

2021-2022
ANNUAL REPORT

ARAVA INSTITUTE

FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES



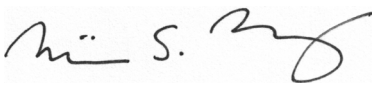
Arava
Institute

מכון הערבה מעמד ואדי ערבה



Dear friends,

We are delighted to present to you the Arava Institute and Friends of the Arava Institute's annual report. Over this past year, the impact of climate change has received greater worldwide attention, and the Arava Institute is an important part of the response. In October 2021, Arava Institute leaders traveled to Glasgow to participate in the United Nations Climate Change Conference – COP26. The conference highlighted the urgent need for regional cooperation to ensure a sustainable future for all. The Institute's applied environmental diplomacy efforts are addressing the regional effects of global climate change. We brought recycled water to Palestinian farmers, harnessed the sun's energy for agriculture in Israel, and empowered another diverse generation of environmental peacebuilders. As travel restrictions lifted, the student body at the Institute again grew. We also welcomed new leadership and staff members who carry a renewed and exciting vision. We are tremendously grateful to our community of global changemakers who enable us to advance cross-border environmental cooperation between Israel, Palestine, and Jordan to strengthen vulnerable communities and change the region's trajectory. We are excited that people are traveling once again and thrilled to welcome our supporters to the Arava Institute. Thank you for your generous support, which makes this essential work possible.



Miriam May

*Chief Executive Officer
Friends of the Arava Institute*



Dr. Tareq Abu Hamed

*Executive Director, Arava Institute
for Environmental Studies*



Michael Marcus

*Chair, Board of Directors
Friends of the Arava Institute*

LAST YEAR AT A GLANCE

- ▶ **ACADEMIC STRENGTH:** The Institute once again brought a diverse student body to campus. Alongside Israelis, Jordanians, and Palestinians, students represented countries such as the US, Canada, Germany, Sudan, and the UK
- ▶ **RESEARCH INNOVATION:** New, innovative farming methods were piloted to address the desertification of land resulting from climate change
- ▶ **LEADERSHIP IN CLIMATE COOPERATION:** Dr. Tareq Abu Hamed co-chaired the Regional Cooperation Working Group of Israeli President Isaac Herzog's Climate Forum
- ▶ **INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION:** Arava Institute leadership participated in the UN Conference on Climate Change, COP26, and the Institute received accreditation to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

COP26

UN Conference on Climate Change

At **COP26**, our leadership amplified the Arava Institute's important transboundary environmental work, learned more about other approaches, and initiated new international partnerships in our mission to face the climate crisis.



ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Throughout the academic year, the Arava Institute was confronted with COVID-19 challenges as well as rising political unrest in the region. Our close-knit campus community banded together to face these complexities. **Over 80 students studied at the Arava Institute during the 2021-22 academic year.** For the first time since the start of the pandemic, a significant group of international students from the US, Canada, Sudan, Germany and the UK joined Israeli, Jordanian, Palestinian and Bedouin students on campus.

Students and interns drew connections between their studies and the climate crisis through classes such as *Climate Change in the Middle East and Post-Oil*; *Statistical Reasoning for Environmental Scientists*; and research in transboundary water diplomacy, butterfly biodiversity in Jordan, and the use of grey water to irrigate crops.



“The Arava Institute is a life-changing place. It is true when they say that environmental issues have no real borders. They both concern and connect the entire world... I have grown, learned, laughed and experienced some of the most foundational moments of my life so far.”

- STUDENT, SPRING 2022

“I moved to Israel when I was five years old, but I had never formed friendships with Arab Israelis. Now, I have Palestinian friends who listen to my perspective and acknowledge my pain — and I hear theirs. The conversations are difficult, but we do not have the luxury to disengage...I wish for us all to learn to see each other as humans — to bear witness to each other’s pain, to hear one another’s stories.”

- STUDENT, SPRING 2022



INTRODUCING NEW STAFF MEMBERS

Dr. Tali Zohar became Director of the Institute's Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation earlier this year. With degrees from the Ruppin Academic Center and the University of Haifa, she is now pursuing research to address the water-energy-food nexus, the assimilation of low-carbon technologies, and sustainable local solutions for water scarcity and clean energy production. Her research addresses the increased desertification of the region caused by climate change. In addition to her research, Dr. Zohar teaches Alternative Energy Science at the Institute.



[video profile online](#)

Dr. Jessica Schäckermann became Academic Director in August 2021 after serving as a lecturer at the Arava Institute. With degrees from the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, the Leuphana Universität Lüneburg in Germany, and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, she is now engaged in socio-ecological research and agroecology, working with both The Dead Sea-Arava Science Center and the Agricultural R&D Center in the Southern Arava.



[video profile online](#)



Students Mobilizing for Climate Action

Just a week before attending COP26, our Deputy Director, Eliza Mayo, participated in the Tel Aviv Climate March with some of the Institute's current students and alumni. Arava Institute students marched in yellow and decorated in sunflowers. Like the sunflower is resilient to climate change, we are aspiring to create resilience for nature and the most vulnerable parts of society and humanity who will be heavily affected by climate change.

Innovative Research

Arava Institute scientists and researchers engage in cutting-edge research and introduce innovative technology. This past year, our researchers published more than twenty articles in scientific journals as well as proceedings from conferences. Here are just a couple:

TAREQ ABU HAMED

"Small-Size Biogas Technology Applications for Rural Areas in the Context of Developing Countries"

*A chapter in **Anaerobic Digestion in Built Environments** from IntechOpen, March 2021*

SIBEL RAQUEL ERSOY, JULIA TERRAPON-PFAFF, TAREQ ABU HAMED, JOZSEF KADAR

***Sustainable Transformation of Israel's Energy System: Development of a Phased Model Climate Change, Energy and Environment**, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, September 2021*

AGRIVOLTAICS (AGRIPV FARMS)

Food systems in the Middle East are increasingly vulnerable to changes in climate, which are leading to an alarming increase in aridity in the region. To address the threats of water scarcity and food insecurity and to bolster the use of solar energy, the Arava Institute is piloting a novel ecosystem approach, Agrivoltaics, which is the simultaneous use of land for both solar power generation and farming.

Agrivoltaics offers solutions to farmers whose crop yields are suffering from the impacts of climate change. It will support economic stability and well-being for the families and communities. This is the first AgriPV pilot in Israel.



AGRIVOLTAICS

Agrivoltaics is the simultaneous use of land for solar power generation and farming.

Agrivoltaics offers solutions to farmers whose crop yields are suffering from the impacts of climate change.



Saving and Producing Energy

There are cooler conditions below the solar PV panels (created by the plants, irrigation and shade).

This reduces the temperature of the panels and increases their efficiency generating renewable energy.



Saving Water

Our crops are grown in the partial shade of the solar PV panels. As a result, the crops require less water, therefore contributing to sustainable water management.



Increasing Crop Yield

This energy and food generating ecosystem is an important mechanism for maximizing crop yields, efficiently delivering water to plants and generating renewable energy in dryland environments.

WHY IT MATTERS

The Middle East faces **extreme heat waves** and **severe drought**

Agrivoltaics will help farmers **fight food insecurity**

Agrivoltaics can **bolster the resilience of solar energy and food production.**

It will allow farmers to maintain their farms in light of increased desertification and climate adaptation

Recycling Water to Empower Communities

Water remains one of the scarcest resources in the Middle East, a challenge exacerbated by climate-induced desertification. Recycled water treatment technology can provide solutions to communities that are most at-risk.

AN EXAMPLE OF OUR CROSS-BORDER IMPACT

Location: Al Sira al-Shamaliya, a Palestinian community in the north of the West Bank

Project Plan: A recycled water system installed in Al Sira al-Shamaliya will treat the wastewater from a school of 300 children.

The treated water from the school will be used to irrigate 300 olive trees, strengthening a community whose livelihood largely depends on the olive harvest.

The expected revenue from the olive oil from 300 olive trees is around \$25,000 per olive harvest.



1

SYSTEM

=



300

CHILDREN

+



300

OLIVE TREES



“Our project in Al Sira is decentralized and does not require major infrastructure development. This cross-border project demonstrates that we do not have to sign another Oslo Accord in order to begin to create real change.”

- INTERN, SPRING 2022

Center for Applied Environmental Diplomacy

The Arava Institute's Track II Environmental Forum, in partnership with the Palestinian NGO Damour for Community Development, has continued to advance cross-border environmental cooperation between Israel, Palestine, and Jordan to improve lives, protect the environment, build trust, and support sustainable resolution of conflict. Former Executive Director Dr. David Lehrer now serves as the Director of International Development, overseeing both the Track II Environmental Forum as well as regional diplomatic activity and related academic research.

Key successes in this arena include the following:

- **Bringing Water to Farmers in the Jordan Valley**

The wastewater treatment plant located in al-Bireh (near Ramallah) discharges its treated wastewater into Wadi al-Ein, polluting groundwater, wadis, and springs. Building a trunk line from the treatment plant to Palestinian farmers in the Jordan Valley will prevent pollution and provide Palestinian farmers with desperately needed water for agriculture. Disagreements between the Palestinian Water Authority and the Israeli Civil Administration over the route of a proposed pipeline through Area C prevented the advancement of a solution. After four years of meetings, field studies, reports, and designs, led by the Institute's Track II Forum, the Israeli Civil Administration has awarded the initial permit for the Al-Bireh pipeline. With this in hand, the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) will now move forward to secure funding as well as the contractor and infrastructure needs for the pipeline. Friends of the Arava Institute thanks Amr Awadallah, David and Ora Chaiken and the Isidore C. and Penny W. Myers Foundation for their support of this project.



- **People to People Diplomacy – Bringing Gazan Professionals to Israel**

In October 2021, the Institute brought a group of Gazan technicians to Israel and the West Bank for training in renewable technologies. For many of the eleven participants it was their first time leaving the Gaza Strip. The workshops revolved around promoting sustainable solutions for development challenges in Gaza. A second training was held in early 2022.

- **Bringing Clean Drinking Water to Gaza**

95% of Gaza's drinking water supply is undrinkable. To address this, the Arava Institute has continued to collaborate with Palestinian partners to introduce Watergen atmospheric water generators (AWG), which create clean drinking water. Following the spring 2021 regional violence, additional Gazan municipalities expressed interest in receiving an AWG. Five new Watergen systems will soon bring clean drinking water to health care centers in Gaza. Friends of the Arava Institute thanks the Rona and Jeffrey Abramson Family Foundation, Ethan Grossman and Family, and Rick and Nancy Moskovitz Foundation for their support of the Institute's technology and development in Gaza.

International Partnerships

The UN Conference on Climate Change, COP26, highlighted the value of regional cooperation. As Dr. Abu Hamed has said, “The pressing environmental challenges faced by the Middle East are inherently transboundary, therefore cooperation in solving these challenges and adapting to climate change is essential.” The Arava Institute is recognized as a leader in environmental cooperation, as our growing number of international partnerships demonstrate.

Over the past year, the Institute saw partnerships grow across the region:

- **The UAE’s Earth Peace Research Center**

The Arava Institute and the Earth Peace Research Center, based in Abu Dhabi, have signed an MOU to pursue environmental policy research addressing regional challenges.

- **Oxford University’s Oxford Martin School**

In February 2022, twenty-seven researchers and government ministry representatives from Israel, Palestine and Jordan as well as researchers from the Oxford Martin School met in Cyprus to begin research on the modeling of natural resources in the region, addressing the need for regional water and energy cooperation to ensure food security.

- **New Agreements and International Partnerships with Leading Moroccan Universities**

During COP26, Dr. Abu Hamed met with representatives from leading Moroccan universities, resulting in agreements to pursue research together. An initial paper on renewable energy integration in the cloud has been published.



ISRAEL RIDE

The Arava Institute is thrilled to be back on the road again after COVID-19 prevented us from gathering in Israel. This year's Israel Ride will take place November 1-8, 2022. We expect nearly 200 riders to enjoy five glorious days of biking throughout the country as well as get to know members of our community of students and alumni. The ride has grown tremendously since 2003 as riders cycle together to advocate for a sustainable, secure, and peaceful Middle East.

Learn more at
israelride.org/the-israel-ride-experience/faq/



ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

For 26 years, the Arava Institute has brought together Israeli, Palestinian, Jordanian, and international students to study and live together on campus. Today, we have a powerful network of over 1,500 environmental peacebuilders in the Middle East and around the world.

Meet Hala Barahme

Hala joined the Arava Institute as an alumni coordinator in August 2022. Hala studied at the Institute in Fall 2019 and served as an intern from 2020-2021. Upon completion of her internship, Hala supported Dr. Miri Lavi Neeman's research in South Hebron Hills and focused on promoting food security for Bedouin communities in the Naqab desert.



“When I was designing an agroecosystem in Palestine for an agroecology course, I reached out to alumni from the Institute, including professors and activists, to help me with the project. I believe this is the essence of the Arava experience, a strong community of people who seek change for a better world.”

The Arava Institute BOASTS OVER

1,500 ALUMNI

Meet Austin Corona

After his internship at the Arava Institute in 2022, Austin went on to work on the policy and communications teams for a Congressional campaign at home in western Colorado. As the American West experiences increasing drought and aridification, water has become a critical part of Colorado politics. Austin is using lessons learned at the Institute to advise on water policy for the campaign. He is also applying his experiences to advise on the campaign's foreign policy positions regarding the Middle East.



“I take the tools in listening, partnership, compassion, honesty, openness, and courage that I learned at the Institute, and I find that they are not just applicable in the Arava. These are tools that empower me to engage more deeply with everyone I meet and allow me to be more responsible, attentive, and accepting in my dialogues with people everywhere.”

EVENTS

Dr. Tareq Abu Hamed and Dr. David Lehrer visited communities throughout the United States and spoke both virtually and in person. For those unable to meet in person, Friends of the Arava Institute continued its series of **online mini-classes**. Recent mini-class video recordings can be found online [here](#).

CONFERENCES

The Arava Institute's faculty and staff members participated in numerous conferences over the past year that highlighted the impact of climate change on our food, water and energy systems. At these conferences, our researchers share our research, exchange ideas and inspire others to action.

- **Cross-border Perspectives: Energy Poverty and Climate Change in the Middle East**
From February 9-10 2022, the Arava Institute, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung –Israel Office co-sponsored this conference on the importance of policy tools to combat energy poverty as well as how the increasing changes in climate (such as heatwaves and extreme weather conditions) affect the lives of residents and the environment alike. Dr. Shaddad Attili from the PLO Negotiations Affairs Department, AIES' Dr. Tareq Abu Hamed, Executive Director, and Dr. Tali Zohar, Director of CREEC, spoke.
- **Haaretz Climate Change Conference**
The Arava institute co-sponsored this year's Haaretz Climate Change Conference in Jerusalem, which took place on February 23, 2022. The conference included top decision makers such as John Kerry, the US special envoy for climate, and panels with top Israeli officials as well as activists, international experts and high-ranking members of the scientific community. Dr. Tareq Abu Hamed called upon the participants to support regional cooperation to address climate change in his keynote address.



**VIRTUAL
MINI-CLASS**

**RECYCLING WATER TO EMPOWER
BEDOUIN COMMUNITIES**



FAREED MAHAMEED
GUEST SPEAKER

MIRIAM MAY
MODERATOR

[Watch recording online](#)

PROFILE

DR. TAREQ ABU HAMED

Executive Director,
Arava Institute for
Environmental Studies



Dr. Abu Hamed became AIES Executive Director in August 2021. He first launched the Institute's Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation. Now, as Executive Director, he is building on the Institute's strengths, expanding its mandate to address science diplomacy through regional cooperation. He is bringing science education and research partnerships to Israel's Arab and Bedouin communities.

A member of Israeli President Herzog's Climate Forum as well as past participant in COP26, Dr. Abu Hamed is focused on working regionally to respond to climate change. He is launching the Institute's Center for Regional Climate Change Research, which will facilitate regional modeling and research to address the impact of climate change throughout the Middle East and North Africa region. As the first Palestinian Israeli to head an Israeli academic institute, his appointment is groundbreaking.



Dr. Abu Hamed being greeted by Israeli President Isaac Herzog.

Photo by Matai Ben Aharon

***Haaretz* Profile on Dr. Tareq Abu Hamed**

[Read article online](#)

In May 2022, *Haaretz* published a compelling profile on Dr. Abu Hamed. The article describes his journey to becoming the head of the Arava Institute and his work to create a different reality of living together with dignity, equality, and justice.



Beyond Borders Tour

In March 2022, eighteen participants spent ten days journeying throughout Jordan, Israel, and the West Bank to explore the culture, politics, and environment on a specially curated trip of the region. In addition to meeting with environmental experts, activists, Institute faculty and alumni at the Arava Institute, they met with Members of Knesset, visited the Israeli President's residence, spoke with leaders in Rawabi and had an audience with His Royal Highness Jordanian Prince Hasan. To find out more about this unique study tour and Beyond Borders 2024, contact us at info@friendsofarava.org.

Accredited to the United Nations Environment Assembly

We are honored to announce that the Arava Institute has been accredited to the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), one of only three Israeli civil society organizations to be accredited by this body. The Environment Assembly, which takes place once every two years in Nairobi, Kenya, is the highest decision-making body on environmental matters in the United Nations system. At the Assembly, the Arava Institute will attend plenary sessions as an observer, exchange views, and interact with governments present. The Institute will also circulate written statements to governments and make oral statements during discussions.



Looking Ahead

We are entering this new year with hope and a bold vision for the future.

We are dedicated to bringing increasing numbers of Israelis, Palestinians, and Jordanians together to address the urgent environmental challenges ahead. Scarce environmental resources should not deepen divides and we are committed to providing cross-border solutions to communities hit hardest by the effects of climate change.

Each project we implement yields results that ripple across the region. Each project builds trust and is one more step towards peacebuilding from the ground up.

Thank you for partnering with us.

FINANCIALS

FRIENDS OF THE ARAVA INSTITUTE (7/1/21-6/30/22)

REVENUE \$2,956,000



GRANTS	\$1,266,000	43%
INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS	\$1,243,000	42%
INVESTMENTS AND OTHER INCOME	\$187,000	6%
SPECIAL EVENT REVENUE - NET	\$73,000	3%
TUITION REVENUE	\$187,000	6%

JEWISH NATIONAL FUND
AFFILIATE FUNDRAISING
\$1,372,000

ARAVA INSTITUTE (1/1/21-12/31/21)

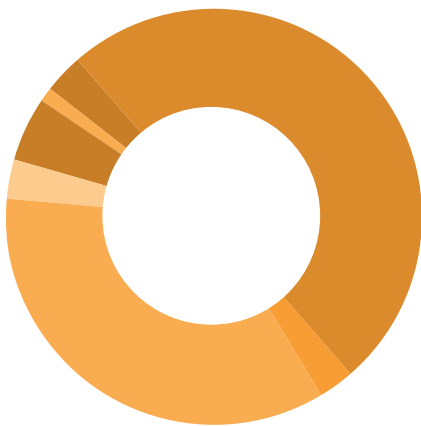
EXPENSES \$3,642,000



RESEARCH AND PROJECTS	\$1,360,000	37%
ACADEMICS	\$1,088,000	30%
ADMINISTRATION	\$682,000	19%
FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT	\$171,000	5%
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	\$235,000	6%
RESERVE FOR SPECIAL PROJECTS	\$106,000	3%

ARAVA INSTITUTE (1/1/21-12/31/21)

REVENUE \$3,640,000



US CONTRIBUTIONS	\$1,802,000	50%
US GRANTS	\$116,000	3%
INTERNATIONAL GRANTS	\$1,281,000	35%
INTERNATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS/ TUITION	\$119,000	3%
NORTH AMERICAN TUITION	\$187,000	5%
SPECIAL PROJECTS	\$37,000	1%
SHORT PROGRAMS	\$98,000	3%



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