

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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Arab NGO Network for Development
شبكة المنظمات العربية غير الحكومية للتنمية

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Executive summary and acknowledgment



Ziad Abdel Samad

The year 2023 was a year full of challenges in terms of peace, security and climate

The Ukrainian-Russian war began in early 2022, causing a surge in food and energy prices, mirroring the enduring global crisis since 2007. The multifaceted impacts of this global conflict, spanning political, security, economic, and climatic domains, further exacerbated the situation in the Arab region, which is still grappling with the aftermath of the pandemic. Indeed, 2023 emerged as a year marked by unprecedented levels of armed conflicts and wars in the Arab region.

In April 2023, the **war broke out in Sudan** between the army and the “Rapid Support Forces”, resulting in widespread destruction and significant loss of life and property. This upheaval dashed the hopes of Sudanese citizens for a democratic transition, a dream they had ardently pursued for years.

The year 2023 concluded with the outbreak of **war in Gaza** on October 7th, an unprecedented conflict characterized by extensive destruction and substantial human and material losses within the Strip. Israel's actions prompted South Africa to file a complaint with the International Court of Justice, seeking investigation into the «crimes against humanity and genocide» committed against the Palestinian population in Gaza. This conflict escalated tensions across the region.

In Yemen, the Houthi forces joined the conflict, threatening to block shipping lanes in the Red Sea, crucial passageways through which 14% of global trade flows. Consequently, shipping costs, energy and food prices escalated, while trade volume in the region plummeted by 42%. The war in Gaza also exacerbated tensions in southern Lebanon, leading to military operations resulting in numerous casualties, property damage, and the displacement of thousands of families to safer areas.

Additionally, escalating tensions between **China and the United States** over Taiwan reverberated through the global economy, impacting the Arab region as well.

And natural disasters too..

In February, a powerful earthquake struck both Turkey and northern Syria, claiming tens of thousands of lives and causing billions of dollars in damages. Similarly, in September, Morocco was rocked by a strong earthquake, resulting in massive loss of life and property. The hurricane that hit Benghazi and Derna unleashed unprecedented flooding in Libya and led to the collapse of dams and bridges, leaving behind a trail of unparalleled human and material losses.

International reports have confirmed that the earth's temperature has risen by 1.4 degrees Celsius since the Industrial Revolution in the



2023 emerged as a year marked by unprecedented levels of armed conflicts and wars in the Arab region.



eighteenth century. The repercussions are now palpable worldwide, from the melting polar ice caps to escalating sea levels, soaring temperatures, and biodiversity loss on land and in the oceans. These phenomena compound the challenges posed by other environmental upheavals observed across the globe.

Against this backdrop, the COP 28 Climate Summit convened in Dubai, culminating in an agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and pollution by transitioning away from fossil fuels toward clean and renewable energy sources. However, despite this commitment, the conference attendees struggled to outline concrete strategies for achieving these ambitious objectives. The path forward appears daunting, with success contingent upon the collective adherence of participating states to the agreed-upon measures.

What about the multilateral global system?

The prevailing conditions have highlighted the fragility of the world order established after World War II and the inability of its institutions to safeguard global peace and security, prevent armed conflicts and wars, and uphold international law and humanitarian standards. This vulnerability extends to the «Bretton Woods» institutions, originally created to promote financial and economic stability and human development. Negotiations surrounding

climate change have underscored the world's failure to shield the planet from rising temperatures, global warming, and greenhouse gas emissions.

The world anticipates significant developments in the upcoming year of 2024. General elections are scheduled in the EU, the USA, UK, India, Indonesia, South Africa, and other nations, with the participation of a substantial portion of the global population. There is a prevailing fear that extremist forces may secure victories, further deteriorating the situation, in addition to existing conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan, and tensions in the Middle East.

World leaders have come to recognize the deep-rooted structured inequalities within the global system, signaling the urgent need for reform. This acknowledgment follows the realization that the «transformational agenda» outlined in Agenda 2030 failed to achieve its intended objectives. The fragility of the global system and its inability to effectively address crises have been clearly demonstrated, beginning with the pandemic and extending through financial, economic, and food-related emergencies, and ending with wars and armed conflicts that have escalated spending on armaments. This adds to the infrastructural and environmental destructions that have led to the exacerbation of the refugee crisis. Furthermore, the rapid advancements in technology and artificial intelligence

underscore the necessity for robust controls to uphold cybersecurity and protect personal data.

Events and developments both regionally and globally underscore the imperative to redouble efforts aimed at restoring stability and fostering a just and comprehensive peace. These efforts must be grounded in principles that uphold the right of individuals to self-determination, the cessation of occupation, and the restoration of social justice and respect for human rights.

How does the Arab region face these challenges?

Amidst these tumultuous times, the Arab region grapples with vast disparities among its countries. While some, like the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, rank among the wealthiest globally, others, such as Somalia, Mauritania, Yemen, and Sudan, are considered among the poorest. This adds to the existing profound imbalance in wealth distribution within each country.

Many nations in the region confront severe structural crises. These encompass escalating debt crises, such as in Lebanon, Tunisia, Jordan, and Egypt, and low growth and soaring unemployment rates, particularly among the youth. Gender discrimination persists, limiting opportunities for women, while restrictions on civic space hinder political participation and development



One of the most prominent challenges lies in the failure to establish the rule of law, characterized by the separation of powers and the peaceful transfer of power based on accountability and transparency.

partnerships. These challenges impact vital sectors like healthcare, education, transportation, and energy, further exacerbating asylum and migration crises. One of the most prominent challenges lies in the failure to establish the rule of law, characterized by the separation of powers and the peaceful transfer of power based on accountability and transparency.

Given these multifaceted challenges, the imperative role of civil society takes precedence. Addressing these issues requires the establishment of strong state institutions, adherence to the rule of law, and the forging of a new social contract based on human rights, democracy, participation, accountability, and responsibility. This also necessitates the pursuit of justice and human development across political, economic, social, environmental, and cultural realms.

What is the role of ANND in the face of these developments?

The Arab NGO Network for Development ANND, alongside its members and partners in the region and worldwide, seeks to respond to these challenges through active engagement in international processes. This engagement encompasses participation in the United Nations and its affiliated institutions,

climate negotiations, annual meetings of International Financial Institutions, the World Trade Organization, and most recently, the Summit of the Future, scheduled for September 2024.

The strategy of ANND is founded on five fundamental strategic goals to be pursued in collaboration with its members and partners. This report succinctly outlines the priorities of the action plan that the Network worked to implement over the past year:

Firstly, enhancing the capabilities of development actors, including organizations, institutions and social groups concerned with development, and enabling them to initiate and engage in social change and achieving social justice;

Secondly, fostering relationships with and mobilizing local communities as active and effective actors for change, moving beyond passive recipients and beneficiaries. This emphasis has grown following the Arab Spring, which underscored the potential strength of the popular and social movements and the vital role of civil society;

Thirdly, work to develop and mobilize alternative knowledge and advocacy tools to influence public policies by fostering collaboration between

academia, activists, and social and political actors;

Fourthly, protecting civic space and defending rights and freedoms, thereby allowing development and social actors to participate, influence, and contribute to social change;

Lastly, developing the institutional and organizational structure, as well as the administrative and financial capacities of the network and its members, to enable an effective and independent role, free from political and financial influence.

Despite the myriad challenges, ANND was able to take bold steps towards achieving the strategic goals and is keen to continue its endeavors line with regional and international developments. Gratitude is extended to partners, members, and the executive team for their invaluable contributions to these efforts.

Beirut, Lebanon on January 28, 2024

Ziad Abdel Samad/Executive Director

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Progress in 2023



Since 1997 ANND has been steadfast in its mission to strengthen and empower civil society and promote democracy, respect for human rights and sustainable development in Arab countries. With no exception, the year 2023 has marked substantial progress in the right direction.

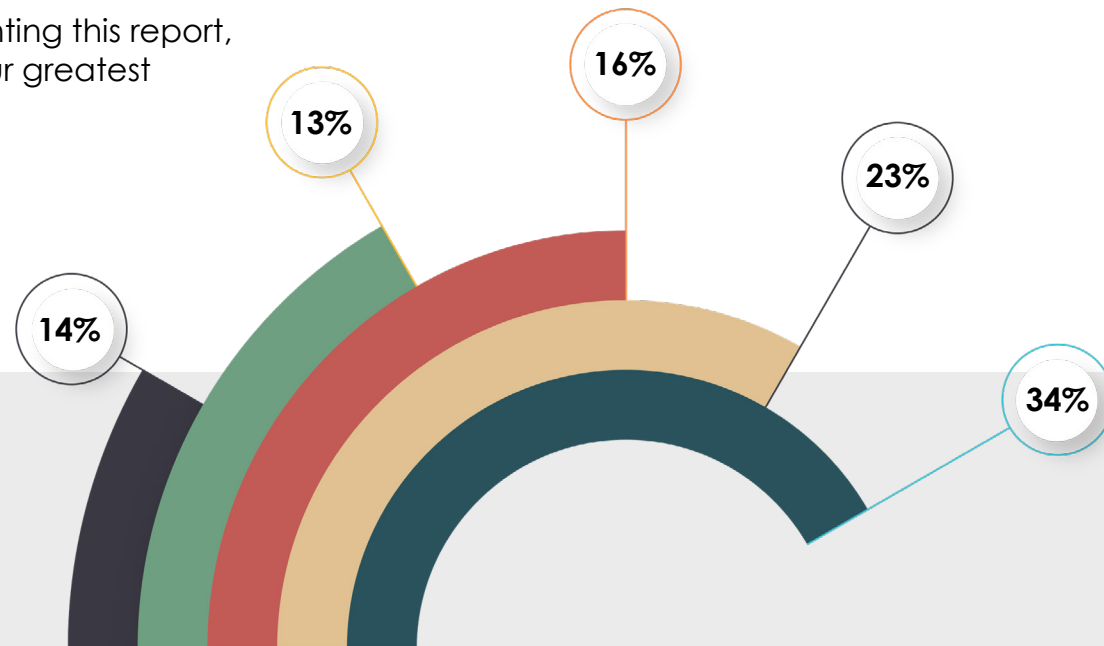
Within the framework of its global strategy 2020-2023 and its annex outlining strategic directions for 2024-2025, ANND has indeed achieved several milestones in 2023 across its main programmatic directions focused on capacity development, advocacy and knowledge production and mobilization.

Guided by our core moral values of equality, transparency, inclusiveness and empowerment, our members, partners and staff have all played a pivotal role in ensuring another year of success.

We take pride in presenting this report, offering a glimpse of our greatest

achievements. Section 1 presents an overview of the main priorities and regional challenges, and section 2 delves into the impact ANND has achieved throughout the year 2023, providing a summary for each of our five strategic objectives, supported by qualitative and quantitative indicators.

In 2023, more than 85% of our financial resources were allocated to projects, activities and solidarity actions, benefiting a large number of members and partner organizations and beneficiaries.



Capacity Development

Institutional Development & Strengthening

Civic Space Program

Advocacy Efforts

Knowledge Production & Mobilization

2023 ACHIEVEMENTS PER STRATEGIC PILLARS





STRATEGIC GOAL 1

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The key achievements reflecting the progress towards strategic goal 1 in 2023 are outlined below:

Direct beneficiaries

Over **300 representatives** from ANND member and partner organizations across **16 Arab countries¹** participated in and benefited from the capacity building and dialogue processes organized by the network at the national and regional levels. The capacity building initiatives spanning over more than 30 days of workshops and seminars, covered crucial topics responding to the needs identified in participatory processes, including:

- **Women's political participation and partnerships**
- **Monitoring partnerships from a human rights-based approach with a focus on gender, youth and transparency.**
- **Climate justice**
- **Civil society engagement in policy making processes in Yemen**

1 - 11 countries where ANND has members: Sudan, Jordan, Bahrain, Iraq, Morocco, Tunisia, Yemen, Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt and Mauritania, in addition to partner organizations from Algeria, Syria, Libya, Qatar and United Arab Emirates.

Snowball effect

The conclusion of the four-year **Safir regional project** targeting youth in the Arab region in 2023 showcased tremendous achievements and increased youth involvement.

289 youths, 73% Women from **9 arab countries** completed in 2023 the training on advocacy and the sustainable development goals (SDGs) through our 20 national partner organizations. These training activities have allowed youth to be more knowledgeable of sustainable development and advocacy processes, and hence promote active citizenship and participation at different levels.



“As a results of the training on advocacy and the SDGs, I was able to increase my awareness and knowledge on how to link the SDGs with women's rights in Egypt.”

Nada Khalifa - Egypt

Induced networking

Networking stands at the core of ANND's work and engagement, and represents a driving force for our work. The varied networking opportunities provided and encouraged by ANND have aimed to raise awareness and knowledge about key issues impacting socio-economic and macroeconomic developments and realities in the Arab region, and mobilize civil society organizations and actors to be involved in policy understanding and making. More precisely in 2023:

- **11 spaces for mutual learning, exchange and alliance building** on social protections have been created in 5 countries with **more than 50 participants, predominantly women.**
- Members and partners in **Syria**  and **Bahrain**  actively participated in networking opportunities by collaborating on the **2023 voluntary national report** of their countries, organizing national consultations and developing spotlight reports in preparation for the High Level Political Forum.



STRATEGIC GOAL 2

ADVOCACY EFFORTS

The key achievements reflecting the progress towards strategic goal 2 in 2023 are outlined below:

Inclusive identification of priorities

In 2023, about **14 consultations and focus group discussions** with civil society organizations and actors were organized in a participatory and inclusive way to identify development priorities. These encompassed topics such as:

- **Civic space in the Arab region**
- **Social protection for agriculture workers in Lebanon**
- **Climate justice topic and preparation for COP 28**
- **Other regional priorities including war and conflicts, gender and women rights, workers' protection and rights, governance and transparency issues, and monetary and financial policies.**

ANND's regional dialogues

150 practitioners including civil society organizations' representatives and youth participated in ANND's regional consultations and dialogues around sustainable development challenges and priorities. Notable activities in 2023 included:

- **Regional civil society forum for sustainable development** in preparation for the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development.
- **Regional Youth Forum**, which created a space for dialogue between **72 youths**, civil society organizations, local authorities and other development actors.

Constructive dialogues

Over **30 dialogues, panels and workshops** were attended by ANND members and partners at the regional and international levels. The dialogues and events presented opportunities to propose alternative policies:

- At the **IMF and World Bank spring and annual meetings**: ANND co-organized side events and engaged in panel discussions around **debt and austerity, taxation and financing social protection, right to health, and gender and feminist economic alternatives**.
- At the **UN ESCWA's Arab Forum for Sustainable Development**: ANND participated in a high-level dialogue on the **partnership with the private sector** and in a panel on the **learning-to-earning agenda** in the Arab region.
- At the **COP 28 Climate Summit: More than 20 side events and negotiations meetings** were attended by ANND representatives around mitigation, adaptation, means of implementation, and integrated holistic approaches.
- **At the UN Human Rights Council**: ANND engaged in **Jordan UPR pre-session** in Geneva and delivered a statement addressing civic space challenges, the right to environment and overall human rights situation in Jordan.
- At the **Policy Forum on Development**: ANND engaged with EU and global actors in dialogue around the EU development cooperation, focusing on the shrinking civic space in the region.

Changing the narrative

ANND supported members and partners in **7 countries** in their UPR and VNR engagement to promote the new development narrative. Here's a list featuring our main engagements in UN-related processes in 2023:

- **Universal Periodic Review**: ANND supported members and partners in **Yemen**  and **Jordan**  in their **submission of joint reports** on the human rights situation, and **mobilized civil society groups in Lebanon**  in preparation for the UPR midterm review.
- **Voluntary National Report**: Members and partners from **Bahrain**  and **Syria**  engaged in **preparing civil society spotlight reports**.
- **High-level Political Forum (HLPF)**: ANND facilitated and supported the engagement of civil society members from **Bahrain** , **Kuwait**  and **KSA**  and the delivery of civil society statements during the HLPF 2023.



STRATEGIC GOAL 3

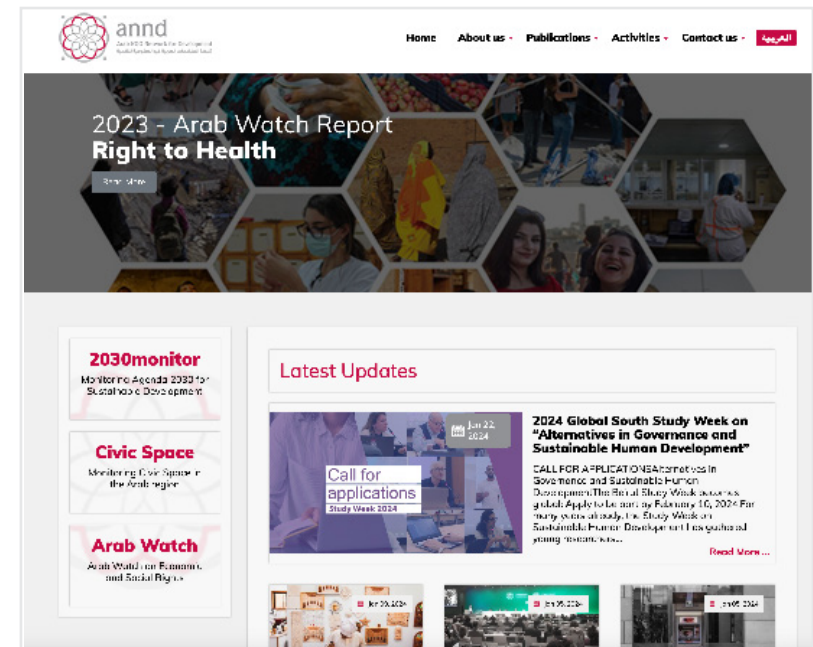
KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION & MOBILIZATION

The key achievements reflecting the progress towards strategic goal 3 in 2023 are represented as follows:

Alternative knowledge

In 2023, ANND produced over **20** research, case studies and policy briefs proposing alternative development policies around the following priorities:

- 1 Arab Watch Report (AWR) on the **right to health**
- 1 policy brief on **interregional trade**
- 3 national case studies on **development partnerships**
- 1 comprehensive **social protection monitor**
- 7 policy briefs on **social protection**.
- 3 publications on ANND's position to **COP 28 Climate Summit**
- 1 research paper on the **role of International Financial Institutions in Iraq**
- 1 paper on **macroeconomic issues and war economy in Yemen**
- 1 paper on **gender equality in Yemen**
- 1 joint submission developed and submitted for **Yemen Universal Periodic Review**
- 2 spotlight reports for **Bahrain and Syria Voluntary National Reports**
- 1 report on **Jordan's Universal Periodic Review**



Arab Watch Report

Within the context of its advocacy work for economic and social rights, ANND established a monitoring function in 2011 to enhance the role of civil society in observing and holding accountable social and economic policies based on their impact on the reality of rights. The most important results of this function are crystallized in the Arab Watch Report on Economic and Social Rights (AWR), which is a periodic report issued by ANND once every two years, focusing on the national, regional and international policies and factors that lead to the violation of the rights being monitored. In 2023, ANND produced and published its

6th Arab Watch Report on the right to health

supported by **1 lead expert, 12 national researchers and 7 experts**, who contributed to a regional report, national reports, thematic reports, a case study, and short articles to the Arab Watch. In a nutshell:

1 regional report	4 thematic reports	11 national reports	1 case study	3 short articles	1 regional launching event was organized and attended by 57 organizations, experts and relevant stakeholders.
2 videos were produced for advocacy and informational purposes.		9 national consultations were organized and attended by over 200 experts and practitioners.		4 advisory committee meetings were organized.	

Accessibility of the knowledge

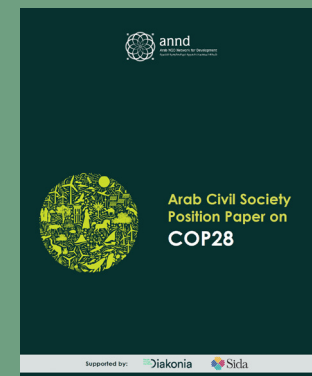
Year 2023 has marked an increase in the accessibility of the knowledge produced by ANND. More precisely:

- Over **900 copies** of ANND's publications were distributed during 2023 events.
- The AWR 2023 on the "right to health" attracted 1,430 users, 2,349 views, and 6,395 performed actions (Arabic website). Meanwhile, the English website had 900 users, 1,764 views, and 4,639 performed actions. This data highlights the **diverse linguistic engagement across the reports**, emphasizing the substantial impact and interaction of users in both Arabic and English contexts.
- The AWR 2023 was featured in the July and August newsletters, reaching over **3,000 recipients**. Similarly, the report was shared across their networks of key regional partners working on socio-economic rights, which ensured a wider outreach.

Mobilization of knowledge

ANND's publications have served members and partners in more than **10 interactions** with different stakeholders, including during the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development, international conferences, IMF/WB spring and annual meetings, capacity development activities, and UPR and VNR engagements.

- In 2023, ANND contributed to the development of ESCWA's fifth Social Development Report (SDR), inputting on **informal workers in the Arab region**. This contribution had mostly benefited from the ANND's AWR on Informal Employment (2016), further disseminating the results of this extensive research work.



STRATEGIC GOAL 4

CIVIC SPACE PROGRAM

The key achievements reflecting the progress towards strategic goal 4 in 2023 are represented as follows:

Civic Space Monitor

In 2023, more than **100 updates** on the civic space situation in **12 arab countries** were posted on the **civic space microsite** and shared through ANND's newsletter and social media pages.

Comparative analysis

In 2023, ANND produced and published **40 reports, infographics & videos** to present in a structured and comparative way the deteriorating civic space situation in the Arab region. A few numbers:

- 1** comparative regional report was developed around the civic space situation in Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, Palestine, Iraq and Sudan.
- 12** national reports were developed addressing civic space and enabling environment in Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, Palestine, Iraq, Sudan, Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, and Yemen.
- 12** infographics were produced on each country covered by the monitor.
- 15** short clips and
- 2** documentaries were produced on the overall civic space in Arab countries.

CIVICUS partnership

As a main research partner to CIVICUS Monitor, ANND continued to provide in 2023 updates on freedoms of association, peaceful assembly and expression in **8 Arab countries** that are Palestine, Sudan, Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya.

The updates served CIVICUS in the development of their global 2023 report on civic space.

Strengthened networking

In 2023, ANND organized **2 regional meetings** attended by over **70 civil society organizations and relevant stakeholders** to identify thematic and advocacy priorities relating to civic space. Besides discussing the progress of the civic space program, these meetings provided an opportunity for participants to identify the main areas of intervention and stakeholder mapping and engagement, as well as best tactics for advocacy.



Our engagement in the civic space program helped our organization gain an in-depth understanding of the Civic Space in Morocco, and developing the national report strengthened our analytical skills. The report was shared regionally, which consolidated our reputation as a key player in the field of civic space. The program generated increased interest in civic participation in Morocco, leading to partnerships with other organizations and strengthening our impact.

Issam Sbihi, Espace Associatif, Morocco.



STRATEGIC GOAL 5

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND STRENGTHENING

The key achievements reflecting the progress towards strategic goal 5 in 2023 are represented as follows:

Institutional growth

In 2023, ANND developed the following **19 new policies and tools** to promote the coordination, communication, and sustainability of the Network and strengthen its institutional capacities:

- 1 policy on Human Resources with 13 practical working tools
- 1 risk management policy with 1 user-friendly tool simplifying risks' monitoring and reporting
- 1 policy on safety and security
- 1 reserve policy
- 1 sub-granting policy

New strategic directions

A meticulously crafted annex to **ANND's strategy** was developed in 2023 in an effort to respond to pressing global, regional and national challenges. This annex was adopted during ANND's General Assembly meeting, which gathered 42 member and partner organizations' representatives.

Coordinated communication

In 2023, ANND published **12 newsletters featuring 48 articles** on diversified topics and priorities, **50% of which tackled regional issues**. These articles represent an important contribution of ANND members and partners.

"Our 2023 newsletters' articles delivery record reached more than **16,000 deliveries.**"

Serving our Network

In 2023, ANND organized the **3 training activities** below to equip members, partners and staff with strong organizational knowledge around key institutional topics that would in turn help them strengthen their own institutions:

1 training on strategic communications involving 14 civil society organizations' representatives.

1 training on Human Resources policies and tools involving ANND staff

1 workshop involving 42 members and partners around strategic budgeting, strategic directions, risk management, growth and reallocation options based on the new reserve policy.

The training on strategic communications helped me develop a clearer vision on how to start developing a communication strategy for my organization. The materials provided constitute a rich reference that will help us develop the next stages of our communication strategy. The information related to social media formed a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics as well as the pros and cons of each platform, which gave me a general understanding of the situation of the platforms at the present time.

Fadwa Farhat, Mouvement Social, Lebanon.

Systemizing networking and exchange

Major institutional milestones have been achieved in 2023 to ensure a more inclusive participation of vulnerable groups in ANND's programs, hence constituting our big wins for 2023. These are the following:

- **1 regional youth network, the "Arab Youth Network - AYN "** was created to engage over 70 youth members from 9 Arab countries in ANND's programs. Members of the AYN Bureau were then elected to coordinate AYN activities with ANND.
- **1 gender and women working group was created** to propose an alternative discourse around tools and strategies used by feminist movements in the region.
- **1 fellowship program was implemented to strengthen** cooperation between ANND and one Moroccan partner, promote knowledge exchange and learning, and support the hosting organization in achieving its strategic and institutional goals.

Global outreach

To influence decision makers and relevant stakeholders, **more than 24 videos and infographics** were produced and disseminated across ANND's platforms. In a nutshell:

- In 2023, **around 61,000 users visited ANND's website** and performed 416,437 actions, **7,114 of which are file downloads** which includes researches and reports and other publications. **Remarkably, the total page views on the website were around 146,418 views.**
- Our communication strategy has successfully created a **core "loyal" audience** that regularly visits ANND's website. The website was majorly visited **from across the whole region (79%) and from other non-Arab countries (roughly 21%).**



Financial Report for the year 2023

	USD
Cumulatif results from previous years	175,023.00
Christian Aid	17,975.00
CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE)	27,700.00
National Endowment for Democracy (NED)	188,700.00
Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)	52,961.00
International Trade Union Confederation	26,646.00
Diakonia	110,003.00
CIVICUS	17,000.00
OXFAM GB	153,567.00
Ford Foundation	430,500.00
Bread for the world	181,144.00
Euro Med Rights	50,236.00
Action 4 SD	12,136.00
Social watch	28,727.00
Open Society Foundation	50,000.00
Total Grant Revenues	1,347,295.00
Activity incomes	7,617.00
Local Donors	9,184.00
Membership	0.00
Total Unrestricted revenues	16,801.00
Financial revenues	49,518.00
Total Revenues	1,413,614.00

Expenditures

ANND Activities Expenses	
Strategic goal No. 1. Build a critical mass of development actors and partners in the Arab region to become effective in development policies at national levels	174,517.00
Strategic goal No. 2. Community organizations are successfully influencing alternative regional and international development policies by working together and collaborating	281,185.00
Strategic goal No. 3. ANND produces knowledge that proposes policy alternatives and serve tasks related to advocacy, awareness-raising, and communication	406,245.00
Strategic Goal No. 4. ANND supports efforts to improve the civil society enabling environment in Arab countries through networking and providing channels	187,320.00
Strategic Goal No. 5. Develop ANND's institutional capacity in coordination, communication, and sustainability	157,315.00
ANND Administrative Expenses	135,311.00
Financial Expenses	30,575.00
Total Expenditures	1,372,468.00
Balance at 31 December 2022	216,169.00