

RELOCATE REDEFINE REBUILD

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020



 **FAIRE**  
REFUGEE ENTREPRENEUR

# President's Intro

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2020 was a difficult year across the globe.

The Covid-19 pandemic did not discriminate; everyone was at risk, regardless of social status, country, colour or gender. We saw a world turned on its head, where successful companies were forced into massive layoffs as business ground to halt, and where “working from home” went from being a rare occurrence, to the new normal.

What didn't change was the need to provide opportunities for newcomers. In fact, many refugee and migrant entrepreneurs were doubly hit by the pandemic — not only did they see their newly launched or developing businesses come to a sudden and complete stop, but due to their refugee status, they were also often ineligible for government aid.

FAIRE, like many other philanthropic organizations, was affected by the pandemic. We were forced to adjust our working habits and to rapidly onboard new tools. What didn't change was our commitment to supporting refugee and migrant entrepreneurs across France.

While budgetary reductions due to the pandemic forced us to reduce spending, we felt it important to continue to support our charity partners and their incubator programs, and thus made 127,500€ in donations. Open communication as to how the pandemic was affecting each structure was key to our continued, successful collaboration. You can find out more about our partners on pages three and four.

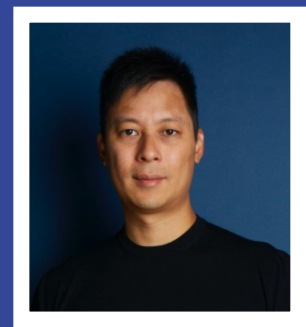
The year 2020 saw us take our jury selection process online. We managed to digitalize our entire process and approved two new entrepreneurs and their businesses in June to join our loan and accompaniment program.

We are pleased to be working with Ousmane Bah, a young entrepreneur from Guinea whose application to fight illiteracy has a bright future, and Rooh Savar whose ambitious online platform Jahan Info affords its clients access to personalized information on geoeconomic and geopolitical trends. You can read more about them on page six.

One of the activities of which we are particularly proud is the emergency response to the pandemic that we were able to put together in a few short months in partnership with SINGA (one of our incubator partners), and the Edmond de Rothschild Foundations. The emergency fund distributed a total of 50 000€ to fourteen refugee and migrant entrepreneurs and/or organizations that provide valuable services to them.

For majority of entrepreneurs, the funding was vital as they had had no incoming revenues for several months. The tripartite agreement was a first for all three structures, and its success bodes well for future collaborations. You can read more about the Covid emergency fund project and its beneficiaries on pages eight and nine.

As I look ahead to the coming year, I don't doubt we will continue to be impacted by Covid. I am also sure however that FAIRE will continue to develop our support programs and I look forward to meeting the talented newcomer entrepreneurs that will lead the way to a brighter future.



Nick Nopporn Suppipat  
President of FAIRE

# Who are we ?

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FAIRE is an endowment fund created in 2018 by Nick Nopporn Suppipat, a successful entrepreneur and political refugee, who was forced to flee his homeland of Thailand in 2014 when the military junta came to power. Nick sees himself as both a refugee and an entrepreneur. He believes that countless refugees like him have what it takes to create successful businesses and contribute to France's economic development.

By launching FAIRE, he wanted to create an organization that could support refugees and migrants who simply had to leave everything behind and start from scratch. As such, the fund is a way of showing his gratitude to France. The FAIRE fund is committed to supporting refugee entrepreneurship on a daily basis, specifically with two areas of focus:

## Our work

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The FAIRE fund is committed to supporting refugee entrepreneurship on a daily basis, specifically with two areas of focus:

- ▶ Supporting refugee entrepreneurs and/or other non-profit organizations working on entrepreneurship among these groups
- ▶ Contributing to public debate around refugees and migrants, their role, their contributions and the issue of their economic and social inclusion

## Our vision

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We firmly believe refugees represent a pool of untapped talent and that their capacity for innovation can be a real opportunity and source of momentum for France and the wider economy. FAIRE is committed to bringing ideas to life and supporting refugees with their entrepreneurial goals.



# Donation program for non-profit organizations

The donation program was the first program developed by FAIRE. Through it, we make donations to partner organizations that facilitate refugee entrepreneurship, specifically by enabling business incubation or acceleration.

In 2020, FAIRE continued to provide support to four organizations: makesense, PLACE, SINGA and Techfugees, and made a one-time donation to New Women Connectors. Our partners share our values of inclusion, integrity, innovation, impact, and a deep conviction that refugees are an opportunity for France and its economy.

It seemed fundamental to us to continue to support our four long-standing partners because we know how much the COVID-19 crisis has impinged on the smooth running of their projects and programs. FAIRE wanted to stay by their side and help them keep up their activities.

**make\_sense**  
\_learn \_create \_transform



makesense was one of our partners most affected by the coronavirus crisis. Some of the association's employees were placed on temporary lay-off and the COMBO incubation program launch was deferred. We are pleased to note that the delay was temporary and the COMBO program launched in September 2020, and will continue until July 2021. Interest in the initiative continues to be strong with 60 applications received. Nineteen participants were selected, representing sixteen different nationalities, to participate in an immersion and exploration phase from September to December.

FAIRE continues to support makesense via this program and in December 2020, participated in a jury selection panel for the refugee entrepreneurs approved for the incubation phase that began in January with 12 participants.

**PLACE**  
NETWORK

In 2020, PLACE Network was able to continue its flagship program – the Catalyst Academy – designed for migrants to accelerate their resettlement in France. This academy was created to provide migrants and refugees with the skills needed to evolve in highly changing economies and to meet their specific needs.

In partnership with the Ecole des Ponts Business School, this original structure also launched an Innovation and Technology Management certificate, a new generation acceleration program allowing newcomers to access interesting jobs in the corporate sector. Kristina Vayda, FAIRE's Executive Director, spoke on the panel "Recruiting and Investing in Newcomer Talent" during the launch of this new opportunity for refugees.



SINGA France has been prolific and has been able to adapt to the constraints of the health crisis, maintaining a large part of its actions and going digital. The organization also took the opportunity to launch AlloMondo, a solidarity project that connects refugees and locals during confinement. The idea was to set up a platform that would generate social links, by connecting, via telephone or video calls, locals who want to be useful and newcomers who want to interact, get involved and meet new friends.

Furthermore, SINGA France also participated in the development of a COVID solidarity fund to support refugee entrepreneurs during the crisis, alongside FAIRE and the Edmond de Rothschild Foundations.



Techfugees was also impacted by the crisis and had to cancel its 2020 Summit. Nonetheless, this resourceful partner managed to run several projects and programs simultaneously, including Basefugees and the #TF4Women program, a fellowship program dedicated to refugee women in the Tech sector.

In 2020, Techfugees also launched a program allowing tech talent from forced migration backgrounds to speak as experts at major conferences on Tech-related topics. FAIRE is excited about the launch of this promising program that will allow for greater inclusion of talented refugees and an increase in their visibility.



In 2020, FAIRE was delighted to provide financial support to New Women Connectors (NWC), a movement led by migrant and refugee women who have joined forces to become a collective movement at the European level.

The one-time grant enabled migrant and refugee women based in France to participate in a conference held in Brussels in January 2020. During this conference, they identified the methods and devices needed to facilitate their participation in the workplace, and in the sector of entrepreneurship.

# Direct support program for refugee entrepreneurs

Since 2019, FAIRE has been working on a second program, the direct support program for refugee entrepreneurs, which allows us to expand our actions by supporting entrepreneurs at crucial moments in the development of their business.

This program was created following an observation made by FAIRE concerning the difficulties linked to access to financing and loans for entrepreneurs. This second program is therefore based in part on zero-interest loans which, in 2020, could reach up to 30 000€.

This financial support is aimed at entrepreneurs with a forced migration background who have an entrepreneurial project. We focus on large-scale economic projects - companies with a national or international vocation - and we remain open to all sectors of activity. The entrepreneur's project must be sufficiently advanced to show either POC (proof of concept or at least, a market study identify need).

Far from being a simple funder, we are committed to providing full support including mentoring and networking. This program is still at an early stage but we aim to make it our flagship program.

## The program

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Direct financial assistance



Counseling & Mentoring



Professional Network

We work with our partners to make our services known to refugee entrepreneurs. The process for accessing a loan is as follows:

In order to apply, the entrepreneur must first fill out an initial form that allows FAIRE to determine basic project eligibility. Should the project fall within FAIRE's mandate, the entrepreneur will then be invited to forward more information regarding his/her business. If the project passes through this second evaluation stage, the entrepreneur will be invited to appear before a selection jury composed of members of our Board of Directors and other sector specialists as needed. If the candidate is selected, an agreement is signed to disburse the funds. A regular follow-up is then put in place to ensure the best possible support.

In 2020, during the confinement, FAIRE was able to organize a second selection jury by videoconference. Today, we proudly fund two new refugee entrepreneurs in addition to Ghaees Alshorbajy, who joined the program in 2019.



# Focus on our new entrepreneurs

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During the lockdown, instead of curtailing its activities, FAIRE sought to support the refugee entrepreneurs as much as possible. Thus, despite the global health crises, we were able to organize a second selection panel via videoconference. At the end of this session, FAIRE chose to support two new entrepreneurs.

## Ousmane Bah

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Ousmane Bah is a talented young entrepreneur who developed a passion for teaching during his exile. When he arrived in France, he realized that many people had a poor command of the language, which hindered their integration. As a result, he created SOLODOU in order to help illiterate people in France and in around the world.

His project is an app that allows people to learn to read and write independently. In no time, users have taken to this tool and requests from organizations have begun to emerge. FAIRE is very proud to be in a position to support this ambitious project, which has a strong social impact and can be adapted to many countries.

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## Rooh Savar

Rooh Savar is an Iranian entrepreneur who has developed Jahan.info, an ambitious AI (artificial intelligence) monitoring platform that analyses local media and keeps track of the trends within the targeted foreign country, translating the information into the local country's language.

If his name rings a bell, that makes sense! In addition to carrying out several projects, Rooh is also the President of SINGA France, one of FAIRE's partners.



# Communication and advocacy

One of FAIRE's major activities is communication and advocacy. We strongly believe in the potential of people from forced migration backgrounds, not only because of our convictions, but also because of our president's experience.

## Changing the narrative around refugees

For us, the term "refugee" refers simply to a transitory status. It does not define the person. Each refugee or migrant has had a life before migration, a professional background, life experiences. We believe that the incredible strength and resilience it takes to embark on a perilous and often cruel journey of exile is an illustration of the incredible determination of these individuals.

We are convinced that refugees represent an opportunity for the host countries and their economies. They are the future employees, the future employers, and bring a diversity that will allow businesses, public organizations and charities to innovate and grow.

In 2020, through our website and social media channels, FAIRE continued to highlight structures and organizations with similar goals. We also continued to profile inspiring and resilient refugee entrepreneurs.



At the beginning of the year, we also had the opportunity to translate and disseminate the 2019 survey conducted with the CFE (Center For Entrepreneurs) on the state of refugee entrepreneurship and refugee entrepreneurship support structures around the world.

Although the health crisis has complicated things, we also wanted to work on the issue of changing the narrative and invite refugees to speak with us at conferences and let them talk about their journey and their vision.

In 2021, in collaboration with our partners and structures operating in the same ecosystem, we want to continue to make the voice of refugees heard. Migration is an essential societal issue that should not be avoided in public debates.



# Focus on the COVID emergency fund

We could not prepare this annual report without highlighting one of the initiatives that made us particularly proud in 2020: the creation of the COVID-19 emergency fund, in partnership with the Edmond de Rothschild Foundations and SINGA France.

At the beginning of 2020, a large part of the world was hit hard by a little-known virus: COVID 19. France was not spared and, in March 2020, a series of unprecedented measures were put in place in response to the health crisis. On March 17, 2020, a strict confinement was instituted and many businesses and activities had to close or had their activities scaled down. The economy was severely impacted.

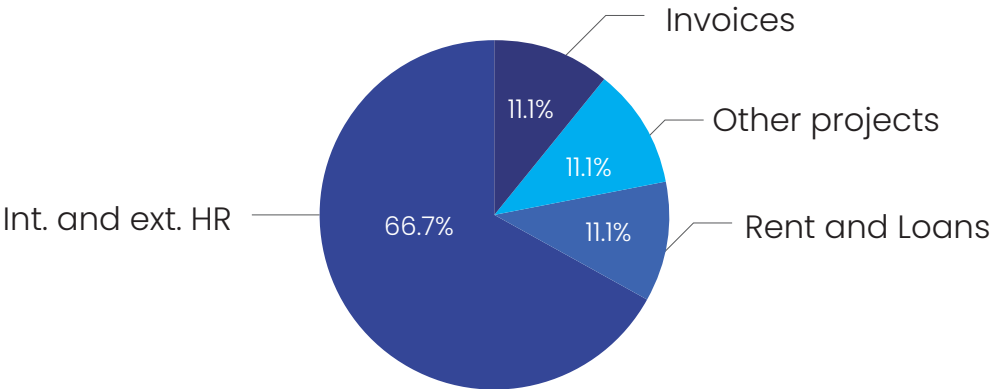
Inevitably, entrepreneurs have been particularly affected by these restrictions and the majority of them have seen a decrease, or even a sudden stop, of their activity. For refugee entrepreneurs who are confronted with additional challenges on a daily basis due to their status, notably concerning access to networks or financing, this crisis may have amounted to a double punishment.

Aware of these difficulties and wishing to support the incredible dynamism of these entrepreneurs, the Edmond de Rothschild Foundations, FAIRE and SINGA France decided to join forces to create an emergency fund in response to COVID-19.

The three organizations worked together throughout 2020 to assist 7 organizations, including 14 entrepreneurs, in a variety of activities: catering and restoration, metal recycling, solidarity housing, artificial intelligence, etc.

The support was done through donations or subsidies, and was aimed at both refugee/migrant entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs proposing a project for people from a migration background who had noted either a drop in activity, a need for cash flow, a loss of financing resources or an inability to claim state aid.

## Use of funds



100%

## 100% of the beneficiaries are satisfied with the emergency fund and are very grateful

However, even though the entrepreneurs that were supported agree that this support helped them to keep going during the crisis, all of them remain worried about the future of their business in a context that remains very uncertain. Entrepreneurs from the catering sector in particular were the most concerned, despite the many support services provided by the state.



“We would like to thank you for the invaluable help you have offered us. This help has allowed us to receive a salary in an economic context where earning a salary is becoming more and more complicated, and to provide for the fundamental needs of our family (rent, basic necessities). It has allowed us to stay on track both from a professional and personal point of view.”

A refugee entrepreneur who started her own business.



## Raising awareness for the project

The emergency fund project, the first of its kind for FAIRE, was the subject of a coordinated communication campaign with stakeholders to highlight the initiative. The campaign was launched on July 21, 2020, mainly on the web, with the publication of an article and a press release. However, it was via the social networks that the announcement gained the most ground.

We also had the opportunity to post this initiative on the “actions-fondations-covid19.org” platform, a website created by the CFF in order to highlight the specific initiatives of funds and foundations during the COVID-19 crisis. Thus, 71 structures proposed support actions during this unprecedented period.

# FAIRE at conferences and events



As in 2019, FAIRE was asked on several occasions to speak at roundtables or conferences. We are delighted and honored by the invitations to speak and each time we are happy to talk about our commitment to entrepreneurs from forced migration backgrounds.



## “Resisting Silence Voices of New Women in Digital”

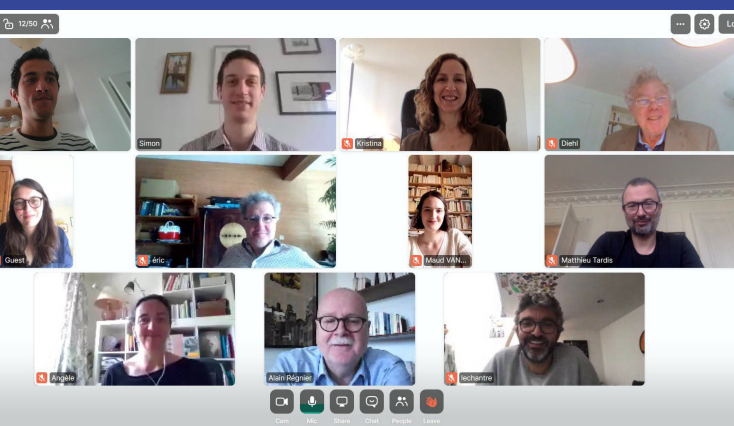
At the beginning of the year, Kristina Vayda was invited by New Women Connectors, in Brussels, to a conference whose theme was “Resisting Silence: Voices of New Women in Digital Age”.

This day was an opportunity to highlight the voices and stories of refugee women, but also to reflect collectively on the role of policies and structures in the integration of refugee women, who are too often isolated and dependent on other structures. Our Executive Director was able to address this issue from the perspective of economic inclusion and entrepreneurship.

In October, the issue of inclusion was also at the heart of the debates at SINGA France which organized the round table discussion on “The financial inclusion of refugees, a responsibility of the private sector? “. This roundtable brought together SINGA, La Nef, WE DO GOOD, and FAIRE to discuss the financing of projects led by people in migration situations.

More recently, in November, Kristina Vayda was invited by Startups without Borders to the SWB Summit on the roundtable entitled “The investors backing a brave new startup landscape”, alongside Amplio Ventures, Included VC and SensAI.

## FAIRE on the DiAIR board



In 2020, Kristina Vayda, Executive Director of FAIRE, joined the DiAIR board - Délégation Interministérielle à l'Accueil et à l'Intégration des Réfugiés - alongside 14 other representatives. This is a strategic steering committee that regularly discusses migration and issues around how best to welcome newcomers, as well as the DiAIR's actions.

RELOCATE REDEFINE REBUILD

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