



PROTECT | NURTURE | EMPOWER

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Iraqi Children Foundation intervenes with love and hope in the lives of children who are vulnerable to abuse, neglect, and exploitation by criminals, traffickers, and extremists.

February 2024





*“Did you know that most Hope Bus children when they first come to us have negative thoughts about themselves like they are stupid, unable to learn. They do not have dreams about the future and feel inferior and that they are not like other children in schools. But when they carry school bags, books and pens, and when they start learning to write the first letter, the change begins.”*

Firas Al Bayati, Manager of the Hope Bus program

# Contents

|                                       |    |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Our Mission and Vision             | 4  |
| 2. Our Impact: Highlights of 2023     | 7  |
| • The Hope Buses                      | 8  |
| • Social Services                     | 14 |
| • The Baghdad Street Lawyers          | 15 |
| • Anti-Trafficking                    | 16 |
| • Centers for Adolescent Girls        | 17 |
| • Disability Services                 | 19 |
| 3. Saluting ICF's Donors & Supporters | 22 |
| 4. Financials and Leadership          | 25 |
| • Financial Accountability            | 26 |
| • Board of Directors and Advisors     | 27 |
| • ICF Credibility                     | 30 |
| • Ways to Give                        | 31 |





## Our Mission

To intervene with love and hope in the lives of Iraqi children who are vulnerable to abuse, neglect, and exploitation by extremists, criminals, and human traffickers.

## Our Vision

To ensure all children in Iraq have a voice, and are empowered to reach their full potential.

# Our Mission Approach

## OUR PHILOSOPHY

We focus on **sustainability and empowerment** through local capacity building.

## HOW WE IMPLEMENT

Our **'hand-up'** approach prioritizes partnering with local Iraqi organizations for service delivery. We respect local leadership, build lasting relationships, and invest in training and capacity building.

## WHAT THIS ACHIEVES

We **work with our partners** to mobilize resources for education, health, legal protection and trauma care, and to **give children a voice.**



## ABOUT US: OUR CORE VALUES

### DIGNITY AND WORTH

---

ICF will love, respect, and serve the most vulnerable children of Iraq, regardless of ethnic or tribal background, gender, religious affiliation, or disability

### TRANSPARENCY

---

ICF will demonstrate transparency and excellent in financial stewardship as well as in disclosure of project performance results

### TEAMWORK

---

ICF is proud to collaborate with valued Iraqi and US partners, and recognizes that we can achieve more together than alone

### SUSTAINABILITY

---

While direct, material assistance is sometimes necessary for humanitarian emergencies, we emphasize sustained investment in projects that give a “hand up” to Iraq’s most vulnerable children by providing access to protection, education, health care, and psychosocial support

### INTEGRITY

---

ICF is committed to both personal and corporate integrity in order to earn and keep the trust of donors and partners

### NONPARTISANSHIP

---

ICF is an independent, nonpartisan, nonsectarian charity

# Our Impact: Highlights of 2023

We are very pleased to report that 2023 was our biggest year ever for programs at ICF, continuing our trend of year on year growth over the past five years. We opened a second center for girls in Mosul, and took over operations of a disability clinic serving children in Fallujah. Our three Hope Buses continued to thrive, as did our Street Lawyers program and our School Transition program. We continued to provide services to vulnerable children in three cities in Iraq, and we worked with a growing number of staff across all programs. Despite a serious currency devaluation issue, we continued to fund all our programs, and we look forward to an exciting year in 2024.

\*Please note, names of all children referenced in this report have been changed for their privacy and protection.

## OUR 2023 IMPACT: THE HOPE BUSES

Our eye-catching "Hope Buses" are ordinary, used buses that are converted into colorful, child-friendly classrooms. Each bus has two teachers and a social worker, and serves approximately 50 orphans and street kids with tutoring, nutrition, health care, social services, practical life lessons, community, and fun.

## OUR 2023 ACHIEVEMENTS:

- 172 children attended Hope Bus 1, 2, and 3 in either a full- or part-time capacity (675 since program start in 2017).
- More than 36,000 nutritious meals were provided to students on the buses.
- 100% of children attending received a daily meal while in attendance.
- 90% of children attending were able to avoid child labor, and 80% were treated for gum, tooth, and skin diseases.
- 100% of children attending received new clothes and shoes.
- More than 85% of children experienced improved behavior, and 80% of families have become more responsive to their children's needs.
- This program provided employment for teachers, social workers, management staff, and guards.
- We contributed to the local economy through the ongoing procurement of food and beverage items for children, clothes and shoes, and school supplies.



In 2023, through a partnership with The PepsiCo Foundation and PepsiCo Middle East, a new video was produced, showcasing the Hope Bus program. [You can watch the video here](#)



## 2023 Hope Bus Case Studies



*“Ali is 11 years old and is a Hope Bus student. He is an orphan with no mother. The bus team noticed that Ali was behaving aggressively, and was bullying other children. One of the social workers studied Ali’s case, and discovered that Ali’s behavior was a result of jealousy towards children that have mothers. Through ongoing support, our social worker was able to gain Ali’s trust and provide a safe environment, and was able to help Ali overcome bullying behaviors.”*



*“Lubna is a 10-year-old girl, and she is one of the most outstanding students at the Hope Bus. She is very intelligent and achieves high marks in her studies on the bus. Lubna has a dream of being a teacher in the future, so she invited the children in her area of residence to her house to give them lessons in writing and reading, just like the lessons she receives on the bus. Lubna is a wonderful example of the change that the bus brings to children.”*



*“Fatima is 8 years old and is a Hope Bus student. The bus team noticed that Fatima was constantly absent from the bus. One day, Fatima came to the bus with bruises on her, and when the bus team asked her, she answered that she was being beaten continuously by her mother and stepfather, and her parents are divorced. A team from the organization contacted Fatima’s father and informed him of the situation in which Fatima is living. The team filed a lawsuit to grant custody to Fatima’s father, and she is now living in much better conditions.”*

## 2023: New developments thanks to PepsiCo Foundation - Hope Bus design upgrades

With the generous support of the PepsiCo Foundation and PepsiCo Middle East, two of our Hope Buses underwent an exciting makeover, with beautiful new exterior designs. The children and staff were so excited to see the results, and we are thankful to the PepsiCo team for finding an incredible local artist to design the graphics and to execute on this project.



From  
design  
mock  
ups...



To the  
finished  
new  
look!



## 2023: New developments thanks to PepsiCo Foundation - Ramadan baskets for all!

With the generous support of the PepsiCo Foundation and PepsiCo Middle East, we were able to provide Ramadan food, water & hygiene supplies to all our Hope Bus families. Throughout the holy month, 150 families received critical staple supplies. Each family received enough to feed a family of five for the entire month. We are thankful to PepsiCo Foundation for extending their support to provide Ramadan supplies not just to the two PepsiCo-sponsored buses, but to our third Hope Bus families as well.

**750** individuals received direct services, with **67,500** meals provided\*



\*30 days of food x 3 meals per day = 90 meals per person. 150 families x 5 people = 750 people. 90 meals x 750 people = 67,500

## 2023: Holistic support beyond the Hope Bus

All children attending the Hope Buses also have the benefit of access to our Street Lawyers program, where a team of dedicated lawyers provide free legal services to children and their families. This includes support in obtaining legal documents to attend school, support accessing government benefits, and help in school enrollment. In the most recent reporting period, 85% of children enrolled in the program have received these critical documents. Children who graduate from the Hope Bus program can also access our School Transitions program, which provides necessary equipment for children to go to school, and also provides school transport.

*CASE STUDY: “Zainab is 10 years old and is one of the children on the Hope Bus. The bus team noticed that Zainab was constantly absent, and when they visited her to inquire about her, it turned out that Zainab had started working in selling water bottles in the streets. The reason was that the social welfare salary allocated to them had been cut, and that Zainab was working to provide daily food for her and her family, as she is an orphan and lives with her widowed mother and younger sister. The team of lawyers followed up on the case of Zainab’s family’s salary and it became clear that it was suspended due to an error in the database, which shows that Zainab’s mother receives salaries from another party. When the matter was investigated by our team, it turned out that there is a similarity of names between the name of Zainab’s mother and another woman. The team carried out all administrative procedures and submitted documents to correct the error, and the social welfare salary was returned to Zainab’s mother, and Zainab returned to the bus again.”*



## OUR 2023 IMPACT: SCHOOL TRANSITIONS

Our “School Transitions” program is designed to help sustain the critical gains made in educating, protecting, and nurturing our Hope Bus program graduates, now nearly 700 children.

### PROGRAM COMPONENTS IN 2023:

- Daily minibus transportation to public school, currently being utilized by more than 50 children.
- School enrollment support.
- “Starting School” pack, with stationery, hygiene supplies, school clothes, and shoes.
- A small, mobile Transitions team to monitor Hope Bus graduates for a minimum of three years.
- An emergency / special needs fund, to meet needs including medical and psychosocial support, clothing, nutrition, and shelter.
- Hope Bus Family annual celebration and check-in.



## OUR 2023 IMPACT: SOCIAL SERVICES

Social workers on our Street Lawyers team strive to end child labor and get children off the streets. They also work to stop domestic abuse, provide medical care, and help get access to psychosocial services for children with mental health issues.

***Case study:** Rana was one of our beneficiaries who was provided with legal assistance. She is currently serving a sentence in a women's prison, and will be released next month. She contacted our lawyers to help with finding work and shelter once she is released, and she was referred on to our social work team. The team were able to secure shelter with a very reliable woman in the community, who runs a women's salon from her home. She agreed to take Rana on to provide work and shelter. Rana is now looking forward to beginning a new life after her release.*

## OUR 2023 ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Social workers served 118 children with clothing, medical attention, family mediation, and abuse prevention. Since this program began in 2017, 1,577 children have been served.
- Social workers assisted young people with finding employment after incarceration, or to support family.
- Social workers assisted children and families in obtaining government benefits.



## OUR 2023 IMPACT: BAGHDAD STREET LAWYERS

Our lawyers provide legal protection for children who are targeted by criminals and traffickers, abused by employers, or are facing other risks. They also help children obtain critical legal documents so that they can access benefits and attend school.

### OUR 2023 ACHIEVEMENTS:

- **Legal protection:** 256 legal representation cases have been completed (and an additional 9 are ongoing), for cases including stealing, vagrancy, prostitution, fighting, drugs etc. (2,156 cases since the program started).
- **Legal documents:** Street Lawyers helped 188 children obtain legal documents required to enroll in school and access government benefits (2,093 cases since the program started).
- **Total completed legal cases in 2023:** 444

**Case study:** Mohammed is 16 years old. He works collecting cans, old iron, and abandoned furniture. One day, while he was looking for items, he found a small electric generator left on the sidewalk, so he took it. Two days later, Mohammed was arrested on charges of theft. During the investigation, it turned out that the owners of the generator had filed a complaint about Mohammed after watching him through cameras while he was taking the generator. Our lawyer explained to the judge about the type of work Mohammed does, and how Mohammed believed that the generator was abandoned because it was on the sidewalk. The lawyer convinced the judge to drop charges. Mohammed was released and the generator was returned to its owners.



**MOHAMMED, 16 YEARS OLD**

## OUR 2023 IMPACT: ADDRESSING CHILD ORGAN, SEX, AND LABOR TRAFFICKING IN IRAQ

Our Anti-Trafficking of Children program (a division of the Baghdad Street Lawyers team) has now completed its third full year of operations. The program has been extremely effective, and we are pleased to announce the continuation of this project into 2024. The team handled 102 cases (84 completed by the end of the reporting period), for a total of 273 cases since the program commenced.

As was the case during our pilot year, we published a specific Annual Report for this program in 2023. Some high level finding from the report included:

- Sex trafficking crimes continue to rise in Iraq. Some of the factors that make children more vulnerable to trafficking include: an increase in “family disintegration” (including separation and divorce – 80% of victims received by JGO came from this type of family situation), an increase in domestic violence, and the rise of massage centers employing underage girls. These factors, coupled with the rise in more organized human trafficking rings, create a dangerous environment for young people in Iraq.
- In 2021 and 2022, organ trafficking crimes declined, due to security forces focusing on combatting this type of trafficking in particular. In 2023, however, the team estimate that organ trafficking crimes have increased 20%. This is due to traffickers finding new ways to commit this type of crime, including taking victims to hospitals in Syria to perform organ removal surgery, as the legal conditions in Syria are less carefully scrutinized.
- Human trafficking gangs are becoming stronger, more organized, and are beginning to transform into organized networks whose work is not limited to one governorate.
- As was the case during previous years, we are convinced of the long term and indirect benefits of this program. Despite all the challenges, the team continue to see positive changes in the attitudes of judges and law enforcement, evidenced by the increased correct application of anti-trafficking laws in local courts.
- The team held a number of community sessions about trafficking awareness and prevention (see images on the right).





## OUR 2023 IMPACT: MOSUL “SAFE SPACE” FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS

In 2023, ICF continued funding the operating costs for a “Safe Space” for adolescent girls in Mosul. This center provides social and psychosocial support for vulnerable girls, as well as educational support and a sense of belonging. Many girls in this area have previously been displaced and are only now returning to Mosul. There is an increased need for support for girls experiencing negative coping mechanisms, trauma, psychological distress, and gender-based violence. Girls at the center have the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of activities, including sports, sewing and crafts, reading, and computer literacy. They also have access to social workers, a library, medical care, and computers. Group and individual therapy is provided. Approximately 50 girls are served at the center each day.

Due to overwhelming response and need, ICF started preparing for a second girls center in Mosul. We look forward to serving even more girls in 2024.

**Case study:** Sara is 14 years old and visits the center regularly. She wants to improve her school performance and to have a career in the future. She struggles with some areas of school, and has a hard time with decision-making. The staff at the center have been working with Sara on a one-on-one basis through psychosocial support sessions, to help her improve her self-esteem and confidence. They are also helping her with her school work. The center will continue to provide support for Sara, for as long as she needs it.



## SPOTLIGHT ON: OUR NEW CENTER FOR GIRLS IN MOSUL

During Q4 of 2023, we commenced work on a new girls center in Mosul. With permission from the Department of Education, the new center is located on the grounds of a local girls school. The center is comprised of donated caravans, which have been converted into spaces for psychological support sessions, recreational activities, and schoolwork support. At the end of 2023, the team commenced outreach activities within the local community, to inform girls and families about the free services that will be offered for adolescent girls in 2024.



## OUR 2023 IMPACT: DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN FALLUJAH

During Q3 and Q4 of 2023, ICF began providing operational support to a disability clinic in Fallujah. The clinic provides physical rehabilitation, psychosocial support, and medical equipment and treatments where needed. Services provided include a mobile clinic, so that the team can conduct home visits, and provide awareness raising sessions within the community. In Q4, the clinic team participated in an annual medical expo held in the local governorate, where government officials visited the clinic to hear a briefing on the services provided, and the impact it is having in the local community.



### OUR 2023 ACHIEVEMENTS (Q3 and Q4):

- 358 medical consultation services were provided
- 155 psychosocial support services were provided
- 318 physical rehabilitation services were provided
- Total number of services provided to children: 831

## Case Study: Lina, 15 years old

Lina was referred to our clinic by another organization, and our mobile team went to visit her home. Lina was born with a brain atrophy condition, which has also caused paraplegia. The clinic staff arranged to provide an oxygen tank to assist with Lina's breathing. In collaboration with Fallujah hospital, ongoing treatment will be provided. The clinic have also put together a plan for Lina to receive physical therapy, and psychosocial support sessions going forward.



## Case Study: Yaseen, 8 years old

Yaseen suffers from shortening of the tendons in his legs, which has made it difficult for him to move. At one point, he had surgery for this condition, but was unable to pursue regular check ups and physical therapy following the operation, due to his family's financial circumstances. Without support and movement, Yaseen was unable to attend school. After hearing about the clinic via social media, Yaseen started visiting the center, and commenced physical therapy and psychosocial support session. Yaseen has now taken his first steps, and will be able to go back to school.





# Saluting ICF's Donors & Supporters

ICF recognizes with gratitude the individuals, foundations, and corporates who stepped up to support vulnerable Iraqi kids in 2023. It is your support that allows us to continue serving this important cause.

# Our 2023 ICF Corporate Sponsors

ICF recognizes with gratitude the Corporate Sponsors who stepped up in 2023 to support Iraq's most vulnerable children. Corporate Sponsors provide significant resources to support ICF initiatives for children in Iraq. ICF gratefully recognizes the generosity of one unnamed company, along with the following businesses:



**PEPSICO**



مجموعة الخضيرى  
**KHUDAIRI GROUP**



**L3HARRIS**  
FAST. FORWARD.



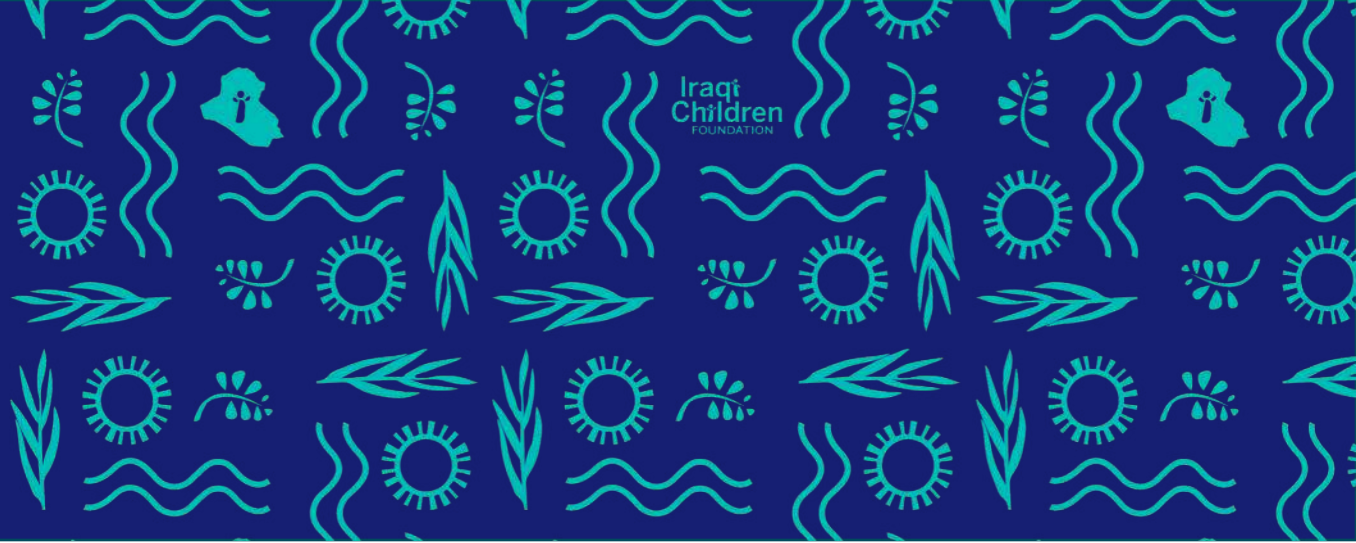
KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE AND FAMILIES TOGETHER

## ICF's Annual "In Their Shoes" 5K

ICF's annual "In Their Shoes" 5K event was held in Washington D.C., at the National Park Services beautiful Hains Point park, along the scenic Potomac River. In addition to the in-person run/walk, a global virtual option allowed participants from other U.S. cities, and around the world, to join the celebration in support of Iraq's children. We are so grateful to the corporate sponsors of this 5K for their generous support of projects for Iraqi children, including PepsiCo Foundation and PepsiCo Middle East, Khudairi Group, L3Harris, Numerus Group, Blair Gastro, and Scott Advocates.







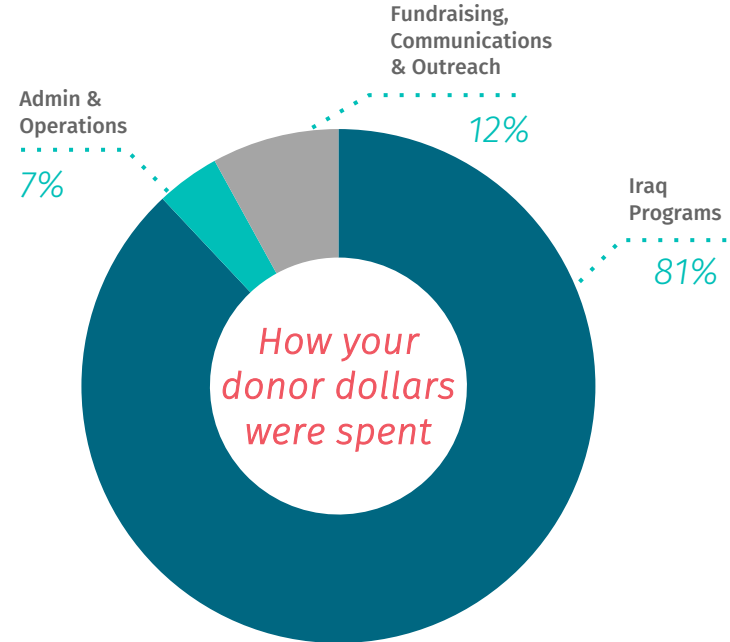
# Financials & Leadership

In 2023, Iraqi Children Foundation had its biggest year ever for program spending. Our direct investments in on-the-ground programs in Iraq represented 81% of our total donor dollar spending for the year, and total dollars spent increased by 12.24%. Most importantly, we are proud that we were able to spend more than ever on our core mission: meaningful interventions in the lives of Iraq's most vulnerable children. The ICF Board of Directors remains committed to responsible stewardship of funds donated, as well as overall leadership of the organization.

# Financial Accountability 2023

Iraqi Children Foundation is a registered US-based tax exempt 501(c)(3) charity (EIN 26-1394773). Our audit and full financial statements are available upon request.

In 2023, we increased our direct program spending by 12.24%, while maintaining overhead spending under 20%.



# Our Leadership - Board of Directors



**David Collins**  
**CHAIR OF THE BOARD**  
Chief Program Officer  
The Children's Village



**Mohammed Khudairi**  
**PRESIDENT**  
Managing Partner,  
Khudairi Group



**Ward E. Scott II, Esq.**  
**SECRETARY & GENERAL COUNSEL**  
Retired US Marine Corps Colonel,  
Founder, Scott Advocates, PLLC



**Layla Safwat Fattah**  
**TREASURER**  
Founder, White Bird Marketing,  
Communications Consultant



**Dr. Rafid Aziz**  
**DIRECTOR**

Medical Doctor & President,  
United Iraqi Medical Association in the  
UK & Ireland (UIMA)



**Mike Jason**  
**DIRECTOR**

Retired US Army Colonel,  
Defense Consultant



**Ali Halabi**  
**DIRECTOR**

Program Manager, International  
Recruitment Specialist



**Grant Felgenhauer**  
**DIRECTOR**

Managing Partner,  
Euphrates Advisors



**Luma Jaffar**  
**DIRECTOR**

Managing Principal  
Lawrence Group



**Kenneth Fox**  
**DIRECTOR**

SVP Operations  
Amentum

# Our Leadership - Advisors



Samir Sumaida'ie

**AMBASSADOR (RET.)**

Ambassador of Iraq  
to the US 2006 - 2011



Ryan Crocker

**AMBASSADOR (RET.)**

US Ambassador to Iraq  
2007 - 2009



Jeremy Kohomban, Ph.D.

**PRESIDENT & CEO**

The Children's Village  
The Center for Child Welfare Research



Maxwell Quqa

**ICF FOUNDER**

Former American bi-cultural  
advisor to US diplomatic and  
military personnel



Shameem Rassam

**EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**



Raymond Lahoud, Esq.

**CHAIR**

Immigration Law Practice  
Norris McLaughlin, P.A.



Ryan K. Bell, CPP

**IRAQ & AFGHANISTAN VETERAN**

Director of Operations  
Jard Inventory & Loss Prevention



May Yang Ying  
(Sumaida'ie)

**BUSINESSWOMAN**

Protect. Nurture. Empower.

# Give a life changing gift to Iraqi children today.

DONATE

## A NEW WEBSITE FOR ICF

In 2023, ICF invested in an overhaul for our website. We were excited to showcase our programs in more detail, and to more effectively integrate our ICF brand into our online presence. We are constantly striving to improve our efficiency, effectiveness, and impact – not just with programs, but with our outreach, operational, and fundraising efforts. Check out our full website at [www.iraqichildren.org](http://www.iraqichildren.org)

# ICF is Credible & Trustworthy

- ✔ We are a registered US-based tax exempt 501(c)(3) charity (EIN 26-1394773).
- ✔ Our audit and financial statements are available upon request.
- ✔ Our partners in Iraq are well-vetted and have worked with US and international organizations, including the UN.
- ✔ ICF has earned a four star rating (highest possible) on Charity Navigator – the industry standard for US-registered non-profits.
- ✔ ICF has earned top Platinum rank from GuideStar for commitment to transparency, and is a “Top Ranked” partner on Global Giving.
- ✔ ICF is registered with the US government’s Combined Federal Campaign (CFC #95191), the world’s largest workplace giving program.
- ✔ In 2018, ICF received an Arab League award for its work with children and youth.
- ✔ Our Board and Advisors include former US and Iraq Ambassadors, Iraqi-Americans, legal experts and veterans.



# How Can You Support Iraqi Orphans & Vulnerable Children?

There are so many ways to give to Iraqi children:

- Direct donate link: <https://www.iraqichildren.org/donate>
- Monthly giving link: <https://www.iraqichildren.org/donate>
- Mail a check: Iraqi Children Foundation (ICF), PO Box 233, Falls Church, VA 22040-0233, USA
- Give through a Donor Advised Fund (DAF), directly through our ICF website: <https://www.iraqichildren.org/donate> (scroll to the DAF direct giving widget)
- Give through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC): <https://cfcgiving.opm.gov/welcome>
- Gift appreciated stock through our Global Giving campaign: <https://www.freewill.com/stocks/globalgiving>
- Utilize employer matching funds – check if you are eligible: <https://www.globalgiving.org/matching/> (or ask your employer)
- Become a corporate sponsor at any level: email [liz@iraqichildren.org](mailto:liz@iraqichildren.org) to find out more, and check out <https://www.iraqichildren.org/corporate-supporters>
- Create a fundraiser: <https://www.iraqichildren.org/get-involved>
- Share with family, friends, or colleagues: <https://www.iraqichildren.org/>
- Follow us on social media: Instagram / Twitter - @iraqichildren, Facebook / LinkedIn: Iraqi Children Foundation

## Thank you for your support!

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.

### Contact us:

Liz McRae  
Executive Director  
[liz@iraqichildren.org](mailto:liz@iraqichildren.org)

Cindy Fogleman  
Staff Advisor  
[cindy@iraqichildren.org](mailto:cindy@iraqichildren.org)

