REGIONAL GUIDE TO INNOVATIVE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

SAFIR

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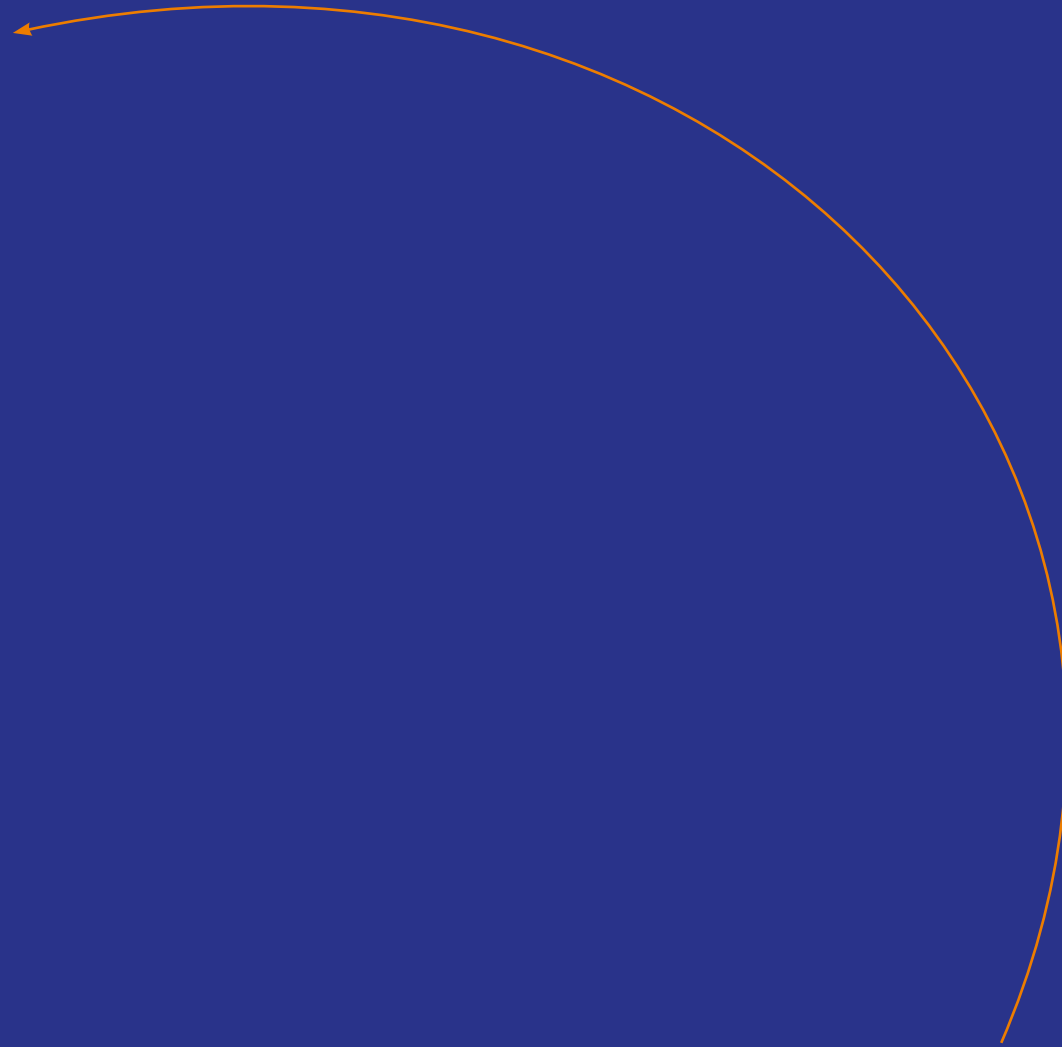
INSPIRING

INFORMING

GUIDE DESIGN CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

01

1.1. The Safir program

The Safir Program is a regional initiative dedicated to promoting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the economic integration of young people in seven North African and Middle Eastern countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia. The program focuses on activating young people's civic engagement and supporting projects with a high social, cultural, and environmental impact.

Providing support to young entrepreneurs:

Safir supports over 1,000 young people by facilitating the development of their initiatives. The 45 most promising projects have received grants and access to an acceleration program

Safir is about:

Strengthening the regional support network:

Establishing a mutual support network of 18 higher education and research institutions and 7 organizations specialized in innovative entrepreneurship to support young people in the region, thus boosting their capacity to provide support to the youth.

The program facilitated sustainable civic engagement with long-lasting and ongoing benefits.

1.2. Stakeholders

European Union and project coordination: The Safir program is funded by the European Union and coordinated by the Institut Français, which is responsible for distributing grants. Reporting to both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture, the Institut Français is dedicated to promoting French culture and fostering international cooperation.

CFI and media support: Canal France International (CFI), the French public operator for media cooperation, provides expertise in media development and allocates grants to SAFIR-supported media projects that promote discussion and awareness of the SDGs.

ANND and advocacy: The Arab Network for Civil Society Organizations (ANND) is a regional network that comprises organizations from 12 countries in the Arab region. Its main focus is on strengthening civil society, promoting democracy, and sustainable development. ANND leads advocacy activities and raises awareness of Agenda 2030 among SAFIR's young beneficiaries.

AUF and academic support: Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) is an association of 1,000 French-speaking educational institutions that supports student-entrepreneur projects and develops innovation spaces within its university network.

Lab'ess and project incubation: Lab'ess is Tunisia's first incubator for projects with a social and environmental impact. It provides support for social entrepreneurship and civil society. Lab'ess aims to reinforce the skills of innovative entrepreneurship support structures (SAEI) as part of Safir.

Pitchworthy / Bloom and business acceleration: Bloom is a social enterprise accelerator from Lebanon that provides tech-empowered mentoring and training for entrepreneurs to enhance their SAEI skills. Bloom collaborates with Lab'ess to enhance the skills of the SAEIs and expand the regional support network size and capacity.

1.3 Quality standard objectives

This guide has been created to establish a quality standard to support the growth of innovative social entrepreneurship led by young people in the MENA region. Its goal is to bring together the knowledge and skills acquired by the seven innovative entrepreneurship support structures that have been strengthened by the Safir program.

The best practices listed in this guide reflect the expertise developed within the social entrepreneurial ecosystem as part of the Safir program. Particular emphasis will be placed on analyzing the specific challenges of supporting social entrepreneurs in the countries concerned, with a focus on two key areas:

- **Harmonization of programs:** The reference framework unifies incubation and acceleration programs of entrepreneurship support structures, fostering regional synergy with a common approach.
- **The importance of network:** The guide will emphasize the importance of building a strong regional network of young entrepreneurs, as well as the entrepreneurial support structures. This helps build a truly collaborative regional dynamic.

- **Capacity building:** The collaborative process of developing this guide will facilitate knowledge sharing about how to support best the challenges MENA social entrepreneurs face. It will enhance stakeholders' skills and enable them to deliver improved support for the youth social entrepreneurs.

1.4. Recipients

This guide is intended for Structures d'Accompagnement à l'Entrepreneuriat Innovant (innovative entrepreneurship support structures) wishing to set up a social entrepreneurship support program on a regional scale. It is also young social entrepreneurs in the MENA region to hone their knowledge and expertise based on best practices in the social entrepreneurship ecosystem. Finally, it is also aimed, any actor involved in projects combining the achievement of the SDGs and social entrepreneurship in the MENA region.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP (SE) ECOSYSTEM IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA REGION

02

2.1. The Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) and Social Entrepreneurship (SE)

What is the social economy? What is social entrepreneurship?

In the MENA region, the Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) and Social Entrepreneurship (SE) have experienced significant growth over the past decade. These concepts reflect a shift in economic practices toward a more substantial consideration of social and environmental issues.

SSE principles
The SSE includes organizations that pursue social or environmental objectives, but are also aligned with specific values. These organizations adopt a variety of legal forms, including associations, cooperatives, mutual societies and social enterprises.

Limited profitability: the project is not an end in itself, but a means to serve the social goal/object .

Democratic, participatory governance

A social or environmental purpose

An economically viable project

Essence of ES

Social Entrepreneurship (SE) is a concept popularized by Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus. It is a type of entrepreneurship where the main objective is to serve the general interest by promoting economic efficiency. In contrast to the state and the market, social enterprises aim to address social or environmental concerns that have been overlooked. The profit earned is reinvested in other social impact initiatives. Unlike SSE, SE prioritizes social innovation and does not always require participative governance.

Diverse approaches in the MENA region

Addressing social and solidarity economy (SSE) as well as social entrepreneurship (SE) in the MENA region can be challenging due to different cultural interpretations. In English-speaking countries of the region, the term «social entrepreneurship» is often preferred, but it refers to a different concept than SSE.

Social entrepreneurship and the social/solidarity-based economy offer a new vision of society that does not separate economic activity from the active participation of citizens in society.

SSE represents:
Egypt:
 - 7.7% of GDP
 - 0.6% of the working population
Tunisia:
 1% of GDP
 4% of working population
Morocco:
 2% of GDP
 3% of working population

Source: «Social and solidarity-based economy: a vector for inclusiveness and job creation in the Mediterranean partner countries» (European Investment Bank - FEMISE, 2014).

Legal frameworks and national examples

The MENA region, except Tunisia, lacks dedicated legislation for social enterprises. In the absence of a specific legal framework, social entrepreneurs operate using a variety of existing legal statuses. Morocco defines SSE, in its 2010-2020 national strategy, as a collection of economic initiatives that aim to promote production, consumption, and savings while respecting individuals, the environment, and local communities.

Social and Solidarity Economy business sectors

In the MENA region, the Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) and Social Entrepreneurship (SE) are emerging fields. The absence of established definitions and formal recognition makes it difficult to accurately quantify SSE in terms of size and sectoral diversity, in an environment where its contribution to local economies remains limited.

The SSE is mainly structured around three legal forms: cooperatives, mutuals and associations. Each tends to focus on specific sectors. For example, data from Morocco shows:

- Cooperatives: 12,022 registered, with a 66.4% predominance in the agricultural sector.

- Mutuals: 50 entities, mainly in insurance and health.

- Associations: Around 90,000, with 22% working in local development and another 22% in the cultural sector.

Social entrepreneurship covers a wide range of sectors that can be grouped into two broad categories, often including social enterprises in the field of new technologies.
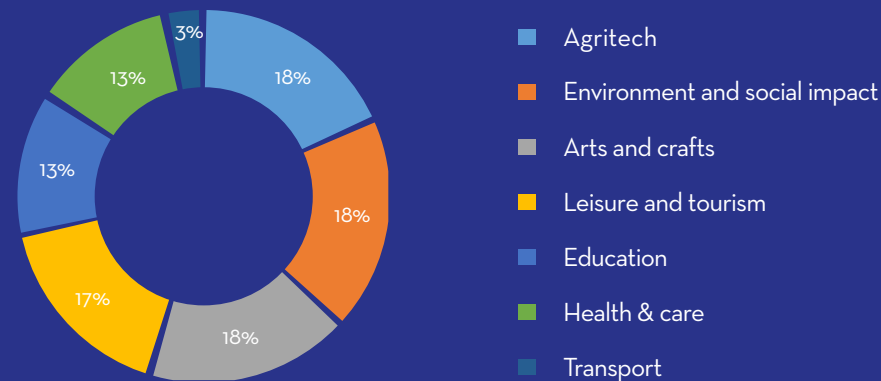
ENVIRONMENT

• Renewable energies
• Sustainable housing
• Recycling
• Waste and water management
• Agriculture

SOCIAL

• Education
• Health and social services
• Culture and heritage
• Finance and microfinance

Social enterprise sector in Tunisia:

- 3%
- 18%
- 13%
- 18%
- 13%
- 18%
- 17%

■ Agritech

■ Environment and social impact

■ Arts and crafts

■ Leisure and tourism

■ Education

■ Health & care

■ Transport

Source : Chiffres de 2022 issus de Entrepreneurs of Tunisia.

Emergence of the SSE in the region

SSE and SE have been developing in the MENA region since the 1980s, expanding rapidly over the last ten years. Today, they are recognized as levers for sustainable development, job creation and the revitalization of local economies.

The Touiza is a traditional Algerian system that promotes mutual aid and cooperation among community members, providing occasional assistance when needed.

In Tunisia, the cradle of the Arab Spring, the number of associations rose from 9,500 in 2010 to 14,000 in 2012.

The MENA region has a long tradition of a long tradition of mutual aid and solidarity based on community or religious principles, providing fertile ground for the development of the social and solidarity economy.

The Arab Spring of 2011 saw people, especially youth, rise up against social inequalities and demand rapid change. The movements democratization of power led to a proliferation of initiatives.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund introduced structural adjustment programs in Arab countries. These programs led to the government scaling back its involvement in various sectors, while simultaneously promoting the development of initiatives to offset this reduced engagement.

Today: the rise of the SSE is strongly supported by international cooperation organizations.

2.2. The entrepreneurial ecosystem in which the Safir program was implemented

The socio-economic and political context of the MENA region

• **Predominantly young :** With 65% of its population under the age of 30, the region has significant potential for growth and economic dynamism.

• **High unemployment rates:** Youth unemployment is a particular concern in the MENA region, with a rate twice as high as the global average in 2019. Countries such as Tunisia and Palestine are experiencing alarming rates.

• **Disparities between men and women:** Gender inequality in employment is apparent in the significant difference between male and female participation rates in the workforce.

• **Education-Employment Disparity:** Young graduates are more affected by unemployment than non-graduates, partly due to an imbalance between available jobs and levels of education.

• **Predominantly public sector:** Except for Lebanon, the public sector is more prominent than the private sector, constraining job opportunities, notably in Egypt, Tunisia, and Jordan.

This socio-economic framework has several implications:

• **Employment and training imbalances:** A large proportion of young workers are employed in jobs that do not correspond to their level of education.

• **Substantial informal sector:** The informal sector accounts for a significant share of the region's GDP and employment.

• **Emigration and brain drain:** An increasing number of young people are relocating in pursuit of better opportunities, detracting from the region's economic and entrepreneurial growth potential.

• **Political and social instability:** The same underlying economic challenges that fueled events like the Arab Spring may also lead to radicalization among young people facing unemployment and limited prospects.

In MENA's socio-economic climate, SSE and SEs appear to be promising solutions for the… economic integration of young people. Conversely, educated youth could be the driving force behind the emergence and development of social entrepreneurship in the region.

> The MENA region boasts a young and highly entrepreneurial population, ranking among the top areas globally in terms of aspiring entrepreneurs.
> The population views entrepreneurship positively. According to a survey of Arab youth, 83.2% of young people in the MENA region believe that «starting a business is considered a good career choice». This compares with 70.9% in developing countries and 62.2% in Europe.

> Algeria stands out in the region for its unique approach to the social and solidarity economy (SSE), with top-down initiatives from the state. In the 1990s and 2000s, the Algerian government, primarily through establishing the Social Development Agency, fostered the growth of the solidarity economy as a response to poverty and instability. Now, the state plays a pivotal role in overseeing and supporting SSE initiatives. However, this significant state involvement may impede the development of a fully independent SSE sector (Ahmed-Zaïd et al., 2013).

Panorama of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the MENA region

The role of the public sector

In the MENA region, public sector involvement in SSE development differs from country to country, but **all have recognized the contribution of SSE to achieving sustainable development.** Here are a few examples:

TUNISIAN SSE LAW, A BREAKTHROUGH IN THE REGION

> The law of June 30, 2022 on the social and solidarity economy has made it possible to :
> • Define the criteria for labeling a social economy company.
> • Created three institutions for the governance and development of the SSE
> • Create adapted financing mechanisms, a percentage of public orders, and tax and financial incentives.

• **Tunisia** has made the most significant strides in acknowledging the importance of the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE), having passed a law in 2020 to establish a special SSE designation for social enterprises. This initiative includes various measures aimed at creating a suitable regulatory and financial environment for these enterprises. However, three years on from its enactment, the detailed regulations required to fully implement this law are yet to be finalized.

Morocco is also one of the countries most involved in the social economy:

• 2005: The country implemented the **National Initiative for Human Development**, a strategy aimed at boosting Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) initiatives.

• 2010: Morocco introduced a **National Strategy for the Social Solidarity Economy**. This strategy led to the overhaul of several legal frameworks, particularly those concerning cooperatives and fair trade. By 2030, Morocco aims for the SSE to contribute 7.4% of its GDP and has established a comprehensive law on the social and solidarity economy.

In Lebanon, the government has introduced a scheme to encourage banks to finance SSE ventures, **Circular 331,** which guarantees banks a 75% refund in the event of failure by the start-up to repay the loan.

The role of the private sector

The private sector is making a significant contribution to the development of the Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) in the MENA region, notably through :

ORANGE PRIZE FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

> Since 2011, the Orange Foundation has organized the Orange Prize for Social Entrepreneurship in Africa and the Middle East. Orange Group subsidiaries in the countries concerned select and elect three innovative projects, which will then compete before an international jury. The finalists receive personalized support and financing.
> The aim of the prize is to identify young technology start-ups with a positive impact. In addition to the prize, the competition provides an opportunity for visibility and networking for impact entrepreneurs.

• Private investors: Western investors are increasingly interested in Arab startups, stimulating the creation of private incubators and accelerator such as Flat6Labs, a key venture capital player in the MENA region.

• Action by private companies, CSRs and foundations: These groups are actively supporting social entrepreneurs and organizations that assist entrepreneurs.

One notable example is the OCP Group in Morocco, which through its OCP Entrepreneurship Network foundation, finances and provides technical support for innovative social entrepreneurship projects.

These private-sector initiatives are fundamental to the sustainable development of the SSE, providing financial resources and essential support for entrepreneurial initiatives with a social impact in the region.

Financing mechanisms

The diverse range of financial support options available to the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) is reflective of the sector's needs. However, navigating through regulatory barriers and the focus on specific sectors often makes securing financing a significant challenge.

Public funds: Although there are not always funds exclusively earmarked for this sector, public authorities in the MENA region are involved in providing financial support for SSE initiatives.

> • **Morocco:** The Moazara program, supported by the relevant ministry, awards grants to cooperatives and other SSE entities.

> • **Egypt:** The Social Fund for Development, set up with the help of the UNDP, finances sustainable development programs through micro-credits.

Grants: Social entrepreneurs have access to grants through civil society support programs, often funded by international donors or private foundations.

Impact investment funds: These target specific sectors, especially those with a strong technological component.

> • **Lebanon:** Insure & Match Capital, with American support, supports entrepreneurs in various sectors.

> • **Egypt:** Egypt Ventures Acumem invests in innovative, job-creating startups.

Solidarity finance: This is an option for social entrepreneurs, but remains limited in the region, with the notable exception of microcredit agencies that mainly support micro-entrepreneurship.

Crowdfunding: Participatory financing platforms exist, but in the absence of a legal framework, entrepreneurs use foreign-based platforms.

Morocco: Smala & Co, a crowdfunding platform for impact projects, initially set up in France before returning to Morocco following the enactment of law 15-18 regulating crowdfunding.

Availability of expertise

The number of these support structures has grown considerably, offering a variety of programs including training, mentoring, networking, and sometimes financing. The latter are often free of charge, supported by international or national donors.

ASHOKA, THE LEADING NETWORK OF INNOVATIVE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS.

Founded in 1980 in India, Ashoka aims to identify and support innovative social entrepreneurs who want to initiate social change.
Since 2003, the Ashoka Arab World platform has brought together 12 countries in the region.

Incubators and accelerators

The number of these support structures has grown considerably, offering a variety of programs including training, mentoring, networking, and sometimes financing. The latter are often free of charge, supported by international or national donors.

FLAT6LABS, THE MOST ESTABLISHED ACCELERATOR IN THE MENA REGION.

Flat6Labs supports innovative entrepreneurs in the region through coaching and start-up financing. It is present in Lebanon, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan.

Contractor networks

Various networks facilitate exchanges, access to events and mentoring. In Palestine, for example, informal online networks invite entrepreneurs to share experience and know-how.

Student Entrepreneur Clubs

Initiatives such as Enactus foster an entrepreneurial spirit among young people, encouraging them to innovate for a sustainable future. This network is active in several MENA countries.

The role of universities

The region's universities are showing a growing interest in entrepreneurship, with the creation of on-campus incubators and the integration of entrepreneurship modules into their curricula.

Challenges and obstacles to SSE development

• **Lack of a unified definition:** SSE and Social Entrepreneurship (SE) are concepts that vary according to the interpretation of different players, which hinders the structuring of a coherent sector. The range of entities under the SSE umbrella, from small producers to startups, adds to the confusion.

• **Lack of a specific regulatory framework:** Faced with an unclear legal framework, SSE entities are forced to register under legal structures that do not always correspond to their business model.

• **Difficulty accessing financing:** Access to banking and private financing is limited for SSE enterprises, which are perceived as risky, especially for young entrepreneurs. International funding is often sector-specific and dispersed through calls for projects, which can lead to a concentration of funds in areas favored by international donors.

• **Fragmented Landscape of Stakeholders:** The growing number of participants in the SSE over the past decade has not been matched by sufficient coordination, impeding effective support. Public initiatives lack cross-sectoral coherence, creating additional obstacles for social entrepreneurs seeking to navigate this ecosystem.

2.3. Social entrepreneurship and the Safir program

Contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals

Social entrepreneurship plays a vital role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by addressing:

• Global social challenges,

• Economic and environmental issues,

• Fostering development that is both sustainable and inclusive.

Although specifically linked to SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), social entrepreneurship can play a key role in progress towards all the SDGs.

SAFIR AND THE SDG

The Safir program is designed to engage young people in active participation and empower them to become agents of change.

The entrepreneurial projects supported by the SAEI responded to one or more of the SDGs.

Safir also conducted local workshops to increase young people's understanding and involvement in social entrepreneurship.

Supporting young entrepreneurs

Recognizing social entrepreneurship as a critical driver for economic growth in the MENA region and a solution to youth unemployment, regional governments and international organizations promote youth entrepreneurship. This initiative aims to prevent social instability and encourage inclusive development.

• **In Morocco and Tunisia:** Since 2019, a new status for student entrepreneurs has been introduced, providing training, support services, and the opportunity for entrepreneurial projects to be recognized as university credits.

• **In Jordan:** Nearly 73% of support structures offer programs exclusively dedicated to young social entrepreneurs.

• **In Lebanon and Palestine:** Incubators, in partnership with UNDP and the Big Heart Foundation, are setting up specific incubation programs for young social entrepreneurs, to develop ecosystems conducive to youth-led impact businesses.

• **Universities in the MENA region:** They are increasingly incorporating entrepreneurship into their business and economics courses and establishing more university incubators. An example is UCASTI at Gaza's College of Applied Sciences.

• **Early Entrepreneurial Education: Specific programs** aim to instill an entrepreneurial mindset from a young age. For example, in Morocco, the NGO INJAZ Al-Maghrib provides an entrepreneurship training program catering to all educational levels, from primary school to university.

SAFIR and youth entrepreneurship

Safir is aimed exclusively at young entrepreneurs between the ages of 20 and 30.

Through the creation of a regional youth network, Safir enables young entrepreneurs to meet, exchange ideas and strengthen their sense of active citizenship.

Promoting female entrepreneurship

In the MENA region, women's entrepreneurial activity is less widespread than men's, with 8% of women versus 13% of men involved in entrepreneurship. This gap is attributable to persistent cultural barriers and social norms. A study by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization reveals that a significant proportion of women in Egypt (20%) and Lebanon (40%) perceive their environment as discriminatory, despite the absence of legislation explicitly discriminating against women entrepreneurs.

Initiatives around the region are therefore being implemented to reduce gender inequalities, encourage women to become entrepreneurs and fully exploit their economic potential in the MENA region:

• **Jordan:** The government has drawn up a national plan for women's economic empowerment.

• **Morocco:** Various government agencies, such as those promoting SMEs and social development, support women's entrepreneurship through training and funding.

There are also programs specifically designed to support women entrepreneurs:

• **In Tunisia:** The ESSentielles program by Lab'ess.

• **In Morocco:** Bidaya's Women Greepreneur program.

• **In Jordan:** The Women in tech program by Oasis 500.

91 PROJECTS INCUBATED, INCLUDING 31 BY STUDENTS OR RECENT GRADUATES.

The Safir program focuses on gender-related issues by:

- Establishing a quota for women-led projects and additional support for female entrepreneurs.
- Prioritizing projects that contribute to the socio-economic empowerment of women.
- Raising awareness among the SAEI stakeholders about women entrepreneurs' unique challenges.

Developing social entrepreneurship outside capital cities

The development of entrepreneurship in the MENA region is unevenly distributed, with capitals and large cities benefiting from better access to information, expertise and financing than rural areas.

At the initiative of governments and civil society, programs are designed to overcome infrastructure and service deficits in rural areas, thus supporting the growth of inclusive and diversified social entrepreneurship throughout the MENA region:

• **In Jordan:** The Hashemite Fund for Human Development aims to promote social entrepreneurship and economic development in rural and disadvantaged areas.

• **Lebanon:** Berytech has launched a program to stimulate the rural and agricultural economy, supporting farming businesses and rural tourism. A social impact fund is established to support social enterprises dedicated to rural development, particularly those improving healthcare and educational access in rural areas.

65 OF 91 INCUBATED PROJECTS BASED IN THE REGIONS (OUTSIDE THE CAPITAL)

Safir and social entrepreneurship outside capital cities

The Safir program emphasizes supporting entrepreneurial projects in regional areas to engage young people beyond major urban centers.

To support this, SAFIR has:

- Made an effort to identify project leaders from areas outside the capital and focused on projects working to reduce territorial inequalities.
- Implemented measures to improve access to support for young people, including online training and travel subsidies.
- Established collaborations with regional universities to extend its reach.

PROFESSIONALIZATION OF INNOVATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUPPORT STRUCTURES

03

3.1. The various support structures and their service offerings

The Safir regional network brings together seven innovative entrepreneurship support structures in the Middle East and North Africa. Selected through a call for applications, these structures are each located in a different country: Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Morocco, and Tunisia. They offer invaluable support to entrepreneurs and startups, providing them with the tools and resources they need to develop their ideas and businesses while reinforcing the diversity and geographical reach of the network.

ACIE-USEK, Lebanon

The Asher Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (ACIE), was established in 2017, with a mission to support Lebanese individuals and young people:
- to define their innovative ideas,
- make connections with like-minded people,
- and acquire the knowledge and skills needed to set up a business.

Located on the main campus of the Université Saint-Esprit de Kaslik (USEK), ACIE :
- provides assistance to startups and entrepreneurs in various sectors and at different stages of their development.
- creates a network with local communities throughout the country, thanks to its collaboration with USEK's three regional centers (Chekka, Rmeich, Zahlé) and the Faculty of Medicine and Medical Sciences in Byblos,
- acts to foster an entrepreneurial spirit among young people through a variety of business and skills workshops, conferences, informal discussions and hackathons.

Its main objective is to promote impactful initiatives in Lebanon through ideation processes, validation sprints, incubation and acceleration programs.

Al Badil, Tunisia

Al Badil is an association that works to structure the Tunisian cultural sector and weave links between citizen and creative initiatives across the country. Its aim is to contribute as much as possible to the democratization of art and culture, because, as its teams are convinced, «[...] more knowledge, more understanding, more ambition and more widely shared inventions are essential to progress».]

The association's activities fall into four main categories:

- Incubating cultural projects
- Distribution of artistic creations
- Capacity-building for artists and cultural managers
- Cultural project engineering

Over the years, Al Badil has developed a business supporting young people's cultural and artistic projects, which has gradually evolved into project incubation. Its expertise in cultural project engineering enables it to offer innovative cultural formats and to provide the best possible support for new players in the cultural and creative economy.

ACSE, Algeria

The Algerian Center for Social Entrepreneurship (ACSE) was created in 2013 with the aim of promoting social entrepreneurship, federating, supporting and accompanying Algerian social entrepreneurs in the creation, development and sustainability of their businesses. Driven by ancestral Algerian values of solidarity and empathy, and aware of the socio-economic challenges facing Algeria today, the center works to support innovative solutions to the country's social and environmental problems. The ACSE team believes in an Algeria in which citizens work together to find solutions to the difficulties that affect them, while preserving the resources they use.

To this end, ACSE has launched Algeria's first social business incubator, enabling young social entrepreneurs to make a positive impact on their country by bringing their impact projects to life.

Bidaya, Morocco

BIDAYA

The Bidaya incubator, created in 2015, is a Moroccan non-profit organization. A dynamic player in the social and solidarity economy in Morocco . Bidaya's mission is to offer comprehensive support to entrepreneurs in the development of innovative projects with a positive social, environmental and cultural impact.

Bidaya has proven expertise in project selection, support and prospecting. Over the years, Bidaya has successfully supported more than 470 high-impact projects, demonstrating its commitment to sustainable change. Through strategic partnerships, the organization has facilitated the financing of over 160 projects, mobilizing grants and honorary loans worth a total of more than 3.5 million euros.

ICEALEX, Egypt

icealex
innovation collaboration entrepreneurship

ICEALEX is a leading platform for sector incubation and community innovation, focused on social and environmental values. Founded in 2015, it supports entrepreneurs in the creation of innovative projects with positive impact.

As an active founder of iceHubs Global (CIC), ICEALEX is part of a worldwide network of technology hubs, collaborating with entities such as iceaddis in Ethiopia, icealex and icecairo in Egypt, and icebauhaus in Germany, to tackle complex challenges.

Its approach is to create an ecosystem conducive to action, fostering innovation, collaboration and entrepreneurship to solve local challenges. Over the years, ICEALEX has supported over 470 projects and mobilized over 3.5 million euros in funding through strategic partnerships.

The organization promotes social innovation, advises governments, encourages the creation of inclusive businesses and aspires to global positive impact. It remains open to all opportunities for collaboration aimed at creating, sharing and implementing innovative solutions with a positive impact on society.

JYIF, Jordan

Jordan Youth Innovation Forum
الملتقى الأردني للإبداع الشبابي

The Jordan Youth Innovation Forum (JYIF) is a youth-focused NGO established in 2007. Its aim is to empower young people and engage them in social and economic development.

The JYIF trains young entrepreneurs, boosts their employability, encourages innovation, and supports the achievement of global sustainable development goals.

Over the years, JYIF has successfully promoted the economic potential of young people through a number of projects, preparing them for the global job market. Its programs are based on in-depth research and adapted to the local context.

The organization's mission is to foster the active engagement of young people by creating quality employment opportunities, an agile development ecosystem, and by encouraging their participation. This enables it to work, through global initiatives and a collaborative approach, to offer a better future for young people in Jordan, where they can flourish and have a significant impact on society.

UCASTI, Palestine

UCASTI

UCASTI, based in Gaza, Palestine, since its creation in 2010, is a leading incubator. Its aim is to support the development of entrepreneurial ideas by offering administrative, technical and financial assistance to young entrepreneurs until their project becomes autonomous and successful.

In partnership with local and international institutions, UCASTI works to bring benefits to the whole community by reducing unemployment and improving the quality of life of Gaza's citizens. The incubator has achieved great success since its inception, collaborating on a variety of projects, notably in the fields of technology, mobile applications and agriculture, in partnership with renowned organizations such as the UNDP.

UCASTI also provides well-equipped workspaces for freelance writers, programmers, designers and researchers, who join the incubator's self-employment programs. It also provides invaluable support to people with disabilities, helping them to achieve their full potential and financial independence.

UCASTI is an incredible organization running high-quality incubation programs in an extremely difficult environment. UCASTI must continue its mission so the world can benefit from the success stories from Gaza.

3.2. Support structures for innovative entrepreneurship
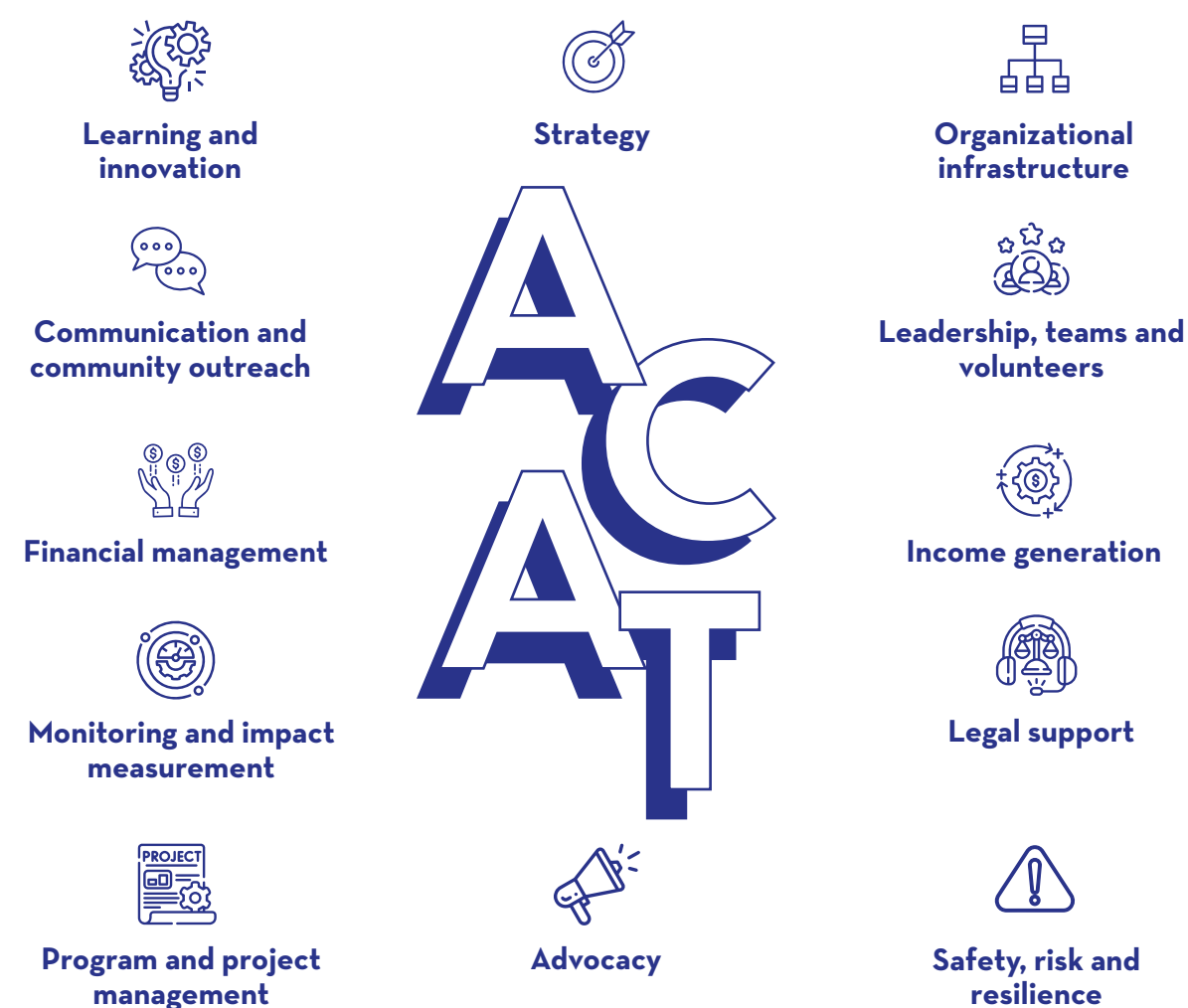
Skills diagnosis: tools and methodology

In order to effectively share best practices and develop a comprehensive plan for improving skills in a particular region, it is important to establish a consistent and replicable diagnostic model. This approach can benefit other stakeholders such as young entrepreneurs.

ACAT (Accelerators Capacity Assessment Tool):

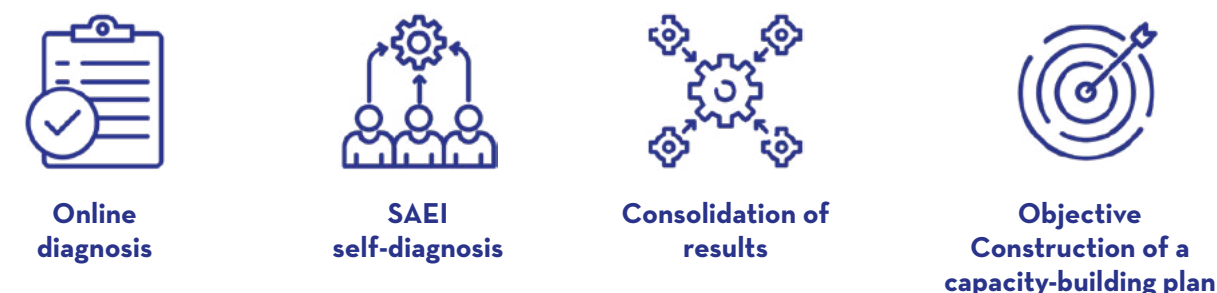*Diagnostic tool for support structures*

ACAT (Accelerator Capacity Assessment Tool) is a diagnostic tool adapted by Safir consortium partner Bloom. It is based on the OCAT (Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool) developed by the McKinsey consulting group. This tool enables support structures to identify their blind spots, offering them a 360-degree perspective of their current situation. It also guides them in selecting the most relevant areas for organizational development.

ACAT is composed of 66 questions divided into 12 categories:

- Learning and innovation
- Strategy
- Organizational infrastructure
- Communication and community outreach
- Leadership, teams and volunteers
- Financial management
- Income generation
- Monitoring and impact measurement
- Legal support
- Program and project management
- Advocacy
- Safety, risk and resilience

Each question gives rise to four evaluation levels weighted from 1 to 4 (4 being the most advanced skill). This quantification makes it possible to obtain a numerical assessment for each structure evaluated according to categories and sub-categories.

Diagnostic approach

| Online diagnosis | SAEI self-diagnosis | Consolidation of results | Objective Construction of a capacity-building plan |

The diagnosis of the organizational capacities of intermediary structures takes place in four distinct stages, through an approach developed by Bloom to ensure the success of these diagnoses:

1. Third-party diagnosis: This stage involves several sessions of up to 2 hours with predefined themes. The approach is informal to encourage trust and information sharing.

2. Self-diagnosis by SAEI members: To improve reliability, reduce subjectivity, and involve SAEI members, a self-diagnosis step is introduced. SAEI members complete the same set of questions asked during the initial diagnosis, using the Bloom platform to automate the process.

3. Data consolidation, analysis and interpretation: This stage involves in-depth analysis of the data collected during the diagnostic and self-diagnostic sessions. Relevant information is grouped and synthesized to provide an in-depth understanding of the situation. The data is then interpreted to formulate a comprehensive diagnosis, highlighting strengths, weaknesses and specific needs.

4. Formulation of diagnostic results and construction of the capacity-building plan: Once the diagnostic results have been obtained, they are analyzed to identify the areas requiring capacity-building. Based on these results, a solid capacity-building plan is drawn up, defining the specific actions, objectives and resources required to improve the skills and performance of the parties concerned.

Several points need to be taken into account to ensure effective diagnostics. These include :

- Informal communication and building trust.

- Maintaining energy and commitment throughout the process.

- Involvement of key stakeholders.

- Maintaining spontaneous, informal discussion to encourage open, unrestricted exchange, including questions that come up in open discussion.

- Ethical considerations, including data confidentiality, informed consent and consideration of stakeholders' values and rights.

3.3. Supporting project developers

Incubation and Acceleration

To foster a unified understanding of incubation and acceleration within the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) ecosystem, it is crucial to align practices and enhance collaboration among the primary stakeholders: incubators, accelerators, and entrepreneurship specialists.

To achieve this goal, comprehensive dialogues were convened among these entities, clarifying the diverse methodologies and perspectives found in the region regarding startup incubation and acceleration.

By working together, the players have established the following common visions and shared definitions for these concepts, thereby setting the groundwork for standardizing practices and methods. This facilitates collaboration and strengthens the Middle East and North Africa ecosystem, with a shared understanding for entrepreneurs, investors, and supporting institutions.
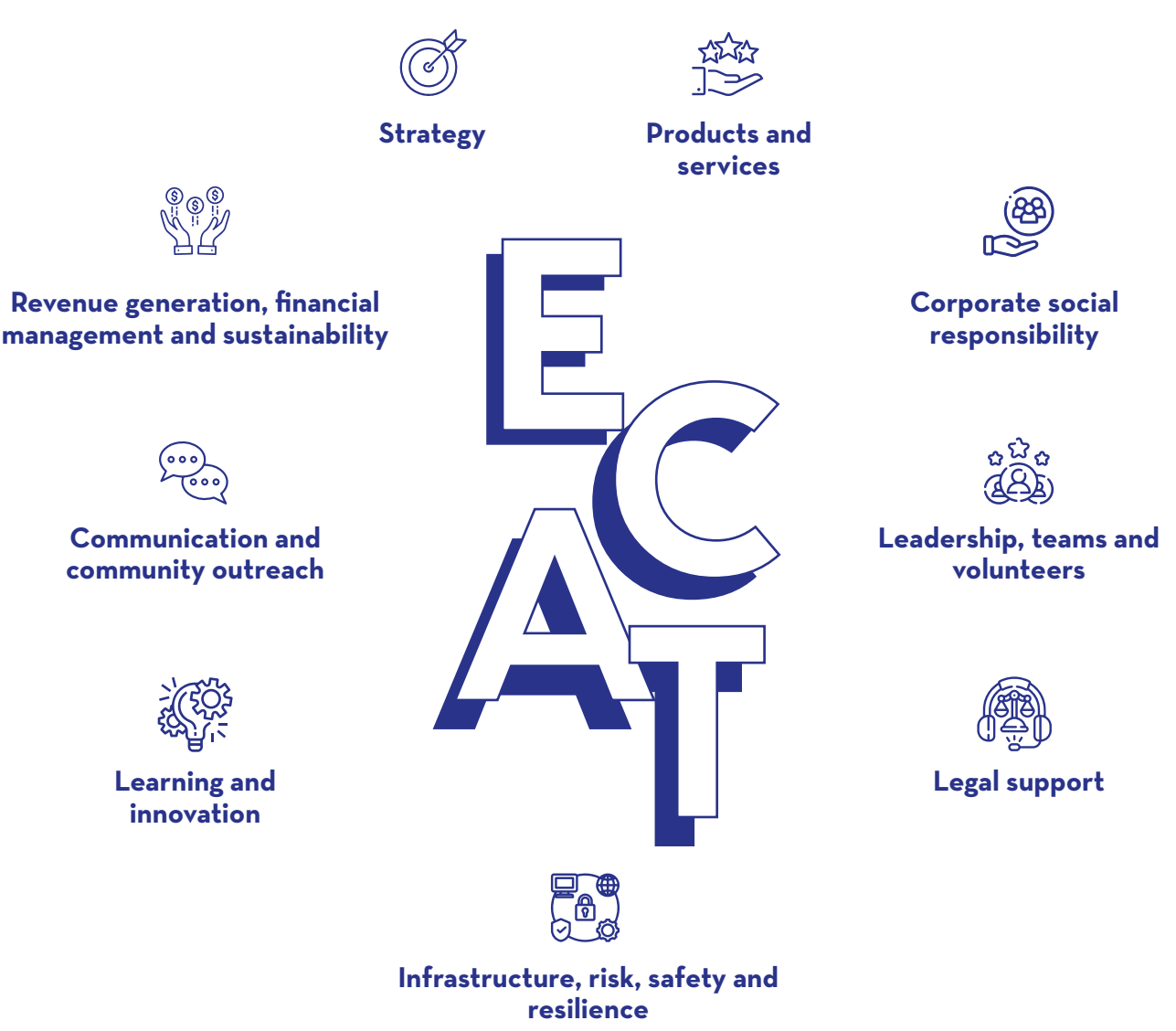
	INCUBATION	ACCELERATION
Value proposition	Providing entrepreneurs with the know-how, material resources and networking to help them launch their businesses effectively.	Enable early-stage startups to grow rapidly (multiplying their traction by at least 2 times) by offering years of learning in a short space of time.
Strategic objectives	Helping new entrepreneurs turn their start-up ideas into a successful, self-sufficient business.	Accelerate the start-up's growth and sales.
Startup milestones	**Stage 1: Ideation phase** You want to get started and are looking for/testing new ideas. **Stage 2: Initial development phase** Explore ideas, conduct market/customer research to start developing ideas... **Stage 3: Prototype phase** Move from a preliminary prototype (low-fidelity/paper-based) to a working prototype (high-fidelity) with early adopters.	**Stage 4: Growth phase** This stage marks the development and expansion of the startup's business, with a focus on customer acquisition, revenue growth and market expansion. **Stage 5: Maturity phase** Once the start-up has established its business model and achieved a certain level of success, it enters a maturity phase where it seeks to consolidate its market position and ensure continued, sustainable growth.
Timeline	1 to 5 years	3 to 6 months

ECAT (Enterprise Capacity Assessment Tool)
Diagnostic tool for startups

Based on the ACAT tool described above, the ECAT is an adaptation of the latter, enabling an assessment adapted to both established companies and start-ups.

The ECAT consists of 68 questions divided into 9 categories:

- Strategy
- Products and services
- Revenue generation, financial management and sustainability
- Corporate social responsibility
- Communication and community outreach
- Leadership, teams and volunteers
- Learning and innovation
- Legal support
- Infrastructure, risk, safety and resilience

Each question is rated on a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 representing the highest level of competence. This quantification provides a numerical evaluation for each structure assessed, based on categories and sub-categories, offering a detailed view of their organizational capabilities.
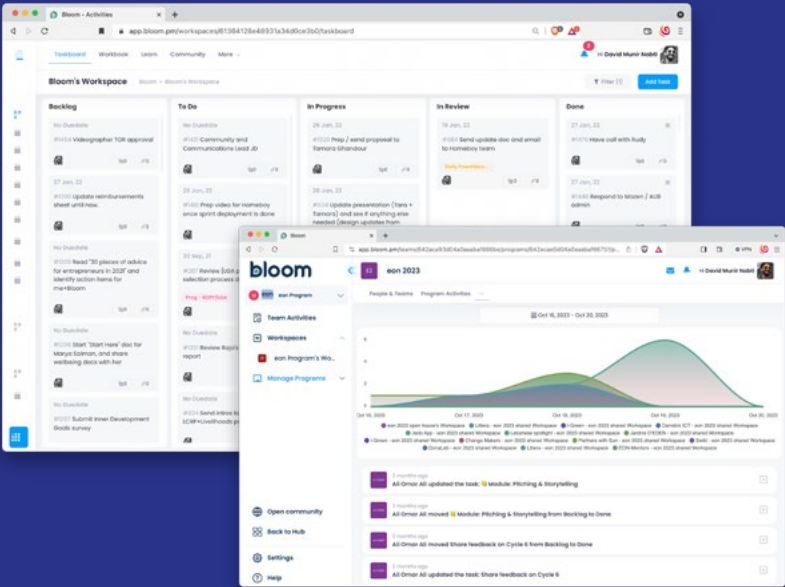
The Bloom Methodology and Platform for supporting young project leaders.

Bloom plateform
Optimizing program and team success:

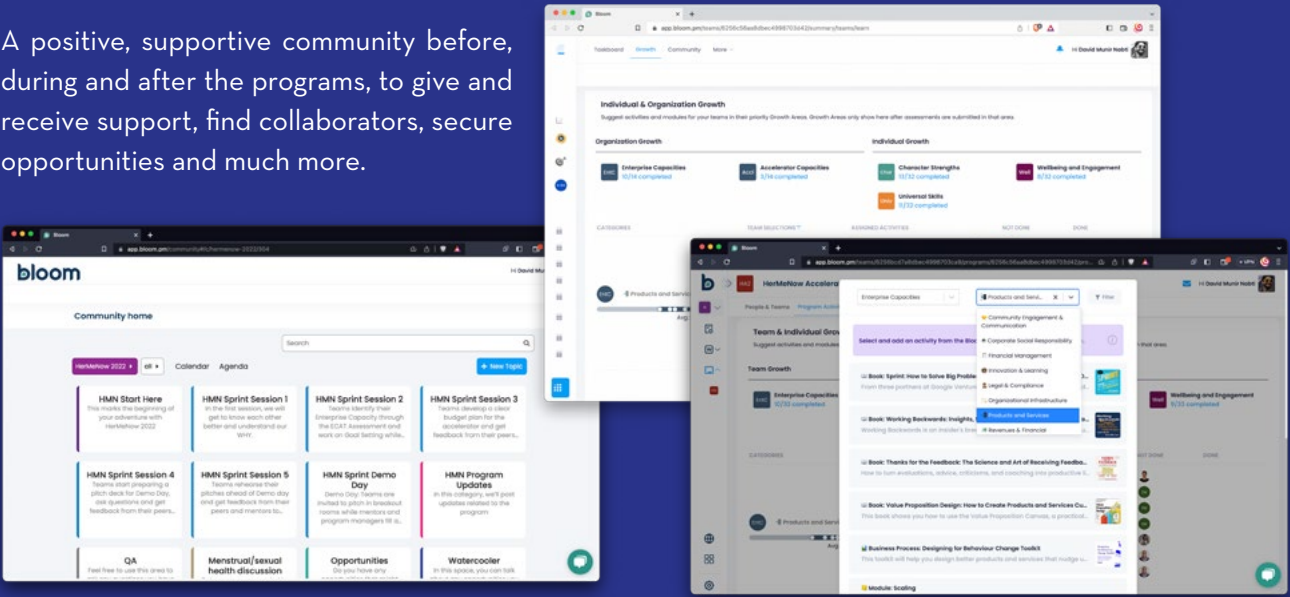Bloom Platform Optimizing Program and Team Success:

Bloom, the platform, optimizes the results of acceleration programs by monitoring engagement and fostering individual and collective growth by tracking productivity and work habits.

It makes it easy to monitor and support engagement and productivity habits, while directing program managers and teams towards most essential tasks for individual and collective growth.
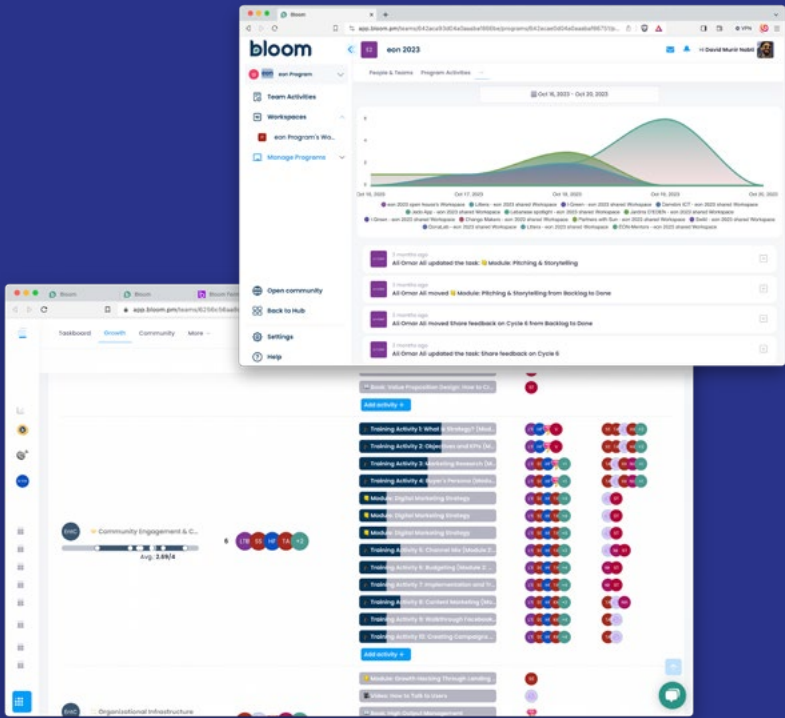

Optimizing impact by exploiting data

The Bloom assessment function aids in creating data-driven programs tailored to partners' and participants' requirements. It optimizes the process of creating customized learning journeys, thereby supporting the enhancement of personal and organizational development outcomes.

Participants (individuals and teams)

primarily use these evaluations for guided self-reflection and prioritization, then can use the results to help them find recommended activities in the Bloom library.

Data and visualizations also help the Bloom team and program managers to continually adjust programs, content, activities and the platform to maximize impact.-

Optimizing interactions within a support community

A positive, supportive community before, during and after the programs, to give and receive support, find collaborators, secure opportunities and much more.

Taking incubation a step further

Incubation programs aims to equip entrepreneurs with the skills, resources and network they need to successfully launch their businesses. It supports entrepreneurs in transforming their start-up concepts into successful, self-sustaining businesses.

INCUBATION	PROGRAM OBJECTIVES
VALUE PROPOSITION	Providing entrepreneurs with the know-how, material resources and networking to help them launch their businesses effectively.
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Helping new entrepreneurs turn their start-up ideas into a successful, self-sufficient business.
OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES	• Find or confirm your idea or create a proof of concept • Define and test the market • Identify target audience • Making the first sale
AVAILABLE RESOURCES	• Workspace (hosting) • Assistance, including consultants, training and resources to determine the business model, write the business plan, file patents and other aspects of intellectual property, legal structuring and fundraising. • Shared services and materials (machines, fablab, etc.) • Coaching and mentoring
ASSESSMENT TOOLS	• Assessment tools • Motivation and commitment • Universal skills • Specialized skills

Consolidating best practices

The six-month Safir incubation program offers:

1. Group training sessions of 2 to 3 hours to address key topics in entrepreneurship through interactive workshops with experts, encouraging learning and the exchange of ideas.

2. Intensive full-day training sessions for immersion in business management and development topics, with presentations, case studies and practical activities.

3. Group workshops of varying lengths to work together on concrete issues, stimulate creativity and innovation, and benefit from expert feedback.

4. Individual personal development coaching lasting 1 to 2 hours, aimed at identifying strengths and areas for improvement, setting goals and overcoming challenges.

5. Collective personal development coaching in group sessions to share experience, advice and strengthen team spirit within the entrepreneurial community.

6. Meetings with professionals to establish contacts with mentors and investors, gain advice, and consider strategic partnerships.

7. Networking events to meet other players in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, encourage collaborations and strengthen professional networks.

The Safir incubation program involved 4 essential phases:

1. The anchoring phase: Entrepreneurs develop a thorough understanding of the program, define their project objectives, identify their values and establish a clear vision for their business. The teams build a solid foundation, analyze the market, identify key stakeholders and develop a comprehensive strategy.

Examples of topics covered:

• Safir program introductory session

• Introduction to the Social Solidarity Economy and Social Entrepreneurship

• Implementation of the incubated entrepreneur's charter

• Submission of NDA (Non-Disclosure Agreement) and session on Social Impact and SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals)

• Exchange and signature of agreements / internal regulations

• Social Impact and SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals)

• Social entrepreneurship and agile start-ups

• Social entrepreneurship and social responsibility

• Diagnosis and needs assessment for startups

• Mapping your ecosystem

• Inventory and analysis of social/environmental issues

• Data processing and formulate insights

• Ideation sessions

2. The entrepreneurial skills-building phase: Specialized training and workshops enable entrepreneurs to strengthen their skills in management, strategic planning, marketing, finance, team management and many other essential areas.

Examples of topics covered:

- Corporate strategy

- Financial and budgetary management

- Marketing and communications

- Market research and competitive analysis

- Sales and commercial negotiation

- Leadership and team management

- Time and resource management

- Innovation and creativity

- Risk and crisis management

- Personal development and interpersonal skills

- Sustainable development and corporate social responsibility

- Digital transformation and the use of digital technologies

- Business ethics and corporate values

3. Prototyping and testing of the offer: Moving from theory to practice, with the development of prototypes, their submission to tests and evaluations to adjust the offer according to feedback and market needs.

- Examples of topics covered:

- Minimum Viable Product (MVP) development

- Product or service concept validation

- User testing and feedback

- Adapt and improve the prototype based on feedback

- Market testing to assess demand for the product or service

- Analysis of the prototype's competition and competitive advantages

- MVP financial viability study

- Analysis of product or service profitability and business model

- Identification of potential risks and obstacles in the test phase

- Measure and monitor prototype results to adjust strategy

- Validation of value proposition with target customers

- Evaluating user experience and customer satisfaction

- Analyze data and metrics to make informed decisions

- Integration of improvements and adjustments into the prototype

4. The launch phase: Final preparation before launching the company, including finalizing operational details, establishing strategic partnerships, and implementing a communications and marketing plan.

- Examples of topics covered:

- Action plan for official launch

- Communication and marketing strategy

- Finalizing the business model

- Refinement of financial and operational details

- Building strategic partnerships :

- Team preparation

- Operational management

Implementing a unified incubation program across seven countries has led to developing an innovative and effective approach. By harmonizing programs across different ecosystems, significant benefits have emerged. The exchange of best practices and expertise has created a dynamic incubation environment, supporting the growth of entrepreneurs. By leveraging each country's unique strengths and combining them, we've created a diverse and dynamic approach to tackling entrepreneurial challenges. The tangible success of this model has resulted in thriving startups, creating jobs and stimulating the economy. This harmonization has demonstrated that cross-border cooperation can catalyze entrepreneurship and generate positive results across diverse ecosystems. In short, this program has demonstrated that innovation and entrepreneurial success can be enhanced through a collaborative approach, providing an inspiring example for future initiatives.

For further acceleration

The Safir acceleration program aims to stimulate the rapid growth of early-stage startups by focusing on sales development and market expansion. It draws on Bloom's Acceleration Framework, structured into 11 categories, to provide a solid and consistent foundation. This framework serves as an overarching structure to which Innovative Entrepreneurship Support Structures can integrate their own content and training materials, ensuring a customized approach while maintaining a uniform level of quality and consistency across the program.

Safir Acceleration Program, its value proposition:

Enable early-stage startups to grow rapidly, multiplying their traction by at least a factor of 2, by offering in-depth learning over a short period of time

ACCELERATION	PROGRAM OBJECTIVES
VALUE PROPOSITION	Enabling startups in the early stages of their development quickly • by multiplying their traction by at least 2 • offering in-depth learning over a short period of time
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Accelerate the startup's growth and impact.
OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES	• Refining the product or service's suitability for the market. • Secure customer pools for pilot initiatives. • Convert customers and generate revenue. • Ensure the project's sustainability. • Measuring social impact. • Prepare the project for potential investment.
AVAILABLE RESOURCES	• Mentoring • Financing • Mentoring structured by successful companies in the target market • Seminars and workshops • Legal advice • Professional networking
ASSESSMENT TOOLS	• Social Enterprise Capacity Assessment Test: SECAT
ACCELERATION FRAME	• A framework of 11 categories will be used to include the content of your programs.

Acceleration program framework

A framework of 11 categories was used to structure and harmonize Safir acceleration programs:

1- strategy

2- impact monitoring

3- innovation and learning

4- products and services

5- ecosystem mobilization and communication

6- organizational infrastructure

7- leadership, team and volunteers

8- financial management

9- revenues and financial viability

10- legal compliance

11- risk, safety and resilience

These categories are also divided into sub-categories that constitute the skills enhancement themes, to enable greater harmonization of programs across the different ecosystems. Ecosystems can thus include their training content in each of these categories:

CATEGORY #1: STRATEGY

1. Mission
2. Growth
3. Strategic Objectives
4. Strategic Planning
5. Operational Planning

CATEGORY #2: IMPACT MONITORING

1. Monitoring impact activities
2. Monitoring team progress
3. M&E
4. Impact orientation
5. Ecosystem access

CATEGORY #3: INNOVATION AND LEARNING

1. Target achievement monitoring
2. Innovation and experimentation

CATEGORY #4: PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

1. Customer approach
2. Project management
3. On position
4. Customer comments and feedback
5. Resource availability

CATEGORY #5: ECOSYSTEM MOBILIZATION AND COMMUNICATION

1. Partnerships and alliances
2. Image de marque
3. Communication strategy
4. Ecosystem and competitive advantage
5. Communication strategy

CATEGORY #6: ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Organizational structure
2. Organizational processes
3. Decision-making framework
4. Technological and operational tools

CATEGORY #7: LEADERSHIP, TEAMS AND VOLUNTEERS

1. Job descriptions
2. Performance management
3. Leadership
4. Volunteers

CATEGORY #8: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

1. Planning
2. Budgeting
3. Cost management
4. Accounting
5. Sourcing

CATEGORY #9: REVENUES AND FINANCIAL VIABILITY

1. Planning
2. Income generation
3. Revenue streams
4. Sales targets
5. Unit savings

CATEGORY #10: LEGAL COMPLIANCE

1. IP
2. Regulatory compliance
3. Legal compliance

CATEGORY #11: RISK, SAFETY AND RESILIENCE

1. Computer security
2. Information Security
3. Brand image and reputation
4. Risk management
5. Resilience

SECAT - PRE- AND POST-PROGRAM CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TEST FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

The SECAT tool is created to evaluate social enterprises, focusing on their economic performance and social and environmental impacts. It gives a comprehensive analysis that is essential for evaluating the sustainability and impact of social enterprises. The tool is becoming increasingly relevant in today's economy, as financial goals and social outcomes are equally important. We will discuss SECAT's core components to illustrate how it effectively assesses and highlights the many contributions of social enterprises.

Strategy

1. Have we clearly identified the value we bring to our customers, with well-defined and aligned products and services?

2. Does our vision translate into well-defined, achievable goals?

3. Do we have a coherent organizational strategy, including a clear mission, vision, values and operational plan?

4. Do we have concrete, aligned and detailed operational plans?

5. Can we identify growth opportunities?

Impact monitoring

1. Do we regularly gather feedback from the teams and mentors in our program, in order to adapt program activities if necessary?

2. Do we regularly monitor the progress of our teams' impact to help them stay on track?

3. How can we measure the progress and success of our impact objectives?

4. Do we have a clear and meaningful impact orientation?

5. To what extent do we know and understand the realities of the individuals or groups we seek to help?

Innovation and learning

1. Do our indicators help us measure progress?

2. Do we encourage experimentation with new approaches and the creation of new ideas?

Products and services

1. Do we have strategies for reaching our customers?

2. Are we planning appropriately to optimize product/service delivery?

3. Have we clearly defined for whom we create value, and who our most important customers are? Do we have well-defined and aligned products and services?

4. Do we have an effective and timely process for collecting and interpreting customer feedback?

5. Do we have the right resources (tools, budget) to optimally deliver our products/services?

Organizational infrastructure

1. Do we have a clear organization chart with defined roles and hierarchical structures?

2. Do we have processes and indicators that improve the way our organization works?

3. Do we have processes that enable us to make informed, effective decisions?

4. Do we use technological/digital tools to manage our operations?

Ecosystem mobilization and communication

1. Have we correctly identified our key partners/suppliers, and established good relationships with the most important ones?

2. Are we building our brand image effectively?

3. Do we have the right communication tools and are we raising awareness effectively?

4. Are we present and active in our community and ecosystem? Are we constantly aligning our competitive advantage?

5. Is our communications and marketing strategy clear, aligned and regularly updated?

Leadership, Team and Volunteers

1. Do we have an effective and clear organizational design?

2. Do we have appropriate performance evaluation systems?

3. Do we have empathetic and effective leadership?

4. Are passion and vision widely shared?

5. Do we have qualified, committed volunteers?

Financial Management

1. Are we able to plan and manage our finances optimally?

2. Do we have a healthy cash flow?

3. Do we have an appropriate budget?

4. Do we have a good understanding of accounting and tax requirements, as well as efficient accounting procedures and systems?

5. Do we have efficient purchasing and debt processes, including competitive supplier contracts?

Revenue and Financial Viability

1. Can we make sound, informed financial decisions?

2. How effective is our revenue generation model?

3. Are our revenue streams clearly defined, and how effective is our revenue generation model?

4. Do we have a systematic sales forecasting process and an incentive system for achieving

sales targets?

5. Do we have a solid understanding of our unitary economy?

Legal compliance

1. Do we have sufficient protection of our intellectual property, including product/design/utility patents, trademarks or other copyrights?

2. Is there a solid understanding of the relevant regulatory requirements and standards related to the field of activity?

3. Do we have a solid understanding of the relevant regulatory requirements and standards related to our field of activity?

Revenues and financial viability

1. Can we make sound, informed financial decisions?

2. How effective is our revenue generation model?

3. Are our revenue streams clearly defined, and how effective is our revenue generation model?

4. Do we have a systematic sales forecasting process and an incentive system for achieving sales targets?

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Legal compliance

1. Do we have sufficient protection of our intellectual property, including product/design/utility patents, trademarks or other copyrights?

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REGIONAL CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH
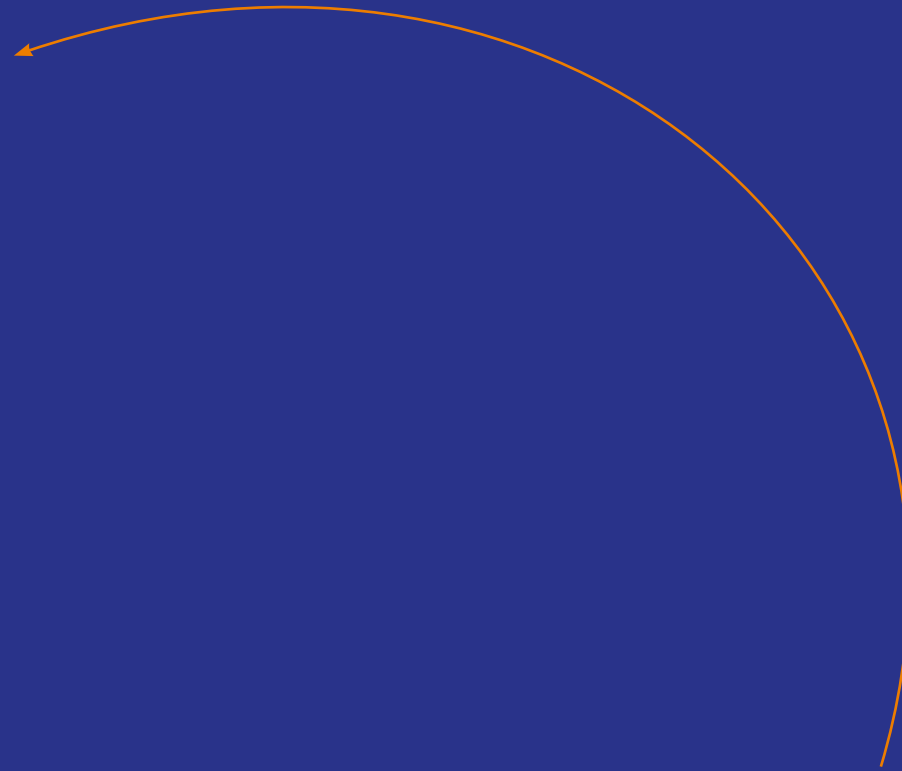
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4.1. Outlook: regional mobility and collaboration for development

The Safir program has helped boost social entrepreneurship in the MENA region, with the creation of a regional network linking incubators and entrepreneurship players in seven countries.

This network connects young entrepreneurs with resources, mentors and opportunities, supporting their development at every stage. Regional collaboration is strengthened by shared events where incubators exchange know-how and experience, contributing to the sustainability of the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The Safir ecosystem has identified three major collaborative opportunities for the development of social entrepreneurship in the region:

a. Regional Collaboration Platform: Catalyzing Development through Synergy

The Regional Collaboration Platform fosters synergy between partners to develop joint projects, with a focus on mapping data flows and identifying synergies. The beneficiaries targeted by this initiative include the regional ecosystem as a whole, highlighting the importance of a collective commitment to overcoming the complex challenges of our time.
The platform's model activities are structured around three crucial stages.

- Map data flows, creating a solid basis for a shared understanding of challenges and opportunities. We'll develop a glossary of key terms to ensure everyone is on the same page. This will help maintain clear and consistent communication among all partners involved. Annual reports, as well as periodic improvement reports, will be produced for all ecosystem partners, creating a culture of accountability and continuous progress.

- Identify synergies by exploring convergences and complementarities between different stakeholders. The aim is to create strategic alliances that amplify individual efforts for a more powerful collective impact.

- Implement: Partners will actively collaborate to develop and implement projects, initiatives and actions that address the challenges identified. The platform will provide the necessary communication channels, from web pages and social networks to an email database and a dedicated collaboration form.

The platform's evaluation strategy will be visually represented through a flow chart. This chart will track the effectiveness of the implemented cooperation, allowing us to measure their impact and make necessary adjustments based on the outcomes.

In short, this regional platform embodies the fusion of regional mobility and targeted collaboration, providing a space to catalyze innovative and sustainable solutions.

b. Cultivating the Entrepreneurial Spirit in Rural Communities: An Opportunity for Collaboration

This collaboration aims to promote entrepreneurship among young people, especially in rural areas, by providing them with the tools and resources they need to innovate. Primarily targeting young people under 18 and those under 35, the initiative aims to instill an entrepreneurial spirit from an early age.

To this end, a dedicated platform will serve as a central hub linking partners: universities, schools, NGOs and Safir, to carry out activities such as:

- Enriching workshops ,interactive workshops organized in schools to encourage young people to embrace the entrepreneurial spirit. They will impart practical knowledge, and also raise awareness of the real challenges faced by entrepreneurs.

- Sharing experiences: inspiring stories of success and failure in the world of entrepreneurship will help young people identify with and draw inspiration from the journeys of other entrepreneurs.

- Research and academic collaboration: dedicated laboratories will be created to encourage creativity and the search for new ideas.

The initiative will be promoted primarily via social media, and partners will ensure effective coordination. Impact will be measured by monitoring participation and evaluating learning. The aim is to build an innovation ecosystem in rural areas and inspire a new generation of entrepreneurs.

c.Awaken the Leader in You: An Empowerment Program for the MENA Region

In a fast-changing region like the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), it's crucial to nurture a generation of dynamic, innovative young leaders. The «Be Your Own Role Model» program is emerging as a beacon of opportunity for teenagers aged 12 to 19, as well as young adults aged 20 to 26. This ambitious initiative aims to develop leadership among young people in the MENA region, particularly in rural areas, regardless of gender or ability.

- Teen Model: Nurturing the Creative Spirit:

 For teenagers, this 4-month program focuses on exploration, reflection and problem-solving. Each week, for two hours, beneficiaries take part in educational visits to the public sector and creative projects. They learn about the inner workings of organizations and gain a deeper understanding of the workings of society.

- Young Adult Model: Becoming Leaders of Change

Young adults take part in a 6-month program, a blend of personal development, social entrepreneurship and conceptual thinking. They benefit from hands-on training, adventure activities and mentoring by seasoned entrepreneurs. For six hours a week, they receive training from experienced social entrepreneurs. They are introduced to the art of conceptual thinking through workshops, bootcamps, roundtables and targeted discussion groups.

The program includes rigorous evaluation to measure long-term impact, and maintains ongoing engagement with participants to support their development as leaders.

4.2. Community outreach strategy

Social entrepreneurship, a driver of positive change, requires much more than a solid vision and innovative solutions to succeed in solving societal challenges. Communication plays a central role in catalyzing change, facilitating collaboration and propelling innovative ideas towards realization. Carefully crafted communication strategies are therefore essential to connect key players, promote dialogue, foster innovative ideas and maximize social impact. This strategy is built around several axes, each of which plays a specific role in building and maintaining a solid network, propagating innovative ideas, and encouraging collaboration within social entrepreneurship.

Networking Events: These are invaluable opportunities for social entrepreneurs, investors, experts and advocates to meet, share ideas and forge links. These informal gatherings transcend organizational barriers, creating a space for unexpected collaborations and fruitful partnerships. By bringing together passionate and dedicated minds, these events fuel a collective synergy that stimulates creativity, encourages knowledge sharing and strengthens the social entrepreneurship community.

Expert debates: These are the intellectual epicenter of the social entrepreneurship ecosystem. They are forums where opinion leaders, researchers and practitioners can discuss critical issues in social entrepreneurship, enriching the intellectual landscape and inspiring new approaches.

Exchange workshops: Through their interactive nature, these sessions provide a space to explore new methods, share success stories and collectively overcome obstacles. By emphasizing collaborative learning, these workshops strengthen participants' entrepreneurial skills, enabling them to adopt more effective strategies and approach challenges from an innovative angle.

Communication and Outreach on Social Media: Online platforms make it possible to reach a vast and diverse audience, inspire action and mobilize support. Using engaging content such as inspiring videos, powerful testimonials and informative infographics, social media communication tells the compelling story of social entrepreneurship, builds support and encourages participation.

IMPACT OF THE SAFIR PROGRAM
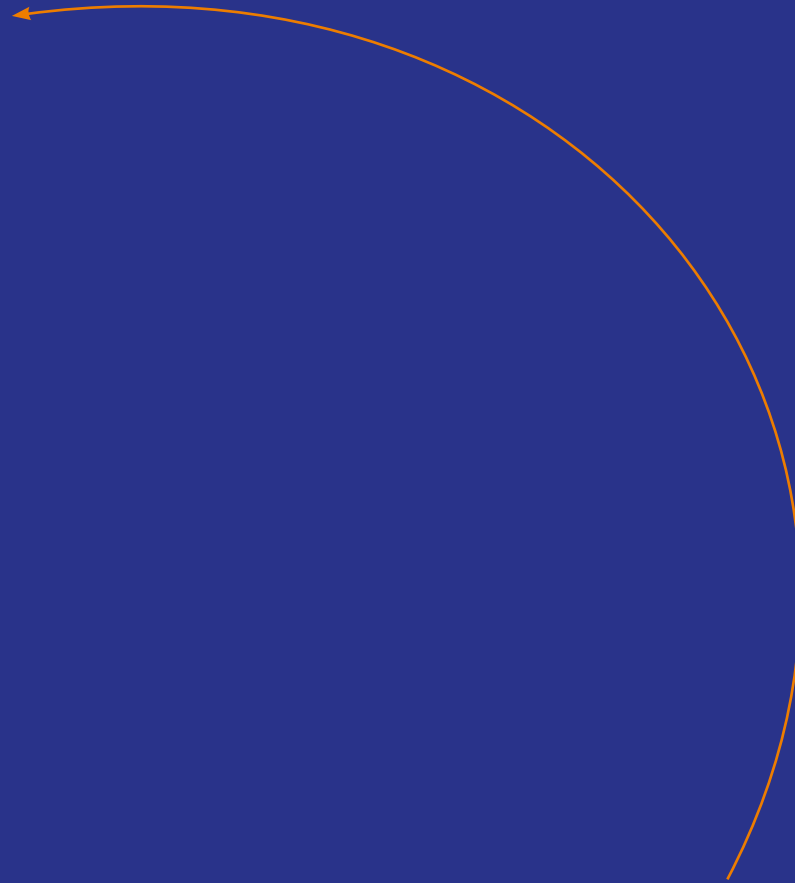
05

The Safir project has had a significant impact on several levels:

Impact on support organizations:

• Support organizations have strengthened their skills in project management and beneficiary support.

• Efficient coordination of activities and administrative management of projects have been improved thanks to the training courses.

• Several organizations have developed well-planned strategies to support the youth.

Impact on young people:

• The young people have acquired skills in advocacy and social entrepreneurship.

• Concrete projects have been set up, creating jobs and positive impacts in their local communities.

• Safir has fostered dialogue between public authorities.

Impact on women:

• Women's civic engagement has been strengthened through social entrepreneurship and advocacy.

• Specific measures have been taken to support the economic empowerment of women entrepreneurs.

Impact at the academic level:

• Training courses on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have broadened knowledge in various fields and provided a global vision of their importance.

• Teachers and academic staff showed a keen interest in social innovation.

Networking and events:

• Safir has fostered national and regional networking.

• Abderrahmane Mira University organized a variety of activities, including workshops, master classes and a call for innovative ideas.

Contributions to public policy:

• Safir has helped raise awareness and influence public policy, particularly in relation to the SDGs and youth.

Impact on gender:

• Measures have been taken to support women entrepreneurs and promote their financial independence.

• Although changes in gender-related attitudes cannot be directly attributed to the project, Safir has helped raise awareness of these issues.

Improving young people's skills:

• The beneficiaries of the Safir project have seen their skills improve in the field of advocacy and SSE.

• Some have taken part in forums and have been able to influence public authorities thanks to their advocacy skills.

Summary

The Safir project has significantly impacted both the supporting organizations and the young people involved. The organizations have strengthened their skills in project management and beneficiary support. The young people have seen their skills in advocacy and the Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) improve, deploying projects directly impacting employment and their communities. Safir has also fostered dialogue between public authorities and strengthened women's civic commitment.

The capacity of support organizations to manage projects and provide support to beneficiaries according to their needs has been strengthened.

In general, support organizations have been positively impacted by an increase in skilled personnel who can effectively coordinate activities and manage projects. Training courses have helped staff develop skills in advocacy and SSE. As a result, concrete strategies have been developed for supporting young people, and the strategies combined with the equipment supplied has contributed to the sustainability of innovation spaces.

Personalized follow-up by the consortium has strengthened our ability to support young people and target their needs. In addition, the networking encouraged by Safir has enabled the sharing of best practices and given a collective voice to young people.

By building the framework for social entrepreneurship projects to flourish, the Safir project has contributed to the development of innovative solutions to development challenges.

The acceleration phase received 69 applications out of 91 incubated projects, illustrating the effectiveness of SAEI's mentoring and coaching. The projects created by the young people testify to their civic commitment and their response to social, cultural and environmental challenges. The 40 projects funded reflect a variety of objectives, from combating global warming to improving democratic participation:

• 15 projects aim to combat global warming and ensure the environmental sustainability of growth models and societies in the intervention zone;

• 9 projects aim at the social, cultural, economic and political inclusion of young people;

• 9 projects aim to improve public debate, citizen participation and democratic procedures;

• 5 projects deal with sports, cultural and heritage;

• 5 projects focus on human rights.

Safir has also contributed to strengthening women's civic engagement in public dialogue, through social impact entrepreneurship and advocacy.

Despite a lower-than-targeted female representation due to structural factors, the gender dimension has been integrated throughout the project. Priority was given to projects that empowered women, and particular attention was paid to women's specific needs in the support methods used.

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC FEEDBACK ON FAST-TRACK PROJECTS

06

6.1. Testimonials from SAEI

Rim El Khattabi, Funds Division Manager, Bidaya - Morocco

The Safir program fitted in very well with Bidaya's actions, vision and targets, i.e. young social entrepreneurs. What was new with the Safir program was the ability to support projects in the Cultural and Creative Industries and associations.

The skills enhancement offered by the Safir program has enabled us to strengthen our ability to monitor results and achievements, as well as the impact of our projects. At Bidaya, we were already doing this type of monitoring, but not automatically, and the Safir program enabled us to do it more assiduously.

Another interesting aspect of the Safir program is that it puts us in touch with universities, but unfortunately we haven't had the opportunity to do much work with them.

Safir was also an opportunity to become part of a network of SAEI and to be supported as a support structure. We are not simply structures that implement an action, we are supported and we can exchange with other structures that resemble us, structures in the region that do things similar to what we do in Morocco. For me, that's what the Safir program is all about!
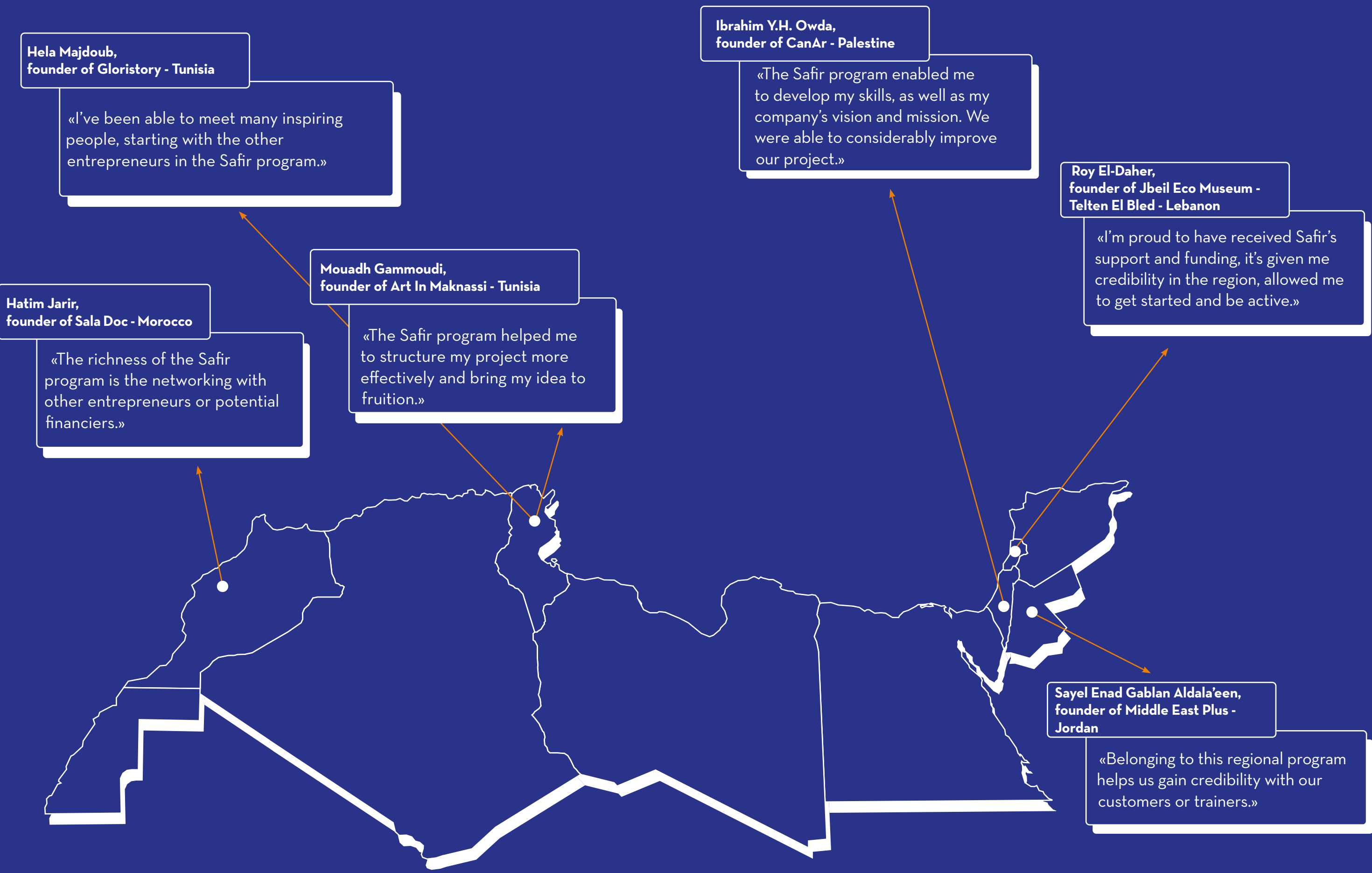
Exchanging ideas with other incubators facing similar challenges to ours, and their entrepreneurs with our entrepreneurs, because we're in a similar socio-economic and cultural context, reassures us and enables us to learn from others. For example, on the university side, I tried to draw inspiration from what the Algerian incubator, ACSE, has done to work with these players. No synergy has yet been formalized, but we'd be delighted to continue exchanging and collaborating with other SAEIs.

Tasneem Bsharat, Director of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Jordan Youth Innovation Forum - Jordan

Our organization's mission is to facilitate entrepreneurial opportunities for young people, and we want to encourage the active participation of young people through economic empowerment and social involvement. The Safir program is therefore of great importance to our organization and fits in perfectly with our objectives. The support of Bloom and Lab'ess has enabled us to strengthen our methodologies. The experience has been enriching and has provided us with valuable approaches to better support startups in their development. The Safir program has enabled us to join a regional network of incubators, which is invaluable and enables us to learn from the experiences and practices of other SAEIs. The synergies we are discussing with other SAEIs have the potential to strengthen our collective impact and better support social projects in the region.

6.2. Young people's testimonials

Hela Majdoub,
founder of Gloristory - Tunisia

«I've been able to meet many inspiring people, starting with the other entrepreneurs in the Safir program.»

Hatim Jarir,
founder of Sala Doc - Morocco

«The richness of the Safir program is the networking with other entrepreneurs or potential financiers.»

Mouadh Gammoudi,
founder of Art In Maknassi - Tunisia

«The Safir program helped me to structure my project more effectively and bring my idea to fruition.»

Ibrahim Y.H. Owda,
founder of CanAr - Palestine

«The Safir program enabled me to develop my skills, as well as my company's vision and mission. We were able to considerably improve our project.»

Roy El-Daher,
founder of Jbeil Eco Museum -
Telten El Bled - Lebanon

«I'm proud to have received Safir's support and funding, it's given me credibility in the region, allowed me to get started and be active.»

Sayel Enad Gablan Aldala'een,
founder of Middle East Plus -
Jordan

«Belonging to this regional program helps us gain credibility with our customers or trainers.»

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