



**2020 ANNUAL
IMPACT REPORT**

INVESTING IN PEOPLE, STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES



WHO WE ARE

IREX is a global development and education organization. We strive for a more just, prosperous, and inclusive world in which individuals reach their full potential, governments serve their people, and communities thrive. With an annual portfolio of \$87 million and over 500 staff worldwide, we work with partners in more than 110 countries in four areas essential to progress: cultivating leaders, empowering youth, strengthening institutions, and increasing access to quality education and information.



INVESTING IN CHANGEMAKERS



- The COVID-19 crisis demonstrates the vulnerability of historically excluded groups and the importance of investing in changemakers who seek to build more just, prosperous, and inclusive societies.

These challenges underscore the enduring relevance of the core belief that has guided IREX's work for decades: We invest in people who in turn create positive change in their communities.

Committed individuals around the world are essential to the IREX approach. Our role is to cultivate new skills, connect the individuals with new tools and opportunities, and foster national and international networks of like-minded individuals.

This year's annual impact report features five changemakers whose journeys we've supported. We find their stories inspiring and hope you will, too. While they work on different issues in different geographies, they share a common commitment to making the world more just, prosperous, and inclusive.

IREX BY THE NUMBERS

In 2020, IREX's work touched the lives of approximately

15 million people



CULTIVATING LEADERS

18,000 LEADERS

More than 18,000 leaders sharpened their leadership skills through IREX fellowships and trainings.

35% INCREASE

The Community Solutions* program saw a 35% increase in applicants last year after implementing new systems to increase diversity.



STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS

87% IMPROVEMENT

87% of the 46 partner public administrations that participated in the Comunitatea Mea** program improved their performance in critical capacity areas.

6,000 PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES AND LEADERS

USAID Takamol*** support enabled the Institute of Public Administration in Jordan to integrate gender equity concepts into its professional development trainings for nearly 6,000 public sector employees and leaders.



EMPOWERING YOUTH

103,000 PEOPLE

More than 103,000 people benefited from community improvement initiatives by IREX-supported youth globally.

6,000 PEOPLE

More than 6,000 people accessed youth tools, resources, and thought leadership pieces created by IREX.



EXTENDING ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

274 MEDIA OUTLETS AND JOURNALISTS

274 media outlets and journalists supported by IREX increased their audiences.

88% OF STUDENTS

88% of students improved their problem-solving skills in Iraq's first nationwide internship program, supported by IREX.

*Community Solutions is a program of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and implemented by IREX.

**Comunitatea Mea is implemented by IREX with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

***The USAID Takamol Program is implemented by IREX with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).



Houssem
Tunisia



Sergiy Khudyi
Ukraine



Career Development Centers
Iraq



Vanessa Metou
Republic of Congo



Sara Pathirana
Sri Lanka





Cultivating
Leaders

STRENGTHENING YOUTH LEADERSHIP

VANESSA METOU, REPUBLIC OF CONGO

“After my participation in the Fellowship I gained skills and a better understanding of the meaning of leadership.”

Young leaders globally have the talent and energy to drive positive change across countries and communities, if given leadership opportunities and the right kind of support. Mandela Washington Fellowship Alumna Vanessa Metou exemplifies this potential.

In 2016, Vanessa came to the United States through the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders, a program of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. During the program, she strengthened her leadership skills in advocacy and organizational development.

In 2017, Vanessa founded a youth development organization that has trained 2,000 youth since its inception. She also became a member of the African Union's Youth Advisory Council, advising the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on youth development issues.



Vanessa's organization has trained 2,000 youth

Working with other Fellowship Alumni, Vanessa has organized a series of activities for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, including virtual learning and mentoring sessions for children in rural communities.

The Mandela Washington Fellowship is a program of the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government and administered by IREX.



96%

As a result of their engagement in the Fellowship, 96% of 2019 Fellows believe that participating in the Fellowship helped them achieve their personal and professional goals.



91%

After participating in the Mandela Washington Fellowship, 91% of 2019 Fellows reported becoming more effective leaders.



Extending Access
to Quality Education

INCREASING EMPLOYMENT THROUGH CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTERS, IRAQ

“When I was a student, I had weekly-based activities with the Career Development Center and was also a beneficiary of one of their grants...It opened my career path and allowed me to start working right after graduation.”

University graduate in Iraq

University graduates in Iraq face a challenging economic environment, with high rates of youth unemployment, limited private-sector opportunities, and difficult labor market conditions that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing conflict.

As part of the U.S.–Iraq Higher Education Partnerships Program, sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, IREX has worked for nearly a decade with government and industry partners to establish and support career centers at all 47 public universities in Iraq.

These career centers offer experiential learning opportunities such as internships, innovation challenges, trainings, and workshops — opportunities that strengthen students' career readiness competencies while bridging the skill gaps identified by industry leaders.

Compared to non-CDC participants, CDC participants are:



More likely to be employed



More likely to be satisfied with their job



Less likely to report that their employment has been negatively affected by COVID-19



Less likely to rely on personal connections to obtain a job

As part of the U.S.–Iraq Higher Education Partnerships Program, sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, IREX has worked for nearly a decade with government and industry partners to establish and support career centers at all 47 public universities in Iraq.



Graduates who participated in CDC activities were 53% more likely than matched comparison graduates to be employed before the pandemic.



Internships were among the most beneficial CDC service for graduates' employability.



Strengthening Institutions

IMPROVING GOVERNANCE THROUGH CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

SERGIY KHUDYI, UKRAINE

“ All of us are concerned about the future of our country, and if we work together we will bring about change and make it better. ”

Around the world, countries like Ukraine are decentralizing power to improve public services and prevent corruption. Small towns like Starokostiantyniv, home to Sergiy Khudiy, are leading efforts to strengthen local solutions.

Ukraine's decentralization reform process – which transfers power from the state to local government — provides an opportunity to build more effective local governments. But citizens must engage in the process for it to succeed.

Sergiy connected with local leaders through IREX's PULSE program and created "Agency of Changes," a local development center for Starokostiantyniv. Here, citizens host events on community issues and organize to demand action.

More than 12,100 participants have attended PULSE community engagement events in 60 communities throughout Ukraine.



12,100 participants



60 communities

The Policy for Ukraine Local Self-Governance (PULSE) program is funded by USAID and implemented by IREX.



60%

After participating in the PULSE program, 60% of the participants reported improved understanding of decentralization.



53%

Engagement in the PULSE program led to 53% of the participants taking a more active role in their communities, including advocating for important issues, raising funds for local causes, and mobilizing volunteers.



Extending access to quality information



STRENGTHENING JOURNALISM IN SRI LANKA

SARA PATHIRANA, SRI LANKA

“ The Fellowship allowed me to speak up on behalf of minority groups, when I might have stayed silent before. ”

Citizens urgently need access to quality information in order to make decisions affecting themselves, their families, and their communities. It is crucial that this information is fair and unbiased, especially in times of crisis.

Supported by a MediaCorps Fellowship, freelance journalist Sara Pathirana worked with peers from different linguistic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds to produce news stories that focus on social cohesion and national integration.

During the Fellowship, Sara learned mobile journalism techniques to capture stories of marginalized communities on a smartphone without the need for expensive equipment. She is working as an assistant producer to share stories of minority groups who have been directly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We need strong journalists so that we can bring progress to the people of Sri Lanka.”

The MediaCorps Fellowship is a component of the Media Empowerment for a Democratic Sri Lanka program, funded by USAID and implemented by IREX.



96 %

After participating in MEND trainings, 96 % of media professionals reported an improved understanding of media practices.



100 %

MediaCorps participants improved their cross-cultural understanding by 100%.



Empowering Youth

EQUIPPING YOUTH WITH SKILLS TO COMBAT MISINFORMATION

HOUSSEM, TUNISIA

“ I was born and raised in Souk Jedid and I want to give back to my community. My hope is that other youth contribute, too. We are the solution. ”

Youth are a tremendous force for change – a force Housseem is familiar with, having grown up near the Tunisian city of Sidi Bouzid, known for its role in launching the Arab Spring. As a Ma3an community Youth Mentor, Housseem trains youth in his community to build critical thinking skills so that they can recognize disinformation and hate speech and promote social cohesion in their communities.

One training at Souk Jedid's juvenile rehabilitation center engaged all of the center's residents in critical thinking exercises. Because of the training's success, the center manager invited Housseem to conduct regular activities.

Housseem uses social media to share virtual media literacy lessons with his community, so that community members can recognize false information about COVID-19 and share lessons with others.

Housseem is a participant in Ma3an: For Resilient Communities, a five-year USAID-funded program implemented by FHI 360 in partnership with IREX. Ma3an empowers Tunisian communities to engage marginalized youth to create a lasting foundation for social cohesion.



810

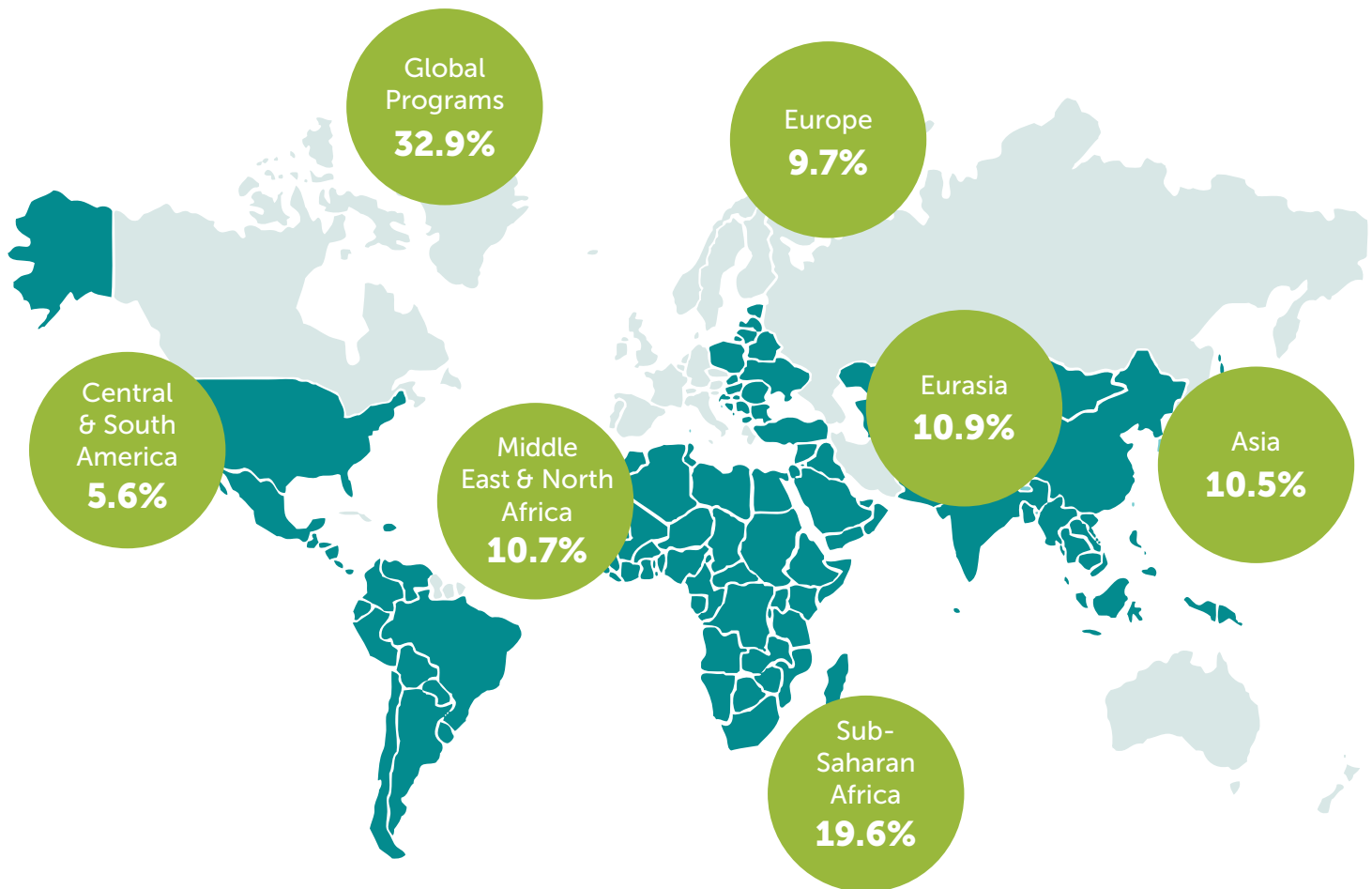
Despite the global disruption of the pandemic, Youth Mentors continued to positively impact their communities as peer leaders, pivoting their activities online to reach 810 youth with opportunities to support and grow their own communication, media literacy, and professional skills.



100%

After their Ma3an Youth Mentor training, youth showed improvement in collaboration, empathy, learning, and proactivity. 100 % of mentors were confident in their ability to perform new or complicated tasks, compared to 30 % before the training.

PROGRAM EXPENDITURES BY REGION





\$87
million portfolio

The icon shows a white folder with a document inside, and a white silhouette of a person's head and shoulders, all within an orange circle.

110
countries

The icon shows a white location pin with a circular base, all within a teal circle.

500
global staff

The icon shows a white globe with a person silhouette in front of it, all within a dark teal circle.

KEY 2020 SUPPORTERS*

We sincerely thank the changemakers around the world whom we've had the privilege to support. We are also grateful to all of the foundations, corporations, government agencies, and global citizens that make our work possible.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, FOUNDATIONS, PRIVATE SECTOR

The Aspen Institute
Carnegie Corporation of New York
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Facebook
Ford Foundation

Google
University of Notre Dame
Walmart Foundation
World Bank

U.S. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

U.S. Agency for International Development
Millennium Challenge Corporation
U.S. Department of State


- Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations
- Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor
- Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
- Bureau of Near East Affairs
- Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs
- Global Engagement Center
- Office of Global Women's Issues
- U.S. Embassy in France
- U.S. Embassy in Georgia
- U.S. Embassy in Iraq
- U.S. Embassy in Jordan
- U.S. Embassy in Kyrgyzstan
- U.S. Embassy in Moldova
- U.S. Embassy in Serbia
- U.S. Embassy in Ukraine
- U.S. Embassy in Uzbekistan

PARTNER COUNTRY GOVERNMENTS AND BILATERAL AGENCIES

Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and
Development – Canada
Federal Foreign Office – Germany

Foreign and Commonwealth Office – United Kingdom
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Netherlands
The Ministry of Education – Singapore

*The supporters listed contributed \$50,000 or more to sustain IREX programs and projects.



IREX is a global development and education organization. We strive for a more just, prosperous, and inclusive world — where individuals reach their full potential, governments serve their people, and communities thrive. IREX is a registered 501(c)(3) organization.

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