# ANNUAL REPORT 2020



We offer our condolences to the families who have lost a loved one, to the injured, and to our Beirut. The Haven team was together when the explosion took place. The office got hit, but we are all physically okay. We will be taking a couple of days to rest, fix our office, and support the people with clean ups and aid. Our offices will be open soon, to host you if you need a place to stay, to rest, to talk, to cry, to stare into the void, to mourn, or to be angry together. We went through this together and we will support each other like we always do. Love always, the Haven team.

# A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,

# DAYNA ASH

This last year has led us to navigate new landscapes not yet discovered and worlds not yet overturned. After our move from Concept 2092 in November of 2019, we anticipated change yet no one could've foreseen what this year had in store. Regardless of the hardships and obstacles, we persevered.

We cannot regard 2020 as a complete year in Lebanon, without beginning the count as of October 17th, 2019. The spark of the revolution, sparked change both on the streets, in homes, and in institutions both private and public. Haven for Artists (HFA) went on strike as an organization but our space opened for meetings, organizing, and escaping tear gas. The garden became a place to rejuvenate and return to the frontlines, as activists, as artists, and as revolutionaries.

The culture of our spaces relies heavily on our ability to reflect the reality. That means reflecting and without hesitation, the wear and tear, the injustice, the systemic racism, the brutality, and violence as well as the strength we have consistently mustered to resist and fight back.

We, as individuals, and as radical feminists and artists took our role and stance as unwavering in the face of the patriarchy, homophobia, bigotry, racism and hate. I believe we will always remain the finger that pressures the wound; to reminds us of the regime that reigns as well as the power we have in collective healing, in community organizing, and in a vision for an equitable, equal and just world.

We experienced, expressed, and in turn produced a film that embodied and spoke of our lives, our strife, strength and Courage. We organized protests and marches alongside our sisters and brothers. We launched advocacy and awareness campaigns. We reached out and created bonds with activists, organizations, ideas, and artists. This year we witnessed the world in revolt with our own city on the front lines.

COVID-19 highlighted the systemic injustices and the people over profit mantra of corporations and companies everywhere. Compounded with the global pandemic and the financial crisis, we survived a deadly explosion that rendered our city into rubble only to pick up the pieces the next day in a dustpan.

"Our focus on art remains unhindered, as it remains, in our belief, the most powerful and humble tool of action."

I paraphrase: "Pity a nation that places a global pandemic in the backseat to a financial crisis and an explosion in the heart of the capital".

August 4th both destroyed and defined us. There are not enough words to describe that day, or the months that followed. Regardless of our tools as a cultural organization, Haven transformed itself in its capacities to respond to the emergency. We still aim to distribute aid to our community, and to all marginalized communities who continue to struggle. That being said, our focus on art remains unhindered, as it remains, in our belief, the most powerful and humble tool of action.

# CONTENTS

### **VISION**

OB Haven for Artists, the intersection of art and activism

# **HIGHLIGHTS 2020**

- 15 PRIDE: 4min with queer artists from the MENA
- 16 Cultural Emergence
- 20 Courage

# RELIEF

27 Beirut Port Blast: emergency response to marginalized communities

# **INSIGHTS ON 2021**

- 40 What's next?
- 42 A note for 2021 from our Creative Director, Yasmine Rifaii
- **46 MEET OUR TEAM**
- 49 **FINANCIALS**
- **52 PARTNERS**



# Haven for Artists, the intersection of



Haven for Artists is an all-inclusive feminist arts organization (NGO) based in Beirut, Lebanon, working at the intersection of art and activism. Haven combines creative and humanitarian methods to facilitate a safe space for the exchange of knowledge, tools, and skills in-order to create a more just world.



Founded in 2011 by artists and activists, Haven began with large events promoting local and regional artists, growing to include annual exhibitions, a gallery and a residency program with international, regional, and local artists.

HFA renovated two heritage houses in Beirut which acted as a cultural safe space and shelter for LGBTQI and women's community, hosting multiple and regular events, workshops, panels and public discussions. By extending its network, skills, and tools to work on numerous campaigns for human rights, HFA provided a platform and network for talented creatives to extend the reach of art and activism.

HFA believes that art is uniquely able to explain complex sociocultural issues in an accessible way to a diverse audience in a non-confrontational manner. To this end, HFA connects talented artists from the Middle East with advocacy groups, activists, and NGOs striving to further human rights, particularly concerning LBTQI persons and women.

Regular visual exhibitions

Festivals, concerts & artistic gatherings

Roundtables, workshops & creative forums

Artistic aspects of humanitarian campaigns and events

# Timeline 2019 with a few meaningful events until

2017

# Radical: Choix et Consequence

32 artists and bands, 2 drag queens Art fair hosted by the French Institute

2011

## Birth of a creative network

HFA is founded by a group of LGBTQIA+ artists and activists

2018

Second Haven house: Concept 2092

International residency for 12 artists Exhibition and work space, shelter program, café, garden

2013

# Transition into gallery spaces

Salus Ex-Machine, 217 artists participated

2019

In-house exhibitions and gatherings

2015

#### A current wave of Nectar

3 days festival, 128 artists, 850 attendees

Vices and Validation

26 artists Exhibition hosted by the French Institute

2016

# First Haven house

Art hub: 12 in-house exhibitions, 8 installations Residency for 12 local & international artists

2019 MENA-logue (Milan)

International festival in collaboration with Macao Milano Cross-cultural representation of LGBTQIA+ individuals from the Middle-East

Officially Registered

#### **2019 NEDWA**

Resilient Roots, an exhibition about the history of activism in the MENA region

Autumn Sonata: As the leaves fall

3 days Arts Festival

Haven house Concept 2092 closes



# A COMMUNITY FOR THE

# ARIS: aloopin 2020

# BY THE START OF 2020, WE WERE ON STRIKE IN SUPPORT OF THE REVOLUTION



# PRIDE:

4min with queer artists from the MENA

Haven for Artists produced a 4-min' short film that served as online opening piece of the annual regional conference of PRIDE (Program for Rights, Inclusivity, Diversity and Equality) for the MENA partners.

Funded by COC Netherlands, this is an inspiring and energetic piece. Relevant to queer middle eastern people, the short movie shows some recognizable achievements of the global LGBTQIA+ movement and how the global LGBTQIA+ movement is still fighting back against many challenges.

The movie featured queer artists from Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Lebanon.

11.

# CULTURAL EMERGENCE:

Cultural Emergence is a project that promoted solidarity and support through art at a time of financial, and health crisis (among other dimensions). Cultural Emergence connected women, LGBTQIA+ persons, activists and artists during times of heightened isolation and mental health difficulties. Following the blast, which devastated what remained from the safety of our quarantine places, we adapted our activities to help the community to cope, not only with COVID-19 consequences, but also with the trauma caused by the Beirut port blast.

Thanks to the financial support of Freedom House, Haven for Artists was able to develop cultural activities online, turning his social media accounts into a platform for arts, artists and activists. This platform is a space for all of us to freely express ourselves, to stay connected, supported and equipped with the right coping mechanisms and community support.

Through Cultural Emergence, we posted methods, mediums and approaches to cope with the crisis within our place of quarantine, isolated. These methods have been produced by different independent artists and activists, including Julien Harfouche, Gab Haddad, Elsa Saade, Lara Salmon, Dayna Ash, Patrick Kazarian, Aline Deloscampos, Mirella Salameh and Rama Duwaji. We hosted 7 digital exhibitions from Beirut By Dyke, Barakunan, Aude Nassr, Lisa Luxx, Elsa Saade, Kid Fourteen, and Mirella Salameh.

We hosted 3 extended poetry nights that were broadcasted on Hammam Radio. We brought in multiple poets as well as the Haven team that consists of LGBTQIA+ artists to discuss the plight, challenges and achievements of the creative community both locally and globally. We discussed mental health through literature and time as we also brought in the mental health and literary discussion pertaining to COVID-19 and the Beirut Blast. On July 28, we hosted Carmina Khairallah, and Luxx, heralded as one of the UK's top four queer poets by Diva magazine (among many other recognitions).

To contribute to fight structural racism and anti-Blackness, we produced 2 videos to raise awareness on the impact of the crisis on the migrant community and on the community response to the crisis and the blast. We followed Egna Legna, an Ethiopian domestic worker run organization based in Beirut, which has over the past three years assisted domestic workers including victims of horrible abuses to the best of its ability.

We created a mental health guide to help cope with our trauma following the blast. We collaborated with Warde Bou Daher, a psychologist and trauma specialist to create this guide through which she answered commonly asked questions about mental health.











# COURAGE:

Courage is a movie tackling identity, freedom, and queer being from the point of view of queers from the region. Nourished by the oppression of adaptability, distance, and violence of this past year, Courage has been produced by HFA thanks to the financial support of KVS (Royal Flemish Theatre, Brussels).

Courage was initially a play to be performed in KVS in April 2020, in the frame of the Slam Our World (SLOW) international program which blends urban poetry and theater. Under the direction of Dayna Ash (writer and performer of the script) and Malak Mroueh (director), the play finally became a movie, due to the COVID-19 lockdowns.

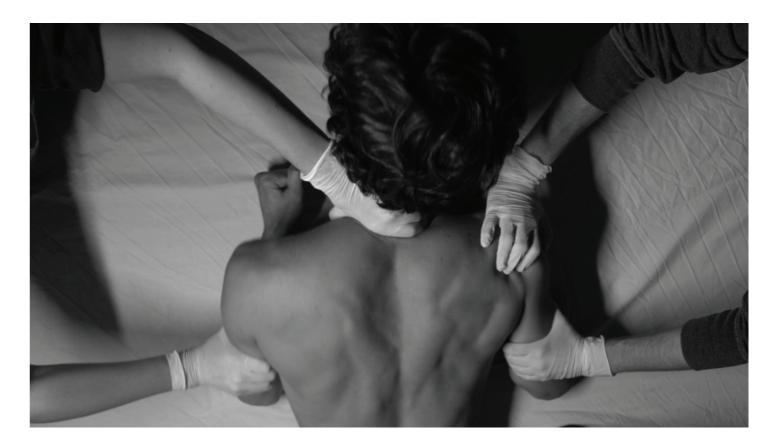
In the Middle East, staying in the closet, coming out, and the spectrum in-between, are all equally courageous acts. With the social and systemic persecution of LGBTQIA+ individuals, the variables of coming out are not simply based on the response and acceptance of the family and friends; but also, with the fear, intolerance, and violence manifested through formal authorities and informal traditional norms.

The dominating discourse is one that promotes coming out of the closet as the desired goal for LGTBQIA+ individuals, to the exclusion of those, who through a courageous act themselves, do not come out. Their life is not framed by the reality of a closet, instead they use other cultural frameworks to construct their queer reality. Coming out to friends, not family; sisters, not brothers; yelling it in the streets of Brussels, but never in Beirut; telling no one and telling all; each approach is influence by space and time, and each approach is deeply courageous.

Credits of Courage:
A Haven for Artists and KVS Brussels co-production,
as part of the SLOW series by Tundé Adefioye.

Written and Performed by Dayna Ash Adapted to screen and Directed by Malak Mroueh Director of Photography Davina Maria Art Direction by Yasmine Rifaii Camera Operator: Gabriel Haddad Camera Assistant: Al Boutros Edited by: Gabriel Haddad Animation by: Jad Wadi Music and Sound Design by Nour Sokhon Line Producer: Dayna Ash Production Manager: Layane Boustany Hajjar **Production Assistant: Marianne Barakat Production Assistant: Christina Achkar** "You insist to see me bare" written and performed Hashem Hashem "not the first nor the last" track by Anthony Sahyoun X MAWADa Cast: Natalie, Yara, Noé, Leah, Liam Casting Directors: Yasmine Rifaii & Natalie Lahoud with the participation of Hanna, M.M, Khaled, Hashem, Ali. Arabic Translation: Rayyan Abedelkhalek French Translation: Layane Boustany Hajjar & Yasmine Rifaii **Dutch Translation: Steven Tallon** 



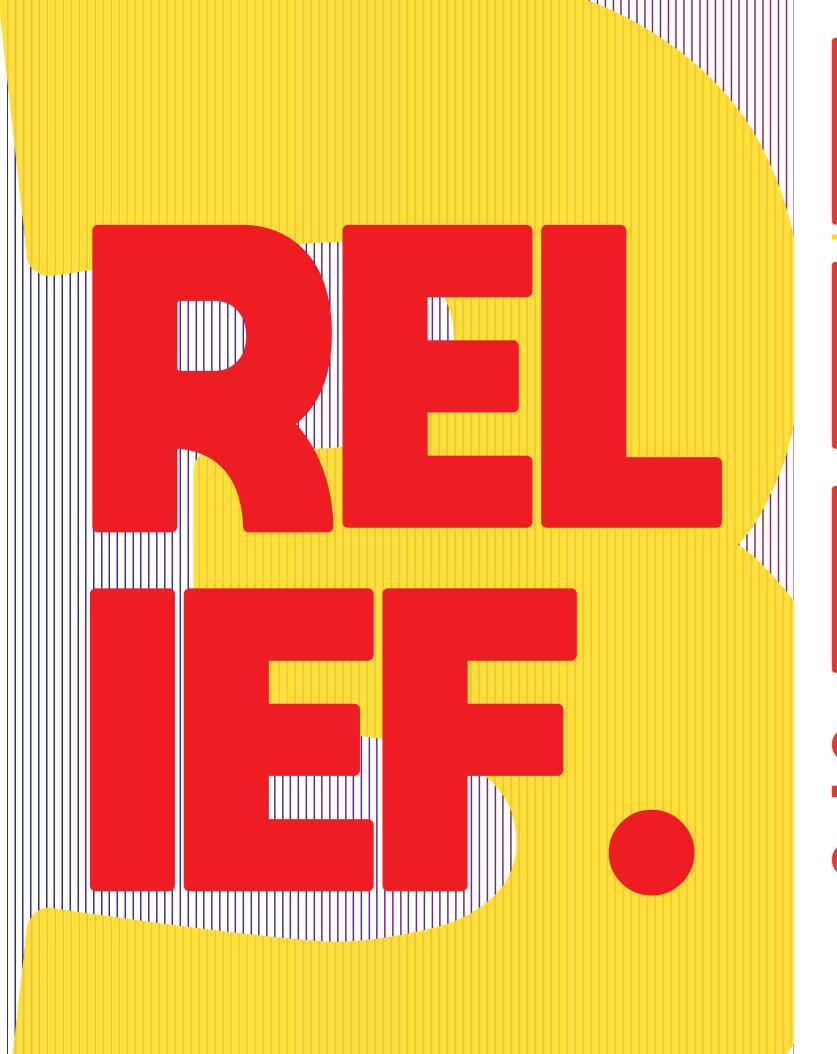












emergency response to marginalized communities

On August 4, at 6:08 pm, a massive explosion destroyed Beirut Port and its surroundings, killing 204 people, injuring 7,000, rendering 300,000 people homeless and many more unemployed. The Beirut port blast happened while Lebanon was already experiencing a very difficult time with the COVID-19 pandemic, and an unprecedented financial crisis that caused the devaluation of the local currency by 480%<sup>1</sup>, and prices' inflation of 133% on average<sup>2</sup>.

While the whole country is affected by this disastrous situation, some communities face more challenges. Women and the LGBTQIA+community have been heavily impacted by the blast, losing access to support or coping mechanisms with thedestruction of the neighborhoods that contained theirsafe spaces, obliging them to be confined in unsafespaces for long periods of time. Migrant workers are particularly affected by the financial crisis, as a lot are abandoned in front of embassies by employers, many of with months of unpaid wages, no access to their passports and/or the price of a plane ticket to return home.

Thanks to hundreds of supporters, we collected \$63,923, along with a lot of in-kind donations.

As a first response, we converted our offices into a shelter for 8 people; 2 migrant workers and 6 LGBTQIA+ individuals, all of which have been relocated to new apartments with a year's rent paid in advance.

The 2 young migrant women in our shelter were repatriated home (upon their request) on the 26th and 28th of August in collaboration with the organizations, the Anti-Racism Movement and This is Lebanon.

During the first month, we put extensive efforts towards ad-hoc distribution. We distributed food, hygiene kits and clothes in the streets of the most damaged areas

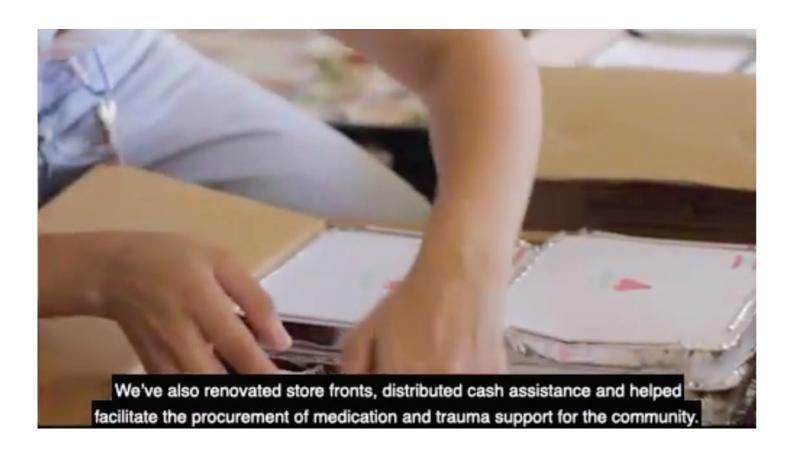
including Mar Mikhael, Gemmayze, Nabaa, Bourj Hammoud, Karantina and Rmeil.

We regularly distributed directly to Egna Legna, an Ethiopian-lead NGO, and to migrant workers protesting in front of the Kenyan Embassy.

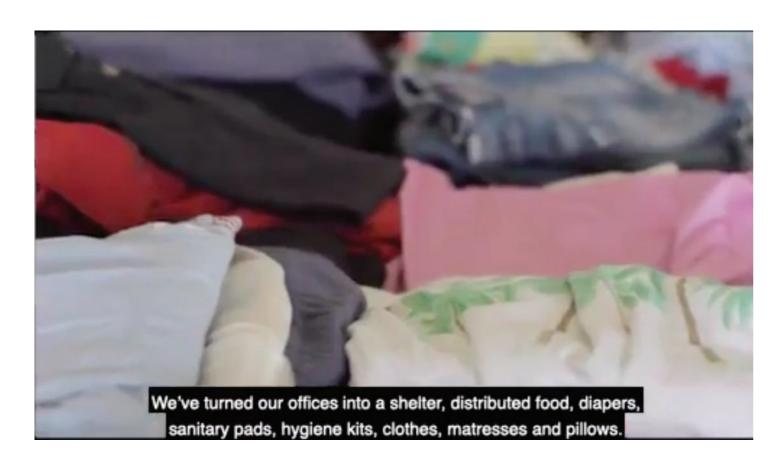
In total, more than 600 people benefited from this first wave of extensive distribution.

<sup>1</sup>situation on Jan 6, with exchange rate at 8700

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> https://tradingeconomics.com/lebanon/indicators









We installed 15 glass fronts for 15 small shops and businesses in Karm El Zaytoun, ran by the elderly and LGBTQI community. The stores include but are not limited to a library, barbershop, flower shop, buttons store, small market, cultural book shop and womens clothing store.

Until the end of the year, we have continued to provide different types of support to people affected by the multi-dimensional crisis.

Among the **276 persons** we assessed, **251** received support adapted to thier needs and requirments.

# Among them, a majority of LGBTQIA+ individuals, a third of single women and their families, and 17 migrant workers.

From October, we strengthened our focus on rent assistance to prepare for winter and the second wave of COVID-19.

According to the rent range, we covered from **2 to 6 months paid in advance.** 

To ensure the effectiveness of aid distribution, Haven collaborated with the Anti-Racist Movement for referral, and with the members of the Yalla Care Coalition. Within Yalla Care, a common needs assessment has been developed to ensure appropriate referral, and collaboration has been reinforced to provide support for the community.

# In total, we were able to support more than 860 persons directly, and 1,300 indirectly.

Thanks to MADRE, Outright International and Urgent Action Fund, we were able to dedicate a team to relief activities, to invest time in collaboration efforts, putting effective referral systems in place and mental health support to enable individuals to have access to support systems.

# Thanks to the donors, we were able to distribute:

# Financial support

13 843.965 19 001.505

20 200.00\$ 2 258.00\$

Appliances, home-supplies and clothing

60 large bags

# **Medical Assistance**

2 500.00\$

Hospital bills

1750.00\$
Medicine and
medical supplies

# Hygiene and baby kits

76
Personal hygiene kits

347
Sanitary pads pack

# **Food Support**

1230 Sandwiches

2 360
Hot Meals

50 Food Parcels Baby parcels (food and supplies)

**200** Diapers pack



# Mat's Mat's

In 2021, we are looking forward to refocusing our energy and upcoming activities on the every expanding intersection of art and activism.

A few projects that will be happening the next year 2021 had already launched in 2020:

#### **Animation:**

In collaboration with the Arab Foundation for Freedoms and Equality (AFE), we fully created the concept, theme as well as produced 2 animation videos meant for awareness campaigns. Video one addressed menstruation issues from a satirical point of view, while presenting to the audience the scarcities in representation and service previsions This included a narrated story of a fictional world where cis-men in power woke up one morning with their periods, and how the public sector would respond. The second animation was focused on FGM (Female Genital Mutilation), an informative video tackling the issue and it's urgency. Accompanied with a trigger warning, this work did not shy from representing the situation as it is, using visuals that portrait the actual forms of mutilation.

Etihadis a regional campaign on LGBTQIA+ strife in the MENA region. This project, which started in May 2020, is funded by the Institute for War and Peace Reporting. Participants, including Haven for Artists, attended intensive digital advocacy training in 2020 and will create and launch their covn campaign in 2021.

# Insights on 2021

#### Tides Foundation: Art in digital times

A series workshops and panels, creating tools that are beneficial as well as attractive to the artists/activists living during this age of digital recoil. Through these workshops, we want to offer tools for creation, tools that don't cost a lot of money and/or allow the artist to develop new means of expression and/or push their artwork online with the aim of it reaching a larger audience.

قولبة المساحة المفقودة - The online digital exhibition will ask the marginalized artists residing in Beirut to reflect on this spatial loss, focus the lens of the artwork on their interpretation of architecture, the physical space, its boundaries, and its impact on identity.

#### Nabad Art: Their Stories, their voices, them

A street intervention to derail the focus of this heavily impacted area from the blast that became its daily reality, by portraying members of society that are essential for the cultural definition of these streets.

#### Mophradat:

A series of workshops for the Women of the Frontlines in collaboration with mental health practitioners and natural herbalists, targeting artists and activists that have toiled on the frontline without intervals of rest. The workshops will center on sensitivity and awareness of mental health for those involved in Lebanon's new landscape of social change varying from the revolution, COVID-19 till the Beirut port blast.

Since the autumn, the Haven team is also preparing cultural projects that will start at the beginning of 2021, thanks to the support of A.topos, Anna Lindh Foundation and Crossing Borders, Foundation for Arts Initiatives, Global Resilience Fund for Girls and Young Women, and the Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development.



# A NOTE FOR 2021 FROM OUR CREATIVE DIRECTOR,

# **YASMINE RIFAII**

A revolution, a failed state, a pandemic and a blast. The past 2 years were times of communal loss, times that made us rethink our identity, our belief systems, our strategies, and the future as a whole. Never-theless, growth was one of the many inevitable consequences of these times as well.

We gathered our thoughts to redefine our ethos and reflected on the word "Unapologetic". We found it rather ironic that an adjective cleared the path and structured our vision for what's to come. Why "Unapologetic"? Because we witnessed the remorselessness of our oppressors, and the inhumanity of their tools. We understood that, in the hopes of winning this global fight of social justice, our methods needed to be radical and straightforward.

From sustaining a feminist economy, to expanding our networks of collaborators as well as recipients, we aim to focus on the roots of the issue, and integrate it in the solution. To propagate the same ethics and principles in our methods and work ethics that we believe in and are fighting for. Going forward into 2021, we want to focus on the way we do things, the method before the outcome. The way we plan change, how we communicate and create connections. and with whom we collaborate, ensures the integrity of the results we seek. We intend to redefine spaces, before filling them. Redefine the notion of Art in the NGO lingo/sector, and practice it in a fully rounded scope. We aim to use Art as the ultimate tool of research, production, and archiving. We want to elaborate on how art is a tool of action and not only a means of expression. It is a tool for the community, to excerpt agency, to engage and to best

represent the realities of their contexts. We will push forward Women produced artworks, and not Women themed. We will push forward queer produced research, and not queer themed. We want the minorities to not only be the center of the conversation, but the ones conversing regarding their own fates.

Art does not sugar coat the truth, if the reflection is not hindered with ill-intent, art is the mirror to reality. We want to maintain putting our trust in the community and have it trust us in return, like we believe it has so far.

We aim to carry the voices of artivists in whom we believe the revolution boils. We aim to carry the energy and reality of what it means to be queer, Arab and a woman in the world. We will place our feminist ideals and queer realities forward and first.

Whether it's digital or physical, we will keep on offering a safe collaborative space, for artists, activists, and creators to work and produce the art that will always stand as the best witness of time.



Dayna Ash
Co-Founder and Executive
Director

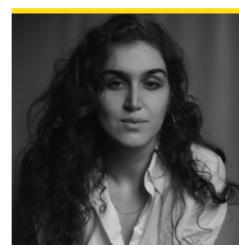
**Tiffany Moujaes**Designer



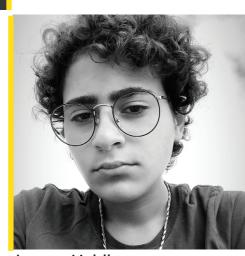
Yasmine Rifaii Creative Director



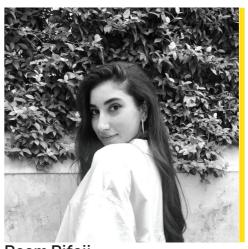
Caroline Créton
Project Coordinator



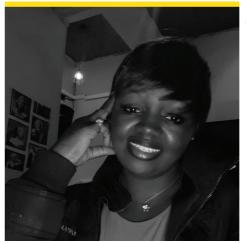
**Marilyn Mokbel** Designer



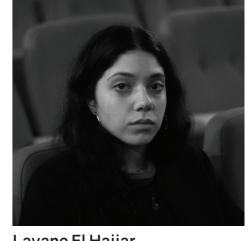
Joanne Habib
Finance Officer



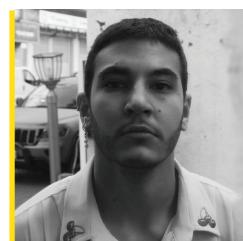
**Reem Rifaii**Distribution Officer



Sal Mansaray Office cleaner



**Layane El Hajjar** Production Manager

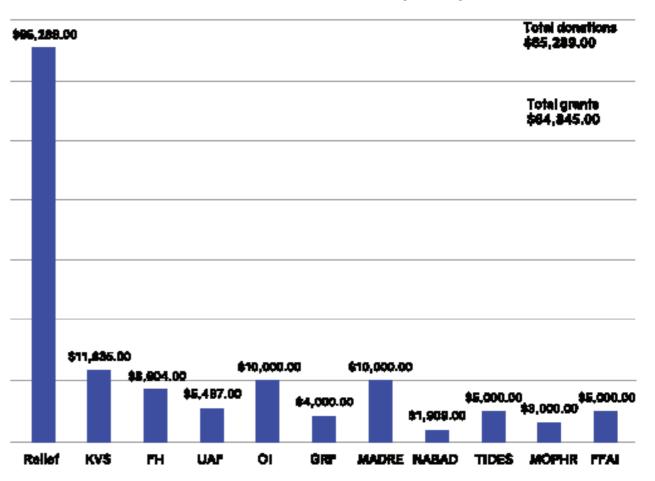


**Gab Haddad** Videographer

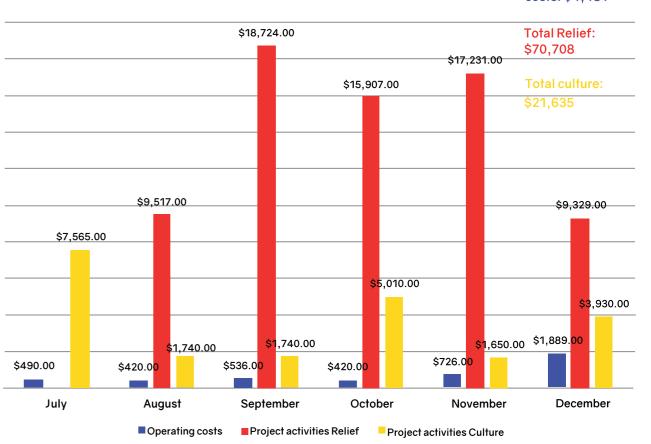


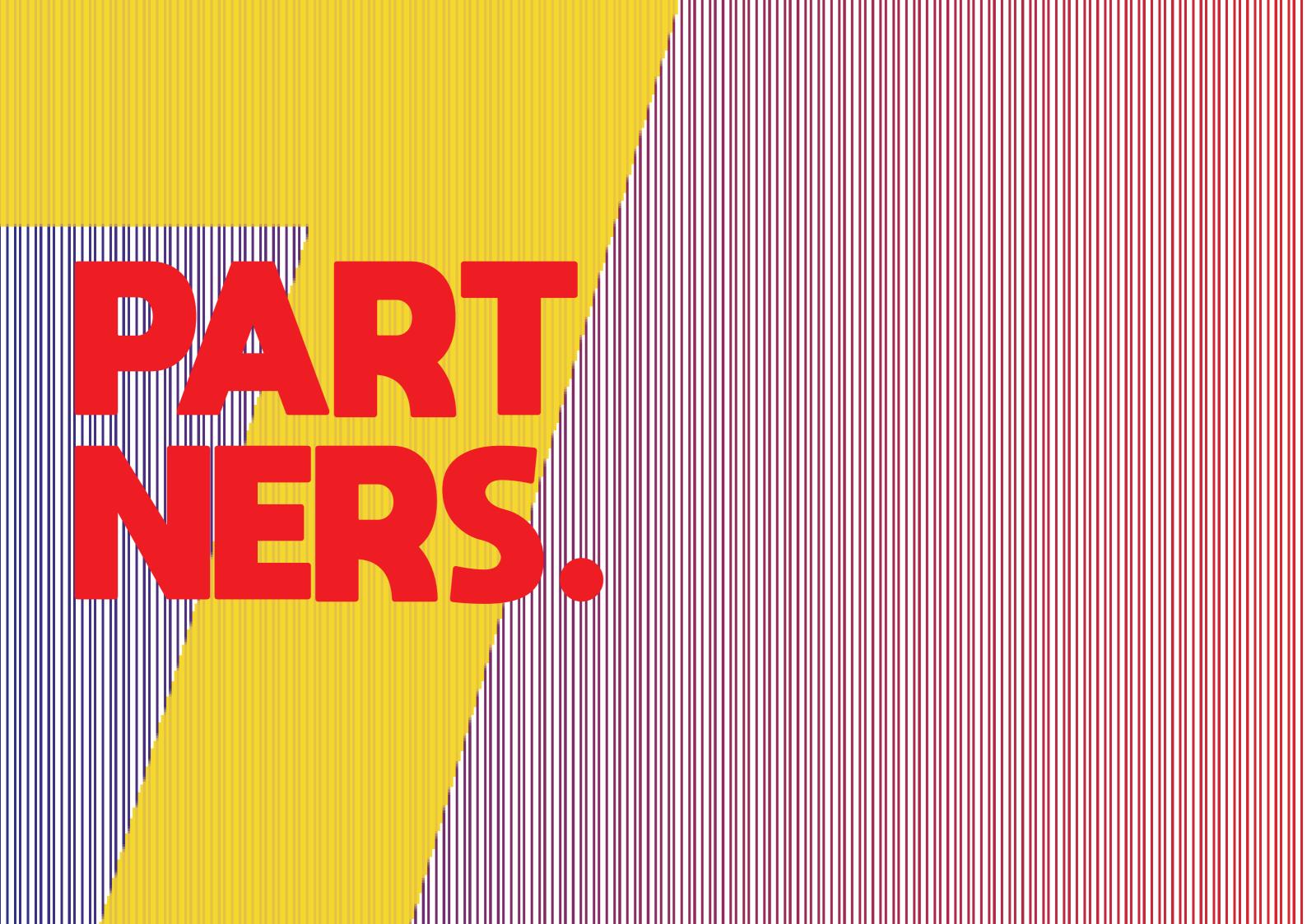
**Ahmad Zaiter**Volunteer Distribution Officer

# HFA Actual Income (USD)



HFA Actual Expenditures (USD) Total Operating costs: \$4,481





# YALLA CARE

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people, organizations, institutions, collectives, artists, activists, partners we worked with in 2020. Special thanks to the Arab Foundation for Freedoms and Equality (AFE), for its continuous support, particularly as a fiscal sponsor.

Below are those that have trusted and supported our action financially in 2020.

Originally started in May 2020 as a fundraiser which grouped LGBTQIA+ organizations in Lebanon in response to the community's needs during the COVID-19 pandemic, Yalla Care has become a coalition to ensure the cohesive distribution and assessment of the community needs after the blast of August 4th.

A MOU, and common needs assessment have been developed, led by HFA, to create focal points for particular service provisions and to enable the community to access direct assistance whilst relaying on coalition referrals to those that require more than one service. Lists were correlated to ensure no one is left behind while each organization relied on its own funding and staff in collaboration with the remaining members.

### Yalla Care members and their relief attributions:

Haven for Artists – Rent and cash assistance, baby kits + medication

AFE / M-Coalition / Tayf
- Food boxes & hygiene,
COVID-19 prevention,
medical consultations,
mental health

Vivre positif / SIDC – HIV, mental health

Marsa - HIV, mental health

Queer Relief fund – shelter renovation and rent assistance, surgeries

Skoun - HIV, addiction center, mental health

LebMash

### **Grants:**

KVS - Koninklijke Vlaamse Schouwburg who financed the film Courage.

MADRE, who reached out after the blast to provide financial support, and made the relief distribution possible after October 15. Contributed to coordination, fundraising and communication efforts.

Outright International, who, along with MADRE, contributed a lot in the relief distribution, contributing to salaries and running costs from November 15th.

Freedom House, who funded Cultural Emergence, bringing culture online in times of isolation Urgent Action Fund, who covered running costs one month only after the blast, contributing in coordination, distributions and the fundraising efforts.

IWPR - Institute for War and Peace Reporting, who is training our team on digital advocacy.

COC Netherlands, who trusted our creativity for PRIDE closing week Video.

AFE - Arab Foundation for Freedoms and Equality, our fiscal sponsors and local partners

# Individual donations (cash, in-kind & crowdfunding campaigns):

Amanda Couzi
Ballromblitz + RadioalHara
Bloem Straat Raffle for Beirut
Anya Kneez
Creatives x BeirutLara Salmon
Cupcake Drag Queen Berlin
Doctors without Borders
Elisabeth Kraus
Erkastaub
Giovani Khalil
Hammam Radio
Help Beirut Now, organized by Gina

Osman
Katie Bush
Lea Moujaes
Lilian Mouthlian
Nabil Storefront fund
Rachel Freeborn
Rami Younes
Rasha Younes
Reem Rifaii
SFX Berlin
Shipping out of Beirut
The Marsm fundraiser - Saliah Artist
Touma Assaf
Wake Island Record Sales



















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https://www.youtube.com/user/HavenForArtists https://www.instagram.com/havenforartists/