

EDUCATION

Imagine gunfire all around you. Bombs falling. Mobs of people running. Danger. Fear. You walk many miles just to find a safe place. You find shelter for the night. Do you head off to school the next morning? Is there even a school to go to anymore?



Photo: IRC/Frank Ishman

Shaimaa's Story

Twenty-three year old Shaimaa Al-khafajee is a good student and a fast-learner. When war came to her hometown of Baghdad, she was suddenly instructed that girls could no longer walk freely in the streets and told to wear a headscarf. In the midst of violence and lawlessness, Shaimaa quickly learned how to run for cover and hide. She also learned how to use languages to translate, working alongside her father to help U.S. and NATO troops.

Soon the war taught her that it was too dangerous to go to her college classes, or almost anywhere else. Then, fleeing to Jordan, she learned how to leave behind many things she loved: friends, relatives, a culture and a home. But then, hers was one of the first Iraqi families to be resettled in the U.S. by the IRC. With them, Shaimaa is now safe in New York City, working to get back in school, and still learning—how to live in the excitement and loneliness of a strange new country and a future that welcomes her.



To learn more about refugees' journeys or to make a donation, please visit FromHarmToHome.org

IRC: Restoring Education

Since first setting up schools for 40,000 Cambodian refugee children in Thailand in 1980, the IRC has been serving youth in emergencies, chronic crisis, and the aftermath of war. In 2007, over 400,000 children around the world received an education in IRC-supported schools in approximately 20 countries around the world.

In Iraq, the IRC is building new classrooms in Halwest, near Erbil, which has become home to thousands of displaced Iraqi families who fled violence in Mosul and other areas. The town's school opened its doors to displaced Iraqi children earlier this year, but that has

caused severe overcrowding – forcing the children to attend classes in shifts. Six new classrooms, built by our Emergency Response Team mean education will continue for hundreds of uprooted children.

Through after-school tutoring, coaching and recreational activities, we help refugee youth to develop cultural skills, better assimilate and make friends.

All children have the right to go to school and learn. Education allows them to fulfill their potential, to build brighter futures for themselves, and for their communities.