

Final Report of the Synergos Institute to USAID

Arab World Social Innovators Program
(Middle East /North Africa Social Innovators Program)
Cooperative Agreement No. 263-00-07-00095-00

Table of Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Key Interventions
- III. The Inaugural Class of Social Innovators
- IV. Program Activities
 - A. Financial Awards
 - B. Training and Capacity Building
 - C. Strategic Connections
 - D. Relationship Management
- V. Program Impact
 - A. Growth and Outreach
 - B. Organizational Effectiveness
 - C. Leadership
 - D. Collaborations and Partnership
 - E. Funding
- VI. Key Learnings
- VII. Budget and Funding

Annexes:

- 1. Completed Work Plan
- 2. Exit Survey Form

Contact information:

Ferne Mele
Senior Manager, Development
The Synergos Institute
51 Madison Avenue, 21st floor
New York, N.Y. 10010, USA
tel: 646-953-2122
fax: 212-447-8119
email: fmele@synergos.org
www.synergos.org

I. Introduction

The goal of the Arab World Social Innovators (AWSI) Program is to foster economic and social development in the Middle East/North Africa by identifying and supporting extraordinary individuals—“social innovators”—from the region who exhibit high potential for creating innovative changes to address key social and economic issues in their communities and beyond. The program was launched in October 2007 with a leading grant of US\$750,000 from USAID. An additional grant of US\$250,000 was approved in September 2008, bringing the total USAID contribution to US\$1 million. The additional funds enabled Synergos to expand the number of Social Innovators served by the program, from the original 20 to 22 individuals.

The three-year program, which ran through October 2010, made strategic investments in 22 high-impact Social Innovators through an integrated set of services that included financial awards, leadership training, organizational capacity building, and strategic connections to leading organizations in civil society, business and philanthropy. These services were geared to enabling the Innovators to bring their successful ideas to scale, build the sustainability of their programs and contribute to long-lasting social progress.

II. Key Interventions

Synergos' approach is based on a number of key program interventions, which are listed below (as provided in Cooperative Agreement 263-00-07-00095-00), along with a brief description of accomplishments in each area.

a) Identify and convene an Advisory Committee to aid in selection, advise on program design and implementation, and mentor selected candidates. Synergos established a Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) of nine members based in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Morocco. RAC members are leaders in business, philanthropy, academia, and civil society. Through in-person convenings and one-on-one consultations with the Synergos team, RAC members provided strategic guidance to the program and facilitated strategic connections with organizations in their countries to support the program and/or individual Social Innovators. In early 2010, Sheikh Tariq Bin Fasil Al Qassimi of the United Arab Emirates became Chairman of the AWSI program, representing an additional important endorsement of the program from a prominent leader from the Arab region.

b) Attract a highly qualified pool of applicants, using a variety of strategies. In the first year of the program, Synergos made a significant investment of time to create a solid application and selection process, build relationships with key stakeholders in the five program geographies

and identify appropriate outreach channels. The solicitation process drew 137 qualified applicants from the five program geographies. Applicants' initiatives spanned a wide range of sectors, and 40 percent of all applicants were women.

c) Select 20 (subsequently increased to 22) Social Innovators from the Middle East/North Africa region. Selected innovators will be entrepreneurial, creative, and have a track record of significant accomplishment in creating positive change in their respective communities. The Regional Advisory Committee made the final selection of 22 Social Innovators whose initiatives showed proven success at the community level and were judged to have significant potential for expanded outreach and impact. Additional details on the Social Innovators selected for the program are provided in section III.

d) Provide financial awards to the Innovators working in the fields of economic, social and sustainable development; health and education; and human rights. In the course of the program period, Synergos disbursed financial awards totaling US\$748,000 to the 22 Social Innovators. Funds were disbursed in four six-monthly tranches of US\$8,500 each, against the provision to Synergos of a projected expenditure budget and other financial information pertaining to the use of the financial award.

e) Bring Social Innovators into a community of social entrepreneurs across the region and the world through Synergos networks, and by connecting them with other global networks including Ashoka, Skoll and Schwab Foundation Fellows. Social Innovators gained access to the Synergos networks of global civil society leaders and philanthropists through participation in annual meetings of the Synergos Senior Fellows, meetings with members of the Synergos Global Philanthropists Circle, and introductions to leading organizations connected to the Synergos networks. Synergos collaborated closely with Ashoka throughout the program period, sharing knowledge on methodologies, processes, and strategic contacts. Iman Bibars, Ashoka's Arab World Director, served as a member of the Regional Advisory Committee from Egypt. In the second half of the program period, three Social Innovators were recruited as Ashoka Fellows.

f) Connect Social Innovators to business, government, philanthropic and other civil society leaders within their countries and globally. Through the AWSI program, selected Social Innovators gained access to some of the most prestigious and important venues showcasing and celebrating the work of social entrepreneurs globally. These included the Skoll World Forum on Social Entrepreneurship, the European Foundation Centre's Annual General Meeting, the Entrepreneurship Summit convened by President Obama in 2010 in Washington, the Clinton Global Initiative, and the Celebration of Entrepreneurship hosted by Abraaj Capital and Aramex in Dubai. In addition, selected Social Innovators gained access to a range of other opportunities including meetings with USAID and State Department officials, and presentations

at convenings organized by leading academic institutions and civil society organizations globally and in the Arab region.

g) Evaluate the impact of the program. Synergos set up an internal monitoring and evaluation system to track the performance of the program and the progress of individual Innovators. Key instruments included a baseline survey administered to Social Innovators at inception, an exit survey distributed in the last quarter of the program period, and a series of evaluation tools to assess the impact of key program elements such as convenings and technical assistance services.

III. The Inaugural Class of Social Innovators

The first class of Arab World Social Innovators was notified of their selection to the program in December 2008. The quantity and quality of applications received is testimony to the region's vast reservoir of entrepreneurial talent and innovative capacity to address deep-seated social problems. Synergos narrowed the initial pool of 137 qualified applicants to a list of 35 finalists, which was submitted to the Regional Advisory Committee that was in charge of the final selection of the 22 Social Innovators. The Regional Advisory Committee, along with Synergos' President, the MENA Regional Director, and the two Program Consultants met in person in Amman, Jordan, to evaluate each of the finalists against the selection criteria.

Gender: Though the applicant pool was 39 percent female, only five of the Social Innovators (22 percent) are women. The applicant pool was 39 percent female. The low ratio of women in the inaugural class was not an intended outcome and was not anticipated by Synergos. This issue is addressed more in depth in the Key Learnings section.

Geographic representation: Sixty-three percent of the Innovators are from two geographies, Palestine (8) and Egypt (6). Three are from Morocco, three from Jordan and two from Lebanon.

Sectors of engagement: The selection criteria for Innovators targeted no specific sectors beyond the broad requirement to create economic, social or environmental impact. While the Innovators represent a range of fields, the majority are working on economic development (45 percent) and education (23 percent) while others work on civic engagement, arts and culture, or the environment. Innovators' programs include information and communications technology, income generation through artisanship, and services to people with disabilities or special needs, as well as cross-cutting themes involving youth.

The chart on the following page provides a breakdown of the inaugural class of Social Innovators by geography, primary sector of activity, target group and gender.

Other key characteristics of the inaugural class of Social Innovators are discussed below.

Rural vs. urban: Through targeted outreach Synergos succeeded in ensuring that underserved rural areas were well represented in the selection of Innovators. For example, one Innovator runs a conservative agricultural community in northern Jordan. Sixty-three percent of the Innovators selected serve both rural and urban areas, 23 percent operate in rural areas and 14 percent in urban areas.

Age: The Innovators ranged in age from 27 to 53, with the average being 38.5 years old upon entering the program in 2009. The diversity in age has proved beneficial as older Innovators serve as role models and mentors for the younger participants.

Educational level: In terms of educational attainment, the Innovators are well above average across the region. Fifty percent hold a university degree and 45 percent hold postgraduate degrees, including a few who have completed or are completing PhD's. Innovator candidates were not required to meet a specific educational level.

Stage of development: Upon entering the program, 60 percent of the Innovators were in the early to intermediate stage of development, or the start-up phase, and thus required significant technical and financial support. The members of this group had an annual of budget of up to US\$15,000 per year, were not legally registered, and had few staff outside of volunteers, no office, no governance structure and little institutional framework to guide their organizational development. The remaining 40 percent were in the mid- to advanced stage of development, with established structures, frameworks and capacities to operate their organizations and expand their programs. From both groups of Innovators there was demand for additional financial support, connection to a regional network, and the credibility associated with the recognition from an international institution. The difference between these two groups' level of organizational development made it challenging to provide training that was equally beneficial to all Innovators. Implications for future planning are addressed in Section VI, Key Learnings.

Operational models: Upon entering the program, 86 percent of the Innovators had traditional nonprofit models that generate positive social returns and are financially sustained by donations, grants and subsidies. The other 14 percent led social enterprise models incorporating a revenue-generating stream that covered part of their costs, or reinvested profits in business expansion.

Clients served: While it is not possible to provide exact data on the total number of clients served by Social Innovators, due to the diverse nature of their initiatives, cumulatively the programs of the Social Innovators are impacting hundreds of thousands of people in marginalized communities in the five program geographies, with a particular focus on youth.

IV. Program Activities

During the grant period the AWSI program delivered:

- Financial awards totaling \$34,000 per Innovator to support program growth and organizational sustainability.
- Capacity building in the form of workshops at two annual convenings; four learning modules on strategic planning, action planning, communication planning, and proposal writing; and English language training for several Innovators.
- Strategic connections to sources of technical support and funding and to local and global media through Innovator participation in global forums.

This section provides a summary of program activities, and highlights on the value these activities provided to Social Innovators, based on the exit survey administered to them at the end of the program.

A. Financial Awards

Each Social Innovator received a total financial award of US\$34,000 over two years, disbursed in four installments of US\$8,500 disbursed every six months. After the initial disbursement, subsequent installments were paid against the provision to Synergos of a projected expenditure budget and financial information pertaining to the use of the financial award. Synergos specifically designed the financial awards as unrestricted grants, whose end-use could be determined by each individual Innovator in function of what would be most instrumental in terms of expanding the scale and impact of their programs. Innovators used the financial award in a variety of ways—to cover a portion of their operating costs, to recruit more staff or launch new programs. Some Innovators used financial awards to cover some or all of their living expenses, thus enabling them to focus their time and energy on expanding their programs.

Funds used for geographic expansion allowed Social Innovators to enter new communities or governorates, and even expand to new countries. In some cases, funds were used to open an office and professionalize their work, house a growing staff, and conduct client meetings. In other cases, it was used to establish a second office to expand their presence and replicate their projects elsewhere. Some specific examples of the use of financial awards are provided below:

- Opening offices and operations in Gaza to serve this disconnected and isolated population of Palestinians. Two of our Palestinian Social Innovators have started operations in Gaza since joining the AWSI program and used most of their financial award to cover the costs.

- One Social Innovator opened an Employment Center in Cairo to train NGOs and serve members of marginalized communities from Upper and Lower Egypt. This center—funded in large part through the financial award—has allowed her organization to reach more people and provide vocational training for employment growth.
- An Egyptian Social Innovator opened a Library and Craft Center in the Siwa Oasis to display handicrafts, train young artisans, and provide a community center for children and youth.

The most important thing I could make use of Synergos grant for is that it allowed me to move freely and creatively without the usual financial restrictions that used to prevent me widening the scope of movement and discovering of new potentials and chances.

- Sameh el-Halawany, Egypt

- A handful of our Social Innovators were able to move from a home office to open their first permanent office place.
- Some Innovators used the award to cover the partial cost of their rent.

Our surveys found that the Innovators attached a very high value to the financial award and the flexibility of its use. Access to seed funding is largely unavailable in the Arab world. Innovators indicated that the award helped them scale their organizations more quickly.

Most of the Innovators were in the early to intermediate stage of development. Survey feedback indicated that a majority of them found the amount of the award appropriate for their needs at this stage of their development, and that they would find it challenging to absorb a larger amount of funding.

B. Training and Capacity Building

Synergos held two annual meetings and workshops for Social Innovators, the first in February 2009 and the second in February 2010. Both convenings were held in Jordan, the only country to which Social Innovators from all five program geographies were able to travel. The objectives of these annual meetings included network building, peer learning, and training and capacity building for the Innovators.

After conducting a needs assessment when the Social Innovators entered the program and attended our orientation, Synergos concluded it was important to identify tangible organizational development training to guide their professional development. To this end, Synergos engaged the pro bono services of the Social Entrepreneurship Advancement Program (SEAP) an initiative launched by a group of consultants at Booz Allen Hamilton. Over the course of the

program period SEAP provided about US\$140,000 equivalent in-kind technical services and training to Social Innovators. These services were delivered by volunteer consultants on a one-on-one basis, in a virtual environment (through email communications and phone calls). This was supplemented by training sessions delivered at the two annual AWSI meetings. SEAP services were structured around a four-module organizational development curriculum focused on Strategic Planning, Action Planning, Communications Planning, and Grant Proposal development. The curriculum for each module was translated into Arabic. The first module was launched in August 2009. The SEAP program ended in October 2010 with the completion of training in proposal development.

"The strategic planning, action plan and communication plan helps any organization to advance its development and it ensures a better strategy for future projects. Therefore I would really recommend the BAH-SEAP assistance for the next class of social innovator." -Paul Abi Rached, Lebanon

A second area under training and capacity building included English language training to help Social Innovators improve their fluency and better connect to an international community of potential partners and donors. While applicants to the program were required to have a basic knowledge of English, proficiency varied widely. Synergos encouraged all Innovators who wanted to improve their language skills to take advantage of this offering. The America-Mideast Educational and Training Services (AMIDEAST) offered to provide Social Innovators access to their regional training centers located in all five of the program geographies for pro bono language support. Innovators located in more remote areas, where training facilities were unavailable, were offered financial support for English language tutors or local classroom-based training.

Based on the exit survey, 90 percent of the Innovators agreed that the capacity-building program addressed their organizational needs while 5 percent disagreed, and 5 percent did not know.

Nineteen Innovators, or 86 percent of the total, participated in the SEAP training implemented by Booz Allen Hamilton consultants. Of these participants, 100 percent completed a Strategic Plan, 72 percent completed an Action Plan, and 61 percent completed a Communications Plan. Eighty-four percent of the participants found the SEAP training helpful in advancing their organizational goals, and 67 percent would recommend it for future Innovators. Seven Innovators, or 32 percent of the total, received English language training. Half of them found it useful and the other half, extremely useful.

C. Strategic Connections

The AWSI program enabled Social Innovators to gain visibility and forge strategic connections to advance their work. The ability to showcase their ideas and programs and to share them with

an international audience enhanced their credibility and improved the Innovators' professional skills in communications and presentation delivery, and networking.

Global forums: Synergos staff identified and connected Innovators to the Skoll World Forum on Entrepreneurship (Oxford, UK, 2009), the European Foundation Centre Annual Conference (Rome, 2009), the Annual Meeting of Synergos Senior Fellows (New York City, 2009 and 2010), President Obama's Inaugural Summit on Social Entrepreneurship (Washington, DC, 2010), the Clinton Global Initiative Annual Meeting (New York, 2010), and the Celebration for Entrepreneurship hosted by Abraaj Capital and Aramex (Dubai, 2010). Several Innovators were invited to these events and presented their work to a global audience that they otherwise would not have had access to in their home communities.

"It helps in making a scope on the active innovators in the region and helps in creating a network between people who have no opportunity to meet in such a way and it create a kind of platform for change which can helps other innovators in the future." - Sameh El-Halawny, Egypt

Access to global forums was rated highly by Innovators, who mentioned the exposure and networking it provided as "offering a regional and global opening to the world." Seventy-one percent of the Innovators attended at least one Global Forum, such as the Skoll World Forum and the Clinton Global Initiative. Ninety-five percent of the participants found this feature of the program very useful for their professional development.

Synergos networks: Synergos' networks comprising leading philanthropic families, social investors, civil society leaders, institutions, development practitioners, academics and influential leaders span the globe. Synergos connected the Social Innovators with the Senior Fellows, our network of seasoned civil society leaders, at the second annual meeting of the Arab World Social Innovators in February 2010 and during the Annual meeting of Senior Fellows in 2009. Natural synergies between Arab Senior Fellows and the Social Innovators led to the Fellows serving as role models and mentors to Innovators. The connections have inspired spontaneous collaborations that continue to expand learning and programs across borders and sectors. Further information about the collaborations inspired by the program is provided further on in this report..

Eighty-three percent of the Innovators found strategic connection to potential donors and other resources useful, 11 percent reported not receiving such connection, and 6 percent found it not useful. The Innovators' survey responses regarding connection to Synergos' larger network of Senior Fellows and Global Philanthropist Circle members was largely positive, with 72 percent

reporting these to be useful, 22 percent finding them not useful, and 6 percent reporting no connection.

Some Innovators derived limited benefit from opportunities for exposure and connection due to language barriers. Synergos had to balance the goal of providing opportunity and visibility to each Innovator with the need to select those who would be the most appropriate participants in a given event. The programmatic implications of differing levels of English language skills are addressed in Section VI, Key Learnings.

“The sense of family belonging was important to create an environment and a network to grow in.”

Peer learning exchanges: Peer learning exchanges were offered toward the end of the project after it became apparent that synergies were beginning to develop between peers within the Innovator network and between Innovators and Synergos Senior Fellows. Our staff facilitated four structured peer learning exchanges that enabled an Innovator to visit the project of another Innovator or Senior Fellow to learn more about the method and approaches to their work.

Media visibility: The Innovators had more mixed responses on the issue of media outlets. Eighty-one percent of the Innovators reported receiving media coverage (local, regional and/or global) of their programs as a result of the AWSI program. This enabled them to enhance the visibility of their programs and to attract new sources of funding and technical support. However, 43 percent of the Innovators reported not receiving access to global media, 29 percent found this useful and 14 percent found it not useful. Implications for future programming are addressed in Section VI.

D. Relationship Management

Although relationship management was not an explicit service among program offerings, Synergos staff provided advisory services and tailored support to Innovators that was highly valued, according to survey results.

The service provided could take the form of proposal writing support, advice on fund-raising strategy, crafted speaking points, drafting professional communications products, writing letters of recommendation for other leadership programs and competitions, and providing strategic feedback on organizational challenges. Relationship managers in the field met routinely with Innovators to discuss challenges they were facing, help with organizational development, and provide professional and moral support. This personalized relationship structure also enabled Synergos staff to gain in-depth knowledge of the Innovators’ projects and connect them to appropriate sources of support, funding and opportunities to advance their work.

Innovators reported a high degree of satisfaction with the mentoring, advice and access to resources provided by Synergos staff, and 89 percent found these services useful.

IV. Program Impact

A. Growth and Outreach

Results of the intake and exit surveys showed how the Innovators had used their financial awards to help them expand their programs in the following ways:

- 90 percent of the Innovators hired new staff such as IT staff, IT technicians, teachers and media experts. Of the 67 new staff hired, 72 percent were women.
- 90 percent of the Innovators used their awards to launch new programs or expand existing ones. For example, one Innovator opened an Employment Center in Cairo to train NGOs and job hunters from Upper and Lower Egypt. The new center enabled her to provide vocational training to more e people. Another Egyptian Innovator opened a library and craft center in the Siwa Oasis to traing young artisans and provide a community center for children and youth. New programs included a youth parliament network, a producer’s coop-kitchen designed to create green spaces in urban areas and rural areas), and a program to train rural women to make soap. One Egyptian Innovator completed the first sign language dictionary in Arabic.
- Before entering the program, 43 percent of the Innovators had not legally registered their organizations. Twenty-nine percent registered after joining and 14 percent are in the process of registering.
- 71 percent of the Innovators used their financial award to cover office rent, open a new office or second office, or move from a home office to permanent office space.

*Being part of well-known project as Synergos has helped us to build a trust bridge with our old and new clients in Palestine, and also helped us to get other grants as result of our record and participation with Synergos.
-Mohammed Kilany, Palestine*

The survey findings also showed a significant increase in the number of beneficiaries served:

- There was a 24 percent increase in the total number of beneficiaries served by the Innovators’ programs over two years:

- 62 percent of the Innovators began serving new categories of beneficiaries: adolescents, youth and women of all ages.

B. Organizational Effectiveness

Some Innovators used their financial award to build their internal organizational capacities by developing communications materials and purchasing equipment.

- 95 percent of the Innovators produced new communications materials to increase their visibility and the reach of their programs. Examples include the following
 - 57 percent website (creation, design and maintenance)
 - 38 percent (brochure design and production)
 - 10 percent (marketing).
- 76 percent bought new equipment such as cameras (48 percent), computers/laptops (43 percent) and printers (19 percent).

AWSI program helped increase the credibility of my work, since my innovation was recognized by Synergos which is a very known international NGO. The program also allowed to popularize and to make known my work throughout the world and this is very important for me.-Saadia Zrira, Morocco

C. Leadership

The AWSI program enhanced the leadership skills of Innovators in various ways. By exposing Social Innovators to global forums and media, the AWSI program increased their visibility and credibility in the field of social entrepreneurship. This also created opportunities for Innovators to receive awards and recognition for their work. For example, one Innovator received the KAAYIA Award and Raghda el Ebrashi of Egypt received the King Abdullah Award.

By connecting them with other emerging social entrepreneurs and civil society, the AWSI program promoted discussion and peer exchanges that inspired Innovators to form new collaborations and partnerships that would replicate program models across geographic borders and sectors.

Synergos has increased my social impact immensely from one neighborhood in Amman to 80 in ten different areas in Jordan including villages and towns mostly from underprivileged areas. From one storyteller to 330 trained storytellers, from serving 100 children to serving 4,000 children. My idea has been put on TV, radio and newspapers. People are more aware of the importance of reading aloud. My model is known and implemented on an individual basis in United Arab Emirates, Tunis, Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia [and Turkey].

–Rana Dajani, Jordan

For example, Rana Dajani's work with reading programs and neighborhood libraries has inspired other leaders and social entrepreneurs from other countries to replicate her model locally. This has propelled her into a leadership position and made her an articulate global advocate for her program. At the Clinton Global Initiative's annual meeting in September 2009, Rana's organization We Love Reading made a commitment to establish 100 more libraries throughout Jordan over the next five years.

D. Collaborations and Partnership

The program inspired new partnership and collaborations both between the Innovators, and between Innovators and other members of Synergos networks such as the Senior Fellows. These collaborations emerged in the latter part of the program period and are continuing past the program's end date.

Seventy-two percent of the Social Innovators entered new partnerships. These include partnerships with organizations sharing similar missions and fields of practice, as well as government ministries, USAID, Aramex and other private companies. For example, one Innovator reported collaborating with 36 NGOs in pre-school education. Another reported partnering with the Palestinian Ministry of Education to advance education for the visually impaired.

Innovators valued the experience of sharing with and learning from their fellow Innovators. They reported fifteen forms of collaboration, from informal exchange of knowledge to learning how to replicate another Innovator's program in their community. Synergos facilitated two learning exchanges between Innovators and two involving Innovators and Synergos Senior Fellow Ayla Göksel from Turkey.

Examples of collaborations and exchanges among Social Innovators include the following:

- Ramzi Odeh in Palestine travelled on an exchange visit to Jordan to learn about Rabee' Zureikat's exchange tourism approach through the community development project, Zikra. Odeh is launching a program based on Rabee's model in Arab Rachiada in Southern Palestine to attract tourism and contribute to the sustainable development of this marginalized area. Odeh got the idea after initially visiting Rabee' and experiencing his work first-hand during the Annual Meeting.
- Rana Dajani in Jordan visited Senior Fellow Ayla Göksel in Turkey as Ayla is interesting in replicating Rana's 'A Library in Every Neighborhood' initiative. This is an example of how Synergos can foster collaboration between its formal networks.

- Mohammed Kilany in Palestine is working with Ezzat Naem Guindy and Raghda el-Ebrashi in Egypt to replicate his innovative mobile technology platform to serve marginalized communities in Cairo.
- Social Innovators are developing collaborations in Palestine (which has the largest representation of Social Innovators). In Lebanon, Kamal Mouzawak organized performances for Paul Abi Rached at the weekly farmers' market in downtown Beirut to raise awareness about the importance of preserving the environment in Lebanon.

The Learning Exchanges are outlined above but these anecdotal statements will further illustrate this clear program output.

- *I believe it is very important for my initiative (creating social change through nonviolence) to be in collaboration with the innovators and especially the Palestinian ones because we deal with education, development, democracy, dialogue, and media as values of change.* - Ali Abu Awwad, Palestine
- *I started using the services of Souktel (Mohammed Kilany) and I learned a lot about recycling from Mr. Ezzat Naem, which drove me to start developing similar projects in Palestine using Paul Abi Rached way in advocacy.*- Aref Hussein, Palestine
- *Dr. Saadia Zrira and I started officially working together since January 2010, as she became a board advisor for Al Mostaqbal Institute.*- Younes Naoumi, Morocco
- *A GPC member introduced me to a press connection (Doreen Goldman and Gastronomica)-Kamal Mouzawak, Lebanon*
- *Ayla Göksel (a Senior Fellow) of ACEV sent two of their employees to study and learn about my model. They are implementing part of it in Istanbul Turkey in their early childhood mother training. We are in the process of signing an MOU/ letter of intent.* -Rana Dajani, Jordan
(This collaboration was forged after Ayla participated in the AWSI Annual Meeting in Jordan in 2010 and met Rana Dajani.)
- *Ala Shanak Ya baladi (AYB-SD) (Raghda from Egypt) we have almost built the cooperation that let us to provide them the service of Job-Matching and they helped us to have presence in Egypt.* - Mohammad Kilany, Palestine
- *We will train Zikra (Rabee' Zureikat, Jordan) on our employment model to implement in Al Ghour, and they will train us on how to do exchange tourism in Egypt.* - Raghda el-Ebrashi, Egypt
- *Working at a regional level gives the opportunity to exchange experience, learn from others, and motivate others to work, at a wider scope.*- Nureddin Amro, Palestine

"It helps in making a scope on the active innovators in the region and helps in creating a network between people who have no opportunity to meet in such a way and it create a kind of platform for change which can helps other innovators in the future." - Sameh El-Halawny, Egypt

- *We are in the process of working between the Pacific University of Paraguay (with Mr. Martin Burt a Senior Fellow) and T.E.R.R.E. Liban (Paul's organization) in order to have some volunteers that might come to our association in order to accomplish their summer internship program.*- Paul Abi Rached, Lebanon
This collaboration was made after Paul attended the Senior Fellows Annual Meeting in New York in 2009 and met Martin Burt.

E. Funding

The strategic connections offered by the AWSI program contributed directly and indirectly to increasing funding for individual Innovators. Seventy-one percent of the Innovators secured new sources of funding such as the Ford Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Aramex, the U.S. Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), Vodafone, the World Bank and European government funds. The total amount raised by the Innovators was \$3.2 million.

VI. Key Learnings

This section addresses the key lessons learned in working with the inaugural class of Social Innovators. These learnings will inform the implementation of the next phase of the program and will be applied to the second class of Social Innovators.

Gender balance. The underrepresentation of females in the program is one of the main lessons learned from the design of the selection process. While women represented 40 percent of the candidates entering the final selection round, we did not stipulate in advance a required quota for female representation in the program to ensure gender balance. The Regional Advisory Committee (comprising nine members, five of whom were women) made the final selection and opted not to adopt gender balance as a selection criteria. We felt that imposing this criteria on the Committee at the time of selection would be contrary to our approach of entrusting the final decision-making to local experts and leaders. With the next class of Social Innovators we will be more explicit about the need for a more equitable gender distribution as we firmly believe in the importance of supporting female social entrepreneurs and having them more equally represented in the second class.

Language skills. Access to global and regional convenings was a major program offering. Since these convenings were conducted in English it became difficult to ensure equal access among our 22 Social Innovators. Those Innovators who did not possess a firm grasp of the English language were, unfortunately, excluded from these events. We were at times obliged to “double dip” into our cohort of Innovators fluent in English. The same Innovators attended multiple events while other Innovators did not have the opportunity to attend any of the global convenings. Moving forward, the program will give higher priority to candidates who have strong English language skills so that they can benefit more fully from technical training and opportunities for strategic connection at global forums.

Technical Assistance. While many Social Innovators benefited considerably from SEAP training, a number of them felt that the virtual nature of the format made it difficult to benefit fully from the experience. Training was delivered by US-based consultants primarily in English, and this proved challenging to Innovators with a more basic knowledge of the language. The seven-hour time difference also made scheduling difficult. Moving forward, we will place greater reliance on local resources, trainers and consulting firms, and identifying Arabic-speaking technical assistance providers. Synergos will work to further strengthen relationships with local and regional institutions (including corporate program sponsors) to deliver in-country assistance and support. This will also ensure more sustainability in the delivery of technical assistance.

Regional Advisory Committee. Significant time, effort, and resources were devoted to forming and convening the Regional Advisory Committee. This was particularly important in building relationships to aid the selection of Innovators, advise on program design and implementation, and mentor selected candidates. However, moving forward we believe we can reap these benefits without the cost of a formal RAC convening. Flexibility will be applied in drawing on the individual experience, advice and resources of Committee members individually rather than as a group. Members will be contacted as and when needed. This strategy also allows us to reach out to new prospective members who may at first have been concerned about the time commitment.

Sustainability. Innovators at the early stage of development are likely to find sustainability more of a challenge after the AWSI program ends. This is particularly true of projects that are highly dependent on the program for financial support. A lesson learned in this first phase of the program has to do with the importance of tailoring offerings to the stage of development of Innovators' initiatives in select critical areas. One of these areas is fundraising; some Social Innovators may be significantly less advanced than others in attracting and diversifying sources of funding. As indicated above, one of the ways to provide tailored support is by identifying local resources in the region to deliver specific training and knowledge. Also, at future regional meetings we will give more time to breakout sessions – in lieu of plenary sessions that provide a uniform level of training – to address specific issues faced by different subsets of Innovators. We would also tailor individual offerings by tapping expertise from the Synergos networks and from the expanded AWSI network: Social Innovators who become alumni of the program can serve as mentors for future classes, and will continue to be invited to select events to encourage knowledge transfer and promote collaboration.

VII. Budget and Funding

Total program expenses over the program period amounted to \$1.86 million. The table below provides the summary breakdown of program costs as per the format of the Cooperative

Agreement. While Years 1, 2 and 3 covered 12 months, Year 4 covers one month to reflect the one-month extension of the program through October 2010.

	Program Expenses				Total US\$
	Year 1 (Oct 2007 to Sep 2008)	Year 2 (Oct 2008 to Sep 2009)	Year 3 (Oct 2009 to Sep 2010)	Year 4 (one month Oct 2010)	
Sub-grant program	-	374,000	340,000	34,000	748,000
Direct costs	153,152	201,325	154,415	8,801	517,693
Training	<u>230</u>	<u>66,492</u>	<u>162,044</u>	<u>31,905</u>	<u>260,671</u>
Subtotal Direct Costs	153,382	641,817	656,459	74,706	1,526,364
Indirect cost (22%)	<u>33,744</u>	<u>141,200</u>	<u>144,421</u>	<u>16,435</u>	<u>335,800</u>
Total US\$	187,126	783,016	800,880	91,141	1,862,164

Of total program expenses, \$1 million was covered by the grant from USAID and \$862,164 in matching and Synergos funds. The matching contribution included about \$140,000 in in-kind support from the Social Entrepreneurship Advancement Program (SEAP) implemented by Booz Allen Hamilton consultants. A full list of donors and in-kind support to the program is provided on the next page.