted our third cohort of Luminary interns in 2023, enabling motivated high school students to work with Alfanar and our social enterprises during the summer. As we continue to grow, our aspiration for SPREAD is to cultivate powerful voices that not only advocate for Alfanar's current initiatives, but also strengthen the capacity and promise of social entrepreneurship for years to come. The Luminary Internship is a competitive programme that provides high school students with an opportunity to learn about venture philanthropy, social enterprise and impact investment in the Arab region.

In 2023, Alfanar welcomed six Luminary interns across our teams in London, Beirut, Cairo and Amman. The interns worked virtually and in-person on projects related to fundraising, communications and research in the social enterprise space.

We would like to thank our 2023 Luminary Interns: Haddy, Jad, Layan, Rayan, Sofia and Yara for their support and commitment.

## Luminary Testimonial

"I just completed my Luminary internship with Alfanar in Lebanon. It was incredible to say the least – from the people I was surrounded by, to the projects I was given.

**I was exposed to multiple experiences that deepened my knowledge in social entrepreneurship. I learned so many things about how social enterprises run and how they remain resilient through hardship.**

I would recommend this internship to anybody around my age, 17 or older, who is interested in gaining experience in the social entrepreneurship ecosystem."

– Rayan, 2023 Luminary Intern



Looking Ahead: In 2024, we will be accepting more Luminary interns to the programme, with an in-person offering for those based in London in addition to virtual positions for those in the region.

# 2023 RESULTS

## Structured for Growth

In line with the ambitions of Alfanar's 2022-2026 plan, efforts were made to grow the team and strengthen internal culture, communication and coordination. We completed the recruitment of 3 positions – a new Lebanon Director, Head of Finance and Communications Manager.

Strategically growing Alfanar's team will enable greater internal efficiency and the achievement of impact and outreach targets. Additionally, with venue sponsorship from The Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship at The American University of Beirut, we held our first in-person team retreat since 2019 to revise key processes and encourage team alignment. In parallel, we began working on a streamlined family structure between Alfanar subsidiaries and affiliates. Our registration of a branch of the UK charity in Jordan was also approved in 2023.

## Accelerated Reach through SEED Cycles

We ran 2 SEED cycles in Egypt (7 social enterprises), 4 in Lebanon (20 social enterprises), launched our first in Jordan (5 social enterprises) and completed our inaugural SEED cycle in Palestine (8 social enterprises) – building the capacities of 40 new social enterprises, up from 18 in 2022. 6 of these SEED enterprises progressed to business planning, and 3 were endorsed by the Investment Committee and approved by the Board for long-term SUSTAIN support.

## Grew Impact through SUSTAIN

Alfanar directly improved 107,152 lives through 13 SUSTAIN social enterprises and emergency support in Lebanon and Gaza, representing a 11% increase from 2022. Our SUSTAIN portfolio generated £3,563,790 through the sale of goods and services. In 2023, the portfolio recovered an average of 66% of costs through self-generated revenue.

## SCALED through Replication and Impact Investment

In 2023, Alfanar, the Global Fund for Widows and Future Eve Foundation began expanding the Amal Project for Widows Empowerment further across Egypt, enabling an additional 3,689 widows and female breadwinners across 108 villages in five governorates to set up their own businesses. With support from The Ford Foundation, we will document the social franchise manual for The Amal Project to guide further expansion in and beyond Egypt. Alfanar also helped advance pre-start-up steps for impact investment fund we are supporting the launch of, including legal and governance structure, recruitment of a Head of Investments and approval of an additional convertible loan investment.

## SPREAD Venture Philanthropy across the MENA Region

Alfanar was featured in more podcasts, articles, and conferences in 2023. We held a teach-in on venture philanthropy and impact investment in the Arab region in partnership with The Conduit London, as well as our first Impact Connector event in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. These outreach efforts helped build interest in and eventual support for Alfanar's venture philanthropy work across the Middle East and North Africa.

# 2024 PLANS

In line with Alfanar's 2022-2026 growth plan, Alfanar aims to achieve the following:

## Strengthen the Foundations

Alfanar will complete an organisational mapping exercise to identify strengths and challenge areas within our governance and operating model and to lay out a plan for improving operational efficiency. Alfanar will send key staff from the investments team to become Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)-certified to strengthen our impact reporting and processes to ensure that we consistently meet external requirements.

## Increase Reach through SEED Cycles

Alfanar aims to provide SEED support to 57 social enterprises across Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine to continue strengthening the social enterprise ecosystem while building Alfanar's pipeline.

## Grow Impact through SUSTAIN Support

In 2024, we aim to reach towards impacting 150,000 women and children through long-term SUSTAIN funding and support to at least 15 social enterprises. We look to increase our reach and impact in Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine, to disburse +£1.5M in grants, with an additional £1m in management support provided to social enterprises.

## SCALE through Replication or Impact Investment

We are looking to expand The Amal Project for Widows' Empowerment further in Egypt, and to Lebanon and Palestine over the coming three years. This will constitute a blueprint for future regional expansion through social franchising. We hope to support the launch of the first regional impact investment fund in 2024.

## SPREAD Alfanar's Venture Philanthropy Approach

We will revise our fundraising strategy with the aim of reliably doubling income and impact within two years. Key to our fundraising in 2024 will be the delivery of a successful 20th Anniversary Leading the Change Gala in the summer of 2024. We will also develop a communications and outreach strategy to align messaging across all parts of the organisation. Finally, we aim to partner with the Arab Foundations Forum to hold a teach-in on venture philanthropy with peer foundations.

“

**With Alfanar's support, we have been able to support widows and female breadwinners in seven governorates across Egypt.**

Awany Mehany  
Amal Manager, Future Eve  
Alfanar Egypt SUSTAIN Portfolio

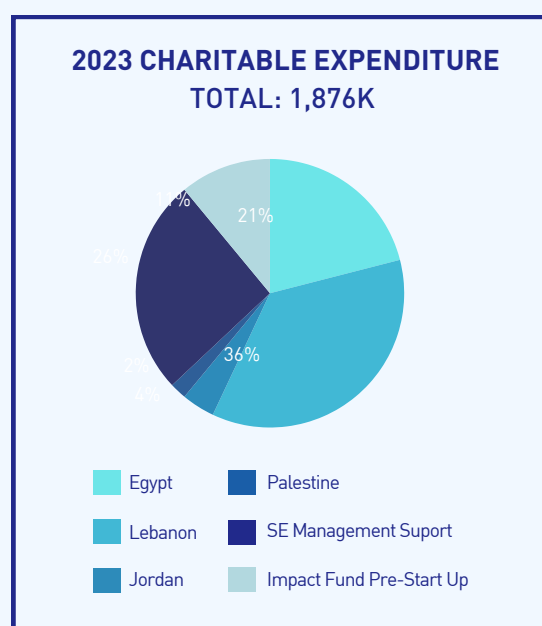
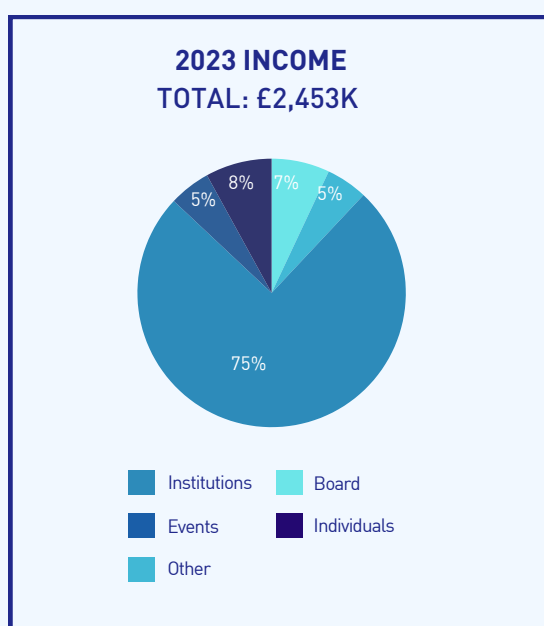
# FINANCIAL REVIEW

In the year ended 31 December 2023, Alfanar raised £2,452k (2022: £2,504k). This represents a slight 2% decrease compared to prior year results, which is in part due to the fact that Alfanar did not host a Gala dinner within the year, but is hosting its next one in honour of its 20th anniversary in 2024.

We recognise and appreciate the generous support received from our Boards, with unrestricted donations of £165k, (2022: £323k), and the support of other individuals with unrestricted donations of £307k (2022: £344k). Additionally, we are grateful for the continued support of our affiliate Alfanar, Inc., US, which supported our venture philanthropy mission with £130k (2022: £56k). Together, these sources covered the Charity's fundraising and support costs in 2023, thus enabling any additional donations raised to be directed towards Alfanar's SEED awards, SUSTAIN grants, ASSET training AIM and other management support delivered to our social enterprises working to improve education, employment and economic empowerment to vulnerable children, youth and women.

Alfanar received significant support from corporate and institutional donors in 2023, including from Drosos, Egyptian Refining Company (ERC), Ford Foundation, GIZ, Global Fund for Widows, Impact Europe, L'Oreal, Osman Consulting, SODIC and WasteAid. Corporate donors provided Alfanar with £424k (2022: £182k), while institutional donors provided £1,434k (2022: £788k).

In 2023, resources expended amounted to £2,473k (2022: £2,053k), an increase of 20%. Of this amount, direct grants to social enterprises rose by 27% to £1,026k (2022: £807k). This is attributed to the transition in 2022 to Alfanar's revised investment cycle, which introduced SEED cycles. These new cycles enable Alfanar to work with more social enterprises while building up the pipeline for new SUSTAIN grantees following significant exits from our portfolio.



# BOARD & TEAM

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Egypt Country Director



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## Impact Investment Team



**Youmna Assaf**  
Head of Investments



**Michelle Mouracade**  
Head of Impact, Investor Relations &  
Operations

“

**Thanks to Alfanar's generous venture philanthropy support, we have been able to enhance our work and make a lasting impact on the lives of women in need.**

Mohamed Ezz  
Business Development Lead, Delta Oil  
Alfanar Egypt SUSTAIN Portfolio



# THANK YOU

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all our donors, advisors and pro-bono supporters for making our work possible.

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Cynthia J. Oakes  
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We thank the numerous individual, corporate and institutional donors whose generous contributions in 2022-2023 made Alfanar's venture philanthropy work possible.

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### Gala Sponsors



# ALFANAR

## EMPOWERING ENTERPRISE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

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 KVK number: 88110834

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 Fadel Zayan, Investment Director  
 Nicolas Kröger, Operations Director  
 Shenouda Bissada, Egypt Director  
 Maya Rahal, Lebanon Director  
 Suha Abdul Rahim, Jordan / Palestine Director  
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- Please note that this is an abridged snapshot of the organisation's 2023 impact and does not constitute the statutory 2023 annual report, which can be accessed through Companies House, the UK Charity Commission and Alfanar's website.