MIMETA 2020-2022 Assessment report

report by MIMETA and its partners were considered by the evaluator and duly addressed, where appropriate, in the final text of the report. The views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of MIMETA or its partners.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report assesses, over the 2020-2022 period, the work of MIMETA , which has focused since 2006 on the protection of cultural rights and the development of the culture sector, and the work of four (4) out of eight (8) of its partners, described by MIMETA as "intermediary organizations" for the structural role they play in the cultural sector.

Supporting these organizations is at the core of MIMETA's strategy. The assessment therefore focuses on two aspects related to said strategy: evaluating MIMETA 's partnership approach and assessing the four (4) partners' achievements on the ground.

The Terms of Reference for the evaluation exercise explicitly invited the evaluator to refer to the existing evaluation frameworks in doing so. But one of the major conclusions of the present report is the insufficiency of the current tools and frameworks in place. There is no tool to evaluate MIMETA 's approach to partnership and evaluation frameworks related to partners' work are centered around individual projects which makes it difficult to expand beyond individual project tracking and see the bigger picture of MIMETA's and its partners' intervention. This results in weaknesses in the chain of evidence from data collection through analysis and conclusions, making assessing impact qualitatively or on a systemic or global scale very difficult.

Challenging these constraints, the methodology adopted in the framework of this exercise relied on documents analysis, interviews and on a particular understanding of the context at stake in order to navigate the wealth of information available and clear the path for the design of tools and frameworks that better fit the specificity of MIMETA 's vision and work.

Indeed, the assessment showed that MIMETA 's approach is quite unique in the development sector and the qualities highlighted by its partners provide it a value greater than the one corresponding to its mere financial support. The outcome-based evaluation conducted of the four entities on-the-ground achievements, i.e. Al Mawred Al Thaqafy (Lebanon), Bayimba Cultural Foundation (Uganda), Ettijahat-Independent Center (Lebanon/Syria) and L'Art Rue (Tunisia), also highlights the unique commitment of each of these organizations, together with the limits their immediate environment bring to their work.

The recommendations stress on what currently misses to provide these partnerships with the amplitude they deserve: a contractual framework that better reflect MIMETA's approach and that goes beyond the financial support it provides; an evaluation framework that marks a shift away from output level reporting and compliance toward creating knowledge value for an organization or a field; and a positioning of MIMETA as an organization dedicated to "making connections" between its vision, its partners, the field, and more.

All this leads us back to the initial observation: impact, in the work of MIMETA and its partners, is not what the current evaluation frameworks and indicators draw our attention to. It is in all the elements left outside of the framework's scope: in the non-financial support of Mimeta, in the sum of entities composing its portfolio and in the aggregated actions, knowledge, and exchanges it allows.

INTRODUCTION

Background   MIMETA is an organization registered and based in Norway and focusing since 2006 on the protection of cultural rights and the development of the culture sector.

MIMETA adopts an approach centered on the rights of freedom of expression. Its vision is "*that people should be given their right to free creative expressions, created on free terms, and presented by independent institutions*"[1].

MIMETA's core team comprises two people Cato Litangen, General Manager, and Laila Hourani, Program Director, who joined the organization in 2022. — MIMETA focuses on "*safeguarding artistic expressions and people's free access to arts production*" and is doing so "*…by supporting intermediary organizations, those who work on behalf of the practitioners, in the media and in arts, globally*"[1].

As a result, MIMETA currently supports eight (8) intermediary organizations that address issues pertaining to artistic expression and free access to art produced on free terms:
- Ettijahat – Independent Culture, initially based in Syria, then Lebanon, and now also registered in Belgium;
- Action for Hope, based in Lebanon and registered in Belgium;
- Culture Resource (Al Mawred Al Thaqafy, hereafter "Al Mawred") based in Lebanon and officially registered in Belgium;
- Hammana Artist House based in Lebanon;
- L'Art Rue based in Tunisia and registered in Tunisia and Belgium;
- Bayimba Cultural Foundation (hereafter "Bayimba") based and registered in Uganda;
- Ishyo operating and registered in Rwanda;
- 32° East, operating and registered in Uganda.

In 2022, Ishyo and 32° East were replaced by Beirut DC (Lebanon) and February Network (Germany).

Current MIMETA partners have a programmatic focus mainly pointing towards the Arab speaking and/or the Sub-Saharan region. It has been highlighted by both Cato and Laila that the geographical focus of MIMETA shifted in 2011 with the Arab Spring and focused more on the MENA region instead of the Sub-Saharan one as it used to. Laila further explains: "*When MIMETA started off, it was mostly in Africa, through the support of the Arterial network, Outmoves Africa and some other Pan-African initiatives. And then MIMETA came to the Arab region a couple of years before the Arab Spring. And when the Arab Spring happened it took over the portfolio. The Arab region hijacked the portfolio. Now we are trying to bring back the balance. But with the limited*

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[1] MIMETA 2022-2024 Strategy document. Available on http://www.mimeta.org/strategy2023 . Last visited on 6 July 2023.

resources, we can't be all over the continent, so we opted for a focus in East Africa where the space for free expression is shrinking and the infrastructure is poor. So we want to fill that gap, very modestly."

Financially, MIMETA has almost exclusively been supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA) since 2008, through three-years programme-based grant contracts, renewed as a result of an application process. MIMETA's partners are mentioned in the NMFA grant contract as "implementation partners".

Unlike other grant contracts, the NMFA specific and general conditions impose very few restrictions on MIMETA and on the way the organization can manage its grant. There is no restriction on the type or nature of the expenses to be spent under the NMFA financial support and the grant recipient can even use the grant to buy property[2]. The only disposition related to sub-granting under the NMFA grant is article 11 of the general conditions of the NMFA agreement, which states very simple and non-restrictive rules to be foreseen in MIMETA's sub-granting contracts with its implementation partners. The NMFA agreement therefore gives MIMETA a free hand in defining its partnership approach and related framework.

Scope

In November 2022, MIMETA launched a call for evaluation consultancy, in order to contract a consultant to evaluate its cooperation with its partners over a period of three years, running from 2020 to 2022.

Focusing on cooperation carried out by MIMETA with funding from the NMFA, the specific purposes of the exercise, according to the terms of reference[3], were to:
- assess the systems and processes applied by MIMETA to carry out its cooperation with partners;
- assess the programmatic achievements of partners against their agreed goals and objectives with MIMETA, focusing on actual results on the ground;
- assess the relationship between MIMETA and its grantee partners in terms of its ability to enhance both parties' ability to achieve goals and impact through their collaboration;
- assess the impact of MIMETA's grantee partners on the field of freedom of expression in the contexts where MIMETA's grantees carry out their programs;
- identify challenges, opportunities and areas for improvement for MIMETA;
- produce a report detailing the findings and providing recommendations and next steps for how MIMETA should move forward in its cooperation with partners.

Focusing on four implementation partners selected by MIMETA[4], the assessment objectives outlined in the ToR were reorganized and grouped around two main exercises: an assessment of MIMETA's partnership strategy and approach and an assessment of MIMETA's partners' programmatic achievements on the ground.

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[2] See article 12 of the specific conditions excluding the application of article 10 of the general conditions to Mimeta's agreement.
[3] See the Terms of Reference in Annex 3.
[4] Implementation partners targeted by the evaluation are Ettijahat-Independent Culture, Culture Resource (Al Mawred Al Thaqafy), L'Art Rue, and Bayimba Cultural Foundation.

Both assessments were guided by the six (6) OECD/DAC Network criteria on development evaluation:
- Relevance: Is the intervention doing the right things?
- Coherence: How well does the intervention fit?
- Effectiveness: Is the intervention achieving its objectives?
- Efficiency: How well are resources being used?
- Impact: What difference does the intervention make?
- Sustainability: Will the benefits last?

As the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and impact of interventions are critically influenced by the context in which actions take place, the evaluation exercise includes a an analysis of both context and implementation in its "Findings and analysis" section. It then concludes on a series of recommendations presented at the end of the report.

Methodology   Each assessment necessitated its own approach and methodology, presented at the beginning of each part. Throughout the exercise, the following research tools were applied:

- A desk review of a large corpus of documents — project documents, contracts, reports — was carried out, together with additional relevant documentation collected. These documents were shared by MIMETA, by its partners, and by the partners' beneficiaries either spontaneously or upon request (see Annex 1 for the exhaustive list of documents communicated and reviewed).

- 23 semi-structured individual interviews were conducted face to face or remotely with key stakeholders, comprising two (2) MIMETA staff members, five (5) management members from the partners chosen by MIMETA to be assessed in the framework of this exercise, and 17 partners' beneficiaries either chosen by the partners or suggested by the evaluator. Two additional partners' beneficiaries shared information via email that was also taken into consideration. The gender ratio among the informants was 56.5% who identify as women and 43.5% who identify as men (see Annex 2 for the list of interviews).

- Exchange of documents and emails helped collect additional information and data on precise point or aspects.

- Field and site visits of projects or actions implemented by the partners were also made where possible in order to get a better grasp on the nature of some particular actions. These have included a visit to L'Art Rue headquarters in Tunis, assisting to the end of residencies of one of L'Art Rue beneficiaries, assisting to the 2023 edition of the Dream City Festival, and assisting to one of Al Mawred workshops organized in the framework of the 2023 edition of Abbara training programme (organized in the L'Art Rue facilities in Tunis).

Limitations   During the inception stage, the following limitations and constraints were identified:

- The exercise focuses on a timespan of three years (2020-2022). A thorough impact assessment would require a larger time frame   than the one targeted by the present evaluation.

- The way the cooperation between Mimeta and its partners is currently framed oriented the assessment of the partners' achievements on the ground towards specific projects, financially supported by Mimeta over the three-year period. The assessment therefore did not look at the overall programmes or action of the partners, which limits the scope of the assessment. Moreover, several assessed projects couldn't be fully implemented within the targeted timeframe while for others, there wasn't enough hindsight to conduct a proper analysis or reach a conclusion.

- Evaluation tools and methodologies predefined in cooperation agreements between Mimeta and its partners are often insufficiently developed, which resulted in weaknesses in the chain of evidence from data to analysis and which made assessing impact qualitatively very complex (see Part 1 subsection 3 for more details on this point).

Despite the above limitations, the data collection instruments and approaches used allowed for sufficient evidence to be collected and triangulated to ensure that the findings, lessons learned, and recommendations presented in this report are evidence-based and reliable.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Part 1. Assessing Mimeta's partnership approach

Mimeta currently has no evaluation framework for the assessment of its partnership approach, as opposed to the assessment of its partners' programmatic outcomes.

The present assessment has therefore been based on an analysis of the systems and processes applied by Mimeta and presented in contracts, templates, and any other written material related to its partnerships, and on interviews conducted with individuals involved in partnerships management, i.e. Mimeta's core team and members of the management team of the four partners assessed.

In order to better appreciate the relevance and effectiveness of Mimeta's partnership approach, the present assessment includes an analysis of context, which is based on the elements shared by partners and their beneficiaries during interviews.

Key finding

Although Mimeta financial contribution only covers between 1,75% to 32% of the overall budget of its partners, several elements specific to Mimeta's partnership approach provide to this partnership a value that is greater than its financial one.

The context of the interventions is highly uncertain, the geographic scope is shifting constantly, due to recent crises and the cost of long-term commitment is very high. Therefore, a consistent, long term, flexible, human partnership like the one Mimeta offers is precious. The non-financial assistance and

support provided by MIMETA also contributes to increasing the value and effectiveness of this partnership.

While being evident when discussing with partners, these aspects are not visible in the contractual tools, frameworks, and processes defined by MIMETA and governing its partnerships. Current frameworks solely focus on the financial support brought by MIMETA to its partner organizations and on the individual projects it helps finance. This is not merely an omission as it leads to working within inadequate frameworks, hindering the full potential of these partnerships, and to inadequate monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

1. A partnership occurring in a challenging context of interventions

The four assessed partners present several similarities.
- They all tend to have a systemic impact on their sector;
- They all have been present in the cultural sector for ten to twenty years (Al Mawred since 2003, L'Art Rue and Bayimba since 2007, and Ettijahat since 2012);
- They all engage with a variety of actors (local and international organizations, informal collectives, individual artists, technicians, experts, and so on) in different manners and ways (partnerships, call for participation, contracts, commissioning, and so on);
- And they all tend to stay committed to the sector and ensure their stability and longevity on a long-term basis.

2020-2022 has been a period particularly challenging for these organizations as it has been marked by multiple global crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which has contributed to highlight the structural and systemic fragility of the cultural and artistic sector worldwide, and localized crises such as the Beirut explosion and the Lebanese collapse, which has highlighted these fragilities regionally and locally.

These crises have crippled the ambitions of these organizations, triggering some changes to the context in which they operate and in the way these organizations work, plan, or operate.

The following part aims to present, in a comparative way, the main characteristics that are now constraining their work, which will help assess the relevance, effectiveness and impact of a partnership occurring in this context.

Ubiquitous uncertainty

All four assessed organizations reported operating in a context characterized by a high and ubiquitous uncertainty.

Abdullah Alkafri, Executive Director of Ettijahat, recounted how in the last few years, the context in Syria and Lebanon kept shifting in unpredictable ways. Lebanon has been assailed by compounded crises—first, an economic and financial one that started in October 2019, followed by the COVID-19 crisis, and by the explosions at the Port of Beirut on August 4, 2020, then an institutional one, that started with the banking system, and followed by a political one. These translated into high inflation, food and basic goods shortages and dire social impacts. For Syria, the uprising was followed by the war which was followed by the COVID-19, which was itself followed by one of the largest displacement crises in the world. There are still tremendous economic, social, humanitarian, and political needs in the country. "*90% of the population in Syria is under the poverty line. Authorities took the pandemic as a good moment to add additional restrictions on the civic sphere. (…) The country shifted towards a prolonged conflict and with a normalization that Syrians are suffering and that the world has to accept that. In 2023 we then had the earthquake (…)*" recalled Abdullah before adding that *"There is also a Syria fatigue, or an Arab region fatigue, especially since 2022, as institutions and donors are shifting away from the region to Ukraine for example*" making the funding environment also uncertain.

Helena Nassif, Director of Al Mawred, stressed the dramatic impact of this high and unending uncertainty on the present and future of the organization. She first highlighted the difference between the notion of risk and of uncertainty, referring to the risk assessment requested by MIMETA: "*While risk is known, and can be assessed, uncertainty is unexpected and can't be weighted or apprehended*" she said. She gives the examples of the Beirut explosions and of the COVID-19, which could not have been anticipated. "*Every time we feel we got a grip on what is happening, something else comes up, which is also unexpected. (…) It is not the organization, the sector or civil society that have a crisis of a comprehensible size. It is a more global crisis from which the grounds are shifting*", she added, before sharing how this relentlessness is impacting

the organization: "*In 2020, we had the adrenaline to engage in high intensity actions but with time, we got exhausted. Dealing with crises cannot be business as usual because the capacity of humans and collectives is limited. There is a tolerance level: it is not that resilience is not there, but with the time and crisis, the capacity to be resilient becomes reduced*".

According to Selma Ouissi, Executive Director of L'Art Rue, in Tunisia, civil society organizations do not know until when they will be able to work, as the civic space is dangerously shrinking. "*Regulations are changing without democratic debate. The country's constitution is re-written with no public consultation. We are protecting ourselves as attacks keep coming*".

For Faisal Kiwewa, Artistic Director of Bayimba, in Uganda, the uncertainty resides in the high probability of conflicts at local level throughout the country, due to political and economic stagnation coupled with a young population with strong ideological leanings, asking to be involved in political discussions. Faisal highlighted that the existence of different languages, narratives, and cultures in Uganda makes the probability of a national uprising weak but of local outbursts high.

Changing grounds

Social and political changes of these last years are having on all four organizations consequences, either programmatically or organizationally. Displacement and the phenomenon of recent diaspora[5], especially for artists from the Arab region, have forced Ettijahat, L'Art Rue, and Al Mawred to extend their geographical focus and apprehend this question in their overall strategy.

While the focus of Ettijahat was and still is on Syria, the great displacement that happened within and outside of Syria has led the organization to extend its focus beyond the country's border, to the region first (mostly Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan), and subsequently to Europe. If Abdullah insists that the biggest number of applications they receive is still from artists living inside Syria, the vulnerability of artists that have left the country has led Ettijahat to extend its scope of work to this group. "*These artists have lost everything — audience, career, etc. They need institutions, partners to pave the way for them so they can be presented and represented as artists and not as Syrian or refugees*". Ettijahat is therefore working on ensuring their right to continue producing, linking them with different audiences and helping them to keep links with Syria and the Arab region.

L'Art Rue has also extended its focus since 2019 from Tunisia to the entire Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Selma shared that they now mostly focus on the quality of the artistic practice itself, and less on the primary location of an artist, in a context where phenomenon like forced or voluntary migration has increased and where temporary migration or geographical mobility is prevalent. Selma also shared that they are trying to enlarge their focus to the rest of the African continent while keeping an opening, as always, towards Europe.

For Al Mawred, the question of diaspora is something that they still have to strategically apprehend. Helena shared that Al Mawred considers the question of diaspora to be something that needs to be answered in the upcoming phase of the organization's strategy. Until now, they have not had a clear position on the eligibility of diaspora-led projects. Their programs are open to all, wherever they are based, and juries decide, according to the focus of the specific call and the content of the application submitted. "*Sometimes they prioritized artists based in the region*

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[5] If diaspora could be classically defined as "a group of people who have spread or have been dispersed from their homeland," several factors are changing the way migrating people are understood, defined, and circumscribed. This should lead to a redefinition of the concept of diaspora towards a concept which affiliates more to transnationality or transnational movements. More on this point in the following publication by Mophradat. *Read the Room #2. Transnationals: who are they and what do they want?* Nadia Cherif, 2021. Available here

because the resources are much less in the region. But in certain context, some jury thought that the project deserves it or that the fund will allow them to say something that cannot be asked to be funded in the European context for example", Helena explained.

As opposed to that, the regional integration in East Africa and in the Horn of Africa has pushed Bayimba to strategically look at the region at large to better support cultural actors. "*How do we look at the region as a regional integrated platform where an artists can move from a place to another. We do programming for East Africa. South Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, Congo, and Somalia: these countries can work together. Most artists struggle to go to Europe to perform and when they go there, they are not popular, they are not known so they end up performing in pubs. So, we try to create mobility between these countries. And we try to drive the narrative towards an integrated common market protocol so they can focus on touring within the region and get paid more money than in Europe. And they don't need a visa   , they just move with an ID*", said Faisal.

In addition to impacting their programmatic work, the context is also changing the geographies of these organizations from an organizational (or structural) point of view. For L'Art Rue, issues with the Tunisian banking system[6] have forced them to open a legal entity in Belgium. For Ettijahat, wars and crises have forced the organization to move first from Syria to Lebanon and then from Lebanon to Belgium, following, as an organization, the route of most displaced Syrian artists[7]. As for Al Mawred, it has been registered in Belgium (since 2003). But its administrative base was moved from Cairo to Beirut in 2017, due to the deteriorating political climate in Egypt impacting the cultural sector. All these changes, in addition to the substantial financial costs they represent, also weight on the time and mental conditions of those trying to make these organizations work.

Teams of all organizations are also geographically impacted by the political context in which they work. As Arab nationals cannot receive work permits in Lebanon, Al Mawred's Arab team members are working remotely from different locations (Tunisia, Egypt, France or Canada), restrictions on mobility of persons often prevent Al Mawred's beneficiaries to physically attend events organized in the Arab region and restrictions on financial transfers make it a challenge to transfer money from an Arab country to another, which makes transferring funds to Abbara organizations or to Artists at Risk – two programmes supported by MIMETA — difficult.

Finally, teams operating in the Arab region are highly susceptible to pressures on their mental health. It has been explicitly stated by Al Mawred in its 2021 report to MIMETA, when dealing with the Stand for Art programme which calls for an increased attention to team members' well-being and for psychological support.

The costs of long-term commitment

All four organizations are aiming at a long-term presence and commitment to the cultural sector. This mainly translates in cultivating links with a large range of actors, following up on the sector changing needs or following up on beneficiaries, which heavily relies on the human capacity of the organizations.

As Abdullah said "*When we finish supporting an artist, the relationship with him or her starts, not ends*". Beyond developing alumni-related programs, the organization keeps an individual relation

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[6] In 2018, Tunisian banks started to force nonprofits to close their accounts in foreign currency, with no legal basis for such a decision. L'Art Rue's bank started to refuse euro-based income transfers coming to the organization account in Euros, to force them to receive the money (mainly grant instalments) in Tunisian dinars and force them to close their euros account.

[7] Agreements signed between MIMETA and its partners have a final clause foreseeing that the financial support from MIMETA may be used to cover project costs incurred from the 1st January, although they are signed in September or October.

with each of the artists they supported, sending them relevant calls and funding opportunities, involving them as trainers or mentors or linking them to relevant cultural opportunities they have.

The same goes for the three other organizations: Faisal clearly stated that Bayimba works with artists on a long term: "*When we started, there was no content. Only three bands could perform. So we started with training and continued through long term collaboration. Most artists in the country have gone through Bayimba's programme and were later invited to perform at one of our festivals.*", a point that was later confirmed by Andrew Kaggwa, a cultural journalist I interviewed as part of the assessment exercise.

Interviewed beneficiaries of Al Mawred all shared how reactive the organization is and how easily they reach out to Al Mawred's team members for advice or a request that goes beyond their participation to the organization's programmes. As Helena said "*We are talking about a sector that is driven by the passion and sacrifices of the persons that are working in it.*"

Helena and Selma both shared that they suffer a huge pressure on their human resources and that having employees costs a lot. With high social charges and limited HR-related budgets, cultural organizations are pushed to collaborate with individuals on the basis of consultancy contracts, which is less expensive for the organization but more precarious for concerned professionals.

Faisal also shared that Bayimba heavily relies on volunteers and interns to cope with its human resources needs. He also highlighted that the funding context, which is mainly project based, add activities to organizations without providing them with sufficient resources to cover overheads and human resources.

Fundraising, which is a crucial part of the economic model of all these organizations, also implies an increased pressure on human resources. At Al Mawred's and Bayimba, no less than 5 people are involved in fundraising activities and management of grants.

Finally, ensuring a long-term presence also implies ensuring a physical presence somewhere: Al Mawred bears heavy rent costs, Bayimba has chosen the long-term strategy to acquire its space but needs to find the resources to invest and upgrade it, L'Art Rue, which is also running a space open to the public, has to bear heavy annual maintaining costs.

All these add up and result in a heavy need in what is usually qualified as core or running costs by donors, that are more inclined to provide project-based funding than running costs or institutional support.

2. A valuable and relevant partnership approach

Although Mimeta's financial contribution only covers between 1,75 to 32% of the overall budget of its partners, several elements highlighted by interviewed partners, and analyzed in the light of the context described above, make Mimeta a valuable and relevant partner to them. These elements are the consistency and long-term aspect of the partnership; the flexibility of Mimeta approach; the humane aspect of the partnership and the relevance of the non-financial support offered by Mimeta.

A consistent and long-term partnership

The four assessed entities have been supported by Mimeta for around 10 years at least. Mimeta's partnership with Culture Resource runs since 2011, with Ettijahat since 2012, with L'Art Rue since 2014 and with Bayimba since 2011.

The long term and consistent aspect of this partnership has been unanimously acclaimed by all the partners as long-term partnerships are more an exception than a rule in the funding landscape. Helena highlighted that the current donor fatigue, tendency for less institutional support, and the absence of public funding in the Arab region makes the consistency and long-term support of Mimeta essential to them. For Selma it also constitutes a very strong and solid basis that is desperately needed in the region.

Being funders themselves, the discussion around the consistency of a given financial support has been also raised internally at Al Mawred, when thinking about the support the organization brings to their own beneficiaries, and more specifically to the organizations that went through the Abbara programme. The team wondered if, by funding organizations that benefitted from Abbara, they were creating an added level of dependency — as these organizations, rather than becoming independent, depended on their support. They concluded that the context does not provide a third way or business model that allows the ecosystem of the region to operate differently or become independent from funding, or as Helena stated "*survive out of the funding system*". "*Those who tried and succeeded in implementing income generating activities, with a café for instance, were able to cover at best 20 to 30% of their annual running budget, which provides a leeway to operate on an independent basis and keep an organisation's own DNA, away from project funding, but which is still not enough*", she added.

The reliability of Mimeta support has also a positive impact on the ability of the organisations to plan and budget for the future: interviewed organizations know that they can count on the support of Mimeta to cover some of their annual budget costs.

A flexible approach

The flexibility and simplicity in dealing with Mimeta has also been highlighted as a factor providing a great value to Mimeta's partnership. According to Helena, the application process to obtain financial support is not heavy, nor labour intensive, and very flexible: "*The partner submits a proposal under the form they wish with basic necessary elements: development goals, the outcomes, the activities, the indicators of success, and a budget. Beyond that, Mimeta leaves it up to the partners to phrase the proposal in the way they want*". She cites the example of the Abbara support initiative, a project financed by Mimeta in 2020, and that shows how a flexible and timely delivered support can make a huge impact on the sector (see Part 2 of the present report for an assessment of the Abbara Support initiative).

Partners also highlighted that Mimeta is flexible with reporting deadlines and with the use of funds or modifications made to approved budgets. Abdullah shared that "*it is one of the donors where we wouldn't be worried as an institution to share updates, needs and need to reallocate. We agree on big questions and indicators, and we then feel at ease to share information*".

The agreement signed annually between MIMETA and its partners are indeed very simple with very few provisions included beyond the mention of the grant amount, description of projects targeted by the funding, related intervention logic and indicators, an obligation for annual reporting according to reporting guidelines, and an obligation to alert MIMETA if the partner organization experience or get information on incidents where artists or producers or artistic works are subject to abuse, detention, censorship or any other violations of artistic freedom, as defined by international human rights standards.

The reporting guidelines are also quite short and in practice, narrative reports submitted to MIMETA do not always refer to the indicators or intervention logic mentioned in the contract and not all partners are using or following MIMETA's guidelines for reporting. It should be noted that the reporting guidelines of MIMETA also do not invite grantees to refer to the indicators or intervention logic set out in their contract.

L'Art Rue for instance provides MIMETA with its global annual report and therefore does not refer solely to the actions financed with the support of MIMETA. As stated by Selma during an interview, this system is much better as it does not add reporting work on the organisation. They provide MIMETA with a view on their whole work plan although both parties know MIMETA only financially supports part of it.

According to Laila, MIMETA wants to build a relationship and want their partners to share as much as possible, but the organization is conscious of what a reporting exercise implies in terms of time and means. She stresses that MIMETA tries to be sensitive to the fact that donors are very demanding with civil society. "*We have to do our asks with sensitivity and caution, and also take into account how much they are getting from us against what we can ask of them*", Laila shared.

Also in line with this flexibile approach, it has been noted that MIMETA imposes no restriction or indication on the way its partners should engage with their beneficiaries, or on the way they should choose them or frame their relationship with them.

This flexible approach was also highlighted by Laila, when talking about the way MIMETA functions, stressing that MIMETA has no rigidity and can make the connection they think are meaningful. "*They don't have the rigidity of a big donor,*" she said.

A humane and accessible partner

The other aspect that was plebiscited by interviewed partners is the humane approach of MIMETA and accessibility of its team members.

"*You know the persons that are behind MIMETA,*" said Abdullah while Selma shared that she feels there is a relationship of trust between both organizations and that MIMETA is not policing them like other donors would. She also added that even if there are very few exchanges between both organizations, they know MIMETA is available in case they need to reach out to them.

Abdullah highlighted that MIMETA was the first partner to support the organization in Syria back in 2012, accepting at that time not to be mentioned as a supporter of Ettijahat in order to avoid exposing the organization to potential threats or attacks. He added that MIMETA helped them launch their research programme which provides training and financial support to researchers from the Arab region, taking the risk of funding a completely new and unknown programme with them. For him, MIMETA is much more a partner than a donor.

Helena shared that MIMETA is reactive when solicited and attentive to what is being sent to them. Abdullah added that they know when they send a report that it will be read and carefully studied.

A crucial non-financial support

Conducted interviews showed that Mimeta has a valuable role in terms of advising, supporting, and connecting its partners, a role that goes beyond the financial support the institution provides.

According to Laila, Mimeta tries to place their partners on platforms they feel are important, making use of the fact that they are based in Norway. For instance, these last two years, implementation partners were invited to the World Expression Forum (WEXFO) that happens annually in Lillehammer, in Norway. They were also invited to different fora enabling interaction with policy makers and influencers in Mimeta's hometown in Arendal or in Oslo. Mimeta team also facilitated connections between partners and authorities in Norway, including the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

For Helena, being invited to international fora was important for the visibility of Al Mawred and even if it did not lead to receiving funding, it was important to present the work and the artistic work that is taking place in the region. "*It is also contributing to advocate for policies in Europe that would take the region into consideration,*" she added.

All partners stressed the importance of this role and expressed the wish to have more exchanges and more conversations with Mimeta and/or with new partners and audiences. Mimeta team also stated that more can be done on this aspect.

Selma suggested that the organization could connect them with experts in communication or in the arts from Norway or have strategic related discussions with Cato and Laila to benefit from their expertise. Selma also highlighted that connections could be fostered with Mimeta's partners from Sub-Saharan Africa, which is a region invested by L'Art Rue. The organization shared that they do not know who Bayimba is for instance and that they would be interested in benefiting from Mimeta's support to expand their activities in the region. Selma however insisted on the fact that this should not be done to the detriment of the financial support they annually receive from Mimeta for their activities in North Africa.

Mimeta provides support and advice to its partners. When Ettijahat experienced issues with its bank in Belgium, Mimeta helped the organization and explored with them the possibility of establishing a new institution in Norway to temporarily host Ettijahat's money and consulted with their lawyers to find a suitable solution.

Compared to other donors or partners, these aspects give Mimeta's partnership a greater value than merely its financial one and provide supported organizations with the necessary tools to address the different constraints of the context in which they operate. However, these aspects were only obvious when discussing with the partners and are not entailed in current Mimeta's partnerships' frameworks or processes.

3. Reductive partnership frameworks and processes

Partnership frameworks and processes established and used by MIMETA mainly focus on the financial support brought by MIMETA to its partner organizations and on the individual projects it helps finance. This leads to working within inadequate frameworks, hindering the full potential of MIMETA's partnerships.

A partnership framed around MIMETA's financial support

Framing MIMETA's partnership around its financial support is reductive for two main reasons: the financial support of MIMETA is currently the most fragile element of MIMETA's partnership approach, as it is conditioned by the support of the NMFA, and the type of financial support currently provided is unclear to MIMETA's partners, which reduces the potential benefits of it.

A conditional financial support

61% of the average annual grant received by MIMETA from the NMFA is directed to the financial support of listed implementation partners. According to Cato, MIMETA operates as a funder and could be qualified as "a sector-development fund," further putting the emphasis on the financial aspect of MIMETA's support in its partnership strategy.

While the grant agreement signed between MIMETA and the NMFA foresees that "*the grant recipient shall secure additional funding for core activities,*" in attachment 5b of the NMFA 2021-2023 grant contract, MIMETA excludes fundraising among major donors as part of its fundraising strategy as it will bias their positioning as equal in donors' related meetings or gatherings. Instead, MIMETA has adopted a fundraising strategy relying on horizontal partnerships and pooling of resources with other foundations or donor institutions around specific programs or initiatives. Although the justification is understandable and sound, it nevertheless leads MIMETA'S current financial support to heavily rely on the support of the NMFA.

When looking at partnership-contracting practices, we can see how this dependency weights on MIMETA overall approach and strategy:

- Although the cooperation between MIMETA and its partners has been ongoing for years, cooperation agreements are only signed on an annual basis. Partnerships between MIMETA and its implementation partners are framed through annual "cooperation agreements", possibly extended twice through one-year addenda and renewed together with the NMFA contract renewal.

- The cooperation process and payment of NMFA instalments to MIMETA also dictates the pace for signing these cooperation agreements or addenda and the amount to be granted from MIMETA to its partners. Contracts between MIMETA and its partners are signed around the month of September or October with a retroactive effect to January 1st of the same year[8]. In order to sign the cooperation agreement and send the annual grant, MIMETA has to wait for the annual reports from implementation partners — usually received by April 1st — prepare their report to the NMFA — including audited reports — set up and hold an annual meeting with the Ministry, and wait until reports are assessed and approved and that the funding is secured from the Ministry, which usually happens in August. September is then usually the period where agreements and addenda are set up based on the proposals and budgets from implementation partners.

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[8] L'Art Rue is planning on recruiting an expert next year to define an evaluation framework that simplifies reporting to donors while providing useful information to the organization. Al Mawred are exploring this question with other partner organizations while reflecting about the reporting they request to their own beneficiaries.

This process impacts partners, as they have to wait until the end of the year to know the specific amount they will be granted. Even if they can have an estimation before, as Abdullah shared: "It is always better if we can plan ahead." He also added that the fluctuation in exchange rate from Norwegian Krone to Euros also often negatively impacts the final amount of the grant.

A financial support of an undefined nature

There is an unclarity among partners on the nature of the financial support they receive from MIMETA. According to Al Mawred, Ettijahat and Bayimba directors, MIMETA supports programmes, describing the financial support as project-based. This has been nuanced by Helena that said that "*MIMETA provides project funding but it is project funding embedded in their programmes so it is feeding their core mission programme. MIMETA is not asking us to create a project tailored to a priority theme they are putting.*" For Selma, MIMETA's support is complementing their annual budget. This being said, Selma stressed that MIMETA should specify and qualify the type of support they provide in order for them to better know how they can allocate it.

For the Managing Director and the Program Director of MIMETA, the answer to this point is clear: the financial support provided by MIMETA to its partners is both project and core or can be both. MIMETA Programme Director Laila also stated that there is no maximum percentage to be allocated to administrative costs like it might be applied by other donor institutions, an important point that has been confirmed by Cato but which has not been communicated to partners. Laila specified that core funding is not only running costs like rent but also covers costs needed to build the capacity of the organization for instance, stressing the wide scope of what core costs can be, a point also never formally shared with partners.

Specifying the type of funds provided is important as it impacts the way each partner could allocate the received financial support and impacts the types of conversation around it. So far, for Bayimba, Al Mawred and Ettijahat, as they assume it is project or programme funding, they are centring the exchanges with MIMETA around programmes or issues that could be of interest to MIMETA and direct the costs to specific projects or programs. L'Art Rue shared that the organisation stayed on the same manner to allocate MIMETA's fund since the first year they benefited   from it: 30% on administrative related costs and 70% on activity related costs.

Specifying the nature of the funding could change the way each partner allocates it and also change the discussions with MIMETA around this allocation, directing it more towards global or strategic level ones, which would provide valuable information on the needs of the organization at large, on the type of costs needed at a given time and context and on the quickly changing funding and political dynamics the organizations are navigating.

Clearly stating that it can be core or project funding would also fuel the flexible approach of MIMETA which has been highlighted by partners as a positive aspect of MIMETA's partnership.

A partnership centred on siloed projects

Cooperation agreements signed between MIMETA and its partners mention as general objective "*to establish a cooperation relationship between the parties in order to support and contribute to the annual work plan*" of the concerned partner but have as specific objective to financially support specific projects named and detailed in the agreements.

This focus has oriented the reporting and evaluation system in place towards projects, weakening the possibility to gather strong data to conduct an impact level assessment at partners or MIMETA's level.

Project-based reporting and evaluation

For each project supported by Mimeta, signed cooperation agreements present a series of objectives — broken down into "Development goals" (impact on society), "Project goals" (outcomes of the project), and "Outputs" (services and products that will be delivered, and to whom) — together with a series of indicators, for which cooperation agreements foresee that they "*will be the basis for measurement of these objectives by the partner's own evaluation of the project and in the reporting for Mimeta*".

Reporting and evaluation are therefore defined for each project, with projects only representing a small share of each organization's work, introducing siloes into the global work of an organization and between organizations.

As Faisal said: "*Bayimba is more than what Mimeta can think of.*" Indeed, looking solely at the reporting made by Bayimba to Mimeta does not allow us to understand the entire scope of intervention of the organization. Both Bayimba's Artistic Director and Andrew Kaggwa, a cultural journalist interviewed as part of the assessment, insisted that the intervention of Bayimba is on the whole value chain of the industry, an aspect that is not obvious when looking at the reporting and evaluation frameworks available in Mimeta's cooperation instruments. "*We are not just organizing a festival, but we are also doing capacity building at all levels, for artists, for art entrepreneurs, for videographers, for film makers and for all stakeholders. And we also see ourselves as contributors of the economic development of the sector as we put money on the table for service providers, for institutions (hotels, restaurants, airlines, etc.) So the value chain and indirect and direct beneficiaries is way beyond the demographics that Mimeta can think of. We are not looking at one target audience. We serve a much bigger and wider audience*", Faisal added.

Moreover, chosen project indicators vary from year to year even if they relate to the same project (see, for example, the Stand for Arts programme of Al Mawred and its intervention logic presented in Part 2 below). Also, we could question the relevance of having a different intervention logic for each project, while within the same organization, all actions converge in the same direction and towards the achievement of the organization's objectives.

This approach also raises the question of the role of monitoring and of reporting obligations in a partnership. How can these obligations stimulate the capacity of partners to generate useful and relevant knowledge? As Laila clearly stated: "*Mimeta relies on its implementation partners, on their perspective, on their knowledge, because Mimeta does not sit in these countries,*" further highlighting the necessity to reflect on the way the reporting and evaluation is currently framed and what it will lead to.

If all partners praised the very light reporting requested by Mimeta, Al Mawred and L'Art Rue also shared that donor's reporting and evaluation requests do not help them become learning organizations. Despite limited resources, they are both trying to invest time, work, and money to build an internal learning system that will help them think and learn about their impact at the organization level, while continuing project-based reporting to donors[9]. How can Mimeta fuel these efforts is a relevant question to partners and to Mimeta, especially provided that the capacity of Mimeta to report to the NMFA relies on the capacity of its implementation partners to collect data, conduct, and share sound and reliable analysis.

A missed opportunity to evaluate impact

There is a mismatch of scale between Mimeta's logical framework annexed to its contract with the NMFA (and represented below) which focuses on systemic changes and large-scale impacts,

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[9] Presentation retrieved from the "About us" section of the organization website. Visible on https://mawred.org/who-we-are/?lang=en (Last visited on 11 July 2023)

and the reporting and evaluation frameworks used between MIMETA and its partners which revolve around individual and siloed projects.

NTERVENTION LOGIC	INDICATORS
Impact — Give people access to free art (created and presented on independent grounds)	No indicator foreseen in the MIMETA–NMFA agreement
Outcome — Provide protection for artists, producers and their works against abuse, censorship and persecution	Legislation and case law relating to international conventions in this area of rights
	An artistic expression practice that is not characterized by neither self-imposed nor public restrictions
Output — The efforts will give an organizational structure that can safeguard artistic rights and the right of the sector to participate in the design of their framework conditions in a political and economic sense	The sector's own ability to organize
	Ability to address the sector's needs in relation to the authorities and the public

Between the project-based reporting of partners and the large systemic intervention logic of MIMETA, there is a great number of steps separating evidence and impact-level conclusions. Therefore the causal link is sometimes muddled and distant.

The indicators currently used in the logical framework are not actionable and cannot serve their purpose. They are too vague and insufficient to establish a link of evidence between what they suggest measuring and the corresponding result.

There is also no clear distinction between outputs and outcomes metrics. Output metrics should focus on quantitative measures that describe the attributes or activities of a given intervention while outcomes metrics should delve deeper into the changes and effects your intervention has made.

No framework is available to consistently look at how MIMETA have improved the way their work with partners, or by assessing, at the partners' level, how the partners perceive their capability to deliver impact has changed thanks to the overall work and support of MIMETA.

Also, and most importantly, the cumulative effect of MIMETA'S overall portfolio is not apprehended. No framework is provided to measure the impact of supporting several organizations in the same region/sector and the impact of the cumulative actions of these organizations on their region or sector. Including this aspect in MIMETA's evaluation process could not only highlight the importance of the role played by cultural organizations in their current operating context, but also guide future choices on geographical scope of new partners or advocate (or not) on the importance of a particular geographical focus of a given partnership portfolio.

Overall, the current tools make it difficult to go beyond individual project tracking and see the bigger picture of MIMETA's and its partners' intervention. This results in weaknesses in the chain of evidence from data collection through analysis and conclusions, making assessing impact qualitatively or on a systemic or global scale very difficult.

Part 2.
Assessing partners' on-the-ground achievements

The assessment conducted here took as reference the intervention logics and indicators mentioned for each project supported by Mimeta in the cooperation agreements signed annually with each of its partners. These indicators are mostly output level indicators which limited the exercise to an output or outcome-based evaluation, depending on the degree of completion of the concerned projects.

Outcome-based evaluation is an exercise facilitating one's asking if an organization is doing the right programme activities to bring about the stated outcomes. Outcomes are usually in terms of enhanced learning (knowledge, perceptions/attitudes or skills) or conditions, e.g., increased literacy, self-reliance, and so on.

The exercise also includes summarizing intervention logic, indicators, and project outputs through a one-page table presenting these different elements. Information presented in these tables were retrieved from the annual agreements signed between Mimeta and its partners, from the narrative reports presented by the partners to Mimeta and from the different information communicated by the partners during the evaluation exercise (either through shared documents or during interviews). These tables were then shared with each partner for comments and edits.

For L'Art Rue, the exercise adopted a different approach, as the organization manages its partnership with Mimeta differently: where other partners present proposals and budgets specific to Mimeta's support, L'Art Rue presents global activity programs and global budgets indicating where Mimeta's financial support will be allocated. Where other partners present specific reports to Mimeta, L'Art Rue presents its overall annual reporting. We therefore looked at the global economy of the organization before presenting in more details the blocks of actions financially supported by Mimeta.

Findings and analysis are presented for each partner. I therefore chose to structure the second part of the report around four sections, each dedicated to one of the assessed partners.

Culture Resource
(Al-Mawred Al-Thaqafy)

The organisation

Culture Resource is a regional, non-profit organization founded in 2003 that seeks to support artistic creativity in the Arab region and to encourage cultural exchange within the region and beyond. Al Mawred support artists, cultural organizations, and the cultural sector throughout the Arab region with a range of services and programs. The work of Al Mawred is based on a belief in the critical role of culture in the development of civil society, the importance of access to culture for all, and the rights of artists to freedom of expression[10].

Scope of the assessment

Over the 2020 to 2022 period, MIMETA supported three types of programmes designed and implemented by Culture Resource:

- The Abbara Support Initiative (2020) and the Abbara Top-up Grants (2021): two funding schemes targeting the Abbara programme alumni and offering exceptional financial support to help them cover basic organizational expenses and adjust to the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The Grants for Artists at Risk (2021) and the Stand for Art Emergency Fund Scheme (2022): two funding schemes related to the Stand for Art programme, which provides artists and cultural actors in the Arab region who are at risk with direct support.

- The Cultural Policy component of the All-Around Culture programme, which is a programme implemented by a consortium of four organisations among which Al Mawred and partially funded by the European Union through the Europe creative programme. The Cultural Policy component aims to work with cultural policy researchers working in the Arab region to foster cultural policy reforms.

The evaluation mainly focused on evaluating the two funding schemes targeting the Abbara programme alumni, as these two projects were (almost) concluded by the time the assessment was conducted. The other projects supported by MIMETA were still nascent and had just started.

Key Finding

The concerned evaluation time frame only allowed for an assessment of the Abbara Support Initiative (2020) and the Abbara Top-up Grants (2021). These two grant schemes, designed to help Abbara alumni organizations adjust to the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic were relevant responses provided timely and under a highly relevant form. If they were efficient in helping organizations in the short term, circumstances in which organizations operate limit the mid- to long- term impact of these funds on the organizations. It however helped Al Mawred enhance both its strategy and positioning towards their beneficiaries.

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[10]Presentation retrieved from the "About us" section of the organization website. Visible on https://mawred.org/who-we-are/?lang=en (Last visited on 11 July 2023)

The Abbara Support Initiative (2020)
and the Abbara Top-up Grant (2021)

The Abbara programme, launched in 2011, supports the development of independent artistic and cultural initiatives and organizations in the Arab region. It targets independent, non-governmental artistic and cultural initiatives/organizations in the Arab region and Arab artistic and cultural initiatives/organizations abroad whose work serves artistic and cultural production in Arabic. The programme provides participants with a training in strategic planning and organizational management, a financial support of up to €22,000 per initiative/organization, continuous technical assistance, and the possibility to network and connect with like-minded peers.

In 2020, when the Abbara Support Initiative was launched, there were five (5) cycles of Abbara organized, with fifty-five (55) participating organizations. By 2020, out of these, thirty-six (36) were still active and potentially concerned by the Abbara Support Initiative. Out of these thirty-six (36) organizations, twenty-three (23) eligible applications were received and thirteen (13) organizations were selected to receive a grant.

The Abbara Top-up Grants targeted the thirteen (13) organizations selected to receive a grant from the Abbara Support Initiative and the eight (8) organizations part of the sixth round of Abbara, still suffering from the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis and who did not receive support from other Culture resources programs in 2021. Out of these twenty-two (22) organizations, eleven (11) were selected to receive a grant as part of the Abbara Top-up grant.

Exceptional Grant Schemes: A Relevant Response

A response relevant to the circumstances and to Culture Resource's strategy

2020 and 2021 were years marked by multi-layered crisis, especially in Lebanon: financial, sanitary, inflation, and shrinking of public spaces. Exceptional times therefore called for exceptional measures. Despite responding to these crises and presented as exceptional grant schemes, both the Abbara Support Initiatives and the Top-up grants were embedded

in the larger logic and strategy of Culture Resource: while offering a needed exceptional support, they were following up years of Abbara training and support cycles and were designed and launched at a time where Culture Resource was willing to take actions to build up a Abbara Alumni Network.

Helena shared, on the genesis of both projects, that: "*In 2019, Mawred was trying to strengthen the relation with the organizations that passed through the Abbara programme. The programme was developing to answer to the changing needs and to the feedback received along the years (…). In 2019, Mawred did a kind of study with the Abbara organizations and held an evaluation meeting in June to learn how we can contribute to their sustainability and to making sure the ecosystem that they are working in allows people to work in continuity, without burning out, to build impact that is meaningful in their context, without keeping answering to calls with priorities that keep changing all the time. And in 2019, we received great feedback and we better understood who these organizations are in terms of size and contexts. Then 2020 and 2021 came, and organisations said that they are worried because they have to let go of their team and would need to start from zero after the crisis. Losing one or two members of a team is a huge loss, because these human resources are the organizations, in most of the Arab region. We are talking about a sector that is driven by the passion and sacrifices of the persons that are working in it. Once Mawred got this request from the organizations, we knew individuals were the priority. And we started receiving requests via the Artists at Risk programme — because Mawred has a dedicated email for this programme. So this channel of communication made us know we were receiving more requests. And we couldn't do anything than through an exceptional grant scheme. So we said to our donor that we are also thinking about schemes that are linked to our programs, to take on additional programs but not start from zero*".

A timely response

For the Abbara Support Initiative, the call was published on 11 June 2020 with an application deadline on 10 July 2020. Final decisions from the jury took place on 19 August 2020 following an online meeting. On 7 September

2020, the names of the selected organizations were announced. All contracts were signed and first instalments paid by December 2020. For example, Basma Eleuch from L'Art Vivant (Tunisia) recalls that they submitted their application on 8 July and received the positive feedback from Al Mawred on 28 August. So in a few weeks' time, organizations knew they could count on the support of Al Mawred through the Abbara Support initiative.

As for the Top-Up grant, the team identified the organizations in need of the Top-up grant by monitoring progress of the Abbara organizations and through reviewing their narrative and financial reports. The organizations were identified and contacted by 6 December 2021, the deadline for their reply was 13 December 2021, and contracts were signed on 17 December 2021.

Both grants were disbursed in two instalments, with a first instalment of 70% and a final one of 30%.

A relevant type of fund

The two funding schemes provided with core and unrestricted funding, which has been a very important aspect in ensuring the efficiency of these two schemes. As mentioned by Al Mawred in their 2021 cooperation agreement signed with MIMETA, "*core unrestricted funding remains the main need of most organizations to sustain and expand their work*".

This statement was confirmed by beneficiaries of both schemes that were interviewed as part of this assessment. For Mudar Alhaggi, Creative Director of Nawras organization (Syria/Germany), "*When someone is working under difficult conditions, what you need most is flexibility.*" And core unrestricted funding offers the flexibility needed to allocate funds where they are most needed.

For all interviewed beneficiaries, provided funds covered administrative costs that are, by nature and under normal circumstances, already difficult to cover: rent, salaries, fees.

L'Art Vivant used the funds as a match fund to cover the administrative costs of an ongoing regional project funded by the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture

(AFAC), as their activity-related expenses doubled with COVID)19 because they had to split groups to respect the sanitary measures at that time. They were therefore able to pay for additional administrative staff, rent and internet related costs, and were able to continue to work in good conditions despite the overall context.

According to Mudar, the funds they received helped them continue to pay the rent and pay part of the team, at a time where employees elsewhere were losing their jobs, and nobody knew what to do. Mudar also shared that "*it is not only about fund issues, but also about psychological ones. This kind of fund gave a bit of security*".

It was also highlighted by Shaima Gamal, Executive Director of the cultural foundation Basement, in Yemen, that the nature of the fund received helped them keep their DNA, and avoid the distortions linked to project funding. She shared: "*Basement can't work on art for art or art for society but has to serve some development goals like gender equality or peacebuilding. Al Mawred helped us be as Basement, as a cultural center, as a cultural place which believes in art, just art. This kind is very important for us because it comes from Al Mawred, which believes in art and institutional support for organizations, which is very important because as a cultural centre we need funds to work. We can't rely only on funds for projects which do not help to improve the organization itself.*" According to Shaima, although the budget covered a year's worth of expenses ahead of time (rent, human resources), its positive effects lasted   more than a year, as it provided the team with a stable feeling for the first time, encouraged them to work more and feel rewarded for their efforts. The funds also help cover COVID-19-specific expenses such as masks, gel, which were very expensive in Yemen at that time, and allowed them to continue implementing their activity despite the sanitary crisis.

Finally, Hatem Tahhan, former Director of Khazaaen organization (Palestine) shared how relevant this flexible form of funding was to its organization, and how core costs weigh on them: "*Al Mawred never asked us why we used the fund for this or that expense. The decision to allocate the fund here or there was ours. Of course, we shared with them the reasons for such an allocation. But the priorities were ours to choose. They gave us the sum as a core fund, and they let us decide how to use it. They didn't intervene at all in the allocation of funds. They just made sure that everything*

was running smoothly but at the end Khazaeen are the ones who decide on the priorities. (…) The experience with Al Mawred was great. We also had a supplementary grant which was so important to us to pay the rent. It was a relief as we were worried about being able to do so. (…) Even if it is a tiny space of two rooms, our annual budget is limited. The website is also important for us; how can we develop it further. We want also to have AI tools, so when someone is looking for an information on Google, our website will show up first in the search bar. The research inside Khazaeen is very developed too, which cost us money for sure, but our main asset is having a strong and supportive website."

Short-term benefits for beneficiaries but long-term ones for Al Mawred

An extremely challenging context and a persistent "survival mode"

Although both grant schemes were a relevant short-term response to help organizations weather the immediate effects of the crisis they faced, the context in which they operate limits the long-term impact of these schemes. It was already the conclusion reached by Al Mawred concerning the Abbara programme and the same observation was shared by beneficiaries about the two grants schemes.

Following the Abbara programme evaluation conducted in 2019, Helena shared that: *"[We] also understood that if you are an organization and live through the programme, it strengthens you, it gives you certain skills and systems, but it is not enough to allow you to live through the challenges because the challenges are extreme."*

As Hanna Atallah, founder and artistic director of FilmLab Palestine said about the Palestinian and more global Arab context: "*It is not only about a pandemic issue. It is a really complicated issue. The Ministry of Culture has a very small budget and no fund to support cultural organizations. The political situation also makes funds shrinking for Palestine, like the Ford Foundation funds and others put conditions like the EU. We had to refuse to sign a 600000   € contract because we had to say that resistance is terrorism. All these factors affect us and put us on the edge and on whether we can continue or not."* He continues, stressing the fragility, in this political context, of the cultural sector specifically: "*The issue is culture, they want to destroy the culture, our narratives. Even the governments, like Egypt, Syria,*

Lebanon, and Palestine — for them culture is scary and really important because it is the only voice that can resist the huge volcano that is smashing all of us."

Concerning the Yemeni context, Shaima said that *"For Yemen, with the war, priorities of funds changed, and culture was not a priority anymore. But humanitarian aid was."* Even before the war, Shaima shared that the organization was "*working in an unhealthy environment,*" with no support and also facing the hostility of conservative community members. The organization had to close and move their space location several times, facing attacks and threats, hate messages scrawled on their walls, and more. Only with time, transparency, and tenacity, was the organization finally able to receive the community support they needed to settle.

The challenges shared by the beneficiaries are dense and diverse: political, administrative, financial, and health-related (two of the Basement staff died due to COVID-19) to name only a few.

Words or lexicon related to survivalism came up a couple of times through the different interviews. Hanna and Mudar respectively said "*When we manage, we feel like we are survivors, more than being a cultural organization focusing on films*", "*We cannot make the sector bigger, but at least we keep it alive."*

Persistent organizational challenges

Scarcity of funds and challenging political contexts keep confronting these organizations with organizational challenges.

Besma and one of the main persons in charge of L'Art Vivant today, shared her exhaustion and fatigue, and is thinking of quitting the organization — which will effectively mean its end.

Nawras, which benefited from the ASI and the Top-up grant, faces some strategic and organizational doubts and crises, and has still not solved the issue related to scarcity of funds. Mudar shared that at Nawras, they still do not master the German funding environment and can't fundraise efficiently or sufficiently, the learning process being particularly slow for an organization that is still getting familiar with its new geographical context. It

is important to note that in 2019, with the support of Abbara, the Nawras team benefitted from a two-day workshop on strategic aspects, which was very useful for the organization according to Mudar. It helped them think about their identity and move towards an organization supporting artists in exile at large, and not only Syrian artists.

The international context is also complex for Al Mawred itself, which faces challenges to disburse funds to organizations due to international transfer restrictions: due to war-related restrictions, international transfer couldn't be received in Yemen. Basement therefore received its ASI fund in cash when the director went to an Al Mawred event in Jordan. As of this writing, they still had not received their Top-up Grant.

Building up next steps for Abbara Alumni Network

In its 2020 report to MIMETA, Al Mawred stressed the fact that the Abbara Support Initiative was an opportunity for the Al Mawred team to be in closer contact with the Abbara Alumni to understand their evolving situations and assess their needs. The report also mentioned that Al Mawred plan on focusing for the next two years on "*piloting solidarity structures, building synergies among organizations, and shifting to a new funding phase that will include collaborative funding.*"

The two exceptional grant schemes were indeed efficient tools to dive into the Abbara Alumni needs: through studying their budget, understanding the type of deficit they faced and providing tools to address it, the grant schemes and work of Al Mawred team contributed to strengthen ties between Al Mawred and its beneficiaries. All interviewed beneficiaries highlighted the quality of ties and link with the Al Mawred team, the ease to contact and reach out to them and the timely follow up the team ensured.

Building up on its efforts, in January 2023, Al Mawred invited managers and cultural actors from nine (9) arts & culture organizations from the Arab region that had benefited from the support of the Abbara programme to a consultative meeting at the Hammana Artist House in Lebanon. Seven (7)

organizations attended the meeting to collaborate in the design of a pilot programme that aims to develop forms of cooperation and networking between cultural and artistic organizations and help build an integrated and productive cultural environment in the Arab region. The meeting was facilitated by Faten Farhat (Palestine), director, cultural advisor and member of the Al Mawred artistic board[11].

Strengthening Al Mawred's identity and positioning

The action of Al Mawred in this particular time of crisis, strongly contributed to strengthening the identity and positioning of the organization — an aspect that was highlighted several times when exchanging with Al Mawred's beneficiaries.

For Mudar, receiving the support of an Arab organization when you are not in the Arab region meant a lot. He said: "*We needed that kind of support from the Arab region. Yes, we were in Berlin but we were new in Berlin and in the scene in general. We didn't have access to the usual support that cultural organizations have. Without Abbara, maybe we couldn't even start.*"

The fact that Al Mawred is an Arab organization was also highlighted as a plus by Hannah: "*At least here, you talk with somebody who understands your condition and really knows the needs. (…) When we meet, we can discuss regional issues and not just your little project, because all of us, I feel we have the same aim: how we will be out from this whole bullshit we are living in, how we can do things and how we can do things because we are all in the same boat, if we will reach the other side or we will fall.*"

For Shaima, putting the logo of Al Mawred on their communication material in a plus and facilitates their work, as Yemeni local authorities consider Lebanese organizations as good partners, are familiar with Al Mawred as a regional institution, and have no suspicion towards them. It even helped them negotiate a derogation to a rule obliging them to ask permission for each activity, even if they are implemented weekly. Thanks to the fact that activities were supported by Al Mawred, they were able to convince the

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[11]Information available on Al Mawred's website: https://mawred.org/mawred-news/abbara-alumni-contribute-to-the-design-of-the-ecosystem-strengthening-pilot-program/?lang=en (Last visited on 23 September 2023)

national security office to give them an authorization over a period of 6 months instead.

As a conclusion, I have to quote the answer of Mudar, who, when asked to qualify Al Mawred in one word, answered: "*Mama.*"

2O2O ABBARA SUPPORT INITIATIVE

Abbara Support Initiative (ASI) is a response scheme offering exceptional financial support to Abbara alumni organisations to help them cover basic organisational expenses. 55 organisations have previously participated in the 5 cycles of Abbara, out of which 36 are still active. ASI aims to support 12 or 13 independent artistic and cultural organisations active in the Arab region and that have participated in one of the five previous Abbara rounds. The organisations will be eligible for grants of up to $15,000 covering a period of 6 to 12 months, depending on the individual needs of the organisation. The elements below were provided by Mawred

	INTERVENTION LOGIC	INDICATORS	REPORTED INFO AND DATA
Impact	*Under the economic stagnation and related repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic, many artistic and cultural organizations have had to cancel or suspend their activities for an indefinite period. Some have even been forced to shut down. In the Arab region, the cumulative effects of the pandemic struck at a time when most Arab countries were already gripped by the political, economic and humanitarian crises that have shaken their stability and put the entire region at unprecedented risk. Due to the lack of essential governmental support for the artistic and cultural sector in most Arab countries and the lack of measures or arrangements to alleviate the immediate strains of the crisis on cultural actors, the entire cultural and artistic sector with its diverse organizations was fighting for its survival while its individual members were struggling to continue work under the adversities of the pandemic.*	*Sustain the arts and culture sector in the face of the multiple economic and public health crises that the region and the world are facing.*	The initiative alleviated the vulnerability of the arts and culture sector and was an important opportunity to better understand the needs of the organizations and how core and unrestricted funding is vital for their sustainability, and was considered to be a first step towards mobilizing the network of the Abbara alumni and the broader arts and culture ecosystem.
Outcome	*In response to these circumstances, and in the framework of its ongoing interactions with participant organizations and its efforts to strengthen networking between them to foster the arts and culture sector across the region, the Abbara program launched an exceptional initiative to support the independent artistic and cultural organizations from the Arab region that took part in one of the five previous Abbara rounds.*	*Alleviate the immediate strains of the pandemic on cultural organisations*	13 organizations surpassed the risk of temporarily shutting down and had the capacity to sustain their teams and spaces, and survive the pandemic despite the cancellation and suspension of their activities. Some organizations worked on shifting their physical events to online projects, others used the halt of activities caused by the pandemic to renovate their space or develop sustainability or fundraising strategies. 3 grantee case studies are available in the report.
Output	*The initiative's aim was to support and empower independent cultural and artistic initiatives and organizations from the Arab region. In this framework, the program offered exceptional financial support to cover basic organizational expenses (administrative staff salaries, rental payments, running costs, etc.) to help organizations adjust to the current circumstances and survive at this time of rapid change.*	*Offer exceptional financial support to cover basic organisational expenses (administrative staff salaries, rental payments, running costs, etc.)*	23 eligible applications received. 13 organisations were selected and provided core and unrestricted funding ranging between US$ 10,000 and US$ 15,000, which helped them adjust to the pandemic circumstances.

2021 ABBARA TOP UP GRANTS

The Abbara Top Up Grants is another round of core support provided to Abbara organisations from the Abbara Support Initiative or the sixth round of Abbara still suffering from the consequences of the COVID 19 crisis and who did not receive support from other Culture resources programs in 2021.

	INTERVENTION LOGIC	INDICATORS	REPORTED INFO AND DATA
Impact	Contribute to the continuity and sustainability of the Arab region's arts and culture sector where cultural and artistic organisations can play an active role in civil society, by working with and serving the cultural community for the long term good of the independent cultural sector, while promoting freedom of expression and artistic creativity, sharing cultural knowledge and experience, and highlighting the importance of culture in societal development	*The preservation of the region's cultural and artistic talent as well as institutional know-how through difficult times*	The top-up grant contributed to the continuity and sustainability of the arts and culture organisations, hence the preservation of the region's cultural and artistic talent, when the Arab region was starting to resume its activity post-Covid 19.
Outcome	Support 8 to 12 organisations towards becoming organisationally and financially stable and sustainable, by financially helping them overcome and adapt to current challenges to enhance their role as key actors in building and sustaining arts and culture practices, and develop into regranting organisations that support their local, national, and/or regional arts and culture sector.	*8 to 12 organisations continue to serve their local, national, and/or regional communities by implementing artistic and cultural activities, and creating a ripple effect of support in their networks to uphold the arts and culture sector.*	The organisations used the top-up grants to maintain their human resources, cultural spaces, and more. Relieving core and significant organisational costs gave way to some of the grantees to partially cover their budget deficits and avoid starting their year with considerable and unforeseen losses and/or uncertainty. Until the first half of 2023, 6 grant agreements out of 11 were closed.
Output	8 to 12 organisations will receive financial support up to USD 10,000 in core funding for 9 months to cover basic organisational expenses such as administrative costs, staffing, rent and upkeep of premises, running costs and website development. This will give them the opportunity and time to rejuvenate themselves through internal enhancements, development of partnerships, and the adaptation of their programs to the current challenges.	*Top-up grants are disbursed to 8 to 12 organisations to cover organizational expenses and cumulative budget deficits following the multiple crises.* *Supported organisations have the minimum resources to become organisationally and financially capable of analysing, responding, and overcoming the challenging circumstances*	11 organisations out of 13 were awarded grants ranging from 3,000 to 10,000 euros based on a thorough assessment of the organisations' narrative reports, action plans, and financial reports that helped identify current and projected deficits.

The Grants for Artists at Risk (2021)
and the Stand for Art Emergency Fund Scheme (2022)

Due to the sensitive aspect of these programs, no interviews with beneficiaries were organized. Instead, the evaluation relied on the feedback provided by the Al Mawred team mentioned below and focused on the output and outcome level, which conclusions are summarized in the table below:

Mawred team's feedback: *"Please note that working on and achieving these impact indicators extends over multiple years, beyond 2021. In 2022, the team took initial steps to start building the protection network of arts and culture organizations across the region to systematize knowledge gained from the SfA programme into a set of guidelines for a developing network of artists' residencies and independent cultural organizations in artists rights in the Arab region and beyond, to create a bond based on shared learning and knowledge-exchange process for organization staff, and to develop a 'culture of protecting artists' across the region in order to prevent persecution, better protect and defend artists at risk, improve capacity to shelter artists within the Arab region, and improve capacity to welcome and protect relocated artists back to their home countries. 18 arts and culture organizations were invited through a closed call to apply to become part of the nucleus for a network on artists at risk protection within the Arab region. Organizations were invited from the pool of Abbara alumni, as well as a pool of organizations concerned with issues of freedom of expression, artists protection, and the management of artistic residencies. 10 organizations were selected to participate in the training, join the nucleus, and become focal points for artist protection in the region. With the support of an expert in artist protection, the team worked on building the content of the artist protection training which was held in the first half of 2023. The training workshop curriculum included 3 modules: relevant rights, legislation and enforcement; professional development; and care, self-care and collective care, to enhance the support offered to artists at risk in the region."*

2021 GRANTS FOR ARTISTS AT RISK

Grants provided in the framework of the Stand for Arts program, which provides artists and cultural actors in the Arab region who are at risk direct support for basic needs, residencies as a form of protection, and networking with organisations and focal points regionally and internationally to ensure safety, opportunities, and a sense of community.

	INTERVENTION LOGIC	INDICATORS	REPORTED AND SHARED INFO
Impact	*Promote inclusion and sustainable development within the cultural sector by supporting artistic freedom, right toequal access to culture and right to participation in culture. This is implemented through safeguarding artists' freedom of expression and artists' safety, and building a supportive ecosystem.*	*An inclusive and sustainable cultural sector where the right to free speech and artistic creativity is preserved and cultural rights are a core component of human rights.*	Safeguarding the presence of artists in the region and securing their rights to live and work with dignity and freedom contributes to having an inclusive sector with free speech and artistic creativity. Supporting these artists, having an increased knowledge on challenges related to freedom of expression, and enhancing the stakeholders' capacity in handling artists at risk cases is a crucial and first step towards acknowledging cultural rights as a core component of human rights. Such shared understanding allows stakeholders to identify effective and collaborative ways to preserve and advocate for cultural rights.
		An increased regional capacity to promote improved opportunities for artists, improved exchange of experience, increased knowledge on challenges related to freedom of expression and efforts to preserve it	Increased knowledge through one focus group organized with 5 female artists at risk focusing on the challenges to freedom of expression for women artists. Continuous exchange of experience and awareness and increased regional capacity through the different networking meetings attended.
Outcome	*Safeguard the presence of artists and artistic expression in the region, given the multiple threats faced by artists, from censorship, to harassment, assault and work ban.*	*Maintaining the presence of artists and cultural actors in the region, who are physically and mentally capable of pursuing their artistic and cultural activities with free expression and creativity*	11 Artists were able to seek refuge by receiving support to settle in the cities they had already sought as safe havens or by relocating to another country for short-term settlement.
Output	*6 to 10 artists and cultural actors from the Arab region selected to receive support from the Emergency fund to cover for financial or non financial needs.*	*6 to 10 artists and cultural actors are safe with immediate emergency funds, are accommodated in a supported environment ensured by host organisations, and have access to legal services.*	13 artists and cultural actors from Yemen, Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq and Palestine have received support. The support offered ranged from covering living expenses and/or accommodation up to 6 months, travel expenses, legal expenses, therapy and wellbeing expenses, and expenses for equipment or workshops/studios that would help the grantee continue their work during their relocation
		Growth in Culture Resource's network of artistic residencies in the Arab region and abroad.	Are progressively building new partnerships with residencies. Planned focus group to identify Human rights organisations committed to cultural rights in the region to build alignment with them.
		Continuous contact with international organizations that support artists at risk.	Continued collaboration with PEN America/Artist at Risk Connection (ARC), ICORN and Ettijahat Sanad program. Also attended Amani Network's monthly meeting and the Annual Safe Havens conference

2022 STAND FOR ART
(EMERGENCY FUND SCHEME)

The Stand for Art's emergency fund scheme provides artists and cultural actors in the Arab region who are at risk direct support for basic needs, residencies as a form of protection, and networking with organisations and focal points regionally and internationally to ensure safety, opportunities, and a sense of community.

	INTERVENTION LOGIC	INDICATORS	REPORTED INFO AND DATA
Impact	SfA aims to safeguard artistic expression in the Arab region, by supporting and maintaining the artists' presence in the region, promoting the right to equal access to culture and the right of participation in culture, and contributing to the strengthening of the cultural ecosystem to ensure it safely and freely accommodates diversity, creativity, innovation, and expression.	*80% of the artist at risk continue to live in the region at the end of the grant*	12 of the 15 supported artists stayed in the region and several of them continued to develop their practice
Outcome	Specifically supports artists who are at risk due to their artistic works or cultural activities or to circumstances in their environment. It helps them access safe havens, in and outside their countries, wellbeing and legal services, and opportunities to be able to continue their work and artistic activity in an environment where they can exercise their right to freedom of expression.	*8 artists fill an evaluation form highlighting the quality of the protection received and the extend of safety they experienced in the environment they relocated to*	Scheduled to take place by the end of 2023 and the first quarter of 2024 with the closing of the 3 year support from the Swedish Arts Council
Output	10 artists at risk will receive support from the SfA emergency fund	*10 artists at risk receive support from the SfA emergency fund*	121 applications received; 15 artists and cultural actors from Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Syria and Yemen selected to receive support.

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All Around Culture's cultural policy component

The support of MIMETA acts as a match fund (or co-funding) for Al Mawred. This project is still at the very beginning of its implementation and achievements at the output level are summarized in the following table:

2022 ALL AROUND CULTURE'S CULTURAL POLICY COMPONENT

The All Around Culture's (AAC) Cultural Policy (CP) component aims to work with cultural policy researchers working in the Arab region to foster cultural policy reform. Within this grant, a participatory policy research engaging AAC beneficiaries and stakeholders will be conducted and will focus on their cultural ecosystem and access to culture and intercultural dialogue. It is planned to start in 2022 and be finalized before the regional policy dialogue in 2023.

	INTERVENTION LOGIC	INDICATORS	REPORTED AND SHARED INFO
Impact	Strengthen the cultural ecosystem of the region by empowering AAC's beneficiaries and stakeholders to play a role in the building of open and democratic societies, to contribute to policy dialogues, and to work together on policy changes that induces a more enabling cultural environment on cultural workers.	*Every 6 month steering committee are held to evaluate the strategy and direction of AAC* *An external audit will be conducted to analyse the efficiency and effectiveness of the action* *Future follow up to monitor the extend to which studies and reports on cultural policy make reference to the white paper to be developed*	No information can be provided yet on the impact indicators since the AAC Cultural Policies component is in the beginning phase of research.
Outcome	Capitalize on the capacity of groups of cultural policy researchers working in the Arab region to foster cultural policy reform.	*At least 60 key stakeholders participate in the policy dialogue (in 2023)*	It didn't happen yet. Planned for the second half of 2023
		A white paper is produced and distributed to stakeholders	The white/brown paper is the final stage in this component. They will first finish the participatory research (undergoing), then validate the outcomes in a policy dialogue, then finally draft the white/brown paper based on the research and the dialogue outputs.
Output	A participatory policy research	*Consultancy agreement signed with Cultural Policy researchers*	Call published on July 2022; 35 applications received; 3 applicants shortlisted and interviewed and a research team hired and started working mi–December 2022. The research team consists of three members: a team leader, an assistant researcher and a consultant. The lead researcher and the assistant researcher have a background in urban studies and artistic research, while the consultant is a cultural policy expert.
	A four day regional policy dialogue (foreseen in 2023)		
	A white paper with policy recommendations and lessons learned (to be finalised in 2023)	*Research outline received and approved*	By December 2022, they only had the methodology and the work plan ready. In April 2023 the team shared a draft outline for the research, and in June 2023 they shared an updated version.

Bayimba Cultural Foundation

The organisation

Bayimba Cultural Foundation (hereafter "Bayimba") was established in June 2006 (followed by formal registration in November 2007) with the aim to bring about change in the status quo of the arts and culture sector in Uganda – envisioning a vibrant sector that is creative, professional, viable, and which contributes to social and economic development in Uganda and East Africa.

In 2017, the organization, which was operating from Kampala, the capital city of Uganda, bought an island (Lunkulu Island) 60 km from the capital city and progressively moved their operations and actions there. Bayimba's festivals and trainings, which used to take place in Kampala were also moved to Lunkulu. This is an important move in the history of the organization and this change of location is to be taken into consideration in the framework of this assessment.

2020 was a particularly difficult year for the organization, which was heavily impacted by the pandemic. Bayimba had to cancel almost all its festivals and events including Amakula Film Festival (initially scheduled in March), DOADOA (initially scheduled in May), Bayimba International Festival (initially scheduled in August) and the Kampala Theatre Festival (initially scheduled in November.) As the pandemic spread and the lockdown was imposed in Uganda, the Bayimba team shifted to remote work with the support of MIMETA and focused on the development of the organization. Faisal stressed that at that time they had no other fund than MIMETA's.

Scope of the assessment

Over the 2020-2022 period, MIMETA supported three (3) different types of actions:

- Enhancement of Bayimba's online and physical infrastructures: the support targeted the redesign of Bayimba's website, the launch of a mobile app, and physical construction of the Bayimba offices and facilities on Lunkulu Island.

- Support to artists and creatives through actions like trainings (physical or through online material), the launch of the UMVA Kreative e-commerce platform or festivals open to the public.

- Enhancement of artists' rights through the design and launch of an Artwatch application for Artwatch Africa.

The assessment of Bayimba's on-the ground achievements is an illustration of the difficulties highlighted in Part 1 section 3 described above. It shows how project-based reporting and evaluation are insufficient to appreciate the impact or effect of an organization.

- Defined indicators do not allow a qualitative appreciation of the actions. For instance, when measuring the outcome of 2021 Project 2 (Space) "Providing a physical space for artists and partners from all over East Africa to work from", the used indicators should at least be "number of artists and partners visiting or using the space" instead of "An actual and physical working space for East African regional collaborators and partners."

- Defined indicators are output level ones, targeting the completion or not of the foreseen activities. as most actions took more time than expected to be completed, this makes the indicators ineffective or useless.

The assessment will therefore try to have a larger view or situate the action in a broader context to better appreciate their relevance, while highlighting the gaps in the monitoring tools defined and used.

Key Finding
The assessment of Bayimba did not allow to reach outcome or impact level conclusions. Delays in activities implementation and output level evaluation framework limited the assessment. The exercise however helped gather factual information, inform the stage of advancement of certain actions and identify ways to enhance their overall monitoring.

Despite these, interviews and data collected demonstrated that the context of interventions of Bayimba together with the consistency and commitment of the organization to the sector makes it a unique organization. An assessment on the organizational level would however be needed to help the organization maximize the use of its limited financial and human capacities. A better use of monitoring and evaluation frameworks could also help refine the overall strategy and action plan of the organization.

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, Bayimba focused on enhancing its online tools and platforms to gain more visibility and prepare for a shift in its programming to online and hybrid.

Online tools

According to the 2020 report submitted to Mimeta, the work done on Bayimba's online presence was: to revive it, integrate it, and go from five different websites to only one, in order to make sure that there is a one-stop site for all of Bayimba's work. The result is the https://bayimba.org website, which was launched at the beginning of 2022.

The 2020 proposal to Mimeta also mentioned that Bayimba will work on developing a "cryptocurrency database and cashless system". Evelyn Ahisibwe, Research and Administration coordinator, explained that the system consisted in providing individuals that had subscribed to Bayimba membership with cards that they can charge and use to pay for goods available on the island during festivals. Evelyn also noted that the system was launched during the 2023 Bayimba Festival but was finally stopped due to the regular cuts in electricity and internet connection on the island, preventing a good user experience of this system.

The organization also reported that they have developed an online app available on Google Store and on the App Store. However, I couldn't download or find the application. The completion of this output couldn't therefore be verified.

Regarding evaluation frameworks, it would have been interesting to define indicators that are focusing on the use of these tools instead of focusing on their mere availability. I requested Bayimba web tracking tools and data measuring traffic on their online tools, but the data was not provided.

Lunkulu Island

The organization moved to Lunkulu Island in 2018 and the administrative team started to work from there in 2021 after the COVID-19 lockdown.

Faisal explained that the space now has 6 operating units and 200 tents. "*The space generates revenues which pays for the expenses linked to the space. The space brought us a base and has helped to drive meaning in our work. People realized we have a space, we are not going away, we are not renting. And people are coming to be part of the story where the space is growing. It is what makes Bayimba unique*".

Still according to Faisal, since Lunkulu Island is at a two-hour drive from Kampala and since the current Bayimba team is based in the capital city, it has been agreed with the team that they will work two days physically from the island (Mondays and Tuesdays) and will work remotely the other three days of the week. At the same time, the organization is starting to scout for people living around the island in order to progressively enhance their capacity and involve them as part of the team.

Discussions with Bayimba's beneficiaries revealed how much this move of location impacted the organization and the work they are doing. While it opened new possibilities in terms of hosting, organizing activities, and providing a creative space for the scene, it also challenged the organization, making it start from scratch, and especially when it comes to attracting people to its events.

Andrew Kaggwa, a cultural journalist interviewed as part of the assessment as one of Bayimba' beneficiaries, highlighted how this change of location impacted visitors of Bayimba's festivals. When they took place in Kampala, people could come back every day to the event. The move to Lunkulu forces people to camp there to assist to festivals or events, yet camping is not developed and appreciated yet in Uganda. In an article published on 5 August 2019, Andrew wrote: "*(…) since they shifted to Lunkulu, an island on Lake Victoria after their tenth edition in 2017, revelers have complained that access to the festival is harder than when they were at the National Theatre. Because of this, the festival doesn't start as early as it used to; in fact, on Thursday at 6pm, many people coming for the festival were still*

making their way to the island – the opening act on the main stage Iddi Masaba almost performed for the crew and volunteers."[12]

Joseph Matovu, one of Bayimba's volunteers in charge of the camping section, added that "*The island has been developing: for the first festival organized there, it was muddy, with many trees and there were ants all over. But for the festivals that have been coming up, the place has upgraded.*(…) *Walk paths were demarcated and cleared. Now it still gets a bit muddy but not as much. And every morning you find someone cleaning the paths. There are also sign posts on the trees.*" Discussing recent improvements, he also said: "*The good thing is that there was a supermarket/mini market on the island, and this was very good. It was stocked.*"

Joseph insisted on the necessity to enhance accommodation on the Island: "*Being in the camping department, I got to exchange with people. People plan to attend 4 days but finally stay a day or two. Their complaint is about the tents. (…) The provision of water on the island is also problematic: some are complaining on the provision of the water there. Aside for those who love swimming, those who want to take a shower, sometimes there is no water in the bathrooms. There is always a technical team that work on the pumps. But it would be good to have a permanent supply of water. Toilets can also be worked on. (…) Transportation to the venue or to the island [should also be worked out]. Maybe by having buses to drop visitors off at the docks and have boats ready at the docks. Even if it is paid for, it would be better for visitors. Avoiding all the challenges linked to transportation from Kampala to the island. It would give a better experience for the people attending the festival.*"

Similarly, Percy Kisame, Creative and Talent manager, also confirmed that "*The island has not been utilized as it should. To create. On the island you get enough time to meet others and hear their story. They should enhance residentials. They should have lodging facilities. There is another route that connects to land without passing on water. It should be developed well. (…) They should also have more facilities for creatives on the island: a music studio, a theater, etc.*"

In this context, we understand why Evelyn said, when asked about the timeline of setting up at Lunkulu Island: "*We are still working on this and it will take us up to 2030 to get Lunkulu Island to where we want it to be for the artists*".

Monitoring the number and characteristics of visitors is also an aspect that should be enhanced. Evelyn said that any visitor has to sign a book but that numbers are not counted or analyzed. Monitoring and evaluation is also done around festivals via evaluation forms to visitors but similarly to the books, the data shared on the forms are not counted or analyzed. When asked about the availability of disaggregated data according to geography (in order to assess the regional dimension of the visitors), situation or gender, Evelyn said that the information was not available.

MIMETA's support focused on the administrative move of the team, but we can see through interviews with beneficiaries that the real challenge is the move of the festivals and the management of guests for instance. There is maybe a greater strategic interest in prioritizing the preparedness of the space for festivals and hosting of artists or visitors, than finalizing the administrative blocks of the organization.

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[12]Andrew Kaggwa. "It was a local affair at Bayimba this year", *Sqoop*, 5 August 2019. Available on https://www.sqoop.co.ug/201908/news/events/it-was-a-local-affair-at-bayimba-this-year.html

2020 DEVELOPING BAYIMBA SYSTEMS

Investing in Bayimba online platforms to foster further visibility and prepare for a shit in its programming to online and hybrid.

INDICATORS	REPORTED INFO AND DATA
No indicator mentioned in the 2020 agreement	A new website has been launched in January 2022 https://bayimba.org
	The organisation reported to have invested in a mobile App downloadable on Google store and Apple (could not be verified)
	Developing a crypto-currency database and cashless system for all activities (festivals, trainings and workshops) (still in progress)

2020 PREPARING SPACE FOR ARTISTS AFTER COVID 19

Developing spaces for artists to use at the Bayimba Center at Lunkulu Island once they are free to create.

INDICATORS	REPORTED INFO AND DATA
No indicator mentioned in the 2020 agreement	The pandemic delayed the beginning of work. The Bayimba Center Masterplan was only ready in June 2021.

2021 SPACES (PROVIDING SPACE A WORKING ENVIRONMENT TO STRUGGLING ARTIST AND EAST AFRICAN COLLABORATORS)

Setting up a physical home for arts creation and innovation to accommodate Bayimba's annual programming while providing space to artists and other sector stakeholders through the Bayimba Center in Lunkulu Island.

	Intervention logic	INDICATORS	REPORTED INFO
Impact	Contributing to East Africa's collaborative network of experts	*No impact level indicator foreseen in the cooperation agreement*	No reported info
Outcome	Providing a physical space for artists and partners from all over East Africa to work from.	An actual and physical working space for East African regional collaborators and partners	No reported info
Output	An up-to-date state of the art working space with access to internet, office accessories and production studio to support regional collaborations.	*No output level indicator foreseen in the cooperation agreement*	The construction of the space kicked off in November 2021 and office ready.

2022 SUPPORT TO MANAGEMENT

Support to management of the new space for East African artists and collaborators.

Project objectives	INDICATORS	REPORTED INFO
Complete move from a rental office to own building Block 1 structure at Lunkulu Island.	–	Completed
Settlement of management staff into new building	–	Completed

The UMVA Kreative platform (2020)

Part of the MIMETA support for 2020 was used to develop the UMVA Kreative e-commerce platform, which allows artists to sale, rent, and crowdfund their work. The platform has been developed in partnership with AUXFIN, an organization which "*aims to carry out projects for Financial and Social Inclusion using the UMVA platform and Community Activation Program (CAP) to build ICT infrastructure, with the goal to combat poverty and improve living conditions.[13]*"

The platform was launch in March 2021. The platform has a registration process and a dedicated page where artists can upload their artwork. A Bayimba team member goes through the platform to approve or not the artwork, according to Bayimba's criteria.

The 2020 narrative report presented to MIMETA mentioned that the platform "*is at the moment hosting 55 artists and more than 200 works of art.*" When visited in July 2023, the platform counted 9 artists and 86 works of art displayed for sale. The UMVA Facebook page is not active anymore. The last post is dated December 6, 2021. When more details were requested on the activity on the platform, especially regarding its main objective which is potential sales, Evelyn said that sales had not started yet and that they are still registering the artists on the platform.

2021 fashion workshop for young women and men

With a partnership with the SEED show and Africalia, Bayimba implemented a fashion workshop for young women and men from the local communities including people who are deaf and/or hard of hearing. According to Bayimba's report submitted to MIMETA, fifteen (15) young women and men participated in the training which went on smoothly with a showcase fashion runway at the end of the training.

The workshop was reported in the 2020 annual report of Bayimba, as part of the Bayimba Academy, which aims, according to the annual report "*at instilling professionalism and aiding creativity within the art sector through workshops, music trainings, hosting residencies and networking sessions. The academy also promotes entrepreneurship among artists for the betterment of their futures and the arts and cultural sector in Uganda.*"

When asked about the link between this action and the overall Bayimba strategy, Evelyn said that activities in the fashion and design field were chosen to encourage more women and girls to participate in Bayimba's activities. Under MIMETA's cooperation agreement, the intervention logic related to this action mentions the objective of creating a movement of entrepreneurs in East Africa.

Originally, the SEED project — SEED is an acronym which stands for Skilled Expressive Entrepreneurial Designers — was a project implemented by the embassy of the United States in Uganda together with designer Ras Kasozi to mentor young fashion designers and give them skills they need to build careers in fashion design. It started in 2013. In 2020, the SEED project and Bayimba started a collaboration which consisted in showcasing the work of 10 selected designers at Bayimba's festival. The following year, the cooperation was taken further and they organized a workshop was on Lunkulu Island for the 7th Edition of SEED, with participants from the villages around Lunkulu such as Namaziina, Kikubabulega, Ngogwe, and including people with disabilities (here deaf and hard of hearing people). The 2021 edition ran under the theme "Self-reliance and Innovative Systems for a Regenerative Environment" and included activities such as talent search, sourcing inspiration/Idea developing, financial Literacy, teamwork and a fashion exhibition held at the end of the project.

While Evelyn shared that this collaboration is still ongoing for the upcoming five years, no information was found or provided on future editions. The last post on the Facebook page of the SEED Show is dated December 2, 2021 and related to the edition that took place on Lunkulu.

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[13] Information on the http://auxfin-foundation.org/ website (Last visited on October 4, 2023)

2022 Lunkulu Reggae Festival

In 2022, Bayimba organized the second edition of their reggae festival on Lunkulu, which was the first event they held after the lockdowns in Uganda. Eighteen (18) different artists performed. According to the 2022 report submitted by Bayimba to MIMETA "*Over 1000 participants attended the Lunkulu reggae festival just a few days after lifting the lockdown which was a milestone in our experience.*"

This same year, the organization hosted the 14th edition of the Bayimba festival of the arts, showcasing (12) different artists over a period of five (5) days on Lunkulu Island. This festival is not funded by the MIMETA agreement but bears mentioning here.

Here again, in order to appreciate the work of Bayimba through its festivals, we have to look at a larger time and action scope.

Andrew explained that there was an increase throughout the years in people's interest and participation to Bayimba's festivals. "*At first*", he said, "*the public did not understand the kind of music that was programmed by the festival. Most of the artists were playing African instruments and playing music different from the dancehall or the music one can dance to. Although the festival was almost free, people would not come. The media did not understand them either. Even mainstream musicians did not understand them. But over time, the public became more receptive to this kind of music and the mainstream artists have started to incorporate such instrumentation into their songs*". He gave the example of Swangz Avenue, a leading audio and film production company in Uganda and East Africa and said that every person they have in their team of instrumentalists has performed once or twice at one of Bayimba's festivals. Already in 2014, Andrew had noted in an article: "*Bayimba International Arts festival is definitely the biggest arts*

gathering in Uganda, giving platforms to different genres of arts and capturing imaginations for an entire weekend. Since its inception in 2008, the festival has developed into a major multi-arts festival with varied and quality programming and creative ideas. The festival is eagerly anticipated by locals, while artistes and visitors from all over the world pour into Kampala to take advantage of this unique art experience."[14]

2022 Edition of the DOADOA Market

Bayimba established DOADOA, the East African Performing Arts Market, in 2012, as a regional platform for networking and learning among sector stakeholders. The DOADOA market is a four-day event with conferences, exhibitions, workshops, networking sessions, and showcases for performing arts sector stakeholders. The activities include inviting festival directors to Uganda in order to allow them to meet local artists, see them perform and potentially invite them to programme in other festivals.

In 2021 and 2023, Bayimba organized a virtual edition of the DOADOA which consisted in 30 videos (6 episodes and 24 teasers or other promotional videos) for the 2021 edition and 7 ones for the 2023 one, published on YouTube. The 2023 videos were produced in 2022 but uploaded in 2023.

The Bayimba YouTube channel   currently has 82 subscribers. The 2021 DoaDoa videos views range between 6 and 2798, while those for 2023 DoaDoa range between 53 and 177 views. We can see that the outreach of these videos is very low.

Evelyn however shared that out of the 2023 edition, one artist broadcasted on one of the DoaDoa videos got contacted by a German institution and offered a teaching position.

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[14] Andrew Kagwa, "Bayimba back for seventh season", *The Observer.ug*, September 17, 2014 https://www.observer.ug/component/content/article?id=33865:-bayimba-back-for-seventh-season (Last visited on October 4, 2023)

2020 SUPPORTING ARTISTS AND PARTNERS

Launching a new e-commerce platform for artists to sale, rent and crowd-fundraise for their work (the UMVA Kreatives Plateform) and supporting artists performance and mobility support in partnership with 32° East.

INDICATORS	REPORTED INFO
No indicator mentioned in the 2020 agreement	End of 2020, the UMVA Kreatives Plateform was at 98% ready.
	As mobility became a challenge due to COVID 19 restrictions, sent artists to perform online at other online events.

2021 SKILLS (STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITIES OF EAST AFRICAN PARTNERS IN NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION)

Enhance creativity, professionalism and, most notably, entrepreneurism to movement. With its planned SYSTEMS and SPACES in place, BAYIMBA will be able to deliver and expand its current training programme across East Africa in a combined and easily adaptable physical/online fashion.

	Intervention logic	INDICATORS	REPORTED INFO
Impact	Creating a movement of Entrepreneurs in the creative arts within East Africa.	*No impact level indicator foreseen in the cooperation agreement*	No data was available o,n this aspect
Outcome	Imparting relevant creative entrepreneurship skills (both basic and advanced) to regional stakeholders so that they can gradually start expanding on their revenues.	Developed regional training creative Entrepreneurship manuals and learning materials as well as case studies.	With a partnership with the SEED show and Africalia, implemented a fashion workshop for 15 young girls and boys from the local communities including right holder groups—specifically the Deaf.
Output	Both physical and online trainings, engagement with business communities to interest and pitch new ideas of our partners.	*No output level indicator foreseen in the cooperation agreement*	The action supported that year only consisted on the fashion workshop for 15 persons

2022 A PROGRAMME OF EXCHANGE

A programme of exchange between artist from Uganda, Reunion Island, Kenya and Tanzania as well as document for the online DOADOA Market with producers, programmers, composers and production directors from across the region.

Project objectives		REPORTED INFO
A one-day Bayimba Reggae Fest programmed artist from all East Africa as a new start after the Pandemic.	*No indicator*	Lunkulu Reggae Festival organised in February 2022 as the first event of the year since the two long years of the pandemic lockdown in Uganda. 1000 participants.
A one-month DOADOA online streaming documentary series on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook		Also organised the Bayimba International Festival on Lunkulu Island on 24-28 August. Over 2000 participants.
		For the DOADOA, 37 videos were prepared and published on Bayimba Youtube channel
Contracts and financial payments to participating artists and stakeholders		Not verified

The ArtWatch Africa mobile app system (2021 – 2022)

The ArtWatch Mobile Application (AMA) is a mobile application which will run on Android and iOS smartphones. The system is designed for information dissemination about artists' rights, improved assistance to artists under threat, insight into threats to artists and their rights for the purpose of lobby and advocacy.

The application is still under preparation as challenges related to ensuring the security of the application delayed its finalization.

Additional observations

As stated by Percy, "*Bayimba is unique.*" Considering the regional context, the consistency of the organization's commitment and the potential offered by its recent location, Bayimba seems indeed quite unique.

However, and although the ToR explicitly did not invite the evaluator to focus on organizational capacity of the assessed organizations, we have to underline that the organization might need strategical and/or organizational support to further thrive.

The assessment demonstrated that the monitoring and evaluation capacity of the organization could be enhanced and resources better oriented to conduct stronger analysis of the organization's impact. Moreover, there seems to be a mismatch between the very large scope of the organization (geographically and programmatically) and very diverse forms of interventions and the reduced financial and human capacities of the organization (5 persons as core staff and an annual budget of 200 000 USD on average).

Finally, the change of location and the infrastructural requirements on the island constitute a challenging step for the organization which requires more attention and support.

Most activities that were supported by Mɪᴍᴇᴛᴀ are not yet completed or not pushed to their full potential and as Percy also said "*Bayimba is lacking a bit. It has less sponsors and is underfunded.*"

Provided this, there may be strategic choices to be made programmatically, at least at first, in order to maximize impacts and make a better use of available resources. A different monitoring and evaluation framework and approach could guide the organization decisional team in these choices.

2021 SYSTEMS (REVIVING AND REVITALIZING ARTWATCH AFRICA BY DEVELOPING AN ARTWATCH APP)

2022 THE ARTWATCH MOBILE APP SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

BAYIMBA will work with its partners—AUXFIN International, This is Africa, ARTerial Network, ArtWatch Africa to develop the ArtWatch App that will offer information on artistic rights as Legal Coach, a platform to report incidences as they happen, options for legal assistance and data collections on the infringements as well as advocacy connections.

	Intervention logic	INDICATORS	REPORTED INFO AND DATA
Impact	Empowering artists and cultural practitioners (especially in East Africa) with information about their human rights as citizens and their rights as artists and cultural practitioners	*No impact indicator foreseen in the cooperation agreement*	Lengthy process. The first test version of the App will be ready for trial in the early weeks of August 2022.
Outcome	Continued collection of relevant data, statistics and real time incidences that demand lobbying and advocacy	An actual ArtsWatch functional App operating with information on individual artistic rights, real time reporting of infringement incidences and access to legal assistance	
Output	A functional digital App (both online and offline) that offers access to human rights defenders, legal aid and research information and statistics of artistic human rights abuses acrossEast Africa	*No output level indicator foreseen in the cooperation agreement*	

Project objectives	INDICATORS	REPORTED INFO AND DATA
A full-fledged functional mobile App with registration of user Members	–	Challenges related to ensuring the security of the Apps have delayed its finalisation. Launch forseen in August 2023
Available research information on individual artist rights	–	
Available Reports on incidences Synching with partnership servers Request forEmergency assistance and Evacuations	–	

Ettijahat
Independent Culture

The organization

Founded in 2011, Ettijahat is a cultural organization working to promote independent culture across the Arab region. According to its website presentation, its vision is to "*build a pluralist, diverse and intellectually and artistically productive Syria, a country where access to art and culture is considered a right for every Syrian citizen.*"

Scope of the assessment

Throughout the 2020-2022 period, MIMETA supported the following programmes:

- The 2020 edition of Create Syria, a programme seeking to increase the capacity of artists to contribute to the development of stronger, more cohesive communities through the design and delivery of community arts initiatives that focus on experience and artistic quality.

- The 2021 and 2022 edition of Life programme, supporting Syrian cultural entities, based inside or outside Syria, registered or non-registered.

- The 2021 and 2022 edition of the Decade of Arts — Research papers programme, which supports researchers from Syria and the Arab region to contribute with research papers and studies on art production, and projects related to the Syrian context during the past decade.

- The 2022 Sanad programme which provided 7 artists living within or outside Syria with all the resources they needed to produce and curate original, bold artworks online. The programme aimed to enable artists to conduct artistic residencies wherever they resided.

All schemes offer a similar package: a training in the subjects most relevant to the scheme, a grant or a financial support and a regular follow up either through the Ettijahat team or through designated mentors.

After a presentation of each scheme and of the monitoring and evaluation tables reviewed by Ettijahat, an overall appreciation of the different programmes is provided.

Key Finding

Ettijahat offers a large variety of programmes. They all are linked to Syria, but they each adopt a different form, with different target groups and dealing with various geographies. Overall, assessed programmes are well received by their beneficiaries: provided trainings were judged useful, mentorship valuable and financial support vital.

However, in a context where there is no public funds and a constant competition for international ones, the provided grants have only an immediate impact, allowing those who receive it to implement short term actions. Provided non-financial support and follow has on the contrary proved to have long lasting benefits. Among all schemes, the research programme seems to be the most impactful for participating researchers, opening doors, boosting careers and providing individuals with an asset for the future.

Presentation of the various schemes

Create Syria 2020 – Third Edition

Create Syria is a programme seeking to increase the capacity of artists to contribute to the development of stronger, more cohesive communities through the design and delivery of community arts initiatives that focus on experience and artistic quality. The programme aims to promote the use of art as a tool to respond to the impact the different crises and disasters had on communities.

The third edition has been slightly adapted following the result of an evaluation of the second one and considering the COVID-19 context. It focused on "arts and social change" as a thematic, had an enlarged geographical scope, and introduced mentoring to assist selected artists or group of artists throughout the programme.

This edition of Create Syria was open to Syrian artists residing in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, and Europe, and encouraged collaboration between participating artists and peers of other nationalities.

As a result of the publication of the call for proposals, thirty (30) applications were received out of which only eighteen (18) were considered eligible. In its 2020 report, Ettijahat explained that ineligible applications were either art production or development projects or were presented by current grantees of Ettijahat or the British Council, all of which are ineligible.

The programme supported ten (10) initiatives, led by informal organizations, individual artists, or collectives[15].

Out of the ten (10) initiatives, six (6) were implemented in Syria, while the remaining ones took place in Lebanon, Poland, and the United Kingdom, with the goal of including artists who have moved from Syria.

The ten (10) initiatives were provided with technical and financial support. The technical support consisted in an online programme of peer-to-peer discussion, training sessions and mentorship. It helped participants adjust or redesign their initiative while the financial support received (up to 6 000 USD per initiative) helped implement it.

The use of online support was a response to the lockdown. Ettijahat helped participants cover the costs for technical and internet related tools where necessary, an approach applied in all their schemes. The grant was provided as a result of a contract signed around October 2020.

At the end of the programme, and after the beneficiaries sent their narrative report for the project, a closing event to discuss process and challenges was organized.

During the project, grantees were linked to a network of institutions that included Zoukak theatre (Lebanon), Change Collective (UK), and experts from Turkey and Egypt as supervisors, in addition to other experts who worked to link a range of issues.

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[15]The ten (10) selected initiatives are presented on Ettijahat website on the following link: https://ettijahat.org/page/1029#gsc.tab=0 (Last visited on September 28, 2023).

2020 CREATE SYRIA – THIRD EDITION – COVID 19 RESPONSE

Intervention logic (*mentioned in the proposal*)	REPORTED INFO AND DATA
Specific objectives	
To empower individual artists and social initiatives to develop and test creative initiatives that can make a positive impact within their communities and contribute to greater inclusivity and cohesiveness in a period of great uncertainty	This project employs different mediums of visual arts, such as painting, paper molding and videography and seeks to incorporate them in other types of art, including paper doll techniques and shadow play theatre, in cooperation with a group of artists. The project aims to capitalize on different modern art techniques, in order to establish a new vision for understanding and interacting with artwork. It gives a group of youngsters and children from different backgrounds a voice of their own, by encouraging them to use the arts as a means and a tool to express themselves, and to rely on imagination, playing and experimentation as a method to learn, discover oneself and engage in discussions with others. This is achieved by recreating paintings and artwork in sketches and scenes that express their story. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5vzpLvdVgU
To improve Syrians and non-Syrian communities' access to and participation in quality community arts initiatives that focus on experience and artistic quality	The attached example of supported projects shows how they can benefit from reaching out to communities and how they can benefit from working with communities in complex environments https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gMMoQltLCg8
To inspire and facilitate networking and collaboration between community-based organisations working in the arts in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey and Europe, as well as with the UK and international practitioners	During the project, grantees were linked to a network of institutions that included the Lebanese Zoukak Troupe, Change Collective UK, and experts from Turkey and Egypt as supervisors, in addition to other experts who worked to link a range of issues.
Outputs	
Ten artists/community art initiatives will be provided with technical and financial support and access to a structure online programme of peer-to-peer discussion and mentorship to enable them to develop and test new models and approaches to community-based arts work.	Postponed to June 2020 instead of March 2020 and included some changes following an evaluation of the program conducted in 2019 and the Covid 19 reality. It therefore combined digital component with home confinement. 10 initiatives were selected and provided with an Ideas and Skills development support online training. Ettijahat helped the participants cover the costs for technical and internet related tools. A grant was provided as a result of a contract signed in October 2020.
A curated series of online conversations will be developed to enable greater local, regional and international exchange and peer-to-peer learning in the field of community arts.	"Arts and uncertainty" launching online event

2021 and 2022 Life

In 2021, Ettijahat launched a funding opportunity for entities and collectives active in the Syrian arts sector, as well as civil and media entities whose work revolves around the arts. The Life initiative aimed to mitigate the challenges these entities were facing and enable twelve (12) of them to continue their work through the use of financial contributions of up to $12,000 each.

The opportunity was open to entities based in Syria, in the Arab region or Europe, and operating physically or digitally. Registered or non-registered entities were eligible but unregistered ones had to justify that their informal status was due to external circumstances.

As a result of a call for proposals, thirty-seven (37) applications were received and fourteen (14) Syrian cultural and civil society institutions operating in Syria, in diaspora, and in digital space were selected to receive support[16].

The jury issued a statement, published on the Ettijahat website, that stated that "*Although the jury did not instate a quota system, it prioritized initiatives within Syria, then in the challenging contexts of Lebanon and Turkey, and finally initiatives in diaspora, considering the extent to which they contribute to Syrian arts and culture.*"

The grant provided under the programme helped funded institutions sustain their work in a difficult context where funding was scarce. According to the Ettijahat team: "*They have been able to develop activities that enrich public life and appeal to diverse communities, as well as create new frameworks that carry a great understanding of culture and its place in promoting public life and linking it to the values of justice.*"

The Ettijahat team also shared the institutional impact the programme had on these entities: "*The narrative and financial periodic and final reports included the ability to measure the evolution of many aspects of the entities. For example, by building an accurate financial system for entities that did not have it before. Or returning to carry out activities after a break that lasted for many months, or rebuilding the work team again after part of it stopped due to the inability to pay salaries,etc. The change was qualitative and manifested in more than one aspect of each entity*."

In an interview, Abdullah cited the example of *Madrasset El Fan El Massrahi* (The School for Dramatic Art): "*They are doing incredible work (…) It is becoming the alternative institute of dramatic art in Damascus. (…) They have a great know-how. (…) We supported this initiative through Life (…) and we discovered that they don't have any system of contracting, everything is verbal. (…) So we decided to build a whole system with them like the contracts, the receipts, the bylaws, etc.*"

The programme also helped initiatives in exile or in the diaspora, such as the Female Voices In Exile initiative, which aims to build a network of engaged women in exile and launched by the Women for Common Space Foundation or the cultural supplement of the web platform *Al Jumhurryia*.

The support of the 2021 edition of the Life programme extended over the year 2022, which mainly consisted in following up with the fourteen (14) entities that have been granted support to assess impact and offer additional support where needed.

This follow-up with beneficiaries continued beyond the timeframe of the programme, which builds a long-lasting and evolving relationships between Ettijahat and its beneficiaries, a point developed in the cross analysis provided below.

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[16] These are presented on the Ettijahat website on the following page: https://www.ettijahat.org/page/1177#gsc.tab=0 (Last visited on September 26, 2023)

2021 LIFE CONTRIBUTIONS TO SUPPORT SYRIAN CULTURAL ENTITIES		2022 LIFE CONTRIBUTIONS TO SUPPORT SYRIAN CULTURAL ENTITIES	
Development and Project Goals Indicators	**Reported info and data**	**Project objectives**	**Reported info and data**
Despite their challenging circumstances, 12 Syrian civil society organisations continue or increase their productivity and measurably grow their audiences over the course of the grant period	Life has supported a total number of 14 cultural entities including 6 Syrian cultural and civil society institutions operating in Syria, in diaspora, and in digital space. While the former became the explicit priority of the selection committee by their independent decision, the programme still managed to reach entities operating in a highly diverse range of contexts and manners. All of the funded institutions were able to develop quality programs that helped to sustain their work teams under difficult conditions. They have been able to develop activities that enrich public life and appeal to diverse communities, as well as create new frameworks that carry a great understanding of culture and its place in promoting public life and linking it to the values of justice.	Periodically follow up with 14 entities that was granted support to assess change and offer in-kind support	A periodic follow-up system was designed with the 14 entities benefiting from the initiative, which includes obtaining news of their activities to contribute to their promotion, a periodic follow-up report on their timeframe, in addition to reviewing their financial reports.
		Promote the organisation/collective and their work via public dialogue-based events and assist them with networking and reaching audiences	Life sheds light on the vital and effective role that these 14 entities play in their societies through the consistent promotion of their work, and through the organization and presentation of information regarding their activities, which are shared as part of Ettijahat's monthly newsletter or through meetings that focus on the importance of the impact of these entities.
The 12 civil society organisations report quantitatively or qualitatively measurable improvements in more than one area of institutional strength (such as but not limited to their financial stability, capacity for long-term planning and institutionalsustainability, network, position within a wider community, capacity for audienceengagement, etc.)	The narrative and financial periodic and final reports included the ability to measure the evolution of many aspects of the entities. For example, by building an accurate financial system for entities that did not have it before. Or returning to carry out activities after a break that lasted for many months, or rebuilding the work team again after part of it stopped due to the inability to pay salaries...etc. The change was qualitative and manifested in more than one aspect of each entity.	Design an evaluation study on the Life programme experience and retrieve the most important experiments in accordance to working on its development.	Ettijahat, together with researcher Marina Al-Tabbaa, initiated an evaluation publication of the initiative that included work with the funded institutions, the initiative team, and experts in the field of supporting cultural institutions. Interviews have been fully completed and the study has been edited and is expected to be published in early 2024. Ettijahat is working on a publication entitled "Arts as Institution", which explores the relationship between artistic production and the issue of institutionalization in the Syrian context, i.e. the extent to which Syrian cultural institutions have created non-traditional structures and frameworks both in the country and in the diaspora. The publication draws on in-depth interviews with 13 Syrian cultural institutions supported by the Life Initiative. Each interview is based on questions tailored to the main cultural and artistic themes explored by Arts as Institution.

A Decade of Arts supported researchers from Syria and the Arab region to contribute with research papers and studies on art production and projects related to the Syrian context during the past decade. The programme was part of the "Research to strengthen culture of knowledge" programme which has as objective to "*promote Syrian scientific and cultural research, analyze the transformations taking place in the arts sector, and explore the connection between old and new cultural structures, as well as the intertwined relationships between arts and social, political, and economic spheres*". Similarly to the Life programme, the support provided to the beneficiaries in 2021 extended until the end of 2022.

This edition was implemented in partnership with the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC) and the Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS) which gave the programme a regional focus by inviting non-Syrian researchers to participate and by expanding the remit of the programme beyond the scope of Syria alone.

This partnership runs from past exchanges and collaboration with these two institutions that were invited to contribute to the trainings or as mentors in past editions. The partnership has however not been renewed for the 2023 edition of the programme which went back to a more restricted geographical focus. Abdullah shared that discussions are resuming around a second collaboration for the upcoming years.

As a result of this extended scope, that previous edition has beneficiaries from Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Sudan, and the UK, addressing themes of regional interest.

The call for applications was launched on May 25 and closed on July 31, 2021, during which fifty-three (53) applications from eight (8) countries in the Arab region were received. Seventeen (17) research projects were selected to benefit from the programme[17].

The selected researchers benefitted from online training, mentoring, and a grant. According to the interviewed researchers, I understood that the first draft of the research papers were reviewed by the designated mentor and that the final approval of the paper, together with the decision to publish it or not, was made by Ettijahat.

The programme also foresaw dialogue events which promote the researchers' work and efforts to "*advocate achievable and practical policy reforms in the cultural sector or related sectors*".

The dialogue events took the form of the *Researchers Café* podcast series, which includes dialogues with scholars involved in research. Three episodes were produced and published on SoundCloud[18] and explored the following questions: "Arts and Questions of Public Space"; "The Concepts of Novelty and Change in Artistic and Creative Productions in the Syrian Context"; and "The Roles of Art in Historiography Outside the Framework of Official and Dominant Narratives". Ettijahat explained that the podcast format was chosen instead of the public meetings in Lebanon due to the still complex social and economic conditions.

The advocacy aspect mentioned as an objective in this programme was not implemented. The sanitary context and the different crises in Syria and Lebanon did not allow for discussions or exchanges around policy related issues with public authorities.

The partnership established with the Arab Council for the Social Sciences also gave an opportunity for researchers supported by Ettijahat programme to publish their paper and discuss it with a larger audience.

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[17] The list of selected researchers for the 2021 edition is available at: https://www.ettijahat.org/page/1211#gsc.tab=0 (Last visited on September 26, 2023)

[18] The "Researchers Café" posdacst series is available at: https://soundcloud.com/ettijahat-indep-culture/sets/research-cafe (Last visited on September 26, 2023)

2021 A DECADE OF ARTS
RESEARCH PAPERS ON SYRIAN ARTISTIC PRODUCTION

Development and Project Goals Indicators	Reported info and data
ETTIJAHAT and its partners publish at least 9 original research papers and disseminate them via digital publication to an audience of at least 10,000 artists, academics, students, and other actors in the cultural sector	17 research projects were selected to benefit from the program: https://beta.creativememory.org/about-us/
ETTIJAHAT and its partners host and/or contribute to numerous dialogue events which simultaneously promote the researchers' work and advocate achievable and practical policy reforms in the cultural sector or related sectors	Ettijahat has designed the "Researchers Café" posdacst series, which includes dialogues with scholars involved in research, available at this link: https://soundcloud.com/ettijahat-indep-culture/sets/research-cafe. This outcome was chosen instead of the public meetings in Lebanon due to the still complex social and economic conditions. On the other hand, presentations were designed for a series of researches in the framework of the Sixth Conference of the Arab Council for Social Sciences, which was held in May 2023, where more than 3,000 participants had the opportunity to see the work of the researchers: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/http://www.theacss.org/uploads/cke_documents/Sixth-Conference-schedule-English-Website.pdf

2022 A DECADE OF ARTS
RESEARCH PAPERS ON SYRIAN ARTISTIC PRODUCTION

Project objectives	Reported info and data
Continue working with the researchers to finalize their research papers.	14 researchers have completed their research in Arabic, and work is currently underway on a publishing programme that includes three digital books in partnership with Dar Mamdouh Adwan for publication and distribution, in addition to a series of publications on the Ettijahat website for the remainder of 2023, and in 2024 a special series of research papers will be published in English in collaboration with Saint Joseph University in Beirut
Provide academic guidance and disburse financial support.	Extended support for a year and a half was provided to all researchers by the Ettijahat team, experts in the field, and members of the arbitration committee provided extensive support to all researchers for a year and a half, including methodology, editing, provision of electronic resources, and literature.
Check in regularly to ensure progress and offer assistance	A monthly follow-up and monitoring program that included monthly meetings and review of four drafts for each researcher
Facilitate the digital publication and English translation of completed research and promote the researchers/their work via public dialogue events	This activity has been postponed to 2024
Publish three podcast interviews with the researchers in Arabic language on the subject of the most important research questions that accompanied their work	Podcast entitled Researcher's Café, where researchers discussed with jury members the intersection of their themes: the clash between the arts and the polemics around public space, the concepts of novelty and change in artistic and creative productions within the Syrian context, and the roles of the arts in the writing of history outside official and dominant narrative frameworks.
Edit research papers that were received and publish a part of it.	A monthly follow-up and monitoring program that included monthly meetings and review of four drafts for each researcher.

The programme provided 7 artists with all the resources they needed to produce and curate artworks online. These "digital residencies" essentially comprise a comprehensive support package which aimed to enable artists to conduct artistic residencies wherever they already reside.

Initially, the Sanad programme focused on providing legal aid. With this edition, the programme also sought to contribute to the well-being of artists and cultural practitioners from different creative fields by using the digital spaces as an alternative form of public space in which Syrian artists, especially women, LGBTQIA+, and refugee artists, can work without suffering from discriminatory and hateful behaviors.

As a result of a call for applications, with a deadline on 10 October 2022, thirty-nine (39) applications were received from nine (9) countries in the Arab region and the world, out of which seven (7) applications were selected to participate in the programme[19].

Ettijahat team shared that "*Four sessions were organized with Dagmar Richter from the Swiss foundation artasfoundation, who has a wide experience working on arts, communities and protection issues. The participants were introduced to the specificity of the foundation and its approach to work, based on their experience in the Balkans and the Arab region, and the methodologies they developed while promoting work during the conflict. Moreover, the foundation shared experiences about the most important challenges during an artistic project, an international cooperation*

it worked on during the past year and how, in order to work with artists in countries with very high digital censorship, they developed a great approach that relies on video games. Within this framework, a special session was later organized with the artist Timofei Dubrovskikh who talked about strategies and techniques that allow artists to ask questions about artworks and freedoms, with applied examples from projects the artasfoundation worked on.

The session was held in English with direct interpretation into Arabic.

The artists were put in touch with Dagmar Richter and Timofei Dubrovskikh to explore further collaborations that could take place during the implementation of these projects over the next six months, and to explore the possibility of artistic intersection."

(…) "*After the selection and in partnership with Mozilla Festival, an online session was designed and facilitated by festival director Sarah Allen, with a focus on creative practices in the digital sphere. The session was opened to beneficiaries of this edition with the aim of connecting them to one another and exploring the significance and impact of emerging digital societies, especially within the context of a fragmented Syria, and the opportunities that technology can provide in creating new narratives and challenging marginalization. The session focused on three axes: Art in the Digital Realm and Online Organization, Digital Security & Safety, and the Creative Utilization of Digital Tools.*"

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[19] Selected entities are presented on Ettijahat's website on the following link: https://www.ettijahat.org/page/1352#gsc.tab=0 (Last visited on September 26, 2023)

2022 SANAD PROGRAMME DIGITAL RESIDENCIES

	Intervention logic	Reported info and data
Objectives	To promote free expression for women and marginalised groups in Syria and Lebanon and amplify the voices of people typically excluded in the cultural sector/Arab societies generally	Specific and extensive efforts have been made to promote discussion of these issues and the importance of examining connections with broader contexts. As part of this, a special episode of the Noon podcast was conceived in collaboration with Daraj Media, focusing on art, queerness, and patriarchy
	To generate dialogue on women's rights, gender rights, cultural rights, and other human rights through free and accessible digital platforms, and to introduce audiences to new perspectives	A number of projects focused on discussing public issues through the arts and their connection to gender, public freedoms, and other issues have been supported. One example is the Nems platform, which offers satirical content: https://al-nems.org/
	To use digital platforms as alternative public spaces where artists/activists can work safely	
Activities	Set standards for Sanad residencies and focus on the component of safety and security	Ettijahat, in partnership with a number of institutions including SMEX, Artists at Risk and Artasfoundation, has developed a support and work pathway in this context and the framework for the services offered is constantly being updated.
	Publish an open call to receive Sanad applications.	Open call launched in August 2022. 45 applications received (the website says 39)
	Form an Art committee to review the applications and select the beneficiaries	The selection committee included Sulafa Hijazi, a multidisciplinary artist, director, and producer, Mazen Elsayed (ELRASS), a music producer, writer, and rapper, Joseph Kai, an independent artist, researcher, and painter. The members gathered in November to assess and select projects.
	Design an Artistic, Legal and Surreal follow-up framework for the participants	Four sessions were organised with Dagmar Richter from the Swiss Foundation Artas Foundation, who has a wide experience working on arts, communities and protection issues.
	Design and publish discussion session on the subject of Art and protection	After the selection and in partnership with Mozilla Festival, an online session was designed and facilitated by festival director Sarah Allen, with a focus on creative practices in the digital sphere.
	Share the projects' results in a digital form	The results of the projects were promoted through Ettijahat platforms
Indicators	6-8 displaced/vulnerable Syrians enjoy participation in the Digital Arts Residency scheme	7 applicants were selected
	Open call for participants launched and shared by numerous supportive partners/peers to ensure maximal reach	Topics covered by the selected applications: LBGTQI+ rights; trauma and mental health of people living in emergencies; freedom of expression; personal and intellectual freedoms.
	6 projects discuss taboo/controversial social themes: topics covered in art projects include women's rights, gender rights, cultural rights, and other human rights	
	500 people engage with artworks presented by Digital Arts Residency beneficiaries	The projects supported are well received via digital platforms. One example is the Nems platform, which has had more than 1,000 participants, and the Thawra platform has more than 5,000 followers

Assessment of the various schemes

In a context where funding and training opportunities are scarce, the interviewed beneficiaries all welcomed the chance to have a grant and to access some training or moments of exchanges. However, some elements of these schemes have longer lasting impacts than others.

<u>Positive feedback on training and mentoring</u>

Interviewed beneficiaries all shared very positive feedback on the training sessions that were provided as part of the programme they were in. Zeina Shahla, who participated to the 2021 edition of the Research programme, shared that the research methodology training was very useful. As an artist based in Syria, she highlighted that this kind of training opportunity is not offered by universities and not accessible there, making the online trainings of Ettijahat a valuable source of knowledge. "*I developed my skills, my contacts, all of those things,*" she stated.

For Mennatallah Mansy, her participation in the 2021 edition of the Research programme was the first opportunity for her to write and work in Arabic. While she already had some skills writing in English, this programme helped her master academic writing in Arabic, in addition to providing useful knowledge. For her and for Reem Khatib from the Open Art Space, and participant of the Create Syria programme, the mentorship was particularly useful and enriching. Mennatallah was able to reach out for feedback to her mentor after finalizing each section of her paper and every time, she received good and relevant comments, and Reem was able to usefully exchange with her mentor who helped Open Art Space throughout the programme but also beyond, by suggesting relevant funding or professional opportunity for the organization and for the individuals involved in it.

Raghad Azkoul also highlighted among the three best things of the Create Syria programme the quality of support provided to each project and the usefulness of artistic related training and support.

 Mentoring has already proved to be an interesting component of artist support programmes. As highlighted in a study conducted by Mophradat and based on a series of interviews with artists from the Arab region[20],

mentorship was overwhelmingly cited as a necessary and highly sought-after experience. It could be interesting to further dig into this aspect throughout all Ettijahat programmes and over a longer period, to see how it can be extended and sustained.

<u>Short term impact of the financial support</u>

Similarly to what has been observed with the Abbara Support schemes of Al Mawred, the financial support offered by Ettijahat are short term answers or quick patches for actors and organizations that evolve in a structurally precarious and underfunded context.

For Create Syria and Life programme beneficiaries, the grant received was one among other financial support, obtained in the course of their relentless search for funds. For Open Art Space, the Create Syria grant allowed them to continue to implement art workshops for children. The amount received covered fees for artists involved in the implementation of the workshops and fees for members of the management team of the organization. They were therefore able to involve artists of different backgrounds and work with different mediums of visual arts, such as painting, paper molding, and videography. Although the grant helped them collaborate with a group of artists and enrich their approach, at the end of the project, the organization went back to implementing simple and casual workshops led by the volunteering team of the organization.

Raghad shared that the "If I am here" project, which consisted in organizing a workshop between a group of children and a group of architects, to imagine how neighborhoods could be enhanced, happened only once, with the funding received from Create Syria programme, and that she hasn't been working on this thematic or with this approach since.

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[20] Mophradat. *Read the Room #2. Transnationals: who are they and what do they want?* Nadia Cherif, 2021. Available here

For Rasha Abbas, the Life grant helped Berlin-based collective al-Jumhuriya release a third and fourth electronic issue of *Hamesch*, the cultural supplement of their online news platform of the same name (*al -Jumhuriya*), while the first and second issue were published with the support of the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC). Rasha explained that the core activity of al-Jumhuriya is focused on news and that the cultural supplement is only produced if it gets specific funding. "*Usually the cultural and the creative work is the hardest thing to fund and be able to do. With the initiative, we were able to go a bit further than our usual work,*" Rasha said.

We can also refer to the testimony of Nawras (provided in the part dedicated to Al Mawred above), which benefitted from the Life programme of Ettijahat and from the Abbara Support Initiative of Al Mawred and reported, despite these supports, being still in a precarious situation.

A long-lasting technical support

As mentioned in the Part 1 section 1 of the report, the Ettijahat team ensures a follow up with its beneficiaries, helping them to grow as organizations or individuals beyond the scope of the programme they participated in.

For beneficiaries of the Life programme, this was done through helping them enhance their internal processes or orienting them towards other relevant support programmes like the Abbara or the ACE ones. It also led to transforming the relationship between Ettijahat and its beneficiaries into a partnership relation where both entities co-apply to a funding opportunity or a programme. This was the case with the collective Sandouk Alhakaya or the Citizens Artists Institution, both beneficiaries of the 2021 edition of Life.

For individuals, we can cite the example of Zeina, who was offered to be a jury member in the 2022 Sanad scheme after being beneficiary of the Ettijahat Research programme. She reported to be in an "*ongoing relation and discussion with Ettijahat*". Raghad also continues to benefit from Ettijahat schemes in the framework of the Ajyal programme.

This long-lasting collaboration and follow up on beneficiaries is an important aspect of the organization's work.

A sustainable impact on researchers

The Research papers programme has also showed to have a long-lasting impact on its participants, as the programme concludes with the production of a research paper, that can be seen as an asset for the concerned researcher, whether published or not.

Mennatallah, for example, whose paper was not published by Ettijahat, was able to submit it and have it published later on by the Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS). Moreover, her participation to the programme helped her secure a scholarship in Ireland.

For Zeina, her participation to the Ettijahat Reseach programme was also a boost to her career. After the programme, she joined a research team to work on a "Syria Music Map" project, supported by Action for Hope and continued to work on intangible culture heritage with the support of the British Council. Talking about the collaboration with Ettijahat, she said: "*I am thankful for this collaboration, it really helped me on the professional level. It gave me exposure; it gave me more relations; I am really very happy with it. It added to my career. Especially when you are inside Syria, now with the sanctions, inside Syria is very closed. It is not easy to go out and meet people. So it is very important, it helps people to get involved into conversation happening outside Syria.*"

For Shama El Rasheed, a researcher from Sudan who benefitted from the Decade for Arts programme, the benefits of the programme were also long-lasting: "*In Sudan, we don't have big organizations that work on art and cultural sector. There is very little organization that give fund for art. So, it was a window opening for me and I was able to pursue my research*".

Visibility of the schemes

Despite overall positive feedback on the schemes offered (format and content), I was surprised by the relatively low number of applications received for each of the published calls for application. The Create Syria Third Edition received eighteen (18) eligible applications for ten (10) beneficiaries; The Life 2021 edition has twenty-seven (27) eligible applications for fourteen (14) beneficiaries; The research programme received fifty-three (53) applications for seventeen (17) beneficiaries and

the Sanad programme received thirty-nine (39) applications for seven (7) beneficiaries.

Abdullah considers these numbers to be reasonable, given the small amounts they have to attribute to beneficiaries. I wonder if the high number and variety of programmes offered is not lowering their visibility and preventing potential applicants from planning for it in a predictable way.

Indeed, Ettijahat design and launch a high number of programs. Even within the same programme, an edition can be very different from the other one. The Sanad programme for instance, a programme focusing on legal support, offered "digital residencies" for its 2022 edition. The 2021 edition of the research programme was open to researchers from the whole Arab region while the 2023 one came back to a more restrictive focus and was only open to Syria and Lebanon.

Each scheme concerns a different type of actors — individuals, artists, collectives, researchers, formal organisations, informal ones — and has different geography-related eligibility criteria — within Syria, outside Syria, specific countries like Lebanon, Turkey or the UK and sometimes whole regions like the Arab region or Europe.

If it is true that, as Abdullah said "*If we are providing 6 or 7 grants it will be so frustrating for me to receive 200 applications*", attention should however be paid to creating more predictable schemes.

Audience and communication

The low number of applications may also indicate that broader outreach efforts should be done. According to Abdullah, outreach is primarily ensured via social media tools (mainly Facebook and Instagram), online and physical events, and through relaying news and opportunities through their network of partners and collaborators.

However, if we look at the audience of the material published by Ettijahat, we can see that the actual audience is a bit low.

For instance, the videos produced in the framework of each programme and which aim at providing visibility to initiatives or organizations supported, receive not more than a hundreds views, while the YouTube channel of Ettijahat has only 1760 subscribers.

Despite that, interviewed beneficiaries all shared that Ettijahat is a well-known organization in the sector and well connected. The organization might need additional outreach efforts to expand beyond the circle of individuals that already know the organization.

A fluid and easy communication

Conducted interviews also showed that Ettijahat is a very fluid and accessible partner for those involved. The five interviewed beneficiaries shared that exchange with the team was easy.

"*Every time we sign a contract which is clear enough to define my duties and their duties. In every stage, it is clear. Sometimes you have questions, but you feel free to contact them and ask them. Same if there is a delay, you can contact them and ask them about anything and you know you will have the answer*", said Zeina.

Raghad cited the ease in exchanging with Ettijahat as the third positive point of the Create Syria programme.

This fluid and good line of communication between Ettijahat and its beneficiaries has been highlighted as being very important for organizations part of the diaspora. Rasha, talking about al-Jumhuriya, shared that: "*Our relationship with Ettijahat has always been a good relation. We are like sister organizations. They are both Syrian organizations and both operating outside the country. For me, this kind of partnership, it means a lot. It is so supportive, and it benefits our work in so many ways. We feel a kind of solidarity. (…) With the absence of our community and in diaspora, it is good to have an alternative network to rely on. We are all operating in a country where we are new in it, so I think this kind of network gives us an alternative support system*".

L'Art Rue

The organisation

Created in 2006, L'Art Rue encourages collective work to promote social cohesion, inclusion, diversity and development through art and develop critical analysis and artistic proposals on the relationship between art, society, heritage, memory, territory, citizenship, politics and public space. In other words, and according to their 2022 proposal to MIMETA, "*L'Art Rue is a Tunisian non-profit organization which puts the artists and their creative work at the heart of a larger civic project and the democratic transition process of Tunisia.*"

Since 2015, L'Art Rue has invested an old palace of the Medina, Dar Bach Hamba, which used to be the office of the Orestiadi Foundation and the venue for a permanent exhibition of costumes, stuccos, and terracottas from all Mediterranean countries. In addition to hosting L'Art Rue's headquarters, the place is also a venue for artists residencies, exhibitions, workshops with children, and other events open to the public. Since 2020, this historical house is also listed as a National Tunisian Heritage Site.

Scope of the assessment

Among the four assessed partners, L'Art Rue is the only one that adopts a different approach to MIMETA's partnership. While the first three partners annually present proposals especially drafted for MIMETA, with specific actions and related budget that only concern the actions to be supported by MIMETA, L'Art Rue presents its annual global programme with an annual global budget indicating the way MIMETA's financial contribution will be allocated. L'Art Rue also presents to MIMETA its global annual reports and does not perform a dedicated reporting exercise, solely focusing on MIMETA funded activities.

The assessment of L'Art Rue's on-the-ground achievements therefore implied another approach and methodology from the one adopted with the previous three organizations: the assessment consisted in studying first the overall budget of the organization, then in analyzing and weighting the allocation of MIMETA contribution to finally look more attentively at actions mostly financed by MIMETA, in link with the other activities and programmes of L'Art Rue.

I clearly felt that it is a much richer approach, that provides much more information on the scope and impact of the support of MIMETA, in addition to fully understanding the role of the organization on a given sector. It also gives a clearer and more obvious idea of the way MIMETA supports the running costs of the organization, which are essential to ensure the existence and overall role of the organization.

Allocations made

Over the three years examined, MIMETA contributed to the overall budget of the organization at 6.7% for 2020, 5.75% for 2021 and 1.75% for 2022. The very low share of contribution in 2022 is explained by the fact that the Dream City Festival occurred that year, which led L'Art Rue's budget to triple.

Despite representing less than 10% of its annual budget, allocations made show that MIMETA contribution does cover whole salaries and whole bulks of actions or activities, which further illustrates the importance of MIMETA's support, as modest as it is. When the contribution matches some other expenses, it is also a precious example of how partial support can be decisive to make things happen.

Contributing to the core costs of L'Art Rue means that MIMETA support an organization that annually provide work — under the form of employment or service contracts — to at least 25 persons with various profiles, specialities, and backgrounds.

Over the assessed period, MIMETA also financed the following activities (above 90% contribution): the work of three different Tunisian artists: two residencies in 2020 and one production in 2021 and contributed to the following ones (partial funding,

below 90% contribution): the 2021 Dream Performative Digital World (DPDW) programme (45% contribution) and the Dream City Festival 2022 Edition (2%).

Key finding   The approach adopted by L'Art Rue when dealing with its partnership with Mimeta invited to perform an analysis whose scope was broader than only the actions where Mimeta's funds were allocated.

Looking at the provided budgets and programmes, several elements demonstrated that L'Art Rue accomplishes more than mere artistic or cultural actions. Its work presents several examples of "soft advocacy", achieved through the multiple actions the organization undertakes to impose its presence and the presence of its work in public spaces or spaces not dedicated to art. These efforts have the potential to be much more impactful than a proper advocacy or policy-related action for which the organization might not be the best placed or have the most appropriate resources.

Budgets analysis

L'Art Rue global annual budgets, over a period of three years (2020, 2021, and 2022), showed that:

- L'Art Rue is one of the biggest non-profit organizations in Tunisia, with an average annual budget around 1 000 000 EUR . It therefore bears the structure and the cost of a large organization: several positions of high-level management (at least 4 annually), an important back-office team - — comprising administrative, financial, fundraising, and logistics team members — and an important production or project related team. L'Art Rue has a space that can host residencies, events, workshops, and all the logistics and facilities of managing the space. L'Art Rue has a network of technicians and experts that support their work throughout the year on different technical or programmatic aspects.

- L'Art Rue is an organization that experiences a drastic increase in budget and workload the years where the Dream City Festival is organized. Years where the festival happens, the budget triples and the number of individuals involved around the work of the organization jumps from 25 to over 666, a number shared in the L'Art Rue 2022 Dream City Festival report. This impressive number includes the 126 volunteers, and 540 employed individuals, including L'Art Rue's organizing team, tech team, artists, performers and diverse artistic and non-artistic collaborators.

- L'Art Rue's annual budgets show how many persons revolve around the organization, economically and organizationally: employees, consultants, technicians, volunteers, artists, artists' assistants, trainers, researchers, trainees, but also logisticians, security agents, food and goods suppliers, etc. It is in itself an illustration of the diversity of profiles and status that currently compose the cultural sector of the concerned country and scene and how the cultural sector can embrace a variety of economic spheres.

- The budgets also show the different specialities involved in the work of the cultural organization, stressing the extent to which culture is a cross cutting sector: IT technicians, security guards, psychologists, artists, researchers, administrators, communication experts, city guides, sociologists, historians, and so on. This aspect demonstrates the social and economic impacts the sector has on a country's economy, whereas it is often considered as a small and secondary sector.

- The organization heavily relies on the work of consultants and service providers, which tells us about the way the sector is structured with a high prevalence of service providers in the sector of communication, arts and culture, one factor that is also contributing to the structural instability of the sector.

- L'Art Rue have heavy communication expenses, dispatched throughout different budget categories but that shows that the organization invests a lot on visibility and communication. This information could be usefully compared with other partners' budgets, a dedicated impact assessment on this could be conducted, good practices on communication could be exchanged to see where it is most important to invest for an organization that would like to reach out to a wider audience or conduct a communication campaign successfully. For instance, what practices could L'Art Rue and Bayimba exchange about communicating on a festival or ensuring the presence of foreign visitors, curators, and producers?

- L'Art Rue has a relatively low rent but heavy maintenance costs. This piece of information can be generative when thinking about infrastructure-related costs that are often disregarded by donors but are crucial for an arts space. We know the cultural sector has costs that are specific and that are not often considered by international aid donors, who are more used to project-oriented organizations. It would also be interesting to know who, in the funding sector, considers these costs as eligible and who does not, and to relate this information with an analysis on the importance of keeping up free and safe artistic spaces running in a region that is witnessing their decrease.

- L'Art Rue is an organization that can annually count on the financial support of at least 10 international partners.

The budget template used by L'Art Rue could be enhanced to include additional information that could be relevant to MIMETA. For instance, as Cato stated that MIMETA is by vision a match fund (i.e. it only supports organizations that other donors are also willing to support), it could be good to know who the other contributors are, especially on activities or costs where MIMETA's financial contribution is allocated. This information could open paths to exchange with the concerned donor, enhance donor coordination and network, pool evaluation or monitoring efforts on a given activity or entity or produce common communication or narratives on the activity or entity

Annual programmes and reports analysis

Programmatically, the existing capacities visible in the budget analysis above (Human resources, Expert and partners network, and Infrastructure/space) allow the organization to be responsive to its environment and quickly tailor and offer relevant schemes.

This was particularly evident during the COVID-19 crisis. Selma explained that L'Art Rue's artistic directors were able to quickly curate artistic programmes available online and therefore both provide content and a source of income for the artists and experts involved in it. As the health crisis came with a shrinking of public spaces in different country of the Arab region, the curated programmes included the participation and voices of other activists and civil society actors.

In addition, the team in place contacted all artists, artists' assistants, technicians, with whom they collaborated with since 2015 in order to check the mental and financial condition they were in. They set up an emergency fund with the help of one of L'Art Rue financial partners to support those who were isolated, with no family or professional support and no resources. With the existing network of psychologists working with L'Art Rue since 2017 in the framework of the "Deconstructing violence" programme, oriented towards children, they were able to quickly set up psychology units to bring help to children and their family throughout the lockdown.

Finally, they seized the slowdown of activities as an opportunity to enhance the well-being and cohesion of the L'Art Rue team and work it out through coaching sessions, analysis, and discussions, together with the definition of new HR-related processes.

This shows that for a cultural organization, it is not always about defining and implementing new projects, programmes, or schemes but that maintaining a team, a space and a network of partners and experts and using these resources on a continuous and smart basis is already a project, a programme, and a scheme in itself.

This point further advocates for the dismissal of the distinction between running (or core, or administrative) and operations (or project or programmatic) costs because running costs are also operations costs (further detailed in the Recommendation section below).

Annual reports of L'Art Rue also provide developments and information about the organizational development and consolidation of the organization, which should be further highlighted and enhanced as it has a direct impact on the actions the organization is able to implement.

Annual programs of L'Art Rue also show the global intervention logic of the organization and allow us to situate the actions that were more specifically supported by MIMETA.

Although there is a slight evolution in the definition of the organization's strategy in 2022, the objectives and outcomes are consistent throughout the years. They are practically the same in 2020 and 2021, with only the outputs adapted according to the activities of the year in question, and adjusted in 2022 to center more around the Dream City Festival but without changing the global vision and mission of the organization.

Referring to the allocation of costs made by L'Art Rue, the following parts will focus more attentively on the programmes partially or totally funded by MIMETA.

Residency Program 2020 – 2021

Under the 2020-2021 residency programme of L'Art Rue, MIMETA supported the residency and production of two Tunisian artists among a total of 5 artists together with the production of artist Nidhal Yahiaoui in 2021, who was already in residency in 2020. These actions were implemented under the stated objective to "Encourage the contextual artistic creation in Tunisia with the direct involvement of local population" under which artists are invited to work in a context directly involving communities and local populations.

The artists were selected as a result of a call for proposals and out of 220 applications received. Given that 2020 was severely affected by COVID-19, the 2020 residencies gave priority to Tunisian artists. Despite the restrictions, the residencies and their methodology were maintained.

During the residency, selected artists develop their projects by addressing social emergencies identified on a given context and territory. The artistic residencies start with a period of research, during which the artist can get to know a specific territory, its communities, its social, political and cultural dynamics, its obstacles and its constraints; then the residencies continue with a phase during which s.he chooses a theme, a question, an aspect to deal with in her.his creation process. Then comes the phase of creation, sometimes divided into several periods, during which the artist works in-situ (onsite), in the zone or space where the chosen theme resonates, and in close collaboration and exchange with the concerned community. As a result of this process, the residencies lead to contextual creations showcasing the artist's ability to transform social, cultural, and political content into works of art that are accessible but also very personal and of great quality.

The whole process provides an environment for research and creation that is stimulating and enabling for the artists, with access to experts from different disciplines, according to the artist's needs and access to a space free from censorship or constraints.

Nejma Zghidi worked in 2019 in L'Art Rue with children from the Medina of Tunis, during artistic workshops set up in public primary schools around the theme "Theater and children's rights." It was while doing these workshops that she learned about a smartphone game that occupied the children's time and attention. During her residency, she worked with a group of 8 children aged 9 to 12 around this theme. Started in 2019, Nejma residency was extended until October 2020 due to the health crisis that suspended her work from March to July 2020. A rehearsal was held on Friday 23 October in front of the L'Art Rue team, followed by an end of residency performance on 24 and 25 October at the "Attarine" barracks in the Medina of Tunis. There were 2 performances for the families of the participants and members of the L'Art Rue team.

Imen Smaoui has been running artistic workshops of bodily expression since 2016 within the association, with children from the Medina of Tunis. As part of her artistic residency at L'Art Rue, she developed a choreographic work on the body and its relationship to space with a group of children aged 8 to 14. Started in 2019, Imen residency was extended until May 2021, due to the health crisis that suspended her work from March to September 2020. A public performance was organized in June 2021 at the end of this residency.

Ridha Tlili, an independent filmmaker and producer, launched his fieldwork with L'Art Rue in October 2020 in Sidi Bouzid, his hometown in central Tunisia. His project "Cypher" aims to produce a performance and a short film with the participation of five young break-dancers from the impoverished neighborhoods of Sidi Bouzid, and two young technicians. The short film, screened during the performance, will be divided into two parts: archive images representing the personal memories of the dancers (their city, events that impacted them) and images filmed during the residency. A first stage of work, in the form of a performance of about 45 minutes, was

presented on December 17 in Sidi Bouzid in front of 13 people, followed by a performance of the works of creation by Ridha with the young dancers, on December 25, as part of the #DPDWprogram. The residency ended with a working week in Tunis followed by a public performance in February 2021. The Cypher project was then programmed at the 2022 Dream City Festival, showing a continuity between various programmes and action of L'Art Rue.

Aly Mrabet was invited for a sound creation project entitled "Electroniq Maqaams" around the sounds of the Medina, more specifically the sounds of four districts: Bab Souika, Bab Akwess, Kasba, and Bab Bhar. A series of four interactive audio documentaries was produced by the artist and was broadcast on a web interface created during the residency (sound map) as well as a sound creation for a live act, between electronic devices, artistic collaborations, and captured sound atmospheres. Initially, his end of residency performance was to take the form of a public live performance. Given the health restrictions, the artist produced a performance filmed without an audience on the premises of L'Art Rue and broadcast online on 7 January 2021.

2021 Dream Performative Digital World (DPDW) programme

"Dream Performative Digital World – DPDW" is an online programme happening and recorded live on the Facebook page of L'Art Rue and inviting artists to perform online (DPDW Performance Room) and intellectuals to discuss current relevant issues (DPDW Civic Space). Launched in 2020 during the lockdown, the programme continued beyond it and continue to provide online content to a large audience in Tunisia and abroad.

In 2021, two series of discussions were curated by experts Wehid Ferchichi, doctor of law and co-founder of the Tunisian association for the defense of individual freedoms, and Adnen El Ghali, an architect and urban planner, and an expert with the Association for the Preservation of the Medina of Tunis around the following themes: "Memories/Legal memories" which invited from April to June 2021 major public figures in the field of law in Tunisia and "The State and the state of emergency" following the 25 July 2021 political coup to understand the situation and its consequences from a human rights perspective.

Nidhal Yahyaoui started research work with two Tunisian musicians and two Greek musicians, in order to create a fusion between Greek Rebetiko music and Tunisian Malouf, which have interesting sound and technical similarities. As a result of this first research phase, he created several songs, a fusion of these two genres, both full of history, and presented some of them to the public during a first show, organized in February 2021 at the L'Art Rue venue. The creative work continued with another artistic residency this time in Greece in February 2022 and the presentation of the final work during the 2022 edition of the Dream City Festival.

The Facebook page and/or the YouTube page of the organization has an incredible number of videos on the different residencies and creation made and supported by L'Art Rue, with some broadcasted live. However, it is very difficult to navigate and should be stored and available on another online media that would allow to access these valuable resources more easily and search for them according to artists, theme or programme.

Fatma Fetni, a jurist, and contributor of the DPDW who also watched other DPDW videos therefore is also an audience member, shared that these online conversations offered a moment to freely debate and exchange on issues related to human rights. Fatma co-wrote a report on cultural and artistic rights in Tunisia, which was submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Council (Switzerland) in 2022 in the framework of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). She was then invited to present and discuss the report and the UPR process in the framework of the DPDW Civic Space in 2022.

In 2021, 9 videos were also produced and broadcast in the framework of the DPDW Performance Room.

The DPDW videos were published on YouTube via the L'Art Rue YouTube channel which counts 693 subscribers and recorded live on the Facebook page of the organization that currently counts more than 111 000 followers. The videos are still visible on the Facebook page of the organizations, where

they receive more viewership than on YouTube. If on Facebook, the videos reached a substantial number of viewers (3000 on average) with a maximum number of views of 39000 views for the performance "Church of Euthanasia" by Moncef Zahrouni), the audience on YouTube was much lower, with a maximum of 603 viewers for the same performance.

Videos were also relayed on its other online media (website, Instagram).

Dream City Festival 2022 Edition

This 2022 Edition was the 8th edition of Dream City and the first since the beginning of the pandemic and the end of the lockdowns.

This edition lasted for 10 days, and counted, according to the festival report, more than 19 500 attendees, presented 55 artistic works produced by a total of 163 artists and collaborators and showcased throughout 28 venues of the city of Tunis that were temporarily filled with art works.

The festival, which constitutes the final and most visible part of two years of artistic research, residencies, and creations with artists from different nationalities, grants a creative space to artists, and access to the public to unique artworks created in echo with the socio-political issues of Tunisia, Africa, and Europe.

Beyond all the facts and data presented in the 2022 Dream City report available on L'Art Rue website, Dream City is the visible result of a long creative process with participating artists, an exhaustive commitment of the teams involved and of a heavy administrative work with the Tunisian public authorities.

To allow one exhibition in a public space or a closed space belonging to a local or national authorities, the organization has to successfully deal with at least three or four administrations: the Municipality of Tunis, the Interior Ministry, the Ministry of Public Roads, the National Heritage Institute, and the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

With a festival occupying 28 different venues, this means hundreds of official letters have to be addressed. It means hours waiting to be physically

Similarly to what has been stated for arts residencies and videos related to artistic creation, these valuable online resources should be stored in a more appropriate platform than Facebook, so they can be accessed, archived, and searched for more easily.

Despite the fluctuating number of views, the programme has been and is still being well received by the public and is still ongoing.

received in meetings and days waiting for positive answers – that sometimes never arrive.

What is crucial to highlight is that years of presence on the cultural scenes and of obstinacy to organize this extremely challenging festival have also progressively forged changes, in terms of space for freedom of creation and expression and in terms of policies, pushing each time the boundaries of what is accepted by public authorities a bit further.

This invisible aspect would deserve a dedicated report and should be documented to show how the artistic work of an organization progressively impacts political spheres and identify soft spots less subject to changes.

Another important aspect to be highlighted is the whole ecosystem that is activated around the implementation of the festival: artists, technicians, economic agents, youth, neighbors, but also local and international civil society organizations.

On this last point, the 8th edition has seen for example the collaboration of the Tunisian association "Mawjoudin We Exist", which fights for equality and the rights of the LGBTQI+ community. They co-produced *Flagranti* by Essia Jaibi, a play that addresses the reality of sexual minorities in Tunisia. Another example is the contribution of three organizations — "The Natural Contract Lab", "Réseau Enfants de la Terre," and "Les Amis des Oiseaux" who were all three involved in the creation of Portuguese artist Maria Lucia Cruz Correia's work dealing with climate justice.

These last two points illustrate how the festival not only invests physical spaces with art but uses art to invest social, civic and political spaces in favor of research, dialogue, and the promotion of rights.

Conclusion
A limited attempt to evaluate impact

Looking beyond the on-the-ground achievements of each of the assessment partners and at the logical framework of Mɪᴍᴇᴛᴀ, we can see that four indicators are mentioned. At the output level, the logical framework mentions "the sector's own ability to organize" and "the ability to address the sector's needs in relation to the authorities and the public." At the outcome level, it mentions "legislation and case law relating to international conventions in this area of rights" and an "artistic expression practice that is not characterized by neither self-imposed nor public restrictions."

We will skip here the debate on the formulation of these indicators – that are neither specific, nor measurable, achievable, relevant, or time-bound (SMART) — and consider that these are what is expected from Mɪᴍᴇᴛᴀ's partners in terms of impact on their sector and on freedom of expression.

If the actions assessed in the framework of this exercise could provide an analysis on the ability of these organizations to self-organize or on the role they play in artistic expression practices not characterized by self-imposed or public restrictions, no element is provided by the screening of projects' implementation on advocacy or policy related actions. We also wonder if it is fair to expect from these organizations to additionally put on their plate the heavy task to lead advocacy or policy-related efforts.

This final part will therefore provide elements to think of these different aspects. They constitute an analysis — and, crucially, not an evaluation — that could help guide the definition of a stronger conceptual and evaluation framework to be used in the future.

On the ability to self-organize

We understand the ability to self-organize as the ability to operate without the support of the public system. All four assessed organization operate in countries or regions characterized by the absence of support from the state and by a general failure of the public systems and of public institutions.

This context has forced these organizations to deploy skills and energy to "self-organize": the four assessed organizations offered support schemes, self-managed and self-financed, to help cultural actors cope with various crises; they moved or registered entities abroad to cope with local or regional restrictions; they collaborated with other civil society actors or managed their operations to implement actions or arranged free space for exchange or artistic creation.

But can one really rely on nothing else than its own or its own kind? Self-organization seems here to have a major limit: if these organizations are doing without the state they are operating in, they are nevertheless heavily relying on another public system, which is the one offered by international aid agency, international partners, or international states. Support schemes were implemented on international partners' funds, solutions to legal or state-related issues were found through moving to legal system of countries of the Global North and daily actions of these organizations are made possible with the grants received from international development funds.

This raises multiple questions: what is the impact of this displacement of dependency on these organizations, their role and, more generally, on the sector? And more importantly, if the aim is to foster freedom of expression at the national or regional level, is it desirable that these organizations self-organize? Is self-organization a relevant indicator of improvement in terms of freedom of expression or access to rights?

On the ability to create room for artistic expression practice not characterized by self-imposed or public restrictions

Let's evacuate the question of self-imposed restrictions, as it is a phenomenon that falls within complex psychological mechanisms that we could reasonably leave outside the current scope of MIMETA's partners.

Several actions implemented by the assessed organizations contribute to create spaces for artistic expression practice safe from public restrictions, such the artistic residencies of L'Art Rue, the Dream

City Festival, Bayimba's festivals and workshops, or of Ettijahat's Research programme, amongst many others.

All these programmes have different approaches, scopes, and methodologies. But they have one point in common: the organizations that all elaborate these programmes also stand behind freedom of expression and respect of human rights.

Considering that, should a distinction be drawn, in an evaluation framework, between schemes that directly support artistic expression practices and schemes — such as Abbara or Life — that support other organizations that themselves support artistic expression practices?

More globally, is there a difference, in terms of impact on artistic expression practice, between an organization that directly operates in the field of artistic creation and an organization that acts as a support structure for others? Perhaps not. Perhaps these are two ways to arrive to the same result. But the question nevertheless deserves to be further explored and evaluation methods adapted to the scope and approach of the organization in question.

On advocacy or policy related efforts

Here we refer to the "ability to address the sector's needs in relation to the authorities and the public" and the "legislation and case law relating to international conventions in this area of rights" indicators to raise an important question: are these organizations best positioned to undertake advocacy or policy-related actions?

To advocate for change of policies, laws or case laws requires skills, time — resources that are currently lacking within all assessed organizations. These objectives might be more relevantly led by entities especially founded for that.

The interview with Fatma Fetni provided a good illustration on how policy-related actions are to be taken seriously and might be better dealt with by organizations that allocate the proper time and necessary resources to it. When exchanging around the report on the cultural and artistic rights in Tunisia that she co-wrote, I understood that:
- Fatma was coached over a period of three years by international organizations (i.e. the Friedrich Evert Foundation and the Euromed rights) to contribute to this process.
- A collaborator of L'Art Rue suggested that in addition to human rights, a specific report on cultural and artistic right should be prepared with the facilitation of L'Art Rue, who accepted.
- L'Art Rue helped Fatma and her co-author meet artists and conduct interviews to draft the report.
- The report was drafted over a record time of two (2) months.
- The report presents forty-eight (48) recommendations.
- The report is being signed by a "Collective for Cultural and Artistic Rights" (*Collectif Droits culturels et artistiques*) comprising ten (10) civil society organizations, including L'Art Rue. Except for L'Art Rue, none of the other nine (9) organizations has a focus on the artistic or cultural field. The ten (10) organizations have never collaborated and have each been unilaterally contacted by Fatma Fetni, who needed signatories to give more weight to the report and contacted civil society organizations she knew.
- Following the presentation of the report to the UNHRC, the so-called collective never met, discussed, or pursued in the set direction. The report was nevertheless presented and discussed during one hour under the DPDW Civic Space programme.

We do not doubt the good intentions behind these efforts, but each of these actors should recognize that policy-related actions should be led with all the seriousness and commitment that the issues in question deserve. Advocacy and policy-related actions are a recurrent ask by international actors towards civil society actors without consideration for their nature, skills, focus, positioning, or scope.

In this specific case, what is the representative value of the recommendations presented to the UNHRC and discussed with the Tunisian government? Where is the consensus of the sector behind these recommendations?

Far from being an isolated case, if we only look at the few actions planned in terms of advocacy among the programmes screened in this exercise, none of them have been successful: the cultural policy component on which Al Mawred is working in the framework of the All Around Culture programme is being hindered by many challenges and the advocacy component of the Research programme of Ettijahat has never been implemented due to inadequate political contexts. In both cases, the asks came from international actors in the framework of internationally funded programmes.

If the analysis relies on only three examples, the question behind advocacy should nevertheless be asked: are under-resourced and overloaded organizations, who are highly dependent on international funding, and focus on fostering art and culture, the best placed to undertake advocacy and policy-related actions? Are we expecting these organizations to create spaces for free creation or free artistic expression or are we expecting them to change policies and enforce international law? Shouldn't we recognize the role they play in soft-advocacy actions, like the one highlighted for L'Art Rue when seeking authorizations for the Dream City Festival as enough?

If all these observations raise more questions than provide answers, it will help, together with the recommendations below, set stakes, buoys and marks in order to advance the overall impact of MIMETA partnerships.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND
OTHER WAYS TO GO

Based on the findings and analysis provided above, this part presents recommendations and next steps for how MIMETA should move forward in its cooperation with its partners.

1.
Adopt a new and rejuvenated contractual framework

The contractual framework and tools pertaining to MIMETA's partnerships should fully reflect the characteristics of MIMETA's partnership approach. In a funding and partnership landscape where the relation between donors and grantees or between partners evolves or innovates very rarely, defining a new type of cooperation agreement will bring an added value to MIMETA, its partners, and to the whole sector.

Making use of the discretion they have as to the type of relation they can create with their partners, MIMETA should adopt a pluriannual over-arching framework agreement, presenting the ways both parties intend to partner and collaborate.

This framework agreement would be individually signed with each of MIMETA's partners and would not be legally binding[21]. It could be first drafted by MIMETA and then discussed with its partners, creating a moment of exchange around the scope and meaning of the partnership. The framework agreement could detail the following aspects:

- Non-financial support

Defining a new cooperation framework should be an opportunity for MIMETA to think about the different types of non-financial support they are able and willing to provide their partners with. This should be considered beyond the frame of the NMFA grants: without any sub-granting resources, what is MIMETA still willing to provide to its partners and what kind of relationship is MIMETA willing to have?

Non-financial support could consist in providing professional expert advice whenever requested, communicating on partners' organizations and their activities, inviting partners to key or important fora, introducing partners to relevant organizations or individuals, organizing exchanges with key individuals or experts, organizing conversations or relevant exchanges, communicating key or useful

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[21] The non-binding aspect could be set through a disposition stating that: "Neither Party shall have any liability to the other Party for any failure to perform or breach of this Framework Agreement".

documents such as administrative processes, financial templates or studies, informing partners on important events or updates in the sector, facilitating travels by providing letters of invitation or assisting with visas, assisting in fundraising activities, pooling resources for the organization's needs, supporting advocacy efforts, providing facilities or material, assisting with administrative tasks, providing hosting services, amongst other examples. .

The list is non-exhaustive and shows how rich a relationship can be beyond sub-granting. Strategic choices should be made to determine what types of support are essential with regards to MIMETA's mission and what are not.

It is however important to clearly name and describe the type of support provided to make it easily identifiable and accessible to partners. Moreover, use of support will provide MIMETA with an additional line of information. If, for instance, MIMETA states that it provides access to expertise, partners would feel more at ease to request it. In turn, MIMETA will gain a clearer knowledge on the type of expertise that is needed among its partners, in the field or the region.

- Long-term partnership

The long-term commitment and consistency of MIMETA's partnership approach is one of the most important aspects to partners. The framework agreement should therefore clearly state the willingness of both parties to develop a long-term relationship, that can deliver better value, build expertise and learning across the sector and speed up impact and the framework agreement should be signed on a pluriannual basis.

- Financial support

As sub-granting holds a core place in MIMETA's work, the framework agreement should mention that, when funds are available, MIMETA can directly support its partners with fundings.

A dedicated and separate agreement shall then specify the amount, duration, and specific conditions of the fund but the framework agreement would present the overall approach and type of funding.

If financial support is to be provided under the form of a grant, as it has been done so far, the framework agreement would be the ideal place to precise the nature of the grant, a necessity for the partners, as shown in the findings part.

In doing so, MIMETA should not only stress the free allocation that can be made of the funds provided but also insist on the irrelevance of a potential distinction between core (or running) and project costs.

If we take the example of an organization whose mission consists in running a space to be provided freely for artists for rehearsals, its budget will only consist in "running" costs. However, the organization could still have a structural role and impact on the sector and in terms of freedom of expression. What is the use of the distinction between running and operational costs in that case?

Adopting this approach will also orientate the exchange between MIMETA and its partners on the overall organization level. Similarly to what is already practiced by L'Art Rue, partners should be invited to submit their overall annual plan, together with an annual budget showing the way MIMETA's financial support will be allocated and the explanation behind the intended allocation.

In addition, accessing annual budgets of its partners would be a great resource to MIMETA. The budget of an organization is a treasure trove of information: it helps

anyone who can read it better understand how the organization functions, in which economy and context, and what expenses are essential to.

The possibility to compare between annual budgets of partners would also open paths towards further knowledge and even a new role for MIMETA, offering the possibility to identify common expenses or needs, to potentially propose common solutions or suggest exchange of good practices on specific point of common interest.

- Exchange of information, data collection, monitoring and evaluation

Collaborative working and framework agreements are designed to encourage a certain degree of sharing information. The agreement could therefore deal with the different types of information that could be exchanged between partners together with presenting the overall monitoring and evaluation framework of MIMETA and identify the role partners would play in it (see recommendation below on this specific point).

The framework agreement could include the current obligation of partners to alert MIMETA if the partner organization experiences or receives information on incidents where artists or producers or artistic works are subject to abuse, detention, censorship or any other violations of the Artistic Freedom, as mentioned in the cooperation agreements currently signed.

It could also include other processes or mechanisms that will help MIMETA and/or its partners produce useful knowledge that would be relevant to the sector.

- Evolution and end of partnership

The draft of the agreement could be an opportunity to discuss the way the partnership could evolve or end. Could it be envisioned that the financial support ends but not the non-financial one? Considering the limited overall resources of MIMETA, could the choice to not receive financial support anymore come from the partner itself? Could the partner redirect its support towards another entity of its choice or that would be recommended by several partners? All these aspects could be explored in order to achieve a framework of cooperation that is interesting to all parties and to the sector and find "exit strategies" that make sense for all entities involved.

- Multilateral aspects

Defining a new framework for cooperation could also be a moment to consider or explore which aspects could be shared among all partners or explore the potential multilateral aspects of it. What actions are to be generated or performed collectively by all MIMETA's partners?

This type of agreement could become a new model to be promoted amongst other donors to insufflate a new dynamic in grant related support and partnerships, with an approach that puts the partnership at a more central place and leave more space for the organization to allocate the fund, generate and share knowledge and actions with its international partner.

2.
Define a stronger knowledge related framework

Any organization that invests in a range of different activities or tends to advance field work towards a vision they have of the world will need some ways of measuring progress so that the various impacts of those activities and investments can be

compared and financial and non-financial resources can be allocated where they create the most impact.

Provided the dire need for knowledge and data of the sector and in the targeted regions, MIMETA should take time to deepen the tools, concepts, and approaches for learning about their work and share the results with its partners and other funders.

The recommended approach to monitoring and evaluation incorporates one main feature: a shift in mindset away from output level reporting and compliance and toward creating knowledge value for an organization or a field.

This will imply going through three different steps: (1) clarifying and aligning what MIMETA wants to learn; (2) clarifying key concepts and theories of change; and (3) setting up indicators and methodology that match the capacity of those involved.

(1) Clarifying and aligning what MIMETA wants to learn

In order to define a comprehensive frame of measurement, MIMETA should first clarify what they precisely need or wish to learn more about. It will also guide the organization in defining the appropriate actions and questions to be addressed by its partners.

Several aspects could therefore be researched:

-   The field itself: If the goal or strategy is to build, grow, or strengthen a field, then it can be important to understand the key characteristics of a given field and/or how these characteristics reflect the field's development, evolution, or structure. It will then help determine the ways in which fields can best be supported. It can be about, for instance, the cultural or artistic field.

-   Field actors: If the vision is to focus on changes or benefits for field actors, either organizations or individuals, measurement tools and frameworks might focus on the degree to which ideas, values, or common practices have been institutionalized or the ways in which widespread adoption of certain behaviors or practices are manifest across a field. It can be about, for instance, intermediary organizations or actors that have a systemic impact in a given field.

-   The field's impact on a mid- or long-term: as fields exist to do or change something, evaluation in this domain might focus on identification and tracking of a field's efforts (are they happening as planned?) or outcomes expected to result from the actions of field members. It can be about creating conditions for free artistic creations or enhanced access of the public to art.

-   The field's impact on a long-term, large-scale mission/vision: beyond their immediate efforts and results, fields seek to advance an ultimate (ambitious, large-scale) purpose: to realize benefits for a community or environment, directly or indirectly, over time. Evaluations might focus on understanding how field-driven efforts contribute to end goals; what overlapping contributions within a broader set of field-driven efforts or across different social change initiatives exist; or how the external environment is influencing advancement of the desired end goal. It can be about the impact of the artistic field on freedom of expression.

(2) Clarifying key concepts and theories of change

Impact measurement involves understanding or suggesting the way things function in order to identify leverages and trigger points to make the intended changes

happen. Here we move away from simply counting or analyzing "what" happens to understanding "why" things happen and measure how the "why" informs the "what".

This implies for MIMETA to set and clarify the key concepts they believe in and develop a theory of change that would guide us through the chain of evidence that would lead to impact.

It could lead MIMETA to define the notion of "intermediary organizations", or specify why, according to MIMETA, its partners are well positioned to generate the intended changes. Which characteristics — organizationally and programmatically — should they present and why these characteristics are most appropriate to generate the intended change on the targeted sector(s). In turn, we will better understand where to direct support or how support could be usefully brought. It could also be used to advocate for MIMETA's approach or find allies around some of its actions.

The current framework misses some conceptual or theoretical background explaining why MIMETA strategically choses to only support intermediary organizations and how these organizations qualify as such.

Conducted interviews provided some elements that could constitute a first basis to elaborate a conceptual framework, a theory of change or lead to the definition of clear indicators linking the strategy of MIMETA with the intended impact on the sector.

According to Cato, the selection of partners is done as a result of field research and/or recommendations from current partners or other similar organizations in the field, helping MIMETA scout for organizations that can take responsibilities as "*sector development agents.*" They are, according to Laila, "*organizations that enhance spaces for artists and have schemes to support artists, therefore being intermediaries between MIMETA and artists and cultural practitioners*". Laila also adds that "*They are also intermediaries in the sense of capacity builders, of field developers, of cultural leaderships (…) and also intermediaries between the issues they work on and the funders. They should bring the issues of their beneficiaries back to the funders. They are in that negotiation space, trying to influence funders and also being influenced by them sometimes.*"

These elements should however be further detailed and contextualized. Existing research could help provide a more rigorous framework that will help evaluation purposes.

A vast literature exists on "intermediary organizations" and their role in different sectors, and looking more particularly at the cultural sector, we can think of the work developed by cultural sociologist Pascal Gielen around the concept of artistic biotope[22], that could provide keys of comprehension on how a particular actor can have a structural role when operating in the cultural sector.

Another aspect that should be delved into is the geographical focus of a given partnership's portfolio.

MIMETA does not have any narrative built around the chosen geographical focus or the connection(s) between both regions targeted by its current portfolio. Similarly,

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[22] Based on two decades of empirical research focused on the European context and derived from studio visits, in-depth interviews, panel discussions, and surveys with creative professionals from various disciplines (architecture, visual art, dance, theater, film), Gielen designed a model to understand the balance and trajectory needed for practitioners to foster the development of thriving and successful artistic careers. Divided in four domains (Domestic, Peers, Market, and Civil) that each enjoy, or at least did enjoy, some form of collective or institutional protection, often on a national policy level, the ideal type of artistic biotope allows us to think about what is needed to sustain creative work and develop careers in the long term, while highlighting the ways in which institutions, national and transnational policies can either reinforce or put pressure on the biotope. A use of this concept has been done in a recent research conduct by the evaluator and expert Samia Labidi in order to better understand the role of intermediary organizations in responding to the structural instability of the cultural sector.

literature exists on the effect of geography on donor choice, or the "geography of giving" that would help built a stronger rationale behind this point and which provides elements to determine why the geographical focus and concentration is particularly impactful in the case of MIMETA.

(3) Setting up indicators and methodology that match the capacity of those involved

Indicators should be SMART i.e Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound, which means that the indicators should be clearly defined, quantifiable, attainable, relevant to your goals, and have a specific timeframe for measurement. This ensures that the metrics are meaningful and can effectively measure impact.

Additionally, it is important to consider the availability and accessibility of the data sources that will provide the necessary information for the defined indicators. Understanding where the data comes from is crucial for accurate measurement and reporting.

As the action of MIMETA on the field in question heavily relies on the actions of its partners, the collection of data will necessarily rely on the capacity of these organizations to set up and manage a data collection and measurement system. As MIMETA's partners collaborate with multiple international aid agencies, that generally impose heavy monitoring, evaluation, and reporting obligations and methods, the collection of data should align with the day-to-day reality of MIMETA's partners.

Interviews conducted demonstrated that these are exposed to the following constraints:

●   *Financial constraint*s: all partners are partnering with a substantial number of funders in order to cover their financial needs and each funder requests reporting on the use of its funds, which puts the organization in a situation where funds are always to be sought and reporting duties are always increasing and putting more weight on the organization.

●   *Limited human capital*: All partners are currently understaffed. With a funding landscape still prioritizing a project-based approach and a limitation on funds allocated to core and administrative costs, activities increase without necessarily an increase in the number of team members involved, especially for crosscutting functions like management, administrative, logistics, development, or monitoring functions. Coupled with the difficulty of finding highly qualified local profiles, hiring people with deep expertise in traditional forms of impact assessment is, in this context, necessarily a low priority.

●   *Poor data management capacities*. All interviewed partners rely on grants and support of funders to implement their work plan. And with the predominance of project-based funding, each financial partner requests its grantee to report on the achievements linked to the awarded funds. This leads organizations to monitor and report on the project level and repeat the exercise for each of their partners. The weight and complexity of the exercise therefore grows with the fundraising efforts of the organisations, as each proposal implies a different monitoring plan, intervention logic, logical framework, and reporting obligations. The nature of the request, which is often focused on projects, coupled with the time and resources needed for grantees to fulfil their contractual obligation leads organization to focus on monitoring and jeopardize the capacity of organization to focus on evaluation or learning.

In line with the change in terms of partnership approach, reporting should also know a shift of scale: annual reports of the organization shall be automatically communicated and evaluation efforts requested to partners should be more directly linked to the evaluation goals of MIMETA.

3.
Commit to "making connections"

MIMETA should commit more resources, skills, and time to "making connections" in several aspects or domain:

- Making connections for knowledge production: MIMETA has access to an important amount of data and with the recommendations made above, will potentially have access to even more. It is essential that MIMETA invests more in analyzing, comparing, aggregating the data received and generate useful knowledge that could be shared with various actors and audiences.

- Making connections between the several levels of intervention: MIMETA's partnerships initiate a whole chain of actions that occur at different level of intervention: at the level of MIMETA, at the level of its partners but also at the level of its partners' beneficiaries and at the level of the beneficiaries of the beneficiaries. There is a need in connecting all these dots in order to make effects or results more apparent like the creation of an ecosystem, the complementarity of schemes, the rippling effect of an action, the creation of connection and networks etc.

- Making geographical connections: as previously highlighted, if MIMETA focus stays on the Arab region and the Sub-Saharan one (even if only focused on East Africa), MIMETA should contribute to building links and connections between these geographical areas. MIMETA could create more connections between their partners and encourage exchanging models, practices and methodologies. On the conceptual side and as Laila suggested during the conducted interview "'*What does it mean to be African?' could be another space that could be explored*". Both the practical and conceptual aspects of making more geographical links should be done in collaboration with partners, especially those who expressed a direct interest in engaging more with the south like Al Mawred or L'Art Rue.

- Making programmatic connections: assessed entities presented several similarities in terms of activities and challenges, MIMETA should also play an active role in highlighting these, encourage exchange of best practices or guide common analyses on these. For instance, there are, as highlighted in the findings part, many videos, podcasts, recorded conferences, papers produced by partners that are of great quality but have very weak exposure. There might either be a role to play here in making these materials more visible, more accessible, and provide more exposure to them or raise the question to know if these organizations are best placed to generate a real audience for this kind of content and if yes, under which conditions.

Overall, the value of MIMETA is the sum of entities of its portfolio and not the individual actions or projects it funds. It is the potential of aggregated actions, knowledge, and exchanges. It is important that MIMETA commits to create value out of these.

ANNEXES

Annex 1 – List of reviewed documents

		Documents shared by MIMETA		
Partner	Year	Contractual documents	Reports	Other
BAYIMBA	2020	Proposal Budget Addendum	Narrative Report 2020	Risk assessment Declaration of Mombasa on the role and benefits of festivals and events in Africa cities (Nov 2019) 2020 Financial statements Lunkulu Master Plan Signed Audit
	2021	Proposal Budget Cooperation agreement	Narrative Report 2021	
	2022	Addendum	Narrative Report 2022	Memorandum of understanding between Bayimba and Arterial Network Africa
AL MAWRED	2020	Concept note of Abbara Support Initiative Addendum	Financial report Narrative Report Global Annual Report	2020 Financial Statements
	2021	Proposal – Stand for Art and Cultural Policy Programs (2021-2023) Budget proposal October 2021 Cooperation agreement	Narrative Report 2021	
	2022	Proposal Cooperation agreement	Financial report 2022 Narrative Report 2022	
ETTIJAHAT	2020	Proposal Budget	Narrative Report 2020	2020-2024 Strategic plan
	2021	Cooperation agreement Budget Proposal	Narrative Report 2021	
	2022	Proposal Addendum	Narrative Report 2022 Financial Report 2022	
L'ART RUE	2020	Addendum Annual programme Annual Budget	Global Annual Report 2020	L'Art Rue Risk Assessment Bank Statement Payment request 2020 Financial Statements for TN and ASBL
	2021	Cooperation agreement Annual programme Annual Budget		
	2022	Annual programme Addendum	Global Annual Report 2022	
OTHER		Dummy Cooperation agreement	NMFA 2021 and 2022 narrative reports	

			Mᴍᴇᴛᴀ reporting guidelines Mᴍᴇᴛᴀ reporting form	

Documents shared by Al Mawred

Templates for the Abbara support initiative:
Open call:
-   The application and letter of intent
-   The budget template
Contracting:
-   The contract
-   The grant narrative report
-   The grant financial report
Templates for the Abbara Top-up grant:
Internal process (internal documents asked from the organizations):
-   The Financial Report (2021) and Projected Budget (2022)
-   The Narrative Report (2021)
Contracting:
-   The contract
-   The grant narrative report
-   The grant financial report

Documents shared by Bayimba

-   2020 Annual report

Documents shared by Ettijahat

-   The videos prepared by The Change Collective in the framework of the "Create Syria" programme
-   The training agenda in the framework of the "Create Syria" programme
-   The agenda of the closing event of the "Create Syria" programme
-   Template of documents related to the relation between Ettijahat and its beneficiaries:
    o   Recruitment policy and selection criteria
    o   Invoice template
    o   Timesheet template
    o   Internal regulations
    o   Sample Volunteer Agreement
    o   Evidence of funds letter template
    o   Needed Bank Info
-   Ettijahat's 10 years evaluation report
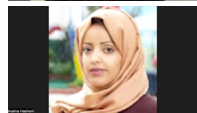
Annex 2. List of interviews conducted
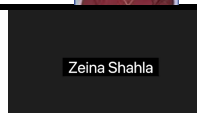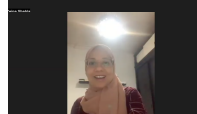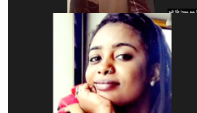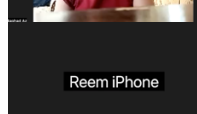
Interviews with MIMETA

Laila Hourani	MIMETA	June 2, 2023	Online via Zoom
Cato Litangen	MIMETA	June 7, 2023	Online via Zoom

Interviews with partners

Abdullah AlKafri (Interview 1)	Ettijahat	April 12, 2023	Online via Zoom
Abdullah AlKafri (Interview 2)	Ettijahat	September 28, 2023	Online via Zoom
Faisal Kiwewa	Bayimba	April 19, 2023	Online via Zoom
Evelyn Ahisibwe	Bayimba	September 21, 2023	Online via Zoom
Helena Nassif	Al Mawred	April 26, 2023	Online via Zoom
Selma Ouissi	L'Art Rue	May 2, 2023	Online via Zoom

Interviews with partners' beneficiaries

	Hanna Atallah	FilmLab (Palestine)	June 30, 2023	Online via Zoom	
	Shaimaa Hashem	Basement (Yemen)	27 June, 2023	Online via Zoom	Beneficiaries of Al Mawred Abbara support initiative and/or Abbara Top-up grant
	Mudar Alhaggi	Nawras (Syria/Germany)	June 14, 2023	Online via Zoom	
	Hatem Tahhan	Khazaaen (Palestine)	May 20, 2023	Online via Zoom	
	Besma Eleuchi	L'Art Vivant (Tunisia)	June 3, 2023	In-person in Tunis	
	Zeina Shahla	Journalist/ Researcher (Syria)	May 18, 2023	Online via Zoom	Ettijahat (Research programme)
	Mennatallah Mansi	Translator/ Researcher (Egypt)	June 8, 2023	Online via Zoom	Ettijahat (Research programme)
	Shama Alrasheed	Researcher (Sudan)	May 17, 2023	Online via Zoom	Ettijahat (Research programme)
	Raghad Azkoul	Architect (Syria)	July 12, 2023	Online via Zoom	Ettijahat (Create Syria-Third edition)
	Reem Khatib	Visual artist (Syria)	July 11, 2023	Online via Zoom	Ettijahat (Create Syria – Third edition)

	Name	Role	Date	Method	Organisation
	Rasha Abbas	Writer and journalist (Syria. Based in Germany)	July 12, 2023	Online via Zoom	Ettijahat (Life programme)
	Andrew Kaggwa	Cultural journalist	June 15, 2023	Online via WhatsApp	Bayimba (covers Bayimba events)
	Bbuule Gabriel	Writer and arts journalist	Via writing		Bayimba
	Matovu Joseph	Poet, Volunteer in charge of tent section	June 2, 2023	Online via WhatsApp	Bayimba
	Percy Kisaame	Creative and Talent manager	June 20, 2023	Online via WhatsApp	Bayimba (Friend)
	Fatuma Hassan	Artist, Volunteer at the reggae festival	Via writing		Bayimba
	Fatma Fetni	Researcher in law and project assistant at the Tunisian Association for the Defence of Individual Liberties	September 27, 2023	Online via Zoom	L'Art Rue – Participant of the DPDW Civic Space programme

Annex 3. Terms of reference

Mimeta: Call for Evaluation consultancy 2020-2022
Terms of Reference

Executive Summary: Mimeta is seeking to contract a consultant to evaluate its cooperation with its grantee partners over the period from 2020-2022. The evaluation will focus on cooperation carried out by Mimeta with funding from Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA). To that effect, the evaluation will refer to Mimeta's agreed goals and terms with NMFA as indicators of measurement for this assessment. The evaluation will focus on the programmatic aspects of the work of Mimeta's partners, rather than the organizational one. The evaluation is intended to provide NMFA with a report that identifies success as well as areas for development in Mimeta's relationship with its grantee partners, through the provision of data and examples of results of impact on the ground.

Background:
Mimeta has been working within culture and development since 2008. The organization is organized as a Norwegian limited company with charitable statutes. Mimeta is working from Arendal (NO). Management is headed by Cato Litangen and Program Director Laila Hourani. Mimeta is involved in the protection of cultural rights - and culture sector development by the means of financial support, knowledge building and professional advises. The activities are financially supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and private foundations.

In the Arabic speaking countries we have partnerships with Tunisian, Lebanese, Maroccan and Syrian service providers to the arts, like Al Mawred, L'Art Rue, Action for Hope, Hammana Artist House, Beirut DC and Ettijahat. While covering the whole region, the programs of these organisations focus on organisational development, policy observance and advocacy, cultural research and planning, and the fostering of socially engaged arts practises. In Sub-Saharan Africa, Mimeta has been engaged in prominent milieus like Bayimba Cultural Foundation and 32 East - Ugandan Arts Trust in Uganda have been among our partners, as well as Ishyio Arts Centre in Rwanda.

For both the Arabic and African regions we are working in close cooperation with European and American foundations and organisations. Most often we meet with Stichting DOEN, Africalia, Goethe Institute, British Council, Ford Foundation, Prince Claus Fund, Open Society and European Cultural Foundation.

Objectives:
The evaluation will:

1. Assess the systems and processes applied by Mimeta to carry out its cooperation with partners.

2. Assess the programmatic achievements of partners against their agreed goals and objectives with Mimeta, focussing on actual results on the ground.

3. Assess the relationship between Mimeta and its grantee partners in terms of its ability to enhance both parties' ability to achieve goals and impact through their collaboration.

4. Assess the impact of Mimeta's grantee partners on the field of freedom of expression in the contexts where Mimeta's grantees carry out their programs.

5. Identify challenges, opportunities and areas for improvement for Mimeta.

6. Produce a report detailing the findings and providing recommendations and next steps for how Mimeta should move forward in its cooperation with partners.

The evaluation will use the following from Mimeta's agreement contract with NMFA as indicators of measurement for this evaluation exercise:

Impact:
The initiative will enhance access to free artistic practices in the Middle East -North Africa (MENA) and Sub-Saharan Africa regions.

Outcomes:
A) the Cultural sector in the MENA and Sub-Saharan Africa regions has been strengthened in the public opinion, and in its political and legal positions.

B) to provide increased protection to artists, producers and the works against abuse, censorship and legal or social persecution.

C) to give people access to participation in artistic practice

Indicators:
A) National legal conditions and international conventions Art practices that are not characterized by censorship or threats - carried out by authorities or social groups

B) vocational training for people in vulnerable life situations

Prerequisites/risk factors The security situation, the relationship with freedom of expression and assembly and the status of human rights.

Output:
The efforts will provide an organizational infrastructure that can contribute to secure the ideas of artistic freedom and cultural rights and give the sector an opportunity to contribute to public policymaking in the field.

Indicators:
Ability to organize themselves and advocate for their rights towards the authorities and public opinion.

Prerequisites/risk *factors:*
Political events. Communication skills in the sector. Attention to the cultural field in public administration and politics. The importance of the cultural field in public opinion.

Scope and methodology

The evaluation will cover the following:

1. Period of Mimeta partnerships: 2020-2022.

2. Number of grantee partners: 3 partners (representing the geographic scope of Mimeta's work in the MENA and Africa). Evaluator to select the partners from Mimeta's partners list, in consultation and agreement with Mimeta.

3. Grantee partners feedback through interviews/meetings with selected grantee partners.

4. Analysis and provision of data and stories drawn from grantee reports, newsletters, and consultant generated questionnaires where necessary. As well as from Mimeta's reports to NMFA for the period of the evaluation.

Application Requirements:

The successful candidate for this consultancy assignment should meet the following requirements:

● Experience in carrying out evaluation exercises within the non-for-profit cultural sector or the international development cooperation sector.

● Knowledge of the MENA and Africa context, preferably from the perspective of the Arts and Culture sector within them.

● Excellent written and oral communication skills at least in English and preferably in Arabic/French as well.

● Ability to analyse data and articulate compelling stories/description of results from data.

- Ability to meet deadlines.

- Demonstrate a learning approach to evaluation.

- Ability to travel to countries in MENA and Africa if need be.

Interested candidates should send the following to Mimeta at info@mimeta.org by 15 December 2022:

1. A Curriculum Vitae for individual consultants, or/and organizational profile for consultancy firms

2. A plan detailing how they would like to go about this consultancy: methodology tools, etc. (preferably no more than one page)

3. A budget, outlining fees and any other expenses related to implementing the evaluation, excluding travel expenses.

Evaluation Consultancy Timeline:

1. Consultancy duration: 1 March 2023 – 1 November 2023.

2. Sign consultancy contract with Mimeta by 15 February 2023.

3. Submit progress reports to Mimeta every second month for the full duration of consultancy

4. Submit draft report of evaluation in English by 15 September 2023 for Mimeta's revision and feedback.

5. Submit final report of evaluation in English by 15 October 2023 for Mimeta's approval.

6. Carry out any necessary changes to final report based on Mimeta's feedback by 30 October 2023.