

Lutfia Rabbani Foundation Activities 2022-2023

This year, the Foundation made a total return to activities that were regularized before the pandemic. In this vein, series type events such as the Informal Dialogue Series were reintroduced successfully. There was also a focus on reconnecting with Foundation scholars and alumni in a way that would gain more interaction and engagement with future activities. For this purpose, more physical events were hosted in the Foundation’s offices such as the Iftar Event and the Foundation’s annual meet and greet event. Further, the the Alumni Network Platform and alumni filing systems were evaluated and updated.

The scholarships and grant opportunities which the Foundation offers to both Dutch and Arab students in the MENA region were continued, both by granting scholarships to individual students, and through renewed collaborations with other educational institutes, such as KIT and Leiden University. The expansion of these renewed collaborations moving into the future were one of the primary goals of this year. In addition, 2022-2023 saw the rebranding of the Foundation website and social media platforms with the intention of focusing and strenghtening our brand image.

Activities 2022-2023  
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* Overall**, 12 scholarships and travel grants** were awarded to various scholars this year:
  + 2 students were awarded Mahmoud Rabbani Scholarship – a fully financed Master or PhD scholarship at a Dutch university or other institute for higher learning;
  + 1 student was awarded the Leiden University Fund – a fully financed Master scholarship at Leiden University for students from the Arab World. This scholarship fund had been renewed for another three years in 2021-2022.
  + 4 students were awarded the Vreede Scholarship for International Law – for Arab students in international law, offered at the International Court of Justice in the Hague. 1 of these students were funded for the on-site Winter course and 3 were funded for the on-site Summer course;
  + 5 Travel Grants were awarded – offered to Dutch and Arab students and professionals seeking experience in the Netherlands or the Arab World;
* The Lutfia Rabbani Foundation funded for the fifth time the **International Documentary Film festival Amsterdam (IDFA)** in November 2022, supporting 12 young Arab filmmakers from Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Sudan. The funds provided by the Foundation went towards their participation in the IDFAcademy, an intensive training programme for emerging documentary filmmakers and producers. The aim of this collaboration for the LRF is to contribute to make IDFA more inclusive, by bringing a rich source of young Arab talents including their ideas and expertise to enrich the film community in and around IDFA, offering different perspectives and valuable insights. While previous years had seen the organization of an online Meet & Greet with these filmmakers, this year the Foundation decided together with IDFA to hold this event later, in November, during the next festival period to take advantage of IDFA´s new Amsterdam location at Vondel CS and hold the event in person. Eva Bottinga from IDFA Development and Tamara Raab from IDFA Digital & Production gave the LRF team a tour of said location. Previous **film screening** events were recorded and shared on the Foundation website as episodes of **Rabbani Talks**– a series of online dialogue events of which all previous episodes can also be found on our [website](https://rabbanifoundation.org/episodes/). The physical event may possibly also be recorded and added to this series as a new episode since the screening will be followed up with panel discussions.
* The Foundation held several events in their offices this year starting with the **annual Meet & Greet** involving the new scholars, alumni from different years, partners and Board members. In April, a more **informal gathering for Iftar** during the month of Ramadan was held in the offices and brought together scholars, a different group of alumni and LRF team members. These events help keep in touch with past and present LRF scholars and provide an attractive social network for prospective students who are thinking of applying for a scholarship via the LRF. Finally, an **Informal Dialogue event**, which is part of a series the LRF had held several times before the pandemic, took place in June. A small group made up of different partners of the LRF as well as people the Foundation already has or wishes to have on its network who may be working related to or interested in the chosen subject matter are invited to listen to a keynote speaker and have a candid dialogue expressing their own insights. This year the speaker was Umayya Abu Hanna, a Palestinian-Finnish writer and journalist who is writing a book regarding the cultural histories of Palestine while also working with The Hummus Academy, an organization dedicated to decolonizing indigenous cuisines. Abu Hanna gave a presentation and led the discussion about the cultural significance of cuisine in Palestine.
* The Lutfia Rabbani Foundation continued its support for the **Nour Project**, initiated by the Leiden branch of AIESEC the Netherlands. The Nour Project sends a group of both Dutch and international students to the MENA region for 6 weeks over the Summer and Winter seasons to work in various projects and internships in their destination country of choice. 2020 had marked the **10-year anniversary** of the partnership between the Nour Project and LRF, which had been celebrated through an online campaign. This partnership underwent an evaluation this year to decide on strategic steps to improve the impact of LRF support and of the exchange projects themselves, as well as a financial review of funds allocated and spent over previous years. A current LRF scholar was invited to the **Nour Preparation Day** to give presentations introducing the country they are from and reflecting on their experience of the cross-cultural dialogue in the Netherlands for high school and university students to encourage them to go on exchange projects in the MENA region.
* The social media accounts and particularly the website of the Foundation underwent significant renewal this year with the purpose of applying a stronger “brand image”, better engaging with the Foundation’s target audience, and adding the feature of a donate button. The addition of a new team member to work in Communications helped to speed up this process and to create new ideas, namely the **Red Dot Campaign** and the formation of a **TikTok account** for the Foundation. The former involved an online social media series in which LRF team members will visit, introduce, and feature different establishments, projects, individuals etc. in the Netherlands that promote the Euro-Arab dialogue and can speak to the Foundation’s target audience. This campaign will also be featured in the upcoming TikTok account of the Foundation. The 18-30 year old part of the target audience of LRF are avid users of this platform, and more and more businesses, foundations and organizations use TikTok to communicate in an easily accessible manner to this group which what the Foundation aims to do. In this vein, an **Instagram giveaway**, another popular form of engaging with young target audiences, was carried out via the LRF Instagram and those who interacted with, shared, and followed the Foundation account were put in a random prize draw with the winner being able to earn different Euro-Arab dialogue related prizes.
* The Foundation’s partnership with the **Leiden University**, which is marked by the matching LUF-LRF scholarship, was renewed in 2022 for three more years. Following this, several meetings were conducted to explore ideas for expanding the existing partnership between LRF and the university. This conversation will hopefully culminate in additional joint scholarships to match the impressive demand.
* In May 2020, the Lutfia Rabbani Foundation and **KIT Royal Tropical Institute** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). One of the activities undertaken as part of this MOU was the sponsorship of participants from the MENA region to join the **Gender Training Programs** starting from 2020. In 2023, the Foundation once again sponsored the program, now in its second phase. This partnership has been especially important for the Foundation as it is aimed at ‘training the trainers’ – the impact of the program grows exponentially. KIT’s newest phase of Gender Training Program, called Feminist Edge, will have a renewed focus on the importance of feminist understanding and practices. LRF will once again start a decision process on supporting this new program.
* The Lutfia Rabbani Foundation hosted a table at the 13th **Middle East North Africa (MENA) Trade Dinner** in The Hague in March 2022, inviting representatives from some of the Foundation’s strategic partners and supporters. The Foundation’s participation at this event stems from its belief that the business community has a key role to play in supporting its mission of increasing cultural and educational exchanges aimed at strengthening Euro – Arab dialogue and understanding. The Foundation’s MSR scholar Charelle Abdallah delivered a short speech on their projects and perspectives on Euro – Arab relations.



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