



PROTECT | NURTURE | EMPOWER

## ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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.

January 2021



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## 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 not hand-out'** 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, protection and trauma care, and to **give children a voice**.



# Our Impact: Highlights of 2020

In an unprecedented year, ICF continued to deliver services through the COVID-19 pandemic to the most vulnerable children in Iraq. Despite some restrictions to our operations, especially during Q2 and Q3, we continued to support children however possible. In some instances, we changed the way we delivered programs, to protect the safety and health of children and staff. We also commenced several new projects in 2020, in response to COVID-19, but also to the changing needs in Iraq.

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

## OUR IMPACT: COVID-19 RESPONSE

Iraq has been heavily impacted by COVID-19, and vulnerable children and their families are disproportionately effected. During Q2 and Q3, programs were particularly impacted, with curfews, shut downs, and restrictions imposed throughout Baghdad and Iraq. ICF maintained commitment to children during this time through the following:



Teachers and social workers conducted home visits to Hope Bus children, to assist with school work, and check on general well being. In this way, our staff were also able to continue working, and no jobs were lost. Children were also able to regularly visit the Hope Bus to pick up food & hygiene supplies for their families.



1,379 packages of food and hygiene supplies (one week supply for a family of 5) were provided for kids and families across Baghdad, Mosul, Basra, and Erbil, and delivered with the generous support of our corporate mentor, Khudairi Group.



ICF sponsored a small project with partner IHAO, to pay for salaries and mask materials for women in Mosul to make masks to protect against COVID (3000+ in total). This project provided opportunities for training and access to the job market, for women victims of gender-based violence, and their children.



When it was safe to open the Hope Buses again, staff have ensured PPE is worn, social distancing measures are implemented, temperatures are checked, and classes are taken outside where possible.

## OUR 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.

**Case study:** Ahmed graduated from the Hope Bus a year ago, and is one of the children who has been enrolled in school. This year, the government decided that children should sit the final exams despite schools not being opened for much of 2020 due to COVID-19. Ahmed did not feel ready to sit his exams, so the Hope Bus team provided ongoing support to Ahmed, helping him with an intensive study program and social support for his confidence. Ahmed responded to these lessons and made progress, succeeding in his final exams.

## OUR 2020 ACHIEVEMENTS:

- 156 children are regularly attending Hope Bus 1 & 2 (89 more children are currently unable to attend due to capacity limits).
- Approx. 12,700+ nutritious meals provided to students on the bus (while buses have been operational in 2020).
- 850 food and hygiene supply packs provided to Hope Bus families during COVID-19 shut down periods, and 94 packs provided to children working on the street. Hope Bus children also received a one-time delivery of toys to raise spirits.
- 100% of children on the bus now have their legal documents (supported by our Street Lawyers team), & 90% of children regularly attending the Hope Bus programs are no longer working.



INCLUSIVITY



LEARNING



HEALTH



FUN & PLAY



BELONGING



CREATIVITY

## HUSSEIN'S HOPE BUS STORY

*"Hussein used to come every day to Hope Bus 2, and stand far away watching the children of the bus while they were playing. One day the teacher asked Hussein to register on the bus, but Hussein started crying and ran away. The teacher visited Hussein's house and met his family, telling them that Hussein should come and join the children on Hope Bus 1. Hussein's mother told the teacher that Hussein was ashamed of his appearance, as he suffers from deformities in the face and head as a result of being burned when he was younger. Hussein worried that the other children would make fun of his appearance. A social worker spoke with Hussein and convinced him that the other children would welcome him with love and consider him their friend, and would never make fun of him. She also explained that a person is not judged by his external appearance, but by his morals, especially his personality and work. Hussein agreed to join the children of the Hope Bus, and now spends his days having a fun and happy time with the other children."*



# Thank you to NASA & Astronaut Jessica Meir

**In 2020, ICF received a very special message all the way from the Space Station!** ICF gratefully recognizes NASA astronaut, Jessica Meir, for her inspiring video message to Iraq children and the kids on the Hope Bus. As a high-achieving woman with Iraqi heritage, Jessica's support and encouragement shows the children that anything is possible and that they can believe in their dreams.



## OUR 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 (which has increased during COVID-19), provide medical care, and help get access to psychosocial services for children with mental health issues.

**Case study:** Sara is 7 years old, and is one of the students at Hope Bus 2. Recently, the bus team noticed that Sara started to be absent from the bus frequently. When the staff inquired about the reason, it became clear that Sara's mother started preventing her from coming to the bus, and started taking her to work begging in the street. Sara's mother explained that she had lost her job and had no source of income. The social workers contacted a respectable woman who runs a beauty salon, who agreed to employ Sara's mother. With agreement from Sara's mother, Sara began returning to the bus regularly.

## OUR 2020 ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Social workers served 135 children with clothing medical attention, family mediation, and abuse prevention.
- 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 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.

**Case study:** While the social workers were checking on street children, they found two kids (7 and 8) who were selling sweets. They didn't look like typical street kids, so they spoke to the children and found out that they live with their widowed mother and 4 year old sister. Their father, a soldier, was killed about a year ago in an ISIS terrorist operation. The team knew that the government financially supports the families of soldiers killed in action. They visited the mother, and found that the family lived in extreme poverty, relying on local charity. The mother explained that she couldn't get government support because her marriage certificate wasn't confirmed officially, and she had no legal documents for her kids. She had no way to prove that her husband was killed. The team worked to get the legal documents for the three children, and official confirmation of the mother's marriage. They then filed to get the mother and children a monthly pension of USD \$1,000, plus financial compensation of \$33,000. The family are now living in good conditions, and the children are registered for school.

## OUR 2020 ACHIEVEMENTS:

- **Legal protection:** 220 legal representation cases have been completed (and an additional 6 are ongoing), for cases including stealing, vagrancy, prostitution, fighting, drugs etc.
- **Legal documents:** Street Lawyers helped 201 children obtain legal documents required to enroll in school and access government benefits.
- **Total completed legal cases: 421**



## NEW PROGRAM: ADDRESSING CHILD ORGAN, SEX, AND LABOR TRAFFICKING IN IRAQ

In Q4 of 2020, we added a new division to the Street Lawyers team – a specialized team to deal with cases of child trafficking. In consultation with the Street Lawyers team, we developed a program that would start to handle these complex cases, which are often misunderstood and poorly handled within the Iraqi legal system. In 2021, we will increase the capacity of this team with the addition of a new lawyer. We also plan to hold sessions within the community with parents, leaders, and children to raise awareness about trafficking, and how to avoid it. This is a major expansion of the work and experience of the Street Lawyers team.

### **Case Study: Amina (17)**

*Amina's father passed away when she was one year old. Her mother re-married, and Amina went to live with her uncle. When Amina was 15, her uncle forced her to marry his son. The son was addicted to alcohol, and treated Amina very badly – beatings, torture, and unwanted sexual practices. When she was 16, Amina tried to commit suicide. She was saved and referred to the court, and was released on bail. A year later, Amina tried to commit suicide again by throwing herself from a bridge. The police intervened and arrested her, and she was referred to the court again. Our lawyer met with Amina and Amina explained that she asked to divorce her husband, but her uncle beat her and imprisoned her, and she no longer wanted to live. The lawyer held a meeting with the judge and after discussing the case, it was agreed to change the legal description of the case, so that the judge was able to place Amina in a state home for women. After that, the lawyer pursued a legal case so that Amina could divorce her husband, and drop her uncle's legal guardianship. The judge handed Amina over to her aunt, who is a respectable and good woman. Amina now has a new life and a future.*

### **Case Study: Zena (17)**

*Zena was arrested during a police raid on a brothel. She was in poor health and was presented for a medical examination. It was revealed that she had undergone an operation to remove one of her kidneys. Through investigation, it was found that Zena had been deceived by someone who promised to marry her and took her to Erbil. He then convinced her to sell one of her kidneys so that they could get married and then live in Erbil. After this person sold Zena's kidney and seized the money, he brought her back to Baghdad and put her in a brothel, then fled. The court charged Zena with organ trafficking and prostitution. The lawyer managed to drop the trafficking charge, but the court still sentenced Zena to five years imprisonment for prostitution. This case demonstrates the challenges facing lawyers as they navigate a legal system that does not always favor the protection of children. While some laws exist, they are not always enforced. The anti-trafficking team are working hard to also educate within the legal system to make sure that children are not charged with prostitution but instead are victims of human trafficking. There is still much work to be done, as evidenced by cases like that of Zena.*

## NEW PROGRAM: TRAUMA CARE FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

In 2020, ICF commenced a mentorship and training program to help build capacity for social workers. This program was developed in collaboration with our Iraqi partner Iraq Health Access Organization (IHAO), and is led by ICF's Mental Health & Trauma Consultant, Farah Al Najjar.

On an ongoing basis, Farah provides supervision and feedback to the team of IHAO social workers, via videoconference from the US. Farah, a native of Baghdad and certified clinical trauma professional, uses culturally-specific feedback and strategies informed by evidence-based approaches to mental health management.

IHAO social workers are working to support families in areas formerly held by ISIS, and are addressing many types of trauma, including that caused by (and leading to) gender-based violence.

This project is part of our focus on capacity-building, to help Iraqis help themselves. By supporting social workers to effectively help others (especially parents), the impact of this work ultimately has far-reaching impact, especially for children and mothers.



## LOOKING FORWARD: A NEW SCHOOL IN SINJAR FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN

At the end of 2020, ICF and partner Iraq Health Access Organization (IHAO) were granted approvals to commence work on a school refurbishment and re-opening project in Sinjar in 2021.

This school has remained abandoned and unused since the ISIS occupation, but will now be re-opened to 400 Yazidi children, and provide jobs for teachers and other locals. This project will:

- Empower locals through jobs training and employment.
- Nurture Yazidi children by getting them back to school.
- Contribute to local infrastructure.

ICF is thankful for the support of Austin Rotary and other donors for helping to fund this project.





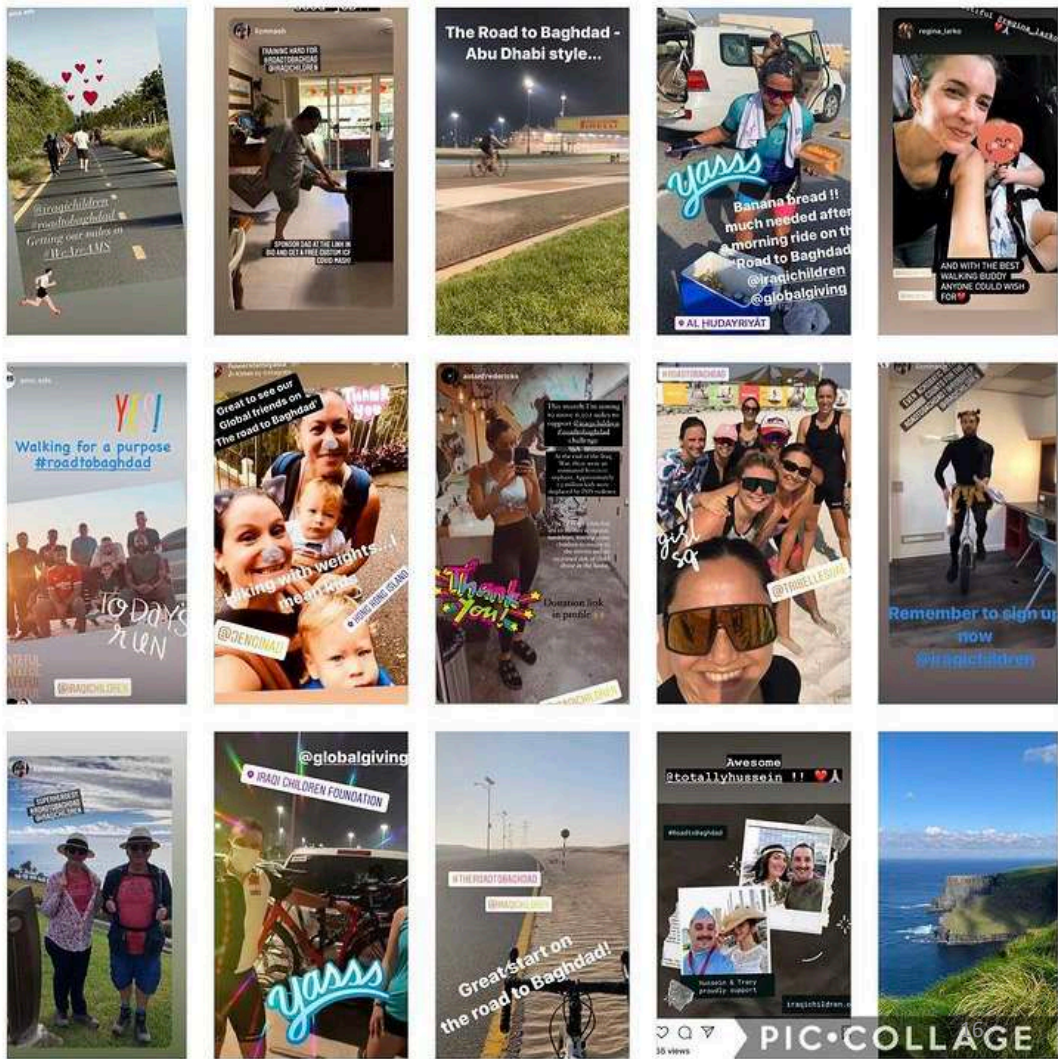
# Saluting ICF's Donors & Supporters

ICF recognizes with gratitude the individuals, foundations, and corporates who stepped up to support vulnerable Iraqi kids in 2020. It is your support that allows us to continue serving this important cause.



## ICF's First Virtual Event: The Road to Baghdad

Our donors and supporters provide life-changing help for Iraqi children. This year, our biggest annual event – the “In Their Shoes 5K” was cancelled due to COVID-19. Instead, we held our first ever virtual event, “The Road to Baghdad”. Participants from all over the world completed miles virtually to help us reach our target of “travelling” from Washington D.C. all the way to Baghdad, Iraq (6,202 miles). In the end, we exceeded our goal, with a total of 17,062 miles travelled, all while fundraising and raising awareness for Iraqi kids.





# Thank you to our donors & supporters!

**ICF would like to thank all our many supporters who stepped up to help Iraqi kids in 2020.** In spite of all the challenges of COVID-19, individual support was higher than ever, allowing ICF to continue and expand this very important work. In particular, ICF thanks all the supporters who held their own fundraisers in 2020 (including those below), who show us all that there are so many ways to give.



**CARLA & RAKAN:  
DONATIONS INSTEAD  
OF WEDDING GIFTS**



**MAIS: FUNDRAISING  
THROUGH A FULL  
IRON(WO)MAN**



**MARIA: COVID-SAFE  
MASKS FOR ICF  
DONORS**



**TEEBA: ICF  
AWARENESS-RAISING  
WRISTBANDS**



**ELIAS: CYCLING  
CHALLENGE WITH  
FRIENDS**

# Our 2020 ICF Corporate Mentors

ICF recognizes with gratitude the Corporate Mentors who stepped up in 2020 to support Iraq's most vulnerable children. Corporate Mentors 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:

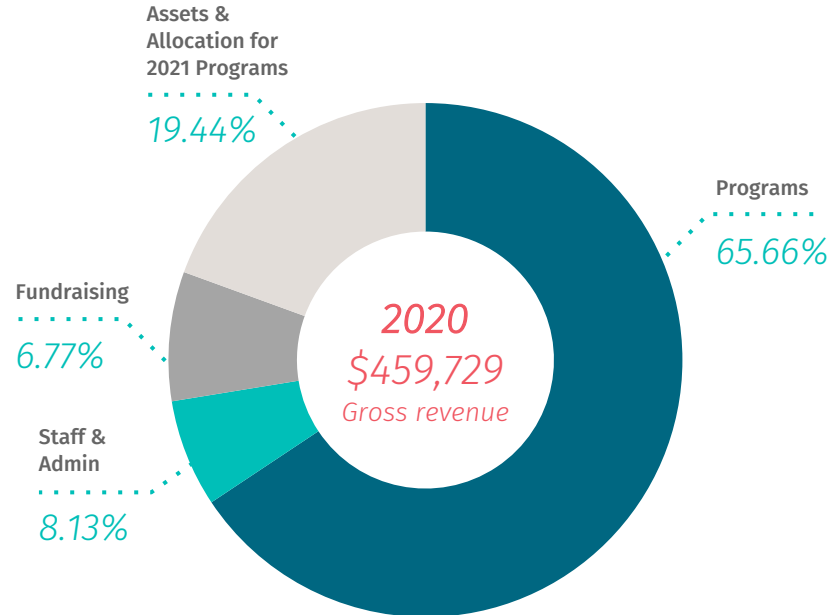


# Financials & Leadership

Despite COVID-19, ICF increased annual revenues by ~30% in 2020. This was largely due to an increase in individual donations, and grants. ICF experienced a decline in corporate support in 2020, consistent with wider industry trends. ICF diversified program spend in 2020 to meet changing needs due to the pandemic, but total spend was lower than expected due to challenges in delivery due to COVID-19 restrictions in Iraq. Therefore, a larger than average percentage of funds remains in reserve for use in 2021 and beyond. The ICF Board of Directors remains committed to responsible stewardship of funds donated, as well as overall leadership of the organization.

# Financial Accountability 2020

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.



# Our Leadership - Board of Directors



Mohammed Khudairi

**CHAIRMAN**

Managing Partner,  
Khudairi Group



Barbara A. Marlowe

**PRESIDENT**

Director, Marketing & PR,  
Dworken & Bernstein Co., LPA



Ward E. Scott II, Esq.

**SECRETARY & GENERAL COUNSEL**

Retired US Marine Corps Colonel,  
Founder, Scott Advocates, PLLC



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Former American bi-cultural  
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Cindy Fogleman

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Mike Jason

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Retired US Army Colonel,  
Defense Consultant



Ali Halabi

**DIRECTOR**

Program Manager International  
Recruitment Specialist



David Collins

**DIRECTOR**

VP, Programs & Policy,  
The Children's Village



Luma Jaffar

**DIRECTOR**

Managing Principal  
Lawrence Group

# 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



Sherizaan Minwalla, Esq.

**LAWYER**

Expert on Iraq and gender-based  
violence/sex trafficking



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



Amar Raouf

**PROCUREMENT DIRECTOR**

Al Bilal Group  
Dubai / Iraq



May Yang Ying  
(Sumaida'ie)

**BUSINESSWOMAN**



## 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 top Platinum rank from GuideStar for commitment to transparency, and is a “Top Ranked” partner on Global Giving
- ✔ 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

## 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:

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