Meedan

Annual Report 2021

Meedan is a technology not-for-profit that builds tools and develops programs to empower journalists, activists, and experts to collaboratively and creatively respond to online misinformation and harmful content.

Contents
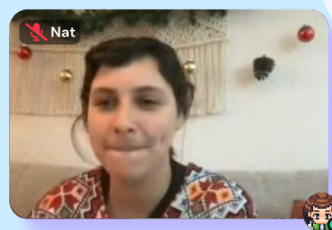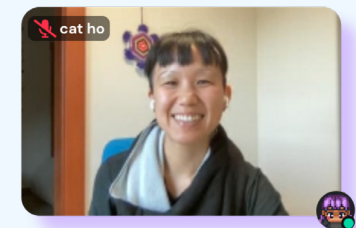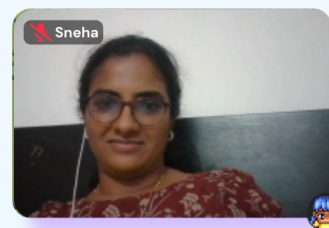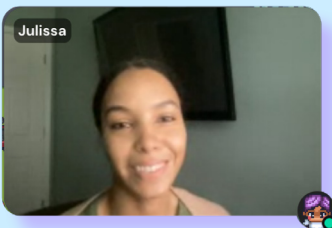
▲ Meedan team holiday party in Gather app

CEO's Note

In 2021, the once in a lifetime challenges to our global interdependence became operationalized. We came to recognize our closest colleagues as much by their Zoom ba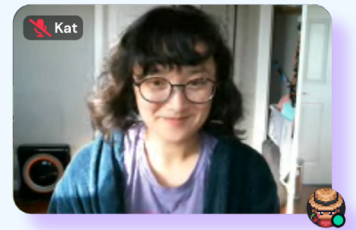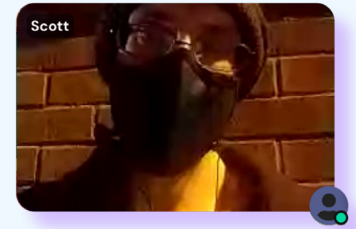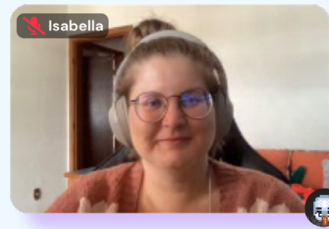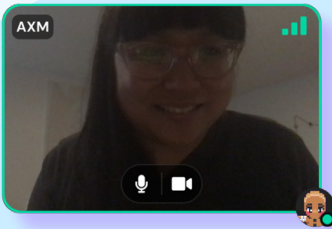ckgrounds as their faces and voices. It was a year in which the miracle of new vaccine science served as hope for many, and as further evidence of the deep inequalities in human society for the billions of people unable to access these vaccines.

Supply chain failures showed us the fragility of global markets. More pronounced though were the disruptions in the supply chain of human compassion and tolerance. We felt this impact as functional democracy retreated around the world. In my country of residence, the United States, the first week of 2022 saw an attempt to violently stop the congressional obligation to certify the votes cast in the 2020 presidential election.

From Meedan's vantage point, we see a common thread—and a foundational challenge—running through all of these themes. Undergirding vaccine hesitancy, democratic decay, and climate change denial is the continuing rise of misinformation in our digital public and private spaces.

In 2021, our small but mighty team—pre-wired for remote, global work—expanded our work across all program areas. Our Digital Health Lab team's work on the Vaccine Media Hub brought vaccine science to journalists and fact-checkers around the world; the Check Global team supported creative global partners and implemented global election media monitoring and fact-checking programs; the Meedan

▲ Ed Bice and Martin Peck

research team published five peer-reviewed publications and developed a major initiative, Co·Insights, with US National Science Foundation support. Our product team brought Check tiplines to maturity as a best-in-class solution for running collaborative fact-checking initiatives on WhatsApp and other messaging services; and our engineering team developed and deployed multilingual, multimodal claim-matching AI.

As a bridge between global civil society, journalism, and platforms, Meedan is making good on a project we started fifteen years ago to have an impact at the scale of the web. We did all of this with a continued commitment to a **set of values** that has served as a compass and inspiration for all of these efforts.

Thanks for spending a few minutes of your day learning more about our work.

Ed

Meedan In Numbers

Check Global
Digital Health Lab
Third-party Fact Checking
Training
Technology
Research
Press

Your team of
health experts
on speed dial.

▲ The Health Desk team of experts

▲ Meedan board member Maria Ressa
awarded the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize

Check Global

Check reports	**26,943**
Total number of countries where Check was used in 2021	**24**
Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) created	**2**
People trained by Check Global partners	**2,002**
Number of organizations and individuals supported through the NAWA Investigative Fund	**12**
Organizational partners	**26**

> **"**
>
> Check Global helped us achieve these outcomes by offering support when needed, but not micromanaging our efforts. Chicas Poderosas believes in supporting and encouraging others; giving them the space and opportunity to shine. Check Global has continued to allow Chicas Poderosas to direct our own efforts, while offering an open line of communication and support when needed. For us, this is the ideal relationship for our programs to flourish.
>
> **Chicas Poderosas**

Digital Health Lab

Number of science information requests	157
Number of news articles citing Health Desk	53
Total number of Health Desk readers	2,283,572
Total number of Health Desk page views	2,785,148
Number of readers referred to Health Desk from other articles	71,189
Final number of explainers produced	200+

Top Health Explainers in 2021

How do we know graphene oxide isn't used in COVID-19 mRNA vaccines? health-desk.org/articles/how-do-we-know-graphene-oxide-isn-t-used-in-covid-19-mrna-vaccines	449,682 views
How long is a person infected with COVID-19 contagious? health-desk.org/articles/how-long-is-a-person-infected-with-covid-19-contagious	145,360 views
What do we know about the toxicity of spike proteins made from COVID-19 vaccines? health-desk.org/articles/what-do-we-know-about-the-toxicity-of-spike-proteins-made-from-covid-19-vaccines	131,211 views

What do we know about the Pfizer vaccine and magnets?	125,445 views
health-desk.org/articles/what-do-we-know-about-the-pfizer-vaccine-and-magnets	

What do we know about false positives with rapid antigen testing?	109,784 views
health-desk.org/articles/what-do-we-know-about-false-positives-with-rapid-antigen-testing	

Third-party Fact Checking

Conversations

When a user interacts with one of the many fact-checking services on our platform, we call that a conversation. Within each conversation, our software can automatically deliver existing resources or brand new fact-checks, depending on what the user needs.

Claims matched	17,648
Unique end users	90,253
Uniques claims	168,480
Fact-checking reports sent to users	36,440
Bot resources sent	14,512
Reports published	18,107
Number of tiplines partners	20

I always enjoy Meedan trainings because they're very informative and practical (i.e. I get to apply the learnings to my daily work asap). Recently, the training on Interpreting Scientific Findings became very helpful to me since I was, at the time, writing a fact-check about breast cancer research.

Feedback from Health Desk Third-Party Fact-Checking Partners Training

Training

Training sessions conducted on applying health verification techniques to newsrooms in Sub-Saharan Africa meedan.com/post/fighting-covid-19-misinformation-lessons-from-meedan-and-article-19s-work	5
Training sessions conducted on Digital Security for Chambal Media, our Check Global partner in India	3
Sessions conducted on fact-checking for media and journalism students in India as part of the Ekta consortium	9
Training session on secondary trauma and mental health for members of the FactsFirstPH coalition in the Philippines www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_uOPMKAvN0	1
Number of new articles in Check Knowledge Base	~15
Number of updated articles in Check Knowledge Base	~32

Technology

Number of commits	1,813
Code bases	11
Lines of code added	556,853
Lines of code deleted	189,413
Files changed	7,883

Press

Press mentions	71

Research

Understanding factors and barriers to alternative media development in emerging economies: Learning from the Check Global project

firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/11370

Fairness via AI: Bias reduction in medical information

arxiv.org/abs/2109.02202

Hatemoji: A test suite and adversarially-generated dataset for benchmarking and detecting emoji-based hate

aclanthology.org/2022.naacl-main.97/

Deciphering Implicit Hate: Evaluating Automated Detection Algorithms for Multimodal Hate

aclanthology.org/2021.findings-acl.166/

Claim Matching Beyond English to Scale Global Fact-Checking

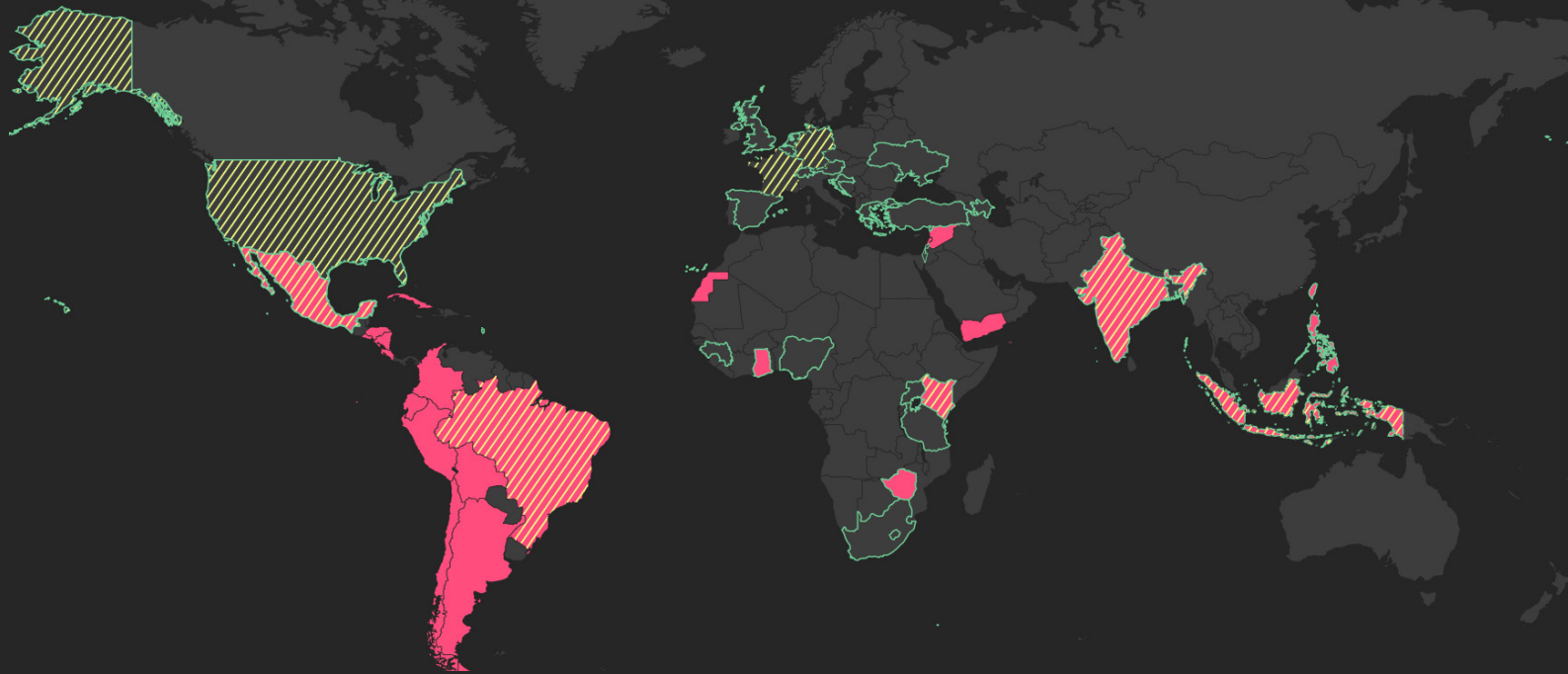aclanthology.org/2021.acl-long.347/

Mobilizing Public Health Professionals to Support Journalists and Fact-Checkers During the Covid-19 Pandemic

hphr.org/edition-33-larose/

Draft Papers

5

Geographic Areas Served In 2021

● **Check Global**

○ **Digital Health Lab**

/// **Third-Party Fact-Checking**

Check Global

Asia Pacific
Indonesia
India
Philippines
Taiwan

North Africa West Asia
Lebanon
Syria
Western Sahara
Yemen

Latin America and the Caribbean
Brazil
Mexico

Sub-saharan Africa
Ghana
Kenya
Zimbabwe

Digital Health Lab

Austria
Azerbaijan
Bangladesh
Barbados
Belgium
Croatia
Germany
Ghana
Greece
India
Indonesia
Israel
Kenya
Luxembourg
Mexico
Netherlands
Nigeria
Philippines
Senegal
Spain
Switzerland
South Africa
Tanzania
Taiwan
Turkey
Uganda
Ukraine
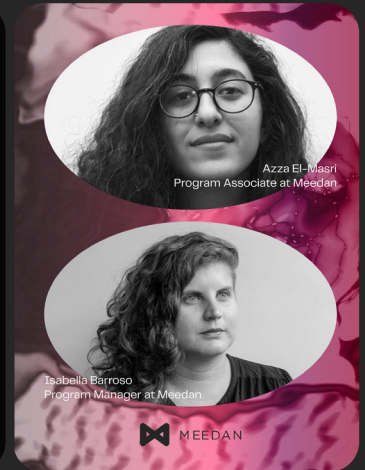United Kingdom
United States
Zimbabwe

Third-Party Fact-Checking

Brazil
France
Germany
Kenya
Mexico
India
Indonesia
United States

Events Highlights

January — Algorithmic inequity and big tech: Check Global chats with "Coded Bias"
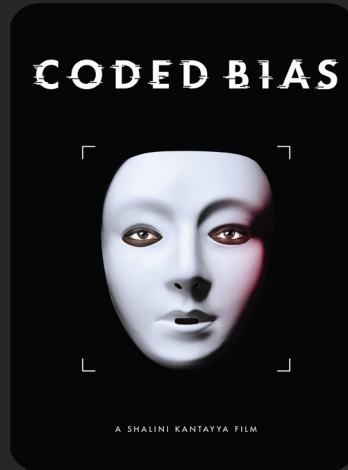
March — U.S. National Library of Medicine hosts "Addressing health misinformation at the scale of the internet"

May — Defending Media Freedom in 2021, presented by the Check Global Network

May — Tiplines to combat misinformation during the 2019 Indian elections, at Stanford Internet Observatory

June — Think before you like: The psychology of misinformation at Spice FM Radio
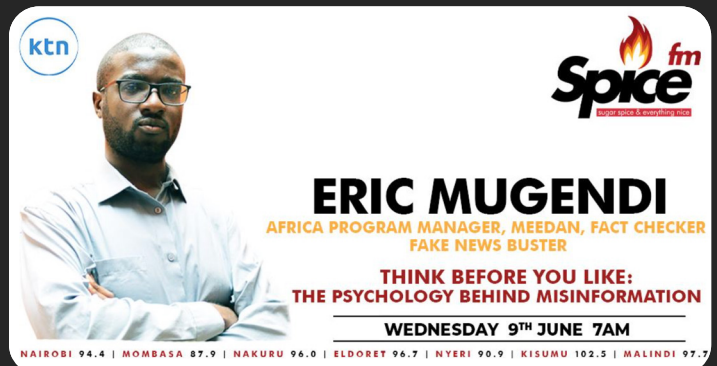
June

[ONA21: Save resources by not building the software you need](#)

July

[Fighting disinformation on social networks: What did we learn? (Portuguese)](#)

October

[Inside Baseball: Demystifying Anti-LGBTQ+ Online Abuse with PEN America](#)

November

[Shalini Joshi speaks at Rappler's #CourageON: Pushing back against disinformation](#)

What People Are Saying About Us

> "
>
> Misinformation, and health misinformation in particular is pervasive, and has real consequences. It has only gotten worse over the past few years, and I was very happy to find Health Desk, which manages to cover some of the most talked about health concerns, in plain English – backed by science and expertise. It's an invaluable resource for overwhelmed reporters that need factual, reliable, and detailed information on current issues that affect us all. The team is responsive, open to questions and feedback, and I truly look forward to a continued working relationship with them.
>
> **Darlene Hodge**
> Journalist, The Daily Herald,
> St. Maarten (Dutch Caribbean)

January 5

Seven free tools for journalists to try in 2021

journalism.co.uk

ONA21: Save resources by not building the software you need

"Non-profit tech company Meedan launched a Digital Health Lab in May of last year to fact-check covid-19 information by an in-house expert team. It consists of public health researchers, epidemiologists, and infectious disease specialists, in collaboration from the Stanford Health Communications Initiative and the Harvard School of Public Health.

The website has a treasure trove of FAQ's which should answer most of your burning questions. But if you still cannot find what you are looking for, you can also submit questions and they will notify you when your question has been answered."

www.journalism.co.uk/news/seven-free-tools-to-try-in-2020/s2/a784466/

February 17

Trusted Web Podcast: Context is King - with Ed Bice, CEO at Meedan

Ed and his team develop open-source tools for creating and sharing context on digital media through annotation, verification, archival, and translation. He has spent most of his professional life operationalizing idealism. He is optimistic that our digital evolution, and the changing face of journalism and publishing will trend us toward a world that is networked for understanding.

thetrustedweb.org/podcasts/ed-bice-meedan-open-source-context-is-king/

March 11

The Harvard Crimson: Experts Address Vaccine Hesitancy, Health Misinformation at School of Public Health Event

"In her opening, Gyenes said it is important to reduce stigma in conversations about health misinformation.

"We've all heard health misinformation or vaccine rumors referred to as outlandish, but we really want to start by phrasing that it isn't an 'us and them' issue — it's something that affects everyone," Gyenes said.

Combating health misinformation, Gyenes said, requires activism across different fields. To that end, she highlighted the diverse academic backgrounds of the panelists.

"We have a demographer, an anthropologist and disinformation researcher, a communications researcher in this conversation," Gyenes said. "Hopefully we can build off of one another and we can really try to strengthen and improve our responses to health information and equity.""

www.thecrimson.com/article/2021/3/12/vaccine-hesitancy-misinformation-event/

June 9

Spice FM Radio: Think Before You Like: The Psychology Behind Misinformation with Eric Mugendi

www.youtube.com/watch?v=95uKrBowI0k

July 8

American Press Institute: Need To Know: July 28, 2021

AMERICANPRESS
institute

"New Facebook partnership tackles health misinformation (Axios)

Facebook has announced that it is working with Meedan, a tech nonprofit, to help its fact-checking partner organizations combat health and vaccine misinformation. The new program comes in the wake of criticism that Facebook is not doing enough to curb misinformation about COVID-19 vaccines. Meedan will offer virtual training sessions to third-party fact-checkers on how to spot and correct misinformation. The partnership will also allow Facebook's fact-checking partners to access Meedan's health experts whenever they need immediate help with a fact-check. Facebook has spent $84 million in the last four years supporting fact-checking efforts on the platform, but does not police misinformation on its own."

www.americanpressinstitute.org/need-to-know/need-to-know-july-28-2021/

July 27

Axios: Exclusive: New Facebook partnership tackles health misinformation

AXIOS

Facebook is partnering with a global tech non-profit called Meedan to give its 80+ fact-checking partner organizations access to training from experts in how to handle health and vaccine misinformation, a spokesperson tells Axios.

www.axios.com/facebook-partnership-fact-checkers-health-misinformation-22886cfe-6d39-4a5d-bbf8-5f30dd656407.html

September 30

Columbia Journalism Review: Australian defamation ruling threatens media companies

Columbia Journalism Review.
The voice of journalism

Meedan, a technology nonprofit that helps build tools for journalists, is launching a new initiative called Fact Champ to address misinformation in Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, in partnership with the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania and its FactCheck.org project; the University of Massachusetts Amherst, University of Connecticut, and Rutgers University; and AuCoDe, a start-up that uses artificial intelligence to detect and analyze disinformation.

www.cjr.org/the_media_today/australian-defamation-ruling-threatens-media-companies.php

"

We have been using Check for a little over two years now and the technology has enabled us to respond to the queries faster and efficiently. Not just that, some of features have allowed us to send handpicked stories to our readers and also make them aware about the work we do in the misinformation space. The flexibility that the platform provides in terms of similarity matching, functioning of the bot etc is exactly what we needed to perform our jobs more effectively.

Kritika Goel, The Quint

October 5

Full Fact: Towards a common definition of claim matching

FULL FACT

"One project of Meedan (Kazemi et al 2021) matches WhatsApp tips with Indian fact checks across 5 languages. If an incoming tip matches a published fact check, then the fact check can be automatically sent out as a reply, potentially slowing the spread of misinformation.

V = fact checks from several organizations
U = tips from WhatsApp users
This automation maximizes response times while minimising costs.

Paraphrase detection: Sometimes, two matching claims may differ by only a few words that share meanings (i.e. synonyms), or they may be formed from the same phrases expressed in a different order. But in other cases, matching claims may be expressed in arbitrarily different ways, and even in different languages, such as with Meedan's work mentioned above, limiting the value of paraphrase detection as a complete solution."

fullfact.org/blog/2021/oct/towards-common-definition-claim-matching/

October 22

Nevada Today: Stopping the spread of misinformation in India

NEVADAToday

"The researchers partnered with Meedan, a San Francisco-based non-profit that focuses on improving the quality and equity of online information, to develop their modules. They also worked with the University of Madras and TATA Institute of Social Sciences to recruit journalism students in India and with the Press Institute of India and 101 Reporters to recruit journalists in India.

Their program included five modules focused on various aspects of fact-checking, including deep fakes, truth, trust and various tools like Google reverse search and the Meedan fact-checking software. During the training, participants also shared how their organizations handled fact-checking."

www.unr.edu/nevada-today/news/2021/international-grant-stopping-misinformation-spread-

Organization Analytics

Staff numbers

We grew our core team from 14 to 29 (108% growth), along with more than 10 part-time contractors.

2020	14 core team members
2021	29 core team members
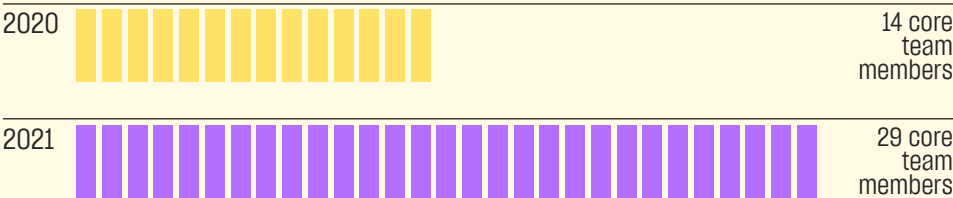
Leadership

We developed a new leadership team structure of 10 leaders, of whom 2 are C-Suite executives, 3 are non-voting executives, and 5 are directors.
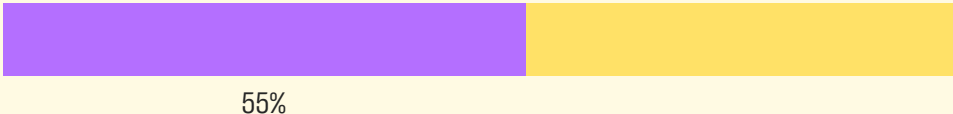
Directors   Non-voting executives   C-Suite executives
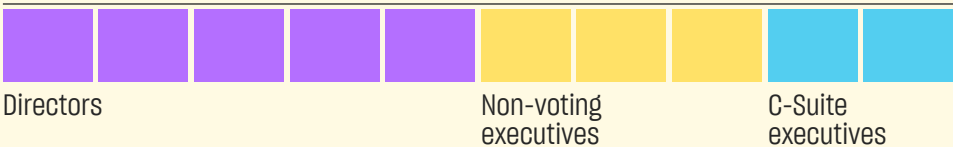
Equity, Diversity & Inclusion – Geography

45%

As of 2021, Global South representation is 45%, with heavy recruiting in the Global South projected for 2022. Geographic diversity among Meedan's leadership grew from 0 working in the Global South to 3.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion – Gender

55%

As of 2021, we are a team composed of 55% women and non-binary people. Gender diversity in leadership grew from 25% to 50% women.

Staff satisfactions

10%

90%

- 90% of our team would recommend Meedan as a place to work

- 90% of our team feel enriched by the working environment

- 90% of our team feel inspired by our mission

- 90% of our team report being able to maintain work-life balance

- 90% of our team feel included and that their opinions count

▲ Caio Almeida, Alexandre Amoedo Amorim and Daniele Valverde

▲ Eric Mugendi and Fiona Mati

Financials

Expenditures
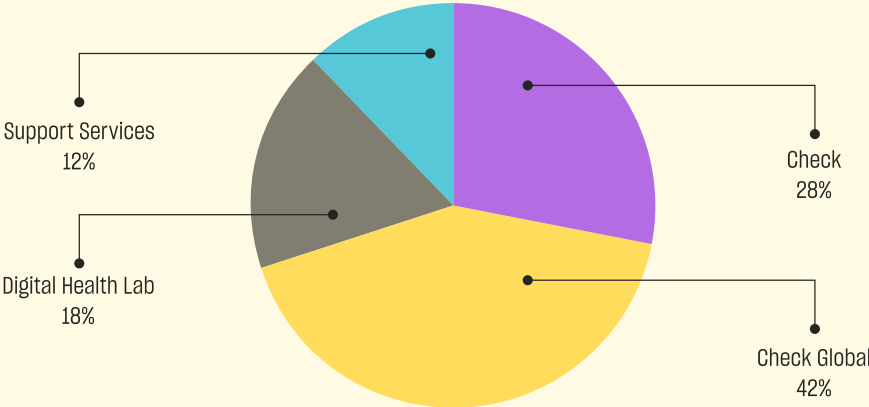
Check	$1,009,296
Check Global	$1,494,992
Digital Health Lab	$642,466
Support Services	$430,394
Total expenditures	**$3,577,148**

Statement of Financial Position
December 31, 2021

ASSETS

Cash & cash equivalents	$1,856,875
Contributions & accounts receivable	$1,198,576
Prepaid expenses & other assets	$106,881
Total Assets	**$3,162,332**

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities

Accounts payable	$192,240
Accrued payroll & vacation pay	$124,438
Total Liabilities	**$316,678**

Net Assets

With donor restrictions	$1,803,978
Without donor restrictions	$1,041,676
Total Net Assets	**$2,845,654**

A copy of our 2021 annual audited financial statements is available upon request.

Meedan