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# ALLIANCES IN ACTION

## ARAB WORLD SOCIAL INNOVATORS PROGRAM

### DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE

The Arab world lags behind other regions in terms of the state of poverty and social inequality, which poses a challenge to the security and stability of a region facing a demographic explosion. Development indicators suggest that educational achievement, economic development, freedom of expression, and gender inequality are areas where the region must make progress to close this gap. Addressing these persistent problems requires new models driven by social entrepreneurs who deliver sustainable solutions that address the root causes of poverty and societal ills. Providing social entrepreneurs with the financial and technical support they need to move their ideas forward is essential to advance programs that make a significant impact on these issues.

### PARTNER CHALLENGE

Donors and business leaders recognize the value of investing in entrepreneurial models as a means of supporting the long-term social, political and economic well-being of the region. Many social enterprise models are revenue-generating and provide employment opportunities while at the same time delivering social returns.

### APPROACH

The program selected 22 social entrepreneurs from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and West Bank/Gaza to receive financial and business development support to transform their innovative ideas into sustainable organizations. The Social Innovators receive seed funding, technical assistance, media visibility, and access to a global network of peer advisors and mentors to help scale-up their projects. They work in a number of high-impact areas including education, youth employment and gender equality, with projects ranging from handicraft production in Morocco, to job placements through cell phone technology in the West Bank, to Beirut's first farmers' market for small local producers.

### PARTNERS



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### RESULTS

- The program has helped 22 social entrepreneurs access additional sources of funding, expand their operation to new geographies, purchase essential equipment, hire staff members, connect with leading social investors, and showcase their ideas at global forums in the U.S. and abroad.
- Innovators have been featured in a number of global media outlets, including: CNN International, BBC World Business Service, and Al Jazeera.

### FAST FACTS

Start: 2007      End: 2010

#### PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS:

USAID: \$1 million  
Synergos: \$750,000  
Social Entrepreneurship Assistance Program: Business Development Assistance

December 2009