



2022 ANNUAL REPORT



Mission and Vision

Ideas Beyond Borders (IBB) champions a positive alternative to the extremism, authoritarianism, censorship, and violence that plagues the greater Middle East. IBB shares, translates, and promotes ideas that foster Enlightenment values. IBB's ultimate goal is to bring to life a modern Middle East, led by the people of the region.





Wikipedia contest winners from the University of Mosul in front of the Great Mosque of Mosul, where construction has resumed after the war with ISIS. Standing with new hope for the future (left to right) are Sufian Nabil, Rand Issam Younis, Aiesha Zaid, and Ahmed Mahmood. Photograph © Fareed Amin.



Young People Are Hungry for the Liberal Ideas We Offer

Not so long ago, I received a Facebook inquiry from someone wanting to start a nonprofit. I soon met Faisal Al Mutar and Melissa Chen, and I decided to help them incorporate Ideas Beyond Borders. Along the way, I became Board Chair.

Five years have flown by, and I am in awe of what we have accomplished. What stands out is that IBB finds good people with good ideas and enables them to act quickly. That's the magic.

Early on, we began by finding good people to translate the works of great authors like Steven Pinker. Our 200 translators, editors, and video producers built the House of Wisdom 2.0, with dozens of translated books, tens of thousands of translated articles, and hundreds of original videos and infographics on

Enlightenment topics. This team translated a mind-boggling 44 million words in just four years.

Where the House of Wisdom 2.0 team really shines is in making this content visible. They achieved an astounding 269 million content views last year, and even more impressive is the fact that our content was viewed in-depth for a total of 57 million minutes, and received 27 million engagements. On top of this, IBB-translated Wikipedia articles were accessed 118 million times last year.

These huge numbers tell a story: Young people in the Middle East are hungry for the liberal ideas and perspectives we offer. We are providing an incredibly important service, we need to keep doing it, and we will.

That said, we never rest on our laurels. We launched the Innova-

tion Hub microgrant program in 2021, and have been scaling ever since. I predict it will be as much of a game-changer as the House of Wisdom 2.0. We enable good people to put their good ideas into action. In a very real sense, they bring Enlightenment values to life.

To me, our Innovators are the future of the Middle East. There are many stories, but I'll share just one. Ever since the Taliban took control, Farid Anwari was looking for a way to help. An expert coder and web developer, he says "Seeing girls suffer, I thought I could help by teaching." He says his AfghanCoders organization has trained 44 girls "who told us they have created websites and that their confidence increased. We are working to help them achieve their goals."

As you can imagine, defending liberal ideas like education is not easy in this part of the world. But good people with good ideas work wonders. This is why we support Farid and so many others like him. As Dr. Steven Pinker says, "Ideas matter, and ideas change the world."

As a supporter of IBB, you can be justly proud of what we, Faisal, Melissa, and the IBB team have accomplished together during our first five years. Just imagine what we can do together during the next five years!

Sincerely,

Samuel P. Hershey

Samuel P. Hershey
Chair of the Board
Ideas Beyond Borders



Every Day I Am Floored by the Bravery and Tenaciousness of Our Team

When I set my mind on starting IBB more than five years ago, I was hopeful. I was hopeful that one day we would see youth in the MENA region who believe in the values of freedom and human dignity, taking initiative, organizing, and fighting for their rights. Put simply, I wanted to make the Middle East a better place than when I left it to come to America in 2013. I wanted to empower those still living in closed societies. I wanted young people in places like Baghdad, where I grew up, to have unfettered access to information— not to have to secretly listen to illegal radio in the middle of the night to understand what was really going on in the world, as I did in the early 2000s.

What would transpire in the years to come would exceed my expectations tenfold. I am a hard man to surprise, but every day I am floored by the bravery,

persistence, and tenaciousness of our translators, underground educators, innovators, content creators, and the operations team who make it all possible.

What you will see in this report is our story on what we have accomplished along the way.

IBB is fulfilling the unkept and failed promises international aid organizations have been making for decades by cutting through the red tape and subverting corruption, by empowering people on the ground to forge better futures for their children.

IBB's success rests upon our investing in people who genuinely want to invest in themselves and their homelands. We have translators who translate books from their cars when no other shelter is available to them. We have educators who run underground

schools for women in places like Afghanistan where they could be arrested or killed for doing so. We have innovators who, when the rest of the MENA region is asleep, are up working on their next inspired idea for the betterment of their communities.

Every dollar IBB receives plays a part in revolutionizing parts of the world that many have deemed unreachable, and we're making progress every day. With every young person curious enough to pick up a book by John Stuart Mill translated into Arabic, or *Development With Dignity* by Tom Palmer or *Rationality* By Steven Pinker, the movement toward freedom in the Middle East presses forward. IBB gives people the resources they need to overcome insurmountable obstacles. With the right tools, anything is possible. With your help, we are making a tangible difference. We aren't just

Ideas Beyond Borders— we are people beyond borders making a tangible impact on the communities who need and deserve it most, and we couldn't do it without you.

Sincerely,

Faisal Saeed Al Mutar
Founder & President



Two happy children, IBB Iraq Country Director Wameed Alshaibi, and IBB cofounders Faisal al Mutar and Melissa Chen celebrate the opening of the Lotus Flower Library at the Essayan Yazidi camp in northern Iraq. Photograph © Fareed Hama Ameen.

Five Years of Exponentially Increasing Impact

What will the next five years bring? We see good ideas just over the horizon, and we'll be making them happen.

Ideas Beyond Borders (IBB) is a **get-stuff-done organization** with a compelling track record, as you will see in this “annual” report, in which we review our first five years.

What made this success possible?
What is distinctive about IBB?

One way of putting it is that we solve problems that matter, where they matter, and when they matter. And we do this without falling prey to the problems that have faced the international development industrial complex for decades: bureaucracy and program solutions that favor the well-connected.

What matters most, though, is that we get stuff done. You can

have great ideas. You can have a good organization with good, well-intentioned people. That's not enough.

We focus on the toughest of problems—that's first. Then we put good people together. They generate new ideas and new opportunities, and they *act*.

That's why IBB is freely spreading liberal ideas in the Middle East, blowing right past authoritarian and extremist censorship.

That's why IBB funds girls' education in Afghanistan, no matter what the Taliban say.

That's why IBB is funding innovators and changemakers who are taking things into their own hands.

never mind the naysayers who say Middle East youth can't or won't.

We do not pretend these issues are easy to solve or that we have all the answers. We do know that tackling big problems is in our DNA.

What will the next five years bring? We see good ideas just over the horizon, and we'll be making them happen.

Buckle up!



There Was a Radio

In the beginning, there was a radio, a battered boom box. Bringing ideas and alternative perspectives...and opening a teenager's mind.

Faisal al Mutar, the founder of Ideas Beyond Borders, would wake up at 2 am to listen to international radio with his father on the rooftop of their Baghdad home. They would discuss the day's events and debate ideas. Democracy. Pluralism. Free speech. Human rights. Sharing knowledge. And more.

Merely discussing ideas was an act of defiance in Saddam's Iraq, a land of authoritarianism, censorship, and intolerance. And then Saddam fell.

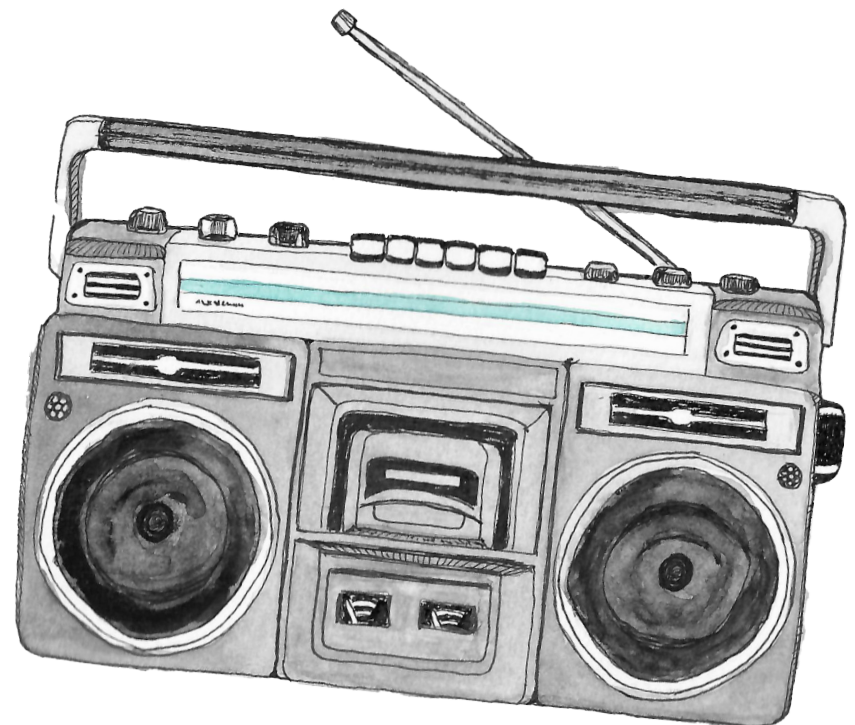
Al Qaeda was a different kind of terrible. Faisal had to walk over dead bodies on his way to high school. Still, he became a leader, bringing together a diverse group to translate, distribute, and stand for human rights. Al Qaeda's extremism and nihilistic violence continued. They recruited his fellow students. They killed his teachers. Then they killed his brother.

They came after him, too. As he escaped Iraq, his last thought was a promise:

"I will devote my life to making the Middle East a better place."

"I will devote my life to making the Middle East a better place."

2000



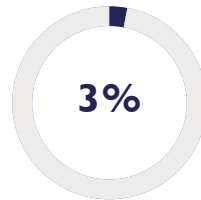
2013



Faisal arrives in U.S.

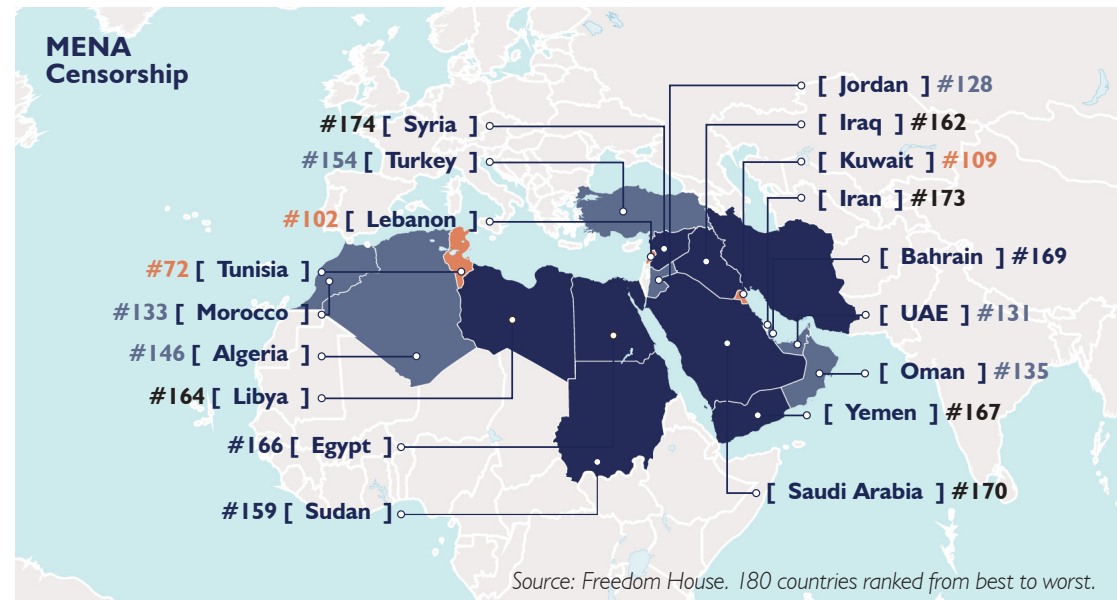
A year later he meets IBB co-founder Melissa Chen, who grew up in Singapore and, like Faisal, came to the US to pursue opportunity and freedom.

2015



Because authoritarians and extremists censor content, youth are ill-equipped to fight for free, liberal societies they need.

As of 2015, only 3% of online content is available in Arabic, even though Arabic is the fourth most spoken language among Internet users.





2016



Founders Gonna Found: Ideas Beyond Borders is Born

In October 2016, Faisal and Melissa are in Los Angeles for a conference. After many cigarettes and hours of discussion, they identify a big reason why so many people in this world are not free:

Enlightenment ideas are simply unavailable.

They are inaccessible because authoritarians and extremists censor liberal content. It means Arab youth don't have the mental framework they need to create a modern MENA.

And so, Ideas Beyond Borders is born, with a mission of “making the inaccessible accessible,” especially in the Middle East, one of the least free regions in the world.

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2017



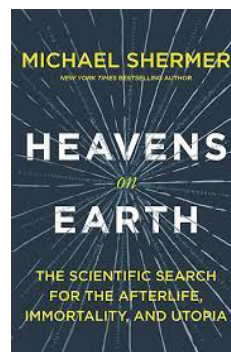
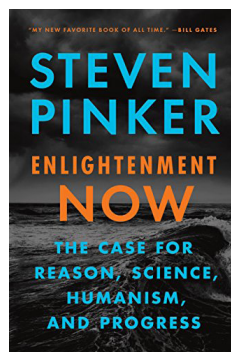
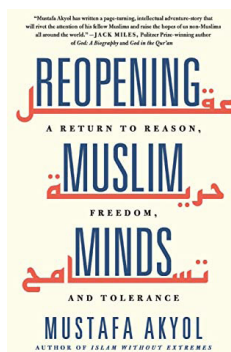
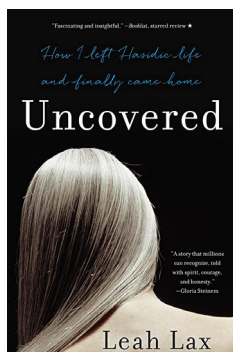
Bayt al-Hikma 2.0

IBB Launches the House of Wisdom 2.0

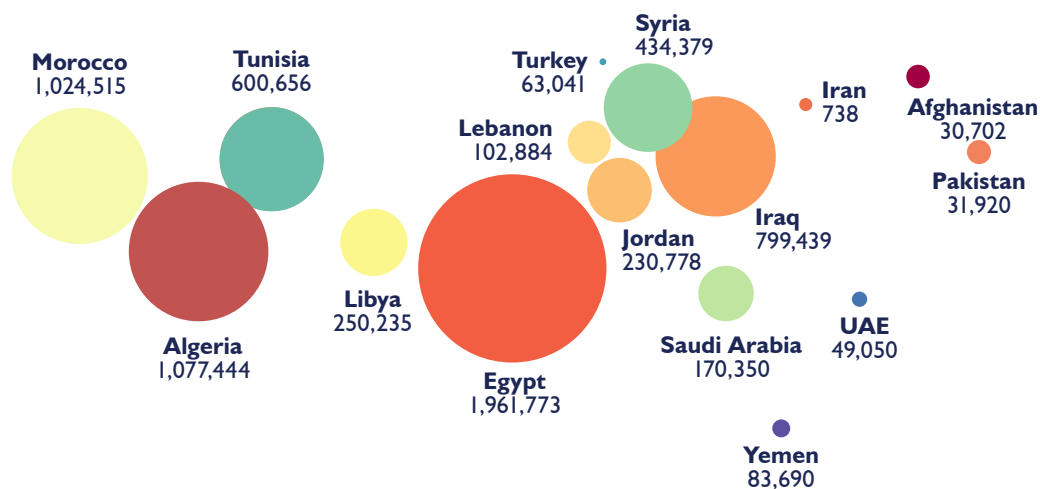
By 2017, Ideas Beyond Borders is in business, and a year later, the House of Wisdom 2.0 digital education platform is launched. Known as Bayt al Hikma 2.0 in Arabic, IBB's flagship program is named after the famous 8th-century Baghdad library and center of knowledge.

The House of Wisdom 2.0 solves the censorship problem by creating an online library that is difficult to censor and a community where youth are free to explore ideas and share their opinions.

Our team of 200 translated more than 44 million words in just four years



IBB's 8.6 million+ Followers by Country



“The works of great modern thinkers and scientists like Steven Pinker need to reach as many people as possible. I hope my translation of *Enlightenment Now* will be a stone thrown into the still waters of the Arab world.”

2018



Steven Pinker's

Enlightenment Now
translated and published.

Hala Gamal, Translator,
Steven Pinker's
Enlightenment Now.



House of Wisdom 2.0 Produces 100 Original Videos Annually



Top-Performing Videos Demonstrate Arab Youth Interest in Secularism, Democracy and Authoritarianism



*The **Kemalist Experience*** video explains how Ataturk built a secular state amidst the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. With more than 4.7 million views, this top-performer indicates **Arab youth are interested in secular solutions.**



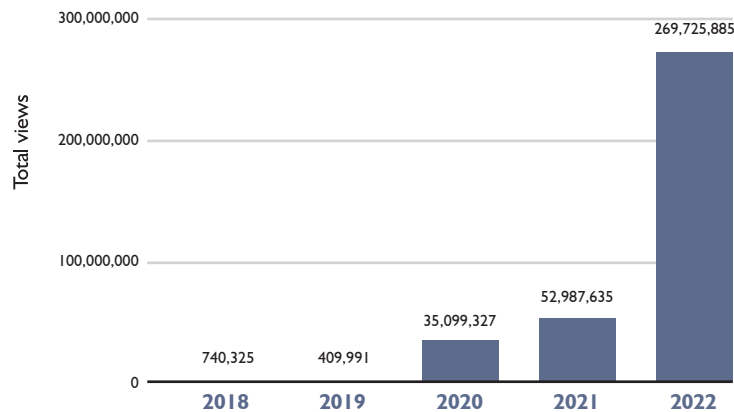
*The **German Renaissance*** video attracted more than 4 million views and highlights the rise of the German democratic state after Hitler. Its popularity shows **Arab youth are interested in how countries successfully transition from authoritarianism to democracy.**



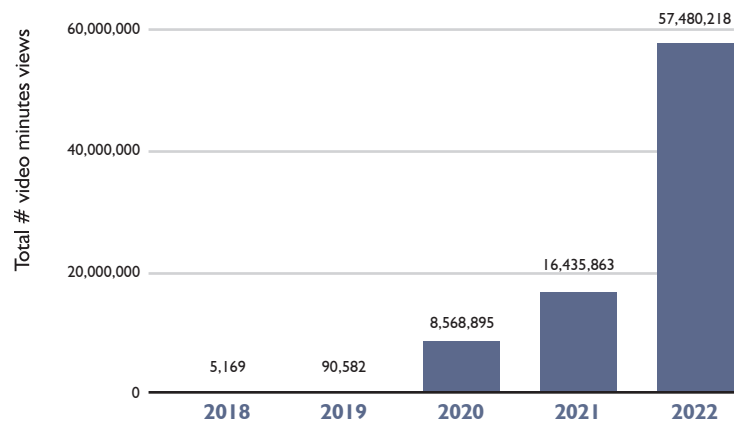
*The **Failed State: How Venezuela Went from Rich to Poor*** explainer video features the collapse of Venezuela's democracy, attracted more than 2.9 million views, and demonstrated **Arab youth's keen appreciation of the problems of authoritarianism.**

269 Million Acts of Free Speech in 2022

Annual Growth in Total Views



Annual Growth in Total Minutes Viewed



“Rationality belongs to no nation, tribe, religion, or civilization. It is woven into the nature of ideas, determining how one truth leads to another, and how we can accomplish what we want. I believe that all societies benefit when their people and their institutions become more rational, and I hope to do my small part in the countries in which my book *Rationality* is available.”

Dr. Steven Pinker is an IBB board member and is Johnstone Family Professor of Psychology at Harvard University



June 2018



WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia



“Ludwig Wittgenstein said, ‘The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.’ When I think about it, we are expanding the limits of our language, and we are expanding the limits of millions of minds.”

Sarah Aldonia, IBB Translator



“The war in Syria made us young people feel helpless. Being part of the House of Wisdom 2.0 family restored my confidence in my ability to have an impact. I could not be more grateful.”

Alissar Ghanem, IBB Translator

The Translation Project: Bringing Liberal Content to Wikipedia Arabic

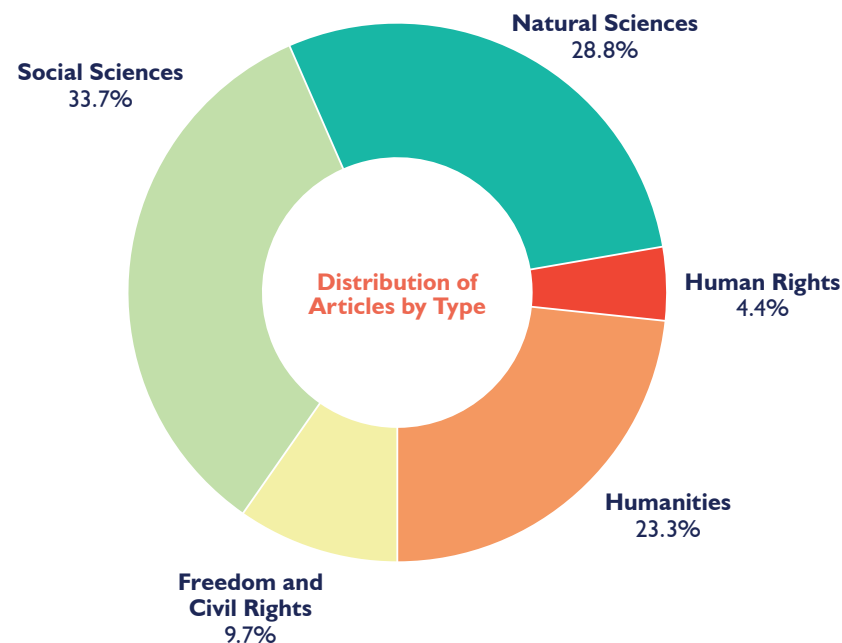
IBB translates and publishes its first Wikipedia article in June 2018, launching a multiyear initiative to ensure that Enlightenment topics are available in Wikipedia Arabic.

32,550

translated articles

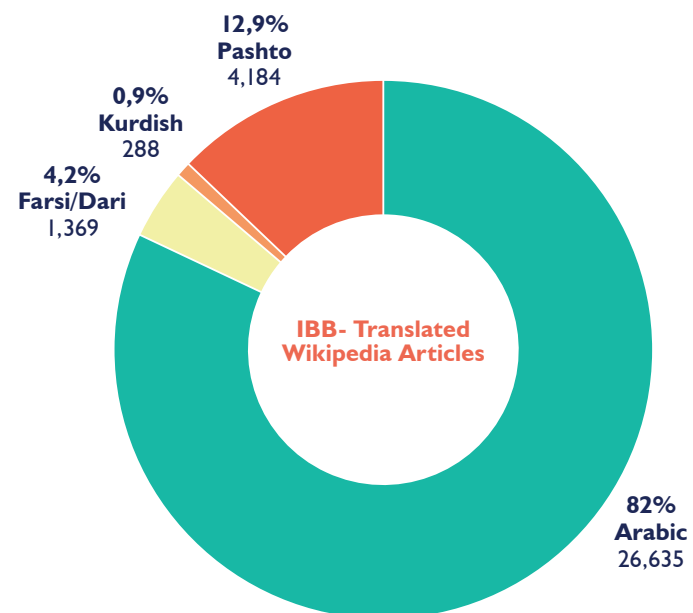
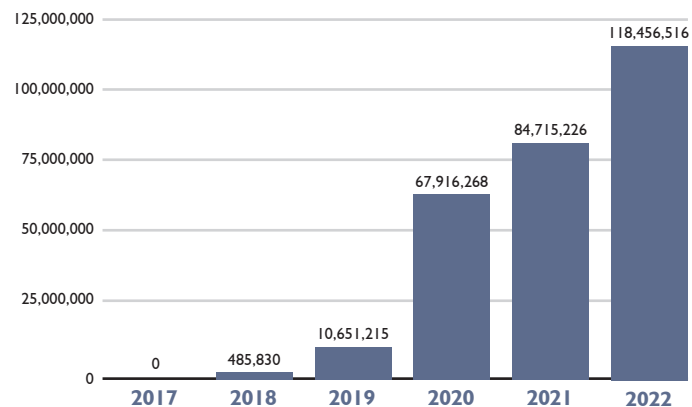
Accessed

118 million times



IBB and Wikipedia in four years

Total # Times Wikipedia Articles Accessed (IBB-edited)



March 2020



IBB launches Stop the Spread to combat Covid disinformation and provide humanitarian aid

When the pandemic hit, IBB launched its Stop the Spread digital public health education campaign within weeks, and a companion humanitarian campaign to distribute masks and food supplies in Iraq.



China TV (CGTN), Al Jazeera, Russia Today, and other state-sponsored media played a major role in communicating Covid-19 disinformation.

A CGTV news story claiming the coronavirus was made in the US and placed in a Wuhan lab gained more than 500,000 views.

IBB countered authoritarian disinformation with satire, accurate information, and critical thinking videos. The Stop the Spread campaign ultimately reached over 30 million views.



Top 3 Videos



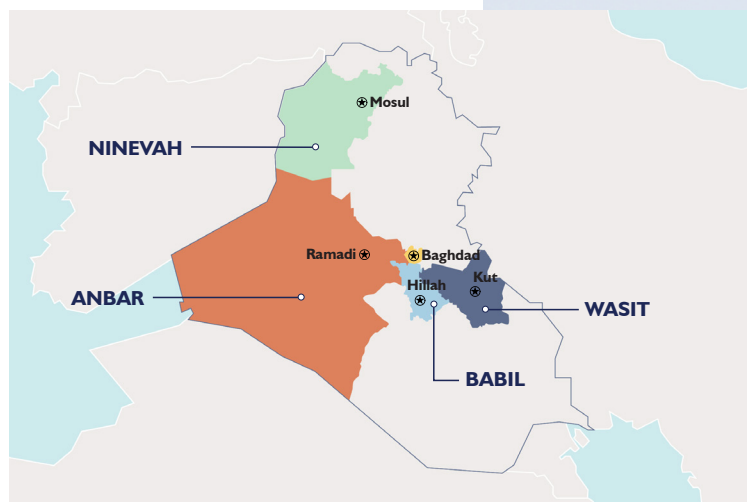
Conspiracy Theories About Covid-19
Satire, 3.4 million views



Interview with Covid Patient
Factual information, 3.4 million views



Why We Believe Conspiracy Theories
Critical thinking about Covid, 522,000 views



More than 144,000 medical-grade masks and 756,000 meals were distributed in war-torn areas of Iraq, ranging from Mosul in the north to Baghdad, Anbar Province in the west, and Wasit in the south.





“Bel Arabi is **one of the best podcasts to follow in Arabic. It has in-depth analyses, without stereotypes and traditional ideas. Behind this show is a talented, smart, and intellectual presenter who always makes you eager for the next episode.”**

Amr Salah, Graduate Lecturer and Ph.D. candidate, Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution, George Mason University. Amr Salah was interviewed on the Russian war on Ukraine and The Art of Negotiation.

July 2020



Bel Arabi makes invisible Arab liberals visible

Bel Arabi is the leading source for liberal perspectives in the Middle East. Led by executive producer and journalist Maher Gabra, Bel Arabi uses podcast and video formats to share liberal perspectives and challenge the region's dominant “authoritarianism is a success and democracy is a failure” narrative.

Every video utilizes powerful visual creative storytelling techniques that are effective in changing people's minds, while the podcast introduces our MENA youth audience to leading liberal analysts, thinkers, and writers.



Top Bel Arabi Podcasts



The Iran Protests
with Hussain Abdual-Hussain
Research Fellow, Foundation for the Defense of Democracies
2.1 million views



What is the James Webb Telescope?
with Diana Alsindy
Fluids Design Manager, Blue Origin
1.7 million views



The Russian War on Ukraine
with Amr Salah
Lecturer, Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution, George Mason University
1.3 million views



Top Bel Arabi Videos



Berlin Wall: Will History Repeat Itself?
4.7 million views

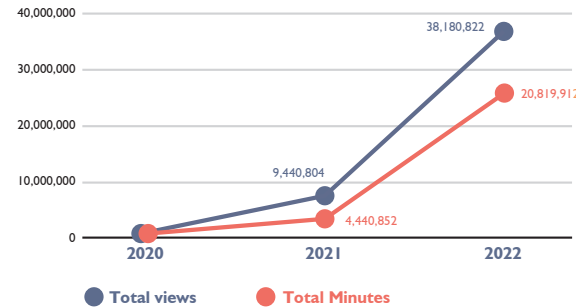


The Protests in Iran
3.5 million views

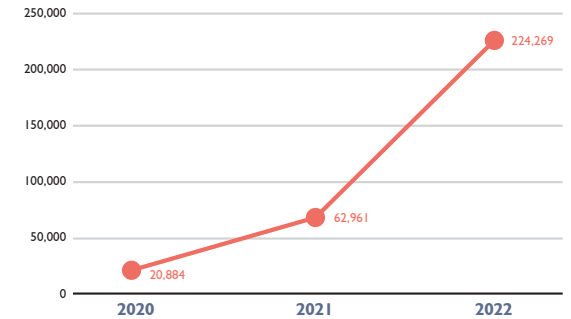


**Dr. Raymond Shinazi:
The Story of an Egyptian
Jew Who Saved Lives**
3.5 million views

Bel Arabi Growth (2020-2022)



Bel Arabi Annual Growth in Engagement



“The Bel Arabi podcast is an important and unique experience for Arab listeners and the Arabic podcast market.”

Mohamed M. Farid, Senator, Egypt. Deputy Chairman, Committee on Human Rights & Social Solidarity. Founding member of the Liberal Club of Cairo. Senator Farid was interviewed on the Egyptian economic crisis.

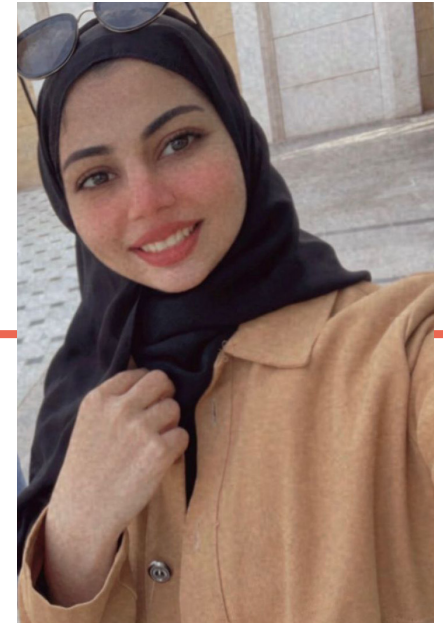


Student Ambassador Ali Firas takes a selfie with “his” student team members at Al Turath University.



“I discovered the power of Arabic Wikipedia and its mission to ensure free knowledge for all.”

Esraa dyaa Saadi,
MENA University
Student Project
participant, from
Al-Turath University



January 2021



The MENA University Student Translator Wikipedia Project **Living Proof Liberal Values Are Coming to Life in the Middle East**

IBB and Wikipedia have the common goal of sharing knowledge in the Middle East, especially Enlightenment-oriented topics like human rights, democracy, science, and more. To do this, Wikipedia needs new young volunteers to take on the challenge

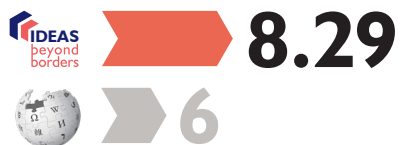
of expanding Wikipedia Arabic. That’s why IBB created the two-year MENA University Student Translator project, which gave students hands-on experience in translating and editing Wikipedia articles in a 21st-century “work

environment.” Through webinars, workshops, and student-team collaboration, students also gained the 21st-century skills they need to take on leadership roles after they graduate.

The project succeeded by the numbers, with best-in class student translation and publication quality scores, and outstanding attendance and retention results:

2 years • 30 teams • 350 students

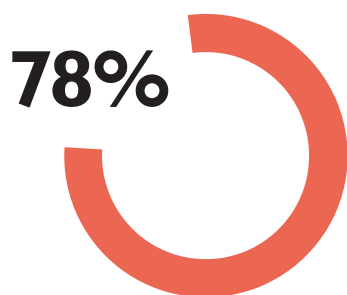
**Publication Quality
Higher than Average**



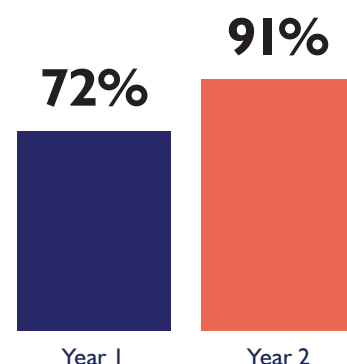
**Translation Quality
Higher than Average**



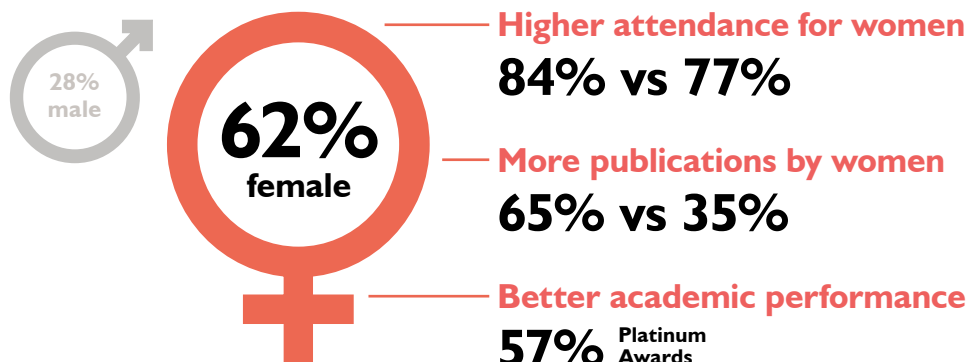
Student retention rate



Average webinar attendance



Female participation



“I was delighted to participate in a program that aims to enrich Arabic digital content on Wikipedia while improving student skills and enhancing their career prospects. I hope it continues to benefit more students in the coming years.”

Luma Salman, Wikipedia Iraq community leader



July 2021



Good people with great ideas can't get funding, so IBB launches the Innovation Hub

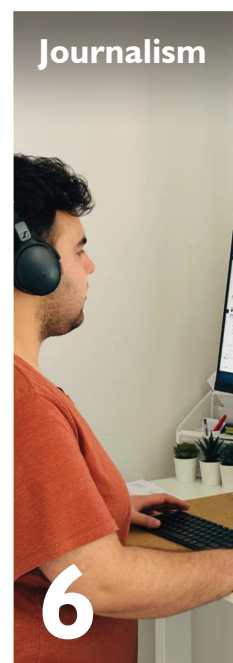
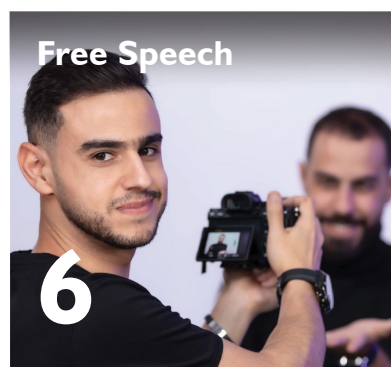
In 2021, IBB moved beyond sharing liberal ideas to actively empowering people to put them into action. The Innovation Hub, inspired by Tyler Cowen's Emergent Ventures philosophy, provides microgrants to entrepreneurs and brilliant minds with ideas that will meaningfully improve the societies in which they live. We keep the bureaucracy at

bay, and we fund applicants who are largely "outside the system." A good idea might involve starting or enhancing a business, advancing the arts, teaching critical thinking, starting a bookshop or publishing company, or creating new opportunities for disadvantaged communities. The possibilities are endless, and purposefully so.

Noor Hashim, founder of the Hili Project, is revolutionizing Iraq's crafts scene. Her all-woman team produces beautiful contemporary pieces celebrating Iraq's ancient roots. At right: hand-woven basket



Innovation Hub Grants by Type



Total Grants:

67

Apollo provides employment and hope for Syrian refugees



Majd's Apollo Agency has a partnership with Google, international clients, and a sister video production studio. He takes every opportunity to share his success with other refugees, offering internships to help young Syrians acquire the skills to compete in the Turkish and global job market.

“We have every kind of challenge from racism and discrimination to unemployment - and no freedom of movement around the country. Thanks to IBB, we provide more people with jobs, and that will give them access to the incredibly competitive job market here. It’s a good push for them to build better lives in Turkey.”

Majd Albasha, founder, Apollo Agency for Digital Marketing Solutions, Istanbul, Turkey

The new Children's Library at Essayan Refugee Camp in northern Iraq

Vian Ahmed of Lotus Flower used her Innovation Hub grant to create a new children's library at the Essayan camp. Located in northern Iraq, the camp is "home" to more than 15,000 Yazidis who suffered greatly at the hands of ISIS.

"I love reading and learning new things. I'm very happy that we finally have a space where we can develop ourselves."

Khalaf Khalil, 15, comes to the library twice a week.



"I love it here, it's great to have access to all these books in such a nice place where I can also find friends."

Gole Karwan is 18. She loves borrowing novels and theater books.

"I like books about personal improvement. I couldn't afford them so it's great to have free access to all this knowledge."

Ghazal Mirza is from Sinjar and visits four times a week.

Avitoria Publishing House's new space for women authors

Muna used Innovation Hub funds to create a new venue and start a literary club, with a special emphasis on women authors. Avitoria is located on Al Mutanabi Street (famous for its bookstores) in Baghdad, Iraq.



“Avitoria just got bigger and more beautiful and IBB played a vital role in making this dream come true. We have a literary session every Friday and sometimes have to move the venue due to the growing number of participants. There are many women authors at Avitoria, and I do my best to help them believe in themselves and unleash their talents.”

Muna Naser Liaibi, head of Avitoria Publishing House, Baghdad, Iraq



Rebuilding Kabul's Kaaj School after the attack

At least 35 people were killed and 82 were wounded when a suicide bomber attacked a class full of students at the Dasht-e-Barchi branch of the Kaaj Education Center in Kabul. IBB quickly provided Mukhtar Mudaber with Innovation Hub funds to help rebuild.

“After this bloody incident, the reopening of the Kaaj school created new hope for the people. We have to fight to the last against ignorance, which is the source of all corruption.”



Mukhtar Mudaber, head of the Kaaj Education Center in Kabul, Afghanistan

Afghans code in North America with Inspirand

“Sometimes you just need a little push, and so now Inspirand is a business. We are already having an impact with five Afghan-based freelancers and more to come.

One developer had to take a factory job in Iran but our hiring him led to a job with a Vancouver ad agency.”



Samiullah Nazari is the founder of Inspirand, a Canadian startup that employs web developers living in Afghanistan to deliver services to North American clients.



Istanbul's YOLO Art Center, a place for art and Arab immigrants

“The YOLO Art Center has emerged as a unique space for immigrants and refugees of Arab origin. Our visitors have been able to move forward and thrive using their art to express themselves and find solace.”

Bayan Agha, co-founder of the
YOLO Art Center, Istanbul, Turkey



YOLO Art is a startup and a space for entertaining, expressing, connecting, learning, and exchanging experiences with the arts.

August 2021



IBB hires the translators left behind in Afghanistan

It's August 15, 2021, and the Taliban return to power amidst the chaos as the US withdraws from Afghanistan.

IBB realizes that not everyone who needs to can leave. Translators still in Afghanistan are targets of blackmail & assassination, and they are unemployed.

IBB mobilizes quickly, hiring 80 in-country translators and editors, many of them women. Our aim is to help those aligned with our values, counter censorship, and oppose Taliban oppression. If they need to get out, we will help. If they are staying, we will employ them until their situation stabilizes.

October 2021



The House of Wisdom 2.0 Afghanistan launches

IBB's answer to the Taliban's repression of free speech

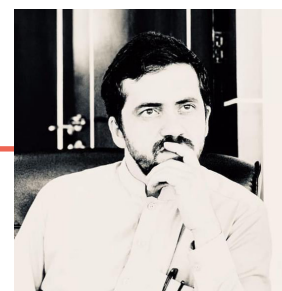
It was an easy decision to counter Taliban censorship by expanding House of Wisdom 2.0 to include Pashto and Dari (Farsi), the main languages of Afghanistan.

Until IBB got involved, very little online content existed in Pashto and Dari about women's rights, democracy, pluralism, and other Enlightenment topics in Wikipedia. Our Afghan team has already translated 5,403 articles that have been accessed more than 750,000 times, freely sharing the knowledge that will one day be the Taliban's downfall.

In 2022, House of Wisdom 2.0 Afghanistan launched its video program, producing 50 videos that were viewed more than 1.2 million times, with a total of more than 300,000 minutes viewed.



“The fact that IBB’s Afghan translators are translating and publishing articles on science and other topics into Pashto will revolutionize the language.”



Safiullah Nasary,
Chief Editor, Aksos
Bookstore.



IBB launches underground girls' school initiative, helping Afghan girls defy the Taliban

The Taliban banned girls education.

The teenage girls and their parents are not giving up. Neither will we.

That's why IBB identified and funded underground schools last year, employing 43 teachers and educating 2,150 girls in 31 locations or classrooms. They risk their lives and defy imprisonment, ensuring their girls are safe even as they educate them.



"I am happy to see that IBB is doing something. I study in freedom here in the US, while my sisters in Afghanistan live in fear. The Underground School Project serves as the light at the end of a dark tunnel for them."

Farida Razaqi, Fulbright Scholar, Program Specialist at the State University at Buffalo School of Law.

Farida was recently accepted at Harvard, Columbia, Cornell, and Buffalo University graduate programs.

“My dream is to go to the moon as an astronaut. It’s far away from the daily troubles we have here on Earth with the Taliban. We have a joke between us girls. We say that when the Taliban are gone, we will come back to this school dressed up in bright colors, and we will dance. Even if that day comes 10 years from now, no matter where on earth I am, I will come to this center and fulfill my vow.”

Elina, a 17-year-old, is from the capital city of Kabul. She is currently in grade 11 and has a deep interest in Astronomy. Her teachers tell us that she influences other students by sharing her love for science and astronomy.

“I was never afraid of the Taliban, and I never will be. I will always be against them and will never lose hope. I want to be a doctor, but right now it is not possible for me to get the necessary education. Nevertheless, I use online tools at home to learn whatever I can.”

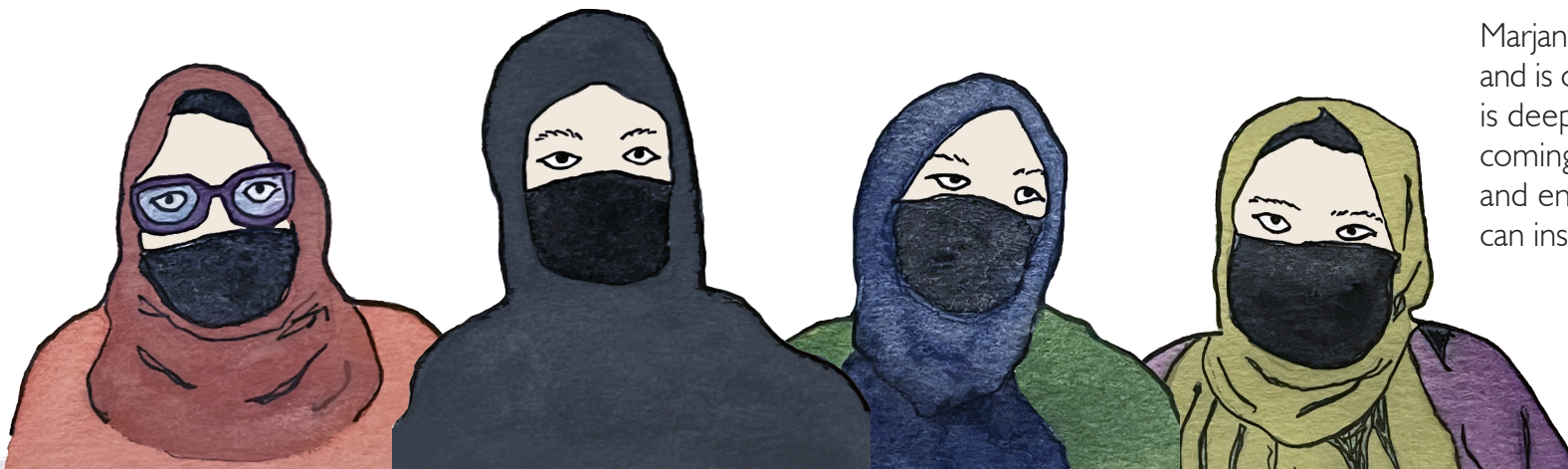
Sana, 17 years old and from Baghlan province, is studying online at a university. She is currently taking English classes at one of our underground schools.

“I want to become a doctor and be a successful person. But my future is not that certain. I am afraid, but we are continuing. We are resisting the Taliban.”

Sara, is originally from Parwan province. She is 19 and is currently preparing for the university entrance examination. Sara loves tailoring and knitting on top of her passion to become a designer one day.

“I want to become a woman leader. We already have people who want to become doctors, engineers, or journalists, but we don’t have a woman leader. I am not afraid of the Taliban, because I believe we can stand against them.”

Marjan, is studying in 12th grade and is currently 18 years old. She is deeply passionate about becoming a strong leader one day and enjoys reading books that can inspire and teach her.



IBB donates new textbooks used by 28,000 students every year, turning a new page after ISIS burned the University of Mosul Central Library

March 2022



“The reopening of the Central Library is a symbol of victory, not just for Mosul, but for Iraq and society as a whole.”

Sayf Al-Ashqar,
Secretary-General
of Libraries at the
University of Mosul,
Mosul, Iraq

The destruction of the University of Mosul's Central Library in northern Iraq was a signature moment for ISIS. UNESCO called the destruction of more than one million books, rare manuscripts, and maps “one of the most devastating acts of de-

struction of library collections in human history.”

Rather than donate old books, IBB asked a simple question: what do you need most? Textbooks, the librarians told us.

Today, more than 28,000 students a year directly benefit from IBB's textbook donation, which also included 5,000 e-books and monographs, 400 software apps such as AutoCAD, and 20 powerful computer workstations.



IBB Launches Freedom Technology Education Campaign

April 2022



IBB launched the Freedom Technology campaign in partnership with MobileCoin, with the goal of educating Arab youth on ways they can protect themselves online.

It is a high-stakes race against time: regional authoritarians are currently adapting the Chinese online surveillance state model, which would enable near-complete online control over their people. But when millions of Arab youth adopt freedom technology, the authoritarians are much less likely to succeed.

Already, there are 11 million views and 2.4 million total minutes watched, and thousands have downloaded free online safety apps such as Signal,

opened a cryptocurrency wallet, or downloaded safer browsers such as Tor or Brave. The ten-video series has been extended to 2023, with plans for more.

August 2022



Top Videos

How to Send Money Safely Using Cryptocurrency
1.3 million views

How to Communicate Safely Online
1.3 million views

How to Not be Tracked While Browsing the Internet
1.3 million views



IBB lends a hand to World Liberty Congress serving as fiscal sponsor

When Leopoldo López needed help in launching the World Liberty Congress, IBB immediately said yes and became its fiscal sponsor. The World Liberty Congress is democracy's answer to the worldwide pro-authoritarian movement. Authoritarianism has been winning the day, in part because authoritarians have been learning from one another. Now, with the World Liberty Congress, leaders and activists will gain support, learn from one another, and build successful democratic movements in their countries, including the Middle East and Central Asia.

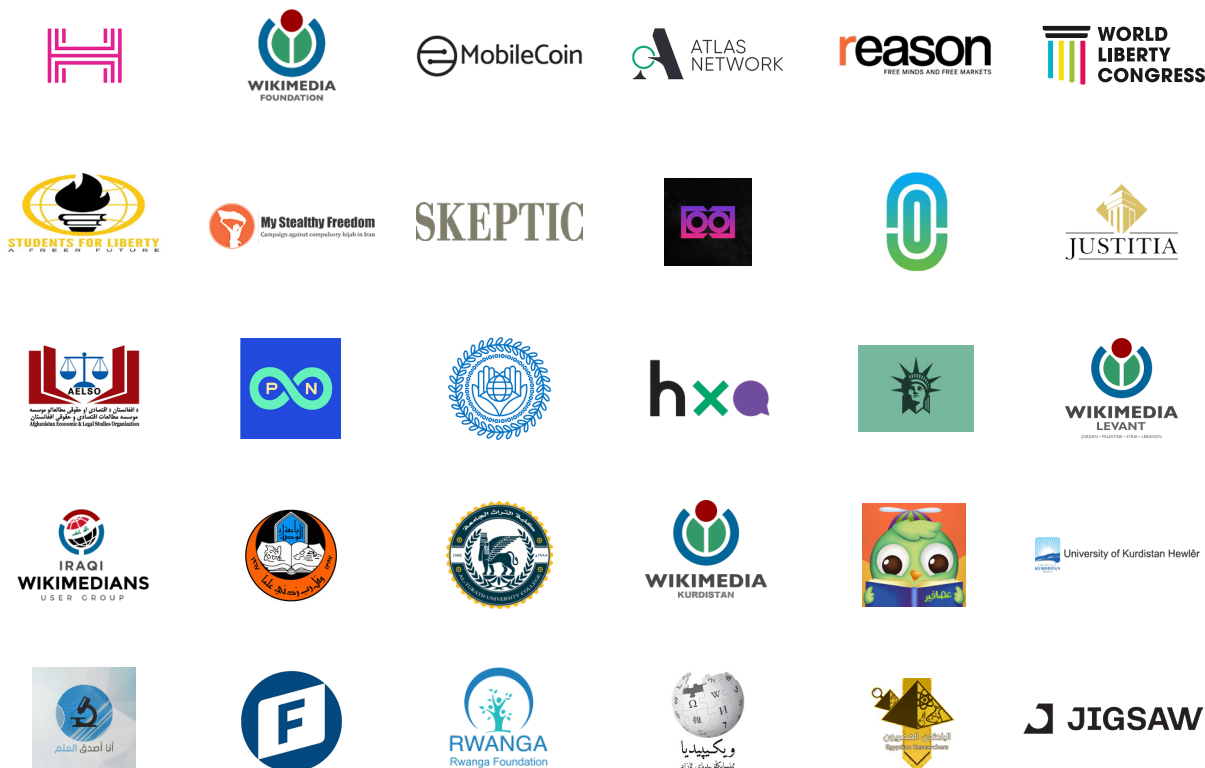


Leopoldo López is co-founder of the World Liberty Congress and leader of the Venezuelan opposition movement. He lives in exile in Spain.



IBB cofounders Faisal al Mutar and Melissa Chen (center) and Kurdistan Director Hussein Ibrahim (far right) celebrate the November 2022 opening of IBB's first office in the Middle East, located in Erbil, capital city of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Partners



Row 1 (left to right): Human Rights Foundation, Wikimedia Foundation, MobileCoin, Atlas Network, Reason Magazine, World Liberty Congress.

Row 2 (left to right): Students for Liberty, My Stealthy Freedom, Skeptic Magazine, Iron Light, Digital Citizens Fund, Justitia

Row 3 (left to right): Afghanistan Economic & Legal Studies Organization, Progress Network, Alliance for Peacebuilding, Heterodox Academy, Ladies of Liberty, Wikimedia Levant

Row 4 (left to right): Iraqi Wikimedians, University of Mosul, Al Turah University College, Wikimedia Kurdistan, Asafeer, University of Kurdistan-Hewler.

Row 5 (left to right): I Believe in Science, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, Rwanda, Wikimedia Farsi, Egyptian Researchers, Jigsaw

Individual Partners and Friends

We thank the following for their generous contributions of time, intellect, and service in advancing IBB's program and network.

Ahmed Ahmadian
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In this annual report, we recognize the members of the Friends of Ideas Beyond Borders, our annual giving society, for their exceptionally generous support. Their philanthropy enables our work and propels change in the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia.

\$100,000 or More

Anonymous (3)
Digital Citizens Fund
Fidelity Charitable Fund
Brady Forrest
The Rob Granieri Fund
Google
Humani Foundation
MobileCoin
MobileCoin Foundation
Vanguard Charitable Fund
Wikimedia Foundation

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(\$10,000 or More)

Farmer Family Fund
Freedom House
Humanity United
Steven Pinker Giving Fund
Students for Liberty

Enlightened Mind Roundtable

(\$5,000 or More)

American Online Giving Fund
The Michael and Charity Coors Fund
Institute of Economic Affairs
National Christian Foundation
- Rocky Mountains
Open Technology Fund
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Inquiring Mind Salon

(\$2,500 or More)

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Marjorie Honickman
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Offerdahl Family Foundation
Samar Charitable Fund
Stiefel Charity Fund
Karthik Sekar
Hugo A Williams

Financials

for the year Ending December 31, 2022

Activity and Net Asset Change Summary

OPERATING REVENUE	
Contributions	\$4,017,335
Donated Services	\$22,426
Investment Income	(\$15,041)
Other Income	\$7,565

TOTAL REVENUE **\$4,032,285**

OPERATING EXPENSES	
Program Services	\$2,836,569
Management & General	\$415,225
Fundraising	\$262,173

TOTAL EXPENSE **\$3,513,967**

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	
Change in Net Assets	\$547,722

NET ASSETS	
Beginning of Year	\$1,667,802
End of Year	\$2,186,120

This summary is based on the audited financial statement prepared by Ideas Beyond Borders auditor Withum.

Assets and Liabilities Summary

ASSETS	
Cash	\$2,133,828
Investments	\$145,735
Promise to Give	\$48,000
Prepaid Expenses	\$2,034
Security deposit	\$4,150

TOTAL ASSETS **\$2,333,747**

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	
Liabilities	
Loans Payable	\$147,627
Total Liabilities	\$147,627
Net Assets	
Without Donor Restrictions	\$2,080,524
With Donor Restrictions	\$105,596
Total Net Assets	\$2,186,120

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS **\$2,333,747**

Looking to the Future: What the Next 5 Years Hold for IBB

by Melissa Chen



You've read about IBB's accomplishments over the last half a decade from my colleagues and probably noticed our evolution: from an idea-generating factory in the world of bytes and pixels to actual on-the-ground programs that implement those ideas and empower people with skills that will help them succeed in the modern, digital economy. Our newly opened brick-and-mortar offices in Erbil and Dubai reflect our enduring commitment to managing and supporting our programs in the region with local staff who belong to the very communities they serve.

Seventy percent of startups fail within the five-year mark from their inception. In many ways, IBB has already beaten these harrowing odds, weathering unprecedented global events, economic shocks, and tightening

labor markets. During this time, tectonic shifts in power within and between the Middle East and the West have brought forth new geopolitical realities that have enormous implications for the near future.

As the War on Terror wound down, US strategy and commitment to the Middle East transitioned from militarily countering the Islamist threat to shoring up economic and diplomatic ties via the Abraham Accords amid growing concerns over Iran's rising influence. New alliances between signatories heralded more bilateral investments, people-to-people exchanges, and greater collaboration in various sectors ranging from medicine to fintech. As Putin's invasion of Ukraine continues to drive up oil and gas prices, the Gulf producers, in refusing to go along with European sanctions

toward the Russians, find themselves with a strong economic upper hand. Meanwhile, China has aligned itself closer to the region as its influence has steadily grown by leveraging its economic power and shared political sensibilities. At the same time, the US continues to waffle between lecturing and disengaging from MENA.

It is in this context of a new realignment that IBB must adapt to. The first five years were about building a solid foundation, about proving ourselves by doing one or two things well. In producing a free digital library of Arabic books that never had an audience and by augmenting Arabic Wikipedia, IBB built a well-oiled translation pipeline, supplemented the incomes of bilingual writers and speakers, and quite literally created new marketplaces for ideas. The next five years represent a critical

stage where IBB can grow and scale to make a lasting impact in the societies it serves.

Just like how the Abraham Accords radically reshaped attitudes and economic outcomes in the Middle East, IBB—as an organization that started with a mandate to bridge two worlds—can continue to build upon and expand programs that foster personal enrichment and economic development to meet the new challenges of our global economy, especially in places where civil society, the private sector, and modern institutional capacity are lacking. Funding and supporting underground girls' schools in Afghanistan is a clear case in point, in a country where the Taliban had reneged on their earlier promise to respect girls' right to education by banning teenage girls from secondary schools and universities.

Grant and fellowship programs such as IBB's Innovation Hub continue to provide unique opportunities for hopeful social entrepreneurs to be a force multiplier for change. We've funded people who provide critical thinking workshops and tech boot camps, make science podcasts, build and maintain physical libraries in refugee camps, and spread the message of tolerance and humanism through the transcendence of heavy metal music. As we look to the future, the innovation fund will grow to include impact investing in for-profit companies with a robust social enterprise component to address regional challenges, including access to financial services, health, education, and community development.

As crypto and AI systems dominate the hype cycle in the West,

it's pertinent for IBB to invest in education outreach and skill development so that MENA youth will be prepared to participate in these fast-growing industries that will shape everything from social interactions to finance. Then there's the promise of capitalizing on blockchain technology to build trust, transparency, and an ethos of decentralization to challenge the norms in some places rife with low trust, high corruption, and authoritarianism. The returns on boosting this innovation ecosystem will be enormous, just like the massive spiritual and socio-cultural returns on the House of Wisdom 2.0.

There's been a vibe change in MENA. The youth are hungry and eager for opportunities to improve their own lives and communities. Some Gulf state governments are turning their

largesse into ambitious, forward-looking dreams and slowly loosening tight social controls. It's time for IBB to capitalize on these trends and lead the way by unlocking the potential of individuals and communities.



📍 244 Fifth Avenue, Ste 2594
New York, NY 10010

🌐 Ideasbeyondborders.org

📞 646.844.4076

✉ info@ideasbeyondborders.org