



# THE 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

“ **IMAGINE** how many times we in the West use our devices to query Google for even the smallest curiosities. Now imagine we found an answer for our question less than 1 in 100 times we searched. On topics related to civil rights, women’s education, and science, that number could be astronomically smaller. Arabic-speaking youth, many of whom grow up facing authoritarian regimes, poverty, extremism, and abhorrent violence, are stranded in a knowledge desert.

**MERETE RIISAGER**  
**FORMER MINISTER OF EDUCATION OF DENMARK**  
**IBB ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER**



# “2019 WAS OUR HIGHEST IMPACT YEAR YET.

Dear Cherished Friends of Ideas Beyond Borders,

2019 was a defining year for our organization. With your support, 2019 was our highest impact year yet. We have developed new, innovative tactics needed to win the war of ideas against extremists, authoritarian governments, and the closed theocracies that dominate the Middle East and allow extremism to flourish.

Your generosity has helped Ideas Beyond Borders make concepts never-before-seen in Arabic available to millions, including works promoting women's equality, LGBT rights, religious tolerance, scientific discovery, and democratic values. You have helped transform IBB from a nascent organization to a robust, content-producing powerhouse that has reached more than **4.2 million people in 120 countries**.

2019 also saw IBB programs expand to help spur meaningful change on-the-ground. We launched programs at universities in Mosul and other Post-ISIS territories, where male and female college students join to celebrate liberal values. We have launched workshops across Iraq and Syria to help elevate professional skills among young adult translators, and we've distributed thousands of copies of critical enlightenment works like *Enlightenment Now!* by Harvard Professor Steven Pinker, *Lying*, by Sam Harris, and *Radical*, by former Islamist Maajid Nawaz. **Where the caliphate once reigned, Ideas Beyond Borders is planting the seeds of an enlightened, pluralistic society.**

We grew existing partnerships and developed new methods to track our successes. The website on which IBB posts its translations received **40,000 unique visitors**, while our books were downloaded over **20,000 times**. IBB's 7,000+ Wikipedia articles on topics such as anti-Semitism, female scientists, and civil rights received more than **10 million views**.

Although IBB is a young organization, we're already making a significant impact, one that would be impossible to achieve without your continued support. Our joint efforts to foment meaningful change across the Middle East are working, and we're just getting started.

We are eagerly looking forward to building a better, brighter future for our translators and the greater Middle East together in 2020.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

*Samuel P. Hershey*

Samuel P. Hershey  
Chairman of the Board of Ideas Beyond Borders





# A WAR OF IDEAS IS BEING WAGED. IBB IS SET ON WINNING THIS WAR.

Dear Ideas Beyond Borders Community,

I founded IBB in 2017 with a lofty vision. That vision was to revolutionize access to knowledge for young adults living across the Middle East in the hope that inspiring ideas on civil rights, science, critical thinking, health, and democratic values would spark change. Your support in 2019 helped make this hope a reality.

## **Change has *truly* begun.**

Many of you have heard bits and pieces of my personal story throughout the years. IBB grew out of the tragedy I witnessed growing up under Saddam Hussein in Baghdad and Al Qaeda and similar extremist groups thereafter. The extremist violence and hatred most Americans have only seen on front pages was my daily reality. Al Qaeda and their hatred spared none; they put explosives in the street, forcefully threatening people, ousting families from their homes and creating checkpoints to divide Iraq along sectarian lines. Al Qaeda stalked the streets, and those that did not submit to their savage ways were murdered as examples. Their bodies were left in the streets for school children to step over.

Sadly, *my story is not unique*. Young adults across the Middle East in countries like Iraq, in Syria, in Yemen, in Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere face the same grotesque violence and oppression. Subject to massive misinformation campaigns waged by autocrats, closed theocratic governments, and extremist recruiters, **many Middle Eastern youth grow up in a vacuum of ideas, where freedom of thought and expression are utterly intangible**. Some of these youth, disaffected by the hopelessness of their daily lives and without the education to participate actively in uplifting their communities, fall prey to propaganda and become radical extremists or terrorists themselves. As I so often say in interviews, the Middle East is the opposite of Las Vegas — what happens in the Middle East doesn't stay in the Middle East.

It is through this lens that I ask you to join Ideas Beyond Borders in their fight for Enlightenment values. A war of ideas is being waged — on social media, on the mobiles of Arab youth, and ultimately, in the closed education systems that dominate the region and allow extremism to flourish. IBB is set on winning this war and disrupting the status quo of biased, unreliable education for Arabic speakers living in the Middle East. We've published thousands of articles and several books on critical ideas like pluralism, freedom of speech, health literacy, and more. We've partnered with three universities in Post-ISIS territories, and hope to have solidified seven more additional partnerships next year. **Our content has been viewed over 10 million times by 4.2 million Arabic-speaking youth, and we're just getting started.**

As you flip through the pages of this report and read about the successes your donations have made possible, I ask you to continue your support into 2020 and beyond. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for all that you do.



Warmest Regards,

Faisal Saeed Al Mutar  
Executive Director, Ideas Beyond Borders

## THE PROBLEM IBB IS SOLVING

Content scarcity in Arabic is an overwhelming problem made worse by governmental and societal censorship. If content isn't available in Arabic, most youth cannot access it. The content that they can access is frequently biased, limited, or sometimes completely untrue.



JUST 0.7% OF THE INTERNET IS AVAILABLE IN ARABIC, BUT IT'S THE 4TH MOST SPOKEN LANGUAGE AMONG INTERNET USERS.

W3TechSchools.

SOME UN REPORTS SUGGEST AS MUCH AS 70% OF THE ARAB WORLD IS MONOLINGUAL.

UN Arab Human Development Report, 2016.

“

Access to knowledge in my community is limited, or even worse, biased. Ideas Beyond Borders is making ideas that are really needed in my region available.

ABDULLAH, EGYPT



## WHY IT MATTERS

The Middle East accounts for 5% of the world's population, yet produces 58% of the world's refugees and almost 70% of the world's battle-related deaths. The region tops the charts with the most egregious human rights violations and the most curtailed freedom of speech. 9/11, the rise of ISIS, Al Qaeda, and the global export of terrorism have taught us that what happens in the Middle East doesn't stay in the Middle East.

When youth don't have access to empowering enlightenment ideas, they cannot participate in civic debate, make informed decisions about what they are told, or uplift their communities for a better future.

# HOW IBB IS CHANGING MINDS AND CHANGING LIVES



We meet Middle Eastern youth where they are with information that fits their needs. We solve the content scarcity problem for Arabic speakers through our revolutionary translation program, *Bayt Al Hikma 2.0*, or the House of Wisdom.

Aimed at rekindling the Golden Age of Middle Eastern Enlightenment when pluralism and diversity flourished, our program translates articles, books, and multimedia content on topics such as human rights, science, and critical thinking that promote inclusive society and democratic values.



## A MASSIVE DISTRIBUTION NETWORK OF 4.2 MILLION ARABIC SPEAKERS

We distribute these ideas, for free, to our audience and distribution networks of 4.2 million people in more than 120 countries, optimizing for mobile, internet speeds, and creating engaging multimedia content that youth crave.



In 2019, we brought our commitment to enlightenment values and critical thinking to several on-the-ground initiatives, launching programs in partnership with universities across Iraq to provide professional workshops and hold meaningful discussions on enlightenment values. Together, we're changing minds and changing lives and empowering MENA-region youth with the tools needed to uplift their communities.



**Top:** Students Translators meeting outside of the University of Mosul  
**Bottom:** Protestors in Baghdad receive copies of *Lying and Enlightenment Now*

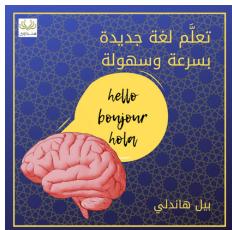
# IN 2019, YOUR SUPPORT HELPED IBB...



- Launch **on-the-ground professional workshops in Iraq & Syria** for translator volunteers with a focus on participants from both genders

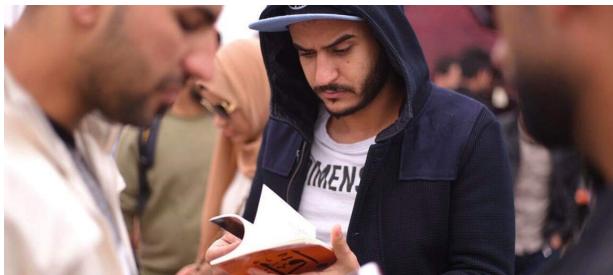


- Kick-start **university programs in Post-ISIS and Iranian-dominated territories**
- Solidify **17 strategic partnerships** with organizations across the MENA region
- Launch **our free online distribution platform** at [baytalhikma2.org](http://baytalhikma2.org)
- Translate **a record number of books, articles, and multimedia content**



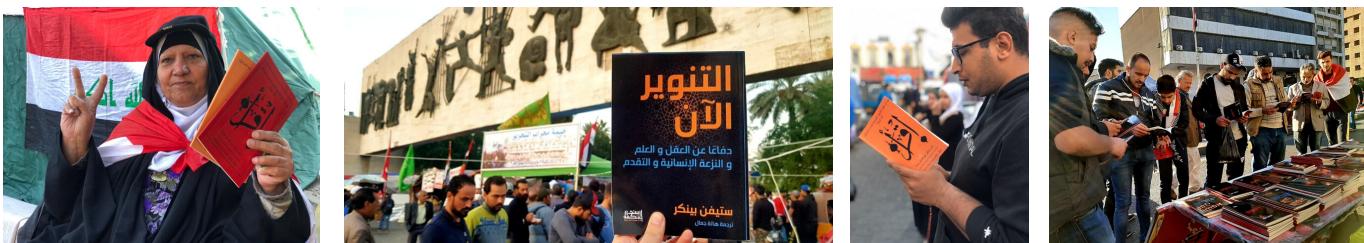
Book covers from left-to-right: *Science in Seconds*, *How to Learn a Language Quickly and Easily*, *Lying* by Sam Harris, *Enlightenment Now* by Steven Pinker, and *The Origin of Infinity*

- Increase total online content available in Arabic by 16%
- Expand our programs to include book printing and **distribution in major cities and refugee camps**



# OUR SHARED SUCCESSES IN 2019

- **Made 7,000+ articles accessible in Arabic**, many for the first time ever, including content on famous civil rights leaders like Rosa Parks and women scientists like Marie Curie. **These articles were viewed 10 million times.**
- **Published 13 books online for free**, including best-sellers like *Enlightenment Now!* by Steven Pinker, and *Radical* by Maajid Nawaz.
- **Reached 120+ countries** and over 4.2 million people in the Middle East, with over 3,000 newsletter subscribers accumulated in the last six months alone.
- **Achieved 20,000 book downloads and 40,000 site visitors** in 2019.
- **Distributed 4,200 books on-the-ground** to refugee camps, youth education centers, and protestors fighting for Enlightenment values.



## OUR STRATEGIC PARTNERS

A heartfelt thank you to all of our partners who helped push our mission forward. A special thanks to Wikimedia of the Levant, who have gone above and beyond to ensure that our articles remain uncensored and accessible for free to Arabic-speakers across the globe.



### Row 1 (left to right):

Middle East Broadcasting Networks, Human Rights Foundation, Justitia, Masterword, Wikimedia of the Levant, Wikimedia Kurdistan

### Row 2 (left to right):

University of Mosul, TedX Jersey City, Narratio, Mino Denmark, Muslim American Leadership Alliance, The Khalifa Ihler Institute

### Row 3 (left to right):

Al Hurra, I Believe in Science, Student Groups at The University of Kufa, Parallel Networks, Fuse School, University of Tikrit

## THE TRANSLATORS YOU EMPOWER

IBB's dedicated, passionate team of translators living across the Middle East are the heart and soul of our mission. They exemplify bravery and courage by stepping up to make access to knowledge and information and freedom of expression available in their communities. These young men and women are the igniting a movement for change across the Middle East, and are an heroic hope for a better tomorrow.



“

Evolution was the most exciting content I translated. It is very important for the Arabic-speaking world because most of the people here think that evolution is a tale - not a reality.

DANIA

I was really excited to be a part of the team who worked on the series of female scientists and public figures... our community needs to be more informed about the role of women... this program is creating equal opportunities for both genders.

MERA

”

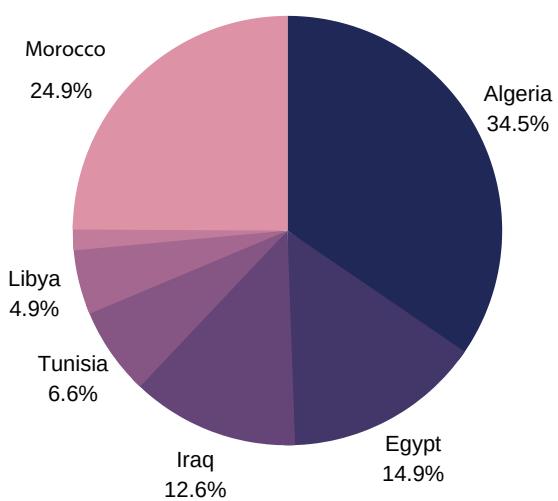
Working as a translator for Bayt Al Hikma 2.0 gives you a sense of motivation in daily life, knowing that you're doing something that is benefitting people across the globe.

KARAM

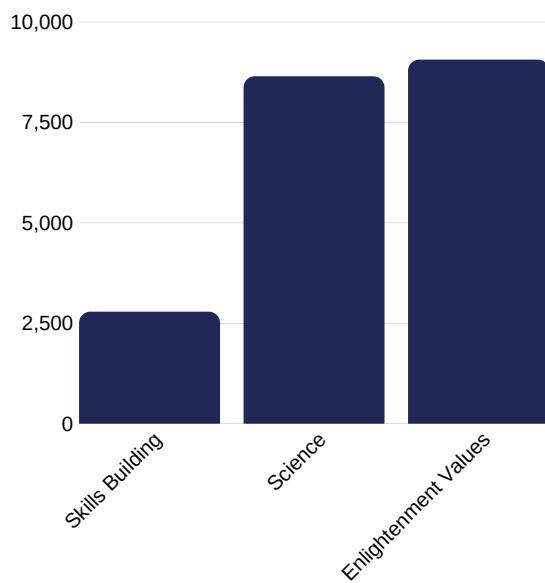


# 2019 BAYT AL HIKMA 2.0 READERSHIP STATISTICS

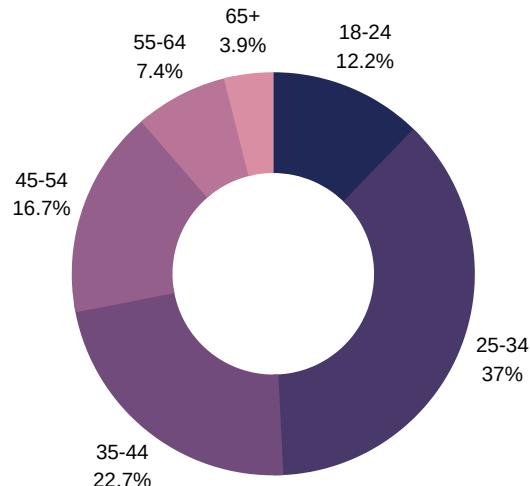
## MENA-REGION SITE VISITORS BY COUNTRY



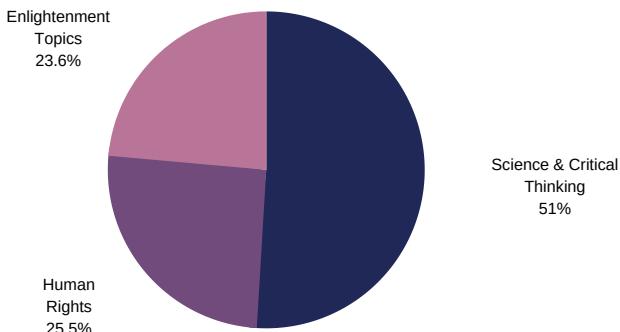
## BOOK DOWNLOADS BY TOPIC



## MENA-REGION SITE VISITORS BY AGE

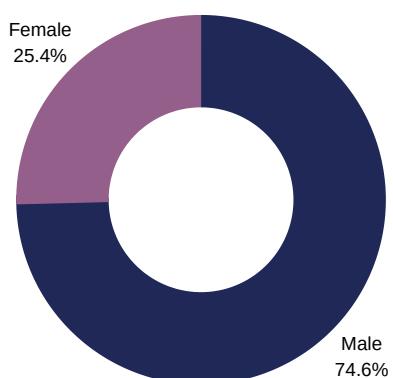


## ARTICLES AVAILABLE BY TOPIC



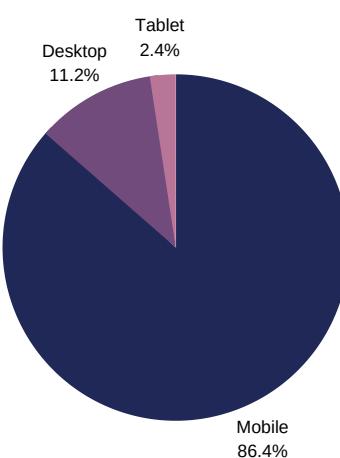
*Topics include Economics, Art & Literature, Language, Health & Emotions, Science & Logic, Politics, Human Rights, Civil Rights & Equality, and Philosophy.*

## MENA-REGION SITE VISITORS BY GENDER



*These results reflect barriers to internet access among females living in the MENA region; 25% readership is a significant accomplishment.*

## MENA-REGION SITE VISITORS BY DEVICE



*These results were anticipated and have been incorporated in the design and distribution of content, and informs our digital production strategy.*

## IN THE PRESS

2019 was an important year for Ideas Beyond Borders in the press! Our programs, leadership, and on-the-ground translators received the most coverage yet, and we're just getting started.



### **"Spread the Word: The Iraqis Translating the Internet into Arabic."**

Featured in The Guardian. Written by Olivia Cuthbert. 8 Oct. 2019. [www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/oct/08/spread-word-iraqis-translating-internet-into-arabic/](http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/oct/08/spread-word-iraqis-translating-internet-into-arabic/)

### **"Why Translation Matters for the Arab World."**

Featured in Arab Weekly. Written by Khadija Hamouchi. 17 Mar. 2019. [www.thearabweekly.com/why-translation-matters-arab-world/](http://www.thearabweekly.com/why-translation-matters-arab-world/)

### **"The Iraq War: Guest Faisal Saeed Al Mutar."**

Featured on The Rubin Report. Hosted by Dave Rubin. 3 Nov. 2019. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNkTt646j2w](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNkTt646j2w)

### **"Iraqis Leading Efforts to Enrich Arabic Wikipedia."**

Featured in Al-Monitor. Written by Gilgamesh Nabeel. 13 Apr. 2019. [www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/04/iraq-bayt-hikma-wikipedia-knowledge-culture.html](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/04/iraq-bayt-hikma-wikipedia-knowledge-culture.html)

## OUR BOARD MEMBERS

### The Board of Directors

- Samuel Hershey, Chairman of the Board | Attorney at law firm White & Case, LLP
- Daniel Johnson | CEO & Chairman of American Financial Systems
- Michael Trollan | Director of Experience Technology at Sapient Razorfish
- Faisal Saeed Al Mutar | Founder & President of Ideas Beyond Borders

### Our Acclaimed Advisory Board

- Omar Mohammed | Historian and Author of the Mosul Eye
- Natalie Khazaal | Expert on Disenfranchisement, Media, and Languages in the Arab World
- Laith Al-Shawaf | Professor of Evolution Psychology and Content Advisor
- Merete Riisager | Former Danish Minister of Education
- Steven Pinker | Acclaimed Author, Professor of Psychology at Harvard University
- Cynthia Schneider | Former US Ambassador to the Netherlands
- Jeffrey Flier | Former Dean of Harvard Medical School
- Bob Pearson | Marketing and Communications Guru
- Aaron Louis | Director of Audio Visual at the New York Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)
- Anthony Amore | Author and Security/Investigations Expert

## OUR SUPPORTERS

Ideas Beyond Borders is pleased to extend its deepest gratitude to our growing community of friends and supporters, who have helped us grow from an idea into a thriving organization with an increasing impact on the lives of the Middle East's young adults. A heartfelt thank you to each of our supporters in 2019, including each and every author that donated the rights to their works or worked with Ideas Beyond Borders to get their ideas into the hands of Arabic-speaking young adults across the globe. Without you, our mission would not be possible.

The IBB Annual Report allows us to recognize the especially generous donors who supported IBB during the past fiscal year, which began January 1, 2019, and ended December 31, 2019.

### **\$10,000+**

Anonymous  
Global Giving Foundation  
The Rob Granieri Fund  
Daniel Johnson  
James O'Shaughnessy  
The Steven Pinker Giving Fund  
Paypal Giving Fund

### **\$2,500+**

Aubrey Ayash  
Anonymous  
Gerald R. Ohrstrom  
Michael Trollan  
Scott Daniel Ullman

### **\$1,000+**

Anonymous  
Cheikh M el Atique  
Samuel Hershey  
Janet Hershey  
Marjorie and Jeffrey Honickman  
Imagine Fund  
William Tung  
Brian and Jeannie Rosenthal  
Rosenthal Family Fund  
Solomon Rubin  
Gregory Salazar  
The Saramar Charitable Trust  
Kimberly Smith  
Valerie Tarico and Brian Arbogast

*IBB apologizes for any errors or omissions.*

# CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES\*

YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2019

<b>OPERATING REVENUES</b>	
<b>Contributions</b>	\$ 1,593,521.78
<b>Earned revenue</b>	\$ 2,370.00
<b>Miscellaneous income</b>	\$ 6,197.33
<b>TOTAL OPERATING REVENUES</b>	<b>\$ 1,602,089.11</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	
<b>Program Services</b>	
<b>Total Program Services</b>	<b>\$749,625.50</b>
<b>Supporting Services</b>	
<b>Management and general</b>	<b>\$312,070.00</b>
<b>Fundraising</b>	<b>\$109,314.00</b>
<b>Total Supporting Services</b>	<b>\$421,384.00</b>
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$1,171,446.50</b>
<b>Excess (Deficiency) of Operating Revenues over Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$430,642.61</b>
<b>ASSETS</b>	
<b>Current Assets</b>	<b>\$1,254,639.46</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	<b>\$2,955.09</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$1,257,594.55</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	
<b>Liabilities</b>	
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$25,688.55</b>
<b>Equity</b>	
<b>Retained Earnings</b>	<b>\$879,412.54</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$403,870.56</b>
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>\$1,283,283.10</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	<b>\$1,257,594.55</b>

\*This information is from IBB's unaudited financial statement as of 2/1/2020. IBB's audit is underway. Audited financial results will be made available in place of the current statement.

## YOUR DONATION MATTERS

In 2019, your support significantly bolstered IBB's programs across the MENA region. Because of you, we were able to encourage disaffected youth to develop professional skills, participate in spreading enlightenment values to their peers and families, and ultimately spur change in their communities.

You helped us meet our fundraising initiatives during the Global Giving Accelerator, granting us access to receive corporate funding from some of the biggest names in Silicon Valley and beyond. You helped us meet our fundraising goals during our year end campaigns, including securing full matches of \$10,000 each from our generous board member, Daniel Johnson, and Harvard University Professor Steven Pinker.

Your act of giving back has allowed millions of Middle Eastern youth to move forward with the values of pluralism, critical thinking, and scientific discovery. Each dollar raised helps us distribute more books and articles, launch empowerment forums, outreach workshops, and new, innovative programs designed to build resistance to extremism, hatred, and oppression.

We're humbly asking for your continued generosity and support in 2020. Our mission relies on you. We need involved, impassioned community members and donors to make the world a safer, better place.

You can contribute your expertise or make a donation by visiting us online at [ideasbeyondborders.org/donate](https://ideasbeyondborders.org/donate) or by mailing a check to the address below.

Help us spread the word. Follow us on social media and join us on our quest to change lives and change minds.

**IDEASBEYONDBORDERS.ORG**

**244 FIFTH AVENUE, SUITE 2594  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10001**

**646.844.4076  
INFO@IDEASBEYONDBORDERS.ORG**