



Iraqi Children
Foundation



ANNUAL REPORT - 2017



Lovingly dedicated to children like these...

Sara* (12) had dropped out of school because she had to work on the street selling tissues. Now, Sara had an opportunity to attend a brand new “Hope Bus:” a school-on-wheels funded by the Iraqi Children Foundation. The colorful, child-friendly Hope Bus offers tutoring, nutritious meals, health care, social services, games and fun. Sara attended regularly and turned out to be one of the smartest kids on the bus.

Then something sweet happened. The Hope Bus staff noticed that Sara always asked for extra notebooks and pens to take home. After she did this several times, the staff asked her why. That is when they discovered something beautiful and touching: 12-year old Sara was thinking about other children she knew who didn’t go to the Hope Bus. After she left the bus to go home, she was leading classes for six other children in the neighborhood, teaching them what she had learned that day.

**Name and picture changed for privacy*

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2017

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INAUGURATING THE NEW “HOPE BUS”

In May 2017, the Iraqi Children Foundation launched a new school-on-wheels initiative led by one of ICF’s partners, Justice Gate. A used bus was purchased and retrofitted as a classroom, with the exterior painted and decorated with child-friendly characters.

The bus was moved to one of Baghdad’s poorest neighborhoods, staffed with two teachers and a social worker, and began offering tutoring, nutritious meals, health care, social services, and fun to up to 55 children at a time.

By the end of 2017, the Hope Bus had already served 82 children, including orphans and working street kids. Their stories are touching. For example, two sisters who attended the Hope Bus had to take turns attending class. The girls and their mother needed money for food so someone had to work. The solution: the sisters took turns. One day, one would sell water on the streets while the other went to the Hope Bus. The next day they switched places. Our hope is one day all Hope Bus children will no longer have to work and can attend the Hope Bus until they are ready to go to school.



THE “BAGHDAD STREET LAWYERS”

From helping children who have been trafficked to helping children get legal documents required for school, the Baghdad Street Lawyers use their legal skills to defend and protect kids from danger as well as give them access to education and support. Here is what they did in 2017:

- **Securing missing legal documents:** Street lawyers help children get important legal documents required to enroll in school and receive government benefits. In 2017, street lawyers helped 339 children get missing legal documents.
- **Legal protection and defense:** 253 children were represented by the “Baghdad Street Lawyers” for charges ranging from begging, stealing, fighting, and more. For example, Saad* (13) worked at a bakery to support his mother and brother (7). He was abused and beaten by his boss. After a severe beating, Saad defended himself and ran away. The boss wanted revenge so he went to police, accusing Saad of theft. The Baghdad Street Lawyers came to his defense and found witnesses who revealed that the boss had bought flour with all the money in the safe on that day, so Saad was released.

*names changed for privacy



Street Lawyers help rescue a 3-year old....

The Baghdad Street Lawyers helped investigate a woman picked up for begging with a 3-year old child. When the lawyers found the child had no legal documents, they offered to help. Oddly, the woman refused their help. Working with police, they discovered the child had been bought from kidnappers and was the victim of trafficking. Efforts then began to reunite the child with its family.

BAGHDAD STREET LAWYERS (Continued)

- **Preventing Exploitation:** 125 boys and girls were trained by the Baghdad Street Lawyers to protect themselves against dangers on the streets, resist strangers offering money to deliver threatening letters or bags that might contain explosives, and avoid drugs and illegal activities like begging or carrying a knife. Prevention is critical to protecting children against dangers on the streets or elsewhere.



Street Lawyers help teen girls trafficked for prostitution...

Police arrested a 16 year old girl on prostitution charges. One of the Baghdad Street Lawyers met with the girl and discovered that a woman had lured three girls from southern Iraq with the promise of jobs at a beauty salon. When the girls arrived in Baghdad, they were locked up instead in an apartment and forced into prostitution. The lawyer successfully defended the girls as victims and, because they might be harmed in honor killings if they returned home, the court sent them to a shelter for the homeless.

Social Services & Home Income Projects for Vulnerable Children

Delivering education and legal services are just two of the ways ICF intervenes in the lives of abused, neglected, and exploited children. A third way ICF intervenes is through life changing social services to address the needs of desperately poor orphans, street kids, and children displaced by violence. In 2017:

- 250 children received social services, such as medical care, mediation with families, protection from abuse, help in getting government benefits, and ending child labor. It is estimated that 118 children were able to stop working during the year.
- ICF invested in 11 income projects for desperately poor families with 37 children. Such projects serve as an alternative source of income and help prevent child labor.

How Income Projects Help Vulnerable Children:

In one project, a teenage orphan boy living with an aunt and two younger brothers, got help setting up a small shop at home so he could stop working at the dump. In another, a 14-year old girl was able to avoid early marriage with a small home income project.



Medical Care for Children and Families Fleeing ISIS

In November 2016, during the displacement of families and children by ISIS, the Iraqi Children Foundation joined the Iraqi NGO – the Iraq Health Access Organization (IHAO) – and the U.S.-based charity Preemptive Love Coalition in opening a tent clinic in Tikrit with pediatric care for children in families displaced by ISIS. In early 2017, ICF continued its support for this project. ICF, working with its two partners, helped support access to pediatric care for an estimated 1,981 children.



Saluting ICF's Corporate Mentors

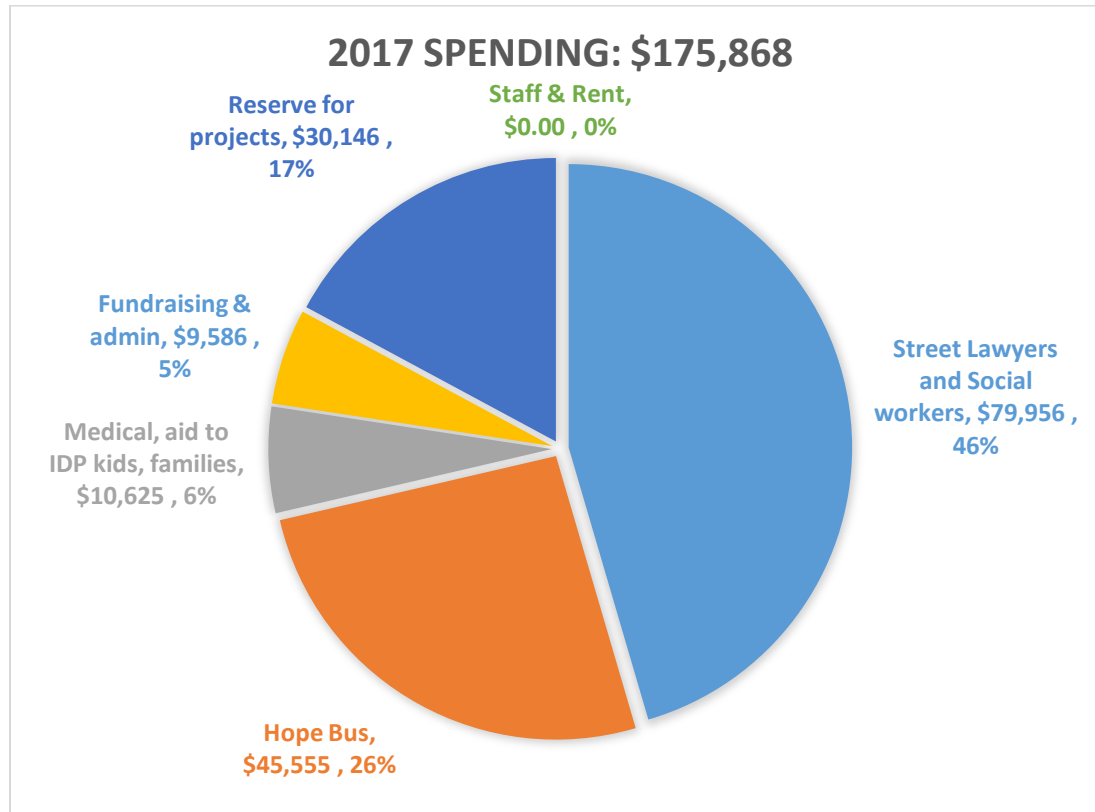
ICF recognizes with gratitude the “Corporate Mentors” who stepped up in 2017 to support Iraq’s most vulnerable children.

Corporate Mentors provide significant resources to support ICF initiatives for children in Iraq. Many served as sponsors of ICF’s annual IN THEIR SHOES 5K in the Washington DC area. One hundred percent of Corporate Mentor gifts go directly to projects in Iraq, not US-based overhead. ICF gratefully recognizes the generosity of one generous unnamed company along with the following businesses:



Financial Accountability

Where did our donors' dollars go?



In 2017, ICF was ranked “Gold” (right) for commitment to transparency and accountability. Guidestar USA, Inc. (www.guidestar.org) is a widely used source of nonprofit information.



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The Iraqi Children Foundation gratefully recognizes the many donors and partners who have given generously of their resources and time to help Iraq's most vulnerable children – the orphans, street kids, and children displaced by violence. You are changing the lives of desperately poor and vulnerable children who have suffered so much. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts on behalf of these children.

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