# ANNUAL REPORT 2020





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Sally Susman
Co-Chair
IRC Board of Directors

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CHAIRS OF THE IRC BOARD OF DIRECTORS & ADVISORS

Dear Friends,

2020 was quite a year. But every time we felt Zoom fatigue, we pulled ourselves up short. The disruption we have faced is nothing compared to what our clients are going through. And every time we wonder how the COVID-19 crisis will end, we think about the IRC's teams in the United States and around the world making lives better. So we hope this Annual Report conveys the courage, leadership and impact of our staff and volunteers on the front line.

The combination of the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate crisis and ongoing conflicts unleashed economic hardship, political shocks and humanitarian need on communities from Mexico to Myanmar.

This was also the year of global protests against racial injustice. Our vision is for the IRC to be part of the movement for change. The work that had taken place inside the IRC in advance of the protests, and has been undertaken since then, has driven our thinking and actions forward. We now have a series of actions in play, developed with a dedicated staff team, that will make us a stronger organization, more representative of the places we work and the people we serve, and better able to serve our highly diverse client base.

As we write, famine looms in four countries, including Yemen. Syrians have endured a decade of war, and conflict in Ethiopia compounded by the pandemic is pushing its people to the brink. But our 15,000 colleagues at the IRC know how to respond to crises—even one as global and unique as the pandemic. Stepping up when others step back is at the core of our nearly 90-year history. In February, even before the world fully understood the threat posed by COVID-19, the IRC team in Bangladesh was buying PPE so we could keep our vital operations up and running in Cox's Bazar.

In this new socially distanced world, IRC teams were quickly delivering cash assistance via mobile phones to at-risk clients in Colombia and medication to people in Jordan who couldn't visit pharmacies themselves.

When proper health and safety protocols became essential safeguards against the virus, IRC teams in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone used their experiences fighting Ebola outbreaks to fight the COVID-19 outbreak. When schools closed and remote learning became the new norm, IRC teams across the Middle East leveraged our partnership with Sesame Workshop to ensure children could still access educational content. When immigrant communities in the U.S. were uniquely impacted by the pandemic, IRC colleagues arranged food banks, remote tutoring, and emergency financial assistance to resettled refugees and asylum seekers.

In the Annual Report, you will read the stories and examples of the life-changing work led by our staff and volunteers. As part of our work in 2020, the IRC provided 31 million people with access to health services, 2.6 million people with clean water and more than 800,000 children with an education.

In the midst of this activity and effort, we have thought critically about how to take our next steps forward. Our newly launched Strategy100 lays the foundation for the future of the IRC: deepening our impact and extending our reach by giving clients a greater and more meaningful say in program design and delivery; taking forward partnerships with civil society organizations; striving for greater racial and gender equality in our programs and staffing; and taking our ideas into corridors of power to achieve policy change. All of this takes the right kind of funding, and we have plans for that, too.

You make this work possible through your generous support for the IRC and the people in crisis we serve around the world. The crises of 2020 created more humanitarian need than ever before, but the great question for 2021 is whether we as a global community stood in solidarity to help or whether we turned our backs on those suffering the most.

If you believe the lesson from 2020 is that the safety, dignity and prosperity of people on the other side of the globe goes hand in hand with our own safety, dignity and prosperity at home, then we urge you to stand with the IRC, our staff and our clients around the world.



Eduardo G. Mestre
Chair
IRC Board of Advisors



Timothy F. Geithner
Co-Chair
IRC Board of Directors

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### WHERE WE WORK

We help people whose lives and livelihoods are shattered by conflict and disaster, including the climate crisis, to survive, recover and regain control of their future. Founded in 1933 at the call of Albert Einstein, we work in over 40 countries worldwide.

Together with our supporters, we help people in some of the toughest places on Earth. From the U.S.-Mexico border to Syria and South Sudan, we are on the ground listening to families and empowering them to rescue their dignity, hope and potential. In the U.S., we are leaders in resettling refugees, and worldwide, we help families integrate into their new communities.



MALAYSIA

♦ PARTNER SUPPORT PROGRAMS

O U.S. PROGRAM OFFICES

RESCUE.ORG



The coronavirus doesn't respect borders...it hits the vulnerable hardest. So people living in conflictaffected countries are considerably at greater risk.

**DAVID MILIBAND** 

IRC PRESIDENT AND CEO

## COVID-19: A GLOBAL RESPONSE

When the global threat of COVID-19 became clear in January 2020, the IRC reacted immediately, establishing a dedicated COVID-19 leadership team to coordinate strategies and communications in response to the pandemic. By April, we were implementing a sixmonth plan to support IRC programs in the 40 countries where we work and across more than 20 U.S. cities.

Our response to this unprecedented health crisis is grounded in decades of experience responding to complex health emergencies and disease outbreaks, including Ebola in West Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and cholera in Yemen, as well as our global technical expertise in health, education, protection, and economic well-being in humanitarian settings. Through our response, we aim to:

- 01. Contain the spread, protect communities and care for people affected by COVID-19.
- 02. Meet basic and food security needs.
- 03. Provide essential services, including health care and psychosocial support.

With the help of our supporters in 2020, IRC country teams developed new interventions, adapted delivery methods, responded to government restrictions, and collaborated with local, national and international actors. During this difficult time, the IRC and our partners rose to this historic humanitarian challenge and continued meeting the needs of our clients.



LEFT: Rebecca Kareng talks with Moses Lomoro, an IRC health worker, about COVID-19 vaccines at a health center in the Bidi Bidi refugee settlement in Uganda.

**OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP):** Anxhela Gradeci, a doctor and refugee from Albania, helps her patient, John, recover from COVID-19 in a North London hospital.

**OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM):** At the IRC's Comprehensive Community Center in Cúcuta, Colombia, the team takes precautions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.





# 6.2 MILLION

health consultations to keep families and communities safe from COVID-19 and other illnesses.

2,900

health facilities and mobile clinics received support in strengthening Infection
Prevention and Control measures, with efforts such as the development of dedicated triage areas, availability and use of PPE, and improved water and sanitation infrastructure to reduce risk of COVID-19 and other illnesses.

# 3.8 MILLION

people were provided with access to critical information, including health messages about preventing the transmission of threatening conditions, such as COVID-19, and where to seek essential health services.

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#### **NUTRITIOUS MEALS DURING A TIME OF URGENT NEED**

When the first wave of COVID-19 hit the U.S, many refugees were on the front lines as essential workers. They were also among the hardest hit by the economic fallout. In IRC offices across the country, priorities had to shift from resettling newly arrived families to helping clients access basic needs.

In New York and New Jersey, the IRC found a partner in Chef José Andrés's World Central Kitchen (WCK). Together, the IRC and WCK built distribution centers to provide IRC clients and the broader community with nourishing meals. With so many out of work, IRC clients—many of them refugees in need of immediate employment—were hired to staff the project.

Nineteen-year-old Rania Abou was one of the people who jumped at the chance to help her community. A refugee from Syria, she had arrived with her father and brothers in Roselle, N.J., less than a year before the pandemic started. With dreams of becoming an architect, she was studying for her GED when the virus began spreading.

Rania wanted to give back and began distributing free meals to the New Jersey community that welcomed her. "If I can help, I should help," she told us. "In the future, somebody will help me. It's like a circle. I help somebody and somebody helps me."



**OPPOSITE PAGE:** Rania Abou distributes meals in Elizabeth, N.J., during the pandemic.

**LEFT:** IRC team members at the food distribution site in Elizabeth, N.J., help people in their community.

# THE MOST GRATIFYING PART IS TO WORK AS A TEAM TO SERVE HUMANITY.

As COVID-19 began to spread, Dr. Hossain was deeply concerned about the impact in the densely populated camp, where social distancing is impossible. He and his team quickly distributed information about how families could protect themselves and prevent the spread of the disease, while also setting up isolation wards. He led trainings for his team on infection prevention, use of PPE and stress management.

Reflecting on 2020, Dr. Hossain said, "In response to COVID-19, the most gratifying part is to work as a team to serve humanity." What keeps him going is "seeing the outstanding resilience of health workers."



**LEFT:** An IRC health worker disinfects a health facility in Bangladesh.

#### OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP):

Dr. Mahmudul Hossain shows his team the proper way to wear a gown at an IRC health facility in Bangladesh.

#### OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM):

An IRC paramedic screens a patient in the triage area at a health facility in Bangladesh.





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I'm happy I can provide people with services I once needed myself... And I'm proud that the IRC continues to provide reproductive health care, even with the pandemic.

#### **DOHA**

SYRIAN REFUGEE AND IRC REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CLINIC VOLUNTEER IN JORDAN

# **HE**ALTH

The IRC envisions a world where all people, including those affected by crisis, have access to essential health services.

#### A SOMALI MOTHER FIGHTS FOR HER SON'S SURVIVAL

"It was dry, there was no water, nothing to eat," says Amina\*, 24, a mother of five living in a camp for displaced families in Mogadishu, Somalia. Having made her living working on farms, she abandoned her home when drought destroyed the crops.

Life in the camp is not easy: there is not always enough to eat, and her son suffered from malnutrition. When the child grew sick, Amina turned to the IRC clinic for help.

Despite ongoing conflict, the largest locust invasion in decades, a growing hunger crisis and the pandemic, the IRC clinic in Mogadishu continues to provide essential services, including access to lifesaving treatment for acute malnutrition. In Somalia and several other countries across East and West Africa, the IRC is testing an innovative approach to combine and simplify treatment, allowing all malnourished children like Amina's son to be treated together through one program at one location until they fully recover.

The IRC and partners are also working to bring treatment out of health facilities and closer to communities so families like Amina's don't have to walk long distances to access care.

To make this possible, the IRC adapted commonly used tools so that even low-literate community health workers can accurately diagnose and treat malnourished children: for example, a color-coded armband that can be used to measure a child's upper-arm circumference for signs of malnutrition. Together, these approaches have the potential to dramatically expand access to lifesaving care for children in need.

While Amina's challenges are not over, she is grateful for the IRC staff members' continued interest in her son, pointing out that one nutrition nurse called her daily to inquire about her son's progress.

"I was really thrilled when my child got better," she says.



OUR 2020 GLOBAL IMPACT:

**THIS PAGE:** Unseasonably wet weather caused flooding across northeast Syria, submerging more than half the Areesheh displacement camp.

#### OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP):

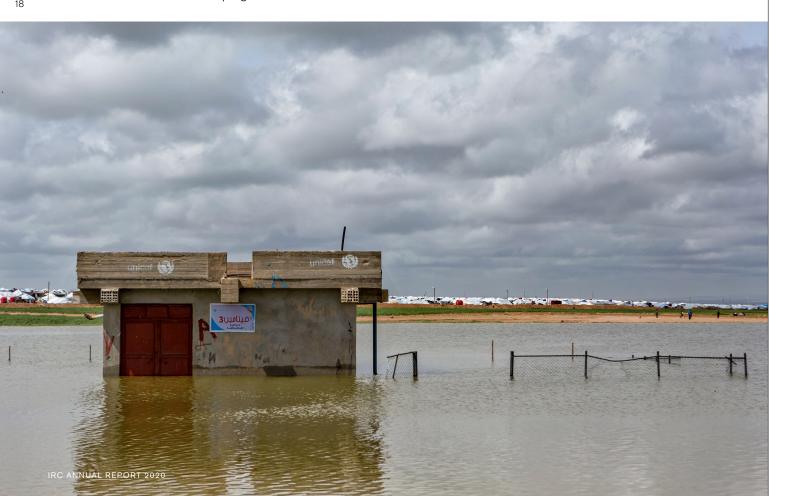
A malnourished child at the IRC's health clinic in Mogadishu, Somalia receives emergency therapeutic food.

**OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM):** Islam Basam Ahmed, 9, washes her hands to protect herself from COVID-19.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE: THE IRC TAKES ACTION

In countries across South Asia, the Middle East, Central America and Africa's Sahel region, extreme weather events and rapid ecosystem change are directly impacting the communities we serve. Displacement from sudden onset disasters has tripled in the last 10 years. In Ethiopia alone, 1 million people lost crops due to the largest outbreak of locusts in recent history, and 11 million are expected to face crisis levels of food insecurity in 2021.

The IRC is committed to helping communities respond to the changing climate. We're implementing programs focused on driving climate-smart agriculture, mapping climate hazards, developing early warning systems, and supporting community-led natural resource management—all while putting women and girls' needs at the center of our programs.





# 31 MILLION

people were provided with access to health services.

4.10,000 children under 5 were treated for malnutrition.



2,900

mobile clinics, hospitals and health care centers were supported by the IRC.

2.6 MILLION

people were provided with clean water.



#### HEALTH SPOTLIGHT:

# MOBILE MEDICAL CLINICS

The IRC's approximately **200 mobile clinics**, usually comprising a doctor, midwife, pharmacist and nutritionist, journey to the most remote places in the world. Our teams navigate rocky terrain, mudslides and other challenging conditions to provide care for pregnant women, follow-up with new mothers and their babies, and treat malnourished children and people suffering from illnesses.

Throughout the pandemic, our mobile clinics in Yemen and other places have worked to prevent the spread of COVID-19, making sure families know how to protect themselves and where to seek help if they fall ill.





## MENTAL HEALTH CARE

The IRC is committed to bringing mental health out of the shadows and making treatment more accessible in crisis settings. Our teams have successfully integrated mental health into primary health care services in 11 countries, and in 2020, as the pandemic took hold, we managed more than **78,000 consultations** for patients with conditions ranging from depression and anxiety to bipolar disorder. When the pandemic hit, we rolled out a global learning series for IRC staff so our teams are better able to address the increased demand for mental health services.

The IRC improves the economic status and well-being of people affected by crisis across the globe.

#### **SEWING MASKS RESTORES HOPE IN SYRIA**

Um Abdo\*, who has been displaced three times, supports her family sewing face masks as part of an IRC-sponsored project in northwest Syria that is meeting a critical need in the fight against COVID-19. Syria's economy has been ravaged by the endless conflict, so the extra cash earned producing the masks was a lifeline to Um Abdo's family in the winter of 2020.

"I am a tailor, but there's not much work here in that field," says the 38-year-old mother of four and primary income-earner for her family, which includes her husband, paralyzed from an injury, her parents, and some siblings. "I opened a shop, selling clothes and accessories. I heard about the IRC's Cash for Work project through my neighbor.... Thank God it worked out. The IRC came here and saw the condition of our family and my husband's situation. They prioritize assisting people who are truly in need."

After she become involved in the mask-making project, Um Abdo became better known in her adopted community and her business improved. "The difference is that now, I'm able to buy supplies for home, wood for winter."

The IRC mask project has provided support to more than 200 workers and supervisors. More than 425,000 masks have been distributed to IRC beneficiaries and staff as well as IRC partners. The project has also augmented IRC's COVID-19 awareness and prevention campaign.



**OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP):** Um Abdo\* works at her sewing machine in Dana, Idlib, northwest Syria.

**OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM):** Um Abdo\* is a part of the IRC's mask-making project, which helps her earn an income and protect her community from COVID-19.

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C ANNUAL REPORT 2020 \*Name has been changed for safety reasons.



OUR 2020 GLOBAL IMPACT:





1,117,980

**people were helped with cash or vouchers** so they could meet
their basic needs and improve their
economic well-being.

232,600

**people received livelihood support,** including job training and agriculture and livestock programming.

13,413

businesses received business development support.

1,576

village savings and loans associations were created or supported, comprising 38,697 members (80 percent female), saving approximately \$1.49 million.





ECONOMIC
RECOVERY AND
DEVELOPMENT
SPOTLIGHT:

## LEARN@HOME IN THAILAND

The IRC has partnered with the Western Union Foundation in a unique approach to entrepreneurship training during a global pandemic: the Learn@Home curriculum combines online and in-person instruction intended to give participants the flexibility to design their own study schedule and comply with COVID-19 restrictions.

"I've attended vocational trainings from various organizations," said a mother living in the Ban Don Yang refugee camp in Kanchanaburi, Thailand. "The Learn@Home course helps me gain new ideas on how to start a business and self-study allows me to weave and earn income. I can take care of my child while studying."

The project takes a three-tiered approach: "I Am" builds participants' self-esteem and helps them establish goals; "I Can" focuses on business and management skills; "I Will" provides cash assistance to launch business plans. In July and August 2020, Learn@ Home reached 117 refugees—men and women equally represented—in seven camps.

# CASH SUPPORT IN YEMEN

Prior to COVID-19, IRC staff in war-torn Yemen had built a strong cash and voucher program, partnering with local financial service providers. We were well positioned to adapt quickly when the outbreak was declared.

In the governorate of Aden, we identified 1,300 vulnerable households before lockdown, allowing the IRC to conduct outreach by phone or through trained and protected frontline workers. As a result, IRC's clients were able to receive quick cash infusions and sustain their purchasing power; none reported negative coping strategies, such as rationing meals.



OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP): Thabit Hassan Qaied holds his son and talks with an IRC mobile medical team member in Aden, Yemen.

#### OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM): A

handwashing station being used in front of the IRC's environmental health office in Ban Mae Surin camp in Thailand.

**LEFT:** Fathiah and her children received nutrition treatment from the IRC's mobile health team in Aden, Yemen.

For nearly 30 years, the IRC has supported programming to prevent violence against women, children and other vulnerable groups in conflict settings, and we respond to violence when it does occur.

#### ETHIOPIAN GIRLS FIND SUPPORT THROUGH GIRL SHINE

Ethiopia hosts more than 850,000 refugees—the second largest cohort in any African nation—40,000 of them in Helowyn camp, located in the southern part of the country. Conditions in the camp are basic, with most refugees living in temporary accommodations. It's especially challenging to be a girl in the camp, as they face an increased risk of gender-based violence.

But girls living in Ethiopia want what all girls want—to be supported, feel safe, and able to plan for bright futures with their friends and families. The IRC is working to help them achieve their goals. Many are participating in our Girl Shine program, which seeks to provide them with life skills, including decision-making and developing trust and friendships.

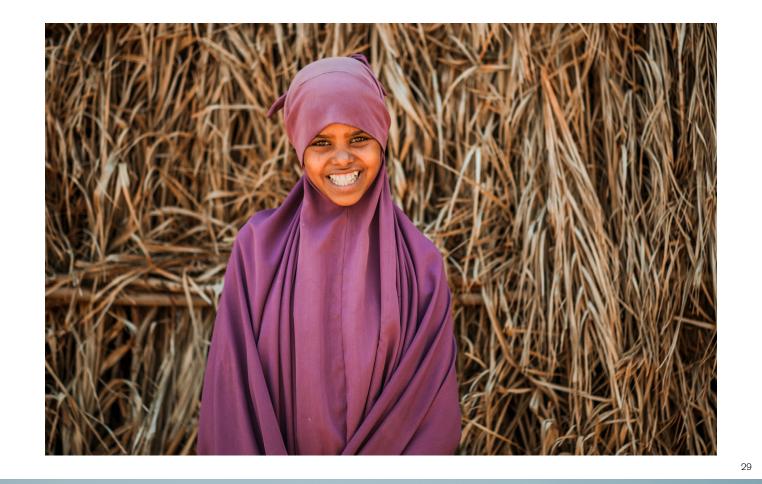
Asha Shoaib Hassan describes herself as "honest, sociable, happy." She looks to her older sister for guidance and inspiration. "My sister got married when she was very young. She is 20 now and has two children. She always encourages me to continue my education because she was not able to finish hers."

And that is crucial, says Asha. "Girls can learn whatever boys learn, and girls can reach their goals and potential just like boys can!" To that end, Girl Shine has been life-changing.

"I've learned important life skills, social and emotional skills," she says. "I've also learned the process and steps of how to select someone I can trust as a friend, and I know now where I can get support and help through the IRC if I face violence."

**OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP):** 15-year-old Asha Shoaib Hassan, a refugee from Somalia, is a part of our Girl Shine program in Ethiopia.

opposite page (Bottom): From the left, Ampiya Mustafa, Asha Shoaib Hassan, Hibo Saeed, Shamsa Mohammed and Nurta Issa have become friends after joining the Girl Shine program.





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GLOBAL IMPACT:

**OUR 2020** 



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Section 3. III.

Section 3.

**766,200**visits to IRC Women and Girls Safe Spaces.

1,236,800
people reached through gender-based violence-awareness activities.

32,000 people received legal counseling.

73,500 children supported through safe healing and learning spaces.



CRISIS RESPONSE, RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT

**THIS PAGE:** Hasina applies traditional make-up in the Teknaf

Women's Center.

OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP):

refugee camp in Bangladesh. She attends the IRC's Integrated

The Togoletta women's group in Uganda's Bidi Bidi refugee

settlement meets to discuss an upcoming counseling session with

OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM): Children learn at an IRC safe healing and learning space in Deh Surkh, Qala-

community members.

e-Naw, Afghanistan.

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"Women and adolescent girls, many of whom were already experiencing forms of violence, are now taking on double and triple responsibilities, all in confined spaces, 24 hours of the day," said Meghan Lopez, IRC regional director for Latin America, about the reality of COVID-19. To keep providing services and get information to women and girls who are under movement restrictions or lockdowns, IRC and our partners have had to get creative.

In Uganda, Karamoja Women Umbrella Organization, an IRC partner, found an innovative way to reach women forced into quarantine: verbal passwords. If a victim of abuse repeats the agreed-upon password to her IRC caseworker, the caseworker knows it is not a safe time to talk and re-directs the conversation until the client can speak freely. Others have used a new "phone-beep system" to allow abuse victims to discreetly communicate with their caseworkers. In El Salvador, the IRC is providing psychosocial support via digital messaging or phone.



IRC's safe spaces provide at-risk women and girls with access to critical services while strengthening social networks and psychosocial support. During the pandemic, the IRC has used safe spaces as centers for information about COVID-19 and its prevention.

In Tanzania, for example, IRC safe spaces have remained open by enforcing social distancing to adhere to new protocols. To make sure as many women as possible could still attend empowerment sessions, IRC staff increased the number of sessions per day.

"We as women are at the core of the fight against COVID-19 disease in our camp," says a group leader in a safe space in South Sudan. "We will work hard to stop the spread of the virus to reduce the burden on our shoulders."



CRISIS RESPONSE, RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT

OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP): Aisha
Namugenyi, a Listen Up officer,
visits with members of the Yumbe
Muslim Women's Group in Uganda.

**OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM):** Zara Tapita (center) meets with IRC staff and discusses some of the challenges that children face while accessing education in Cameroon.

RESCUE.ORG

The IRC ensures children and youth affected by crisis and conflict have access to safe, quality education. Our programs build the academic and social-emotional skills children need for well-being and success in school and beyond.

#### **EDUCATION IS A LIFELINE FOR GIRLS IN NIGERIA**

Fatima is only 8 years old, but already she has ambitious plans for her life. "I want to get an education to become a doctor," she tells us. "I want to help parents because parents are losing their children. I also lost my brother."

Fatima and her family were forced to flee Maiduguri, a large city in northeast Nigeria, and now live in Damaturu, a town in the more stable northern region of the country. Her mother, Habiba, supported the family by making soybean cakes but now is unable to afford the ingredients. Her husband and son work odd jobs to earn just enough income to manage.

Fortunately, Fatima and her older sister are able to attend the Waziri Ibrahim Primary School, where they can participate in the IRC's Accelerated Learning Program. ALP sessions target children who have had to drop out of school and seek to equip them with the skills necessary to return to public education.

# I WANT TO GET AN EDUCATION TO BECOME A DOCTOR.

"Life has changed for us," says Habiba. Their adopted community found her family a place to live and has helped with food, but Habiba is most thankful for the schooling her daughters now receive. "I am happy and proud of them," she says. "When Fatima returns home, she tells me, 'Mum, I learned this, this, and this' ... it surprises me!"

"Arithmetic is my favorite subject," says Fatima. "I feel very happy when I come to school."





OUR 2020 GLOBAL IMPACT:





819,500 children were provided with education opportunities.

20,000 teachers and facilitators were provided with professional development.

6,600 learning centers were supported.







#### **AHLAN SIMSIM**

**EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT:** 

> A partnership between Sesame Workshop and the IRC in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, Ahlan Simsim ("Welcome Sesame" in Arabic), provides quality early-learning opportunities for children affected by conflict. With the emergence of COVID-19, the program pivoted from delivering content in group settings and through home visits to digital delivery via WhatsApp, and partnered with Viamo (a global social media tool) to allow two-way communication between IRC teams and caregivers.

For example, basic lessons in reading, math and social-emotional learning originally designed for in-classroom instruction were adapted as five- to 10-minute videos, with complementary activities for use at home. Parents reported that the lessons helped them teach their children the alphabet, talk about emotions, and ultimately give them the skills they need to heal, grow, learn and thrive.

More than 22,000 caregivers and children accessed Ahlan Simsim via WhatsApp, including Talia, who told us, "I learned from Elmo that you have to wash your hands for 20 seconds, and I always sing the alphabet song when washing them."

Beyond the pandemic, this program provides a model for potential application in other crisis-affected places where in-person programming is not possible.

#### **PAKISTAN READING PROJECT**

Pakistan's ongoing challenge of keeping school-age children in the classroom was exacerbated by four months of school closures because of the pandemic. In response, the IRC's highly successful Pakistan Reading Project (PRP) immediately adapted its approach, disseminating learning and teaching materials via WhatsApp, SMS and online webinars to make home-based education a reality.

Our PRP team produced content for multiple mediums in seven languages, including Urdu, Pashto and English. The program's digital platforms were accessed 570,000 times; we also recorded stories in an audio format for people using dial-in phones.

Additionally, the PRP team organized 16 online webinars for teachers' professional development during the pandemic. The first webinar had 25 teachers in attendance, which gradually increased to 500 teachers regularly attending the sessions.

**OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP):** Children in the Azrag refugee camp in Jordan take part in the Ahlan Simsim workshop.

#### OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM):

The Pakistan Reading Project is helping children learn to read in Grade I and Grade II.

### **GOVERNANCE**

The IRC amplifies the voices of people whose lives have been impacted by crisis, helping them regain control of their future by championing their right to influence the issues and programming that affect their cities, towns and communities.

THIS PAGE: Zainab Bare is a Somali refugee and member of the Women Steering Committee in Ethiopia's Helowyn camp. She raises awareness about women's rights.







30,800

people were trained on governance themes, ensuring they have a voice in how decisions are made in their communities.

166

organizations were supported to improve their ability to lead, manage and connect.

620,000

**people participated in awareness- raising sessions** on peace building, social accountability and other governance themes.



# PLAY FOR PEACE IN LIBYA

In Libya, the IRC brings together young people with diverse backgrounds and experiences in safe spaces where they can dialogue, learn about conflict management, and develop interpersonal skills. The program, Promoting Leadership and Activism of Youth for Peace in Libya (PLAY for Peace), seeks to reduce violence and discrimination in three cities (Misrata, Tawergha and Bani Walid).

"At this critical time, with displaced members of the Tawergha community returning to the city, it's very important to recognize the role women and girls can play in promoting peace and avoiding hate speech," says Zeineb Ghoul, a PLAY for Peace participant. Young women in Libya have limited freedom of movement and rarely participate in community debates and decisions. "The sessions gave me the chance to learn about other experiences where women played a strong role and had a big, positive impact," says Ghoul.

# IT'S VERY IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE THE ROLE WOMEN AND GIRLS CAN PLAY IN PROMOTING PEACE AND AVOIDING HATE SPEECH.

In addition, the IRC partnered with the Libyan nongovernmental organization Y-PEER to create opportunities for young people to engage with community organizations, linking youth groups with municipal councils, for example, to build civic engagement and leadership skills. PLAY for Peace will also broadcast positive messages to the public and organize community events to promote behavior that discourages discrimination and violence.

**OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP):** Sarah, a Training for Trainers participant, gives a presentation on the drivers of conflict.

**OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM):** At a Trainings for Trainers session, participants receive guidance on leadership topics.



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Seeking asylum is legal—even during a pandemic. People have the right to seek asylum without being criminalized, turned away or separated from family.

#### **HANS VAN DE WEERD**

IRC VICE PRESIDENT OF RESETTLEMENT, **ASYLUM AND INTEGRATION** 

The IRC creates opportunities for refugees and other vulnerable migrants to survive and thrive in the United States and in Europe. We are the largest resettlement agency in the U.S., operating community-based programs serving immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees across 26 cities. In Europe, we partner with governments and local organizations to help communities address the unique needs of asylum seekers, migrants and refugees.

#### THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM, THE RIGHT TO VOTE

The 2020 elections presented the IRC with an exciting opportunity: prepare a new cohort of U.S. citizens for their civic duties. With our help, numerous new Americans exercised that right and responsibility for the first time. "As a citizen of the United States of America, it is my duty to vote," said Muska Haseeb, a pre-med student from Afghanistan now living in Phoenix, Ariz. "I know that this right did not come easy to many in the U.S. When I vote, I think about education, immigration and women's rights—issues that I believe are related to one another.... With your vote, you're supporting yourself, your family, your friends and every citizen of this country."

# YOUR VOTE COUNTS AND YOUR VOTE WILL CHANGE THE WORLD.

Fredrick Shema, from Uganda, now living in Boise, Idaho, agreed. "I believe it is crucial for me to vote, because my vote will determine the next administration and what policies are passed. As a black man in America, I see that there is a lot of racism and injustice going on. That's one issue that's very personal to me.... Whether it's in person or by mail, please vote, because your vote counts and your vote will change the world."



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#### OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM):

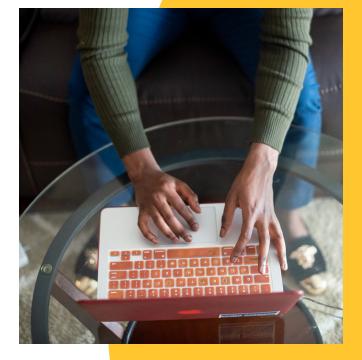
Nasima, an asylum seeker from Afghanistan, comforts her son Alireza in Lesvos, Greece. Before the election, our staff developed creative ways to promote voter education and assist clients in exercising their right to vote. In Los Angeles, for example, citizenship class instructors held mock elections to highlight the importance of voting. In Georgia, Arizona, Florida, Washington, Idaho, Utah, California and Virginia, staff conducted texting, social media and education campaigns to help newly naturalized citizens register to vote and get informed. The IRC was part of the national New American Voters 2020 Campaign to help ensure equitable access for refugees and immigrants through digital means, which was crucial given restrictions during the pandemic.

# REFUGEE.INFO: A PERSONAL CONNECTION AND CRITICAL SUPPORT FOR REFUGEES

The pandemic made it more important than ever for refugees and migrants to be able to access vital information about health and safety.

Refugee.Info is a platform in Europe that proactively provides accessible, reliable information on COVID-19 and on asylum procedures, among other critical issues, and that responds to user needs and requests for support. Many refugees and migrants arrive in Europe with smartphones, making it easier to reach them wherever they are via WhatsApp, Facebook and other social media. That personal connection—with responses and support provided in users' native languages—is critical: "We are always here to listen to [users] and provide support, not only in this difficult time, but always," says Henry, one of the Refugee.Info moderators.

Since its creation in 2015, Refugee.Info has reached over one million people in Europe. Most recently in Greece, the team has created content to help refugees find lodging, transportation, medical services and support while navigating the asylum process. In Italy, the team uses Facebook to reach asylum seekers with information about essential services, answer questions from users, and dispel misinformation about COVID-19.





IN THE UNITED STATES:

5,237 people were helped in becoming U.S. citizens.

14,000 people participated in workforce, small-business and financial-capability development.

53,000 people are provided with life-changing services each year.

#### **IN EUROPE:**

9,300 people were supported after the Moria refugee camp fire in Lesvos, Greece.

260,000 refugees and migrants in Greece and Italy used Refugee.Info.

IRC ANNUAL REPORT 2020



**TOP:** Fredrick Shema is helping young refugees thrive in the U.S. while studying to become a lawyer.

**BOTTOM:** Marta and Julio speak with Alex Cruz, an asylum-seeking family specialist at the IRC's Welcome Center in Phoenix, Ariz.



RESETTLEMENT, ASYLUM AND INTEGRATION SPOTLIGHT:

#### CITIZENSHIP FOR IMMIGRANTS

Over the past six years, the IRC has helped more than 30,000 immigrants and refugees become Americans. We offer high-quality, free or low-cost legal services and citizenship assistance in 23 cities, assisting qualified individuals to obtain green cards and navigate the naturalization process, from background checks to interviews to civic and English tests.

Our naturalization program strives to simplify and increase access to the naturalization process and ensure civic integration for IRC clients.

## LEGAL SERVICES FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS

In the U.S, most asylum seekers fleeing violence and persecution do not have access to a lawyer. For them, the stakes could not be higher: asylum seekers with legal representation are at least five times more likely to win their cases.

In Dallas, Phoenix, Denver and California's Central Valley, the IRC has legal centers providing critical legal representation to asylum seekers, unaccompanied children, and other noncitizens at risk of deportation, including survivors of torture and trafficking. Five IRC field offices participated in an initiative to provide legal assistance during the pandemic to individuals seeking release from ICE detention or entry into the U.S. from Mexico, where they feared exposure to COVID-19.

Olga Byrne, IRC's director of U.S. immigration, states: "Ensuring the right to counsel, as well as finding alternatives to a detention-centric asylum system, is absolutely essential to creating a safe, legal and fair immigration system for some of the world's most vulnerable."



**Both advocacy** and action are needed to impact refugees' lives. The manifestation of these factors was the passing of HB-1179. Now refugees won't be deprived of higher education.

#### **SEYED HOSSEIN HASHEMI**

A FORMER REFUGEE WHO WORKED WITH THE IRC IN VIRGINIA

The IRC vigorously advocates on behalf of people affected by crisis to assure they have what they need, not only to survive, but to rebuild and thrive in new communities.

**COVID-19 RESPONSE:** We collaborated with our partners to secure critical pandemic-related supplies for low-income countries, including \$18 billion in U.S. spending and \$300 million in direct funding to NGOs through the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan. We worked to increase European Union funding for the international COVID-19 response to €26 billion (from €15.6 billion).

**U.S. REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION:** We successfully promoted 36 pro-refugee pieces of legislation in 14 states and drove efforts in New York, New Jersey, Nevada, Michigan and Colorado to permit foreign-licensed health care professionals to contribute to the U.S. COVID-19 response.

**EU REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION:** The IRC enabled the publication of a crucial action plan that will determine the direction of EU integration policy for years to come. We helped facilitate the transfer of more than 3,650 vulnerable asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection from temporary shelters on Greek islands to permanent homes in other European countries.

**CONFLICT IN SYRIA:** As a result of our persistent advocacy and leadership, the U.N. Security Council reauthorized cross-border humanitarian aid to Syria in 2020, a decision that will benefit 3 million Syrians in need.

Batta at Bat

4.9,000 actions taken by IRC supporters, including 1,300 calls made to the White House.

42,000

emails sent to Congress and the White House.

3,650

asylum seekers and beneficiaries were transferred from shelters in Greece to permanent homes in Europe with our help.

OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP): Naman
Bachir, an asylum seeker and IRC
staff member from Niger, prepares
boxes of hygiene products for
families in Lesvos, Greece.

**OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM):** Esham Muhammad Ali's son was treated for malnutrition by the IRC's mobile medical team in Yemen.



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NUAL REPORT 2020

RESCUE.ORG

When we reach our 100-year anniversary in 2033, we want the impact of our programs and the influence of our ideas to empower those caught in crisis to make lasting change in their lives.

To achieve this vision, we are launching Strategy100, a strategic plan that provides a north star for our programs, our research and our voice.

Strategy100 sets out five key goals to address the greatest challenges to helping crisisaffected people.

- **Increase our impact:** We will combine our sector-leading research and data-driven evidence with contextual knowledge to deliver the highest quality humanitarian, development and resettlement programming possible.
- **Expand our scale:** We will increase the number of people we reach with our work, not just through our direct programming, but also by using our resources and technical expertise to empower and strengthen local support systems.
- **Invest in our people:** We will ensure the highest quality teams by strengthening our ability to attract, retain and train an inclusive global workforce that represents the communities we serve.
- Use our influence: We will share our best ideas and use our influence around the world to improve the lives of all people affected by crisis.
- **Stabilize our funding:** We will secure flexible, stable, diverse funding, which will allow us to make stronger investments in the people we serve and better respond to their needs.

In partnership with the people we serve and local communities, we are building on our strong foundations to find new ways to advance these goals and improve the outcomes of our work.

#### MISSION

To help people whose lives and livelihoods are shattered by conflict and disaster, including the climate crisis, to survive, recover and gain control over their future.

**CLIENTS** 

d Δ. C \_ G TRATE

IMPACT

Raise program quality

SCALE

Reach more people

PEOPLE

Strengthen our teams

INFLUENCE

Innovation for good

FUNDING

Flexible, diverse, stable

HEALTH SAFETY

**EDUCATION** 

**ECONOMIC** WELLBEING OUTCOM

m

POWER

through all our work

Tackling gender inequalities in and

After 100 years of service, we want the impact of our programs and the influence of our ideas to empower those caught in crisis to make lasting change in their lives.

VISION

The struggle against racism runs deep in the IRC's DNA. We are a global organization working in contexts which experience issues of racial justice in widely different ways. But we are united in our values, and united too in our determination to better reflect in our organization and in our work the places where we operate and the people we serve.

When we started work on our new strategic plan in 2019, we identified issues of Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) as a key element. Strategy100, as our CEO states, "committed us to anti-racism and fighting discrimination, including its systemic underpinnings, which are experienced in different parts of the world in different ways," and we set ambitious goals for ourselves in the coming years. In 2020, we convened a team of IRC staff to take forward this work. Now, a new and permanent Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) unit is being created to lead the implementation of IRC's GEDI aspirations.

#### The DEI team developed a vision statement which states:

At the IRC, our diverse clients, partners and staff have the power, voice and agency to shape programs and operations. Within the IRC, we actively work to end all forms of systemic discrimination and foster an inclusive working environment where everyone feels respected, heard, valued and supported. Our programs seek to reduce disparities in outcomes which are driven by systemic inequality.

# THE DEI TEAM DEVELOPED FIVE PRINCIPLES TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION:

- **Client-centered:** We are pursuing DEI with the ultimate aim to better serve our clients in alignment with our organizational mission.
- 2. Intersectionality: We adopt an intersectional, feminist lens to proactively understand and work on transforming power structures and norms.
- **3. Decoloniality:** We acknowledge and challenge the legacy of colonialism and racism in our sector.
- Accountability: Our DEI efforts connect every part of our organization to drive commitment at all levels. Each of us takes responsibility for our actions.
- **Engagement:** Our efforts are supported by two-way communication to share power.

#### SO FAR, THE IRC'S ACTIONS INCLUDE:

We committed to leadership diversity goals related to gender identity, race/ethnicity, and nationality, including that 50% of our global and regional senior leaders identify as races/ethnicities underrepresented in global power structures.

We established a 10-member DEI team that gathered insights from over 110 listening sessions involving more than 2,000 colleagues to build the IRC DEI strategy. In FY21, \$2 million was allocated toward our DEI initiatives. About half of this investment was allocated directly to the office and country programs to support locally led and staff-led initiatives and to implement foundational work at the global level.

We committed to channeling 25% of our funding to local and national responders by 2024. We made a new commitment to increase resources to local partners by half in 2021 (compared to 2020) and to expand partnerships with local actors (half of them women-led).

We established a 40-person DEI Council composed of 20 employee groups and networks to be a forum for staff views on DEI issues.

We launched an audit of HR practices and a staff survey to inform further investments in improving internal policies and practices to deliver on our DEI goals. We improved recruitment practices to attract more diverse talent and hired a diversity recruiter.

Learn more about our commitments to Diversity, Equality and Inclusion: Rescue.org/DEI

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#### THE IRC'S COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUALITY

In 2015, the IRC made a new commitment to bridge the gender gap. Women and girls are the significant majority of our clients and face multiple inequalities. In 2019, in recognition of the barriers to equality facing clients and staff, our CEO stated, "We cannot be a truly successful humanitarian organization, defined by the outcomes achieved by and for our beneficiaries, until we are a feminist organization." Strategy100 commits that across our outcomes framework we will tackle gender inequalities in and through all our work.

In 2018, the IRC launched a three-year Gender Action Plan which consists of 16 indicators aimed at improving gender parity in our workforce and fostering a gender-equitable organizational culture where women feel safe and are respected. By 2020, the GAP led to a 5 percent increase in overall women's participation and a 3.5 percent increase in women's representation at the leadership level.

We helped establish 90 women-led Employee Recourse Groups across 29 countries, and built a 325-member community of Gender Equality Champions who led initiatives to improve working conditions for women frontline humanitarian workers. These initiatives ranged from establishing day-care centers and feminist libraries to developing unconscious-bias awareness campaigns.

We conducted gender analyses to inform programming in 10 countries including Afghanistan, Syria, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Yemen, and three U.S. resettlement offices. The analyses respond to immediate needs as well as identify opportunities to introduce gender transformative programming that addresses root causes of inequalities.

The IRC also developed and rolled out global anti-sexual harassment and safety-and-security frameworks to mitigate security concerns specific to women and LGBTQI+humanitarians.

It is important to us that we are accountable for progress against the Gender Action Plan. You can learn more about the IRC's GAP here: Rescue.org/GAPresource



To our supporters and partners, thank you for helping people in the toughest places on Earth to survive, recover and rebuild their lives. Your generosity in 2020 enabled us to help millions of people despite the challenges brought forth by the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic.

When we needed you, you responded with courage, leadership and compassion. Thank you for stepping up to support the IRC and the people we serve.

Our many generous supporters and partners make the work we do around the world possible. It is because of them that we were able to help so many refugees to survive, recover and rebuild their lives in 2020.

#### MIKE SCHROEPFER AND ERIN HOFFMANN

PROVIDING ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE AND EMPOWERING REFUGEES IN THE TOUGHEST PLACES ON EARTH

Over the last five years, Mike Schroepfer and Erin Hoffmann have been dedicated partners of the IRC. Moved by the Syrian refugee crisis in 2015, they made a \$1 million gift to support the IRC's emergency response in the Middle East and Europe. Inspired by the impact of that gift, Mike and Erin next made a three-year multimillion dollar commitment to sustain the largest health clinic in the Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan. The IRC is one of the largest providers of health care for Syrian refugees in Jordan, offering services free of

In 2020, they stepped up once again with a three-year multimillion dollar unrestricted commitment, which allows the IRC flexibility to deploy resources as needed to crisisaffected people around the world. We are deeply grateful for their solidarity and generosity.

#### **ANYA AND ALBERT SALAMA**

STANDING AS A BEACON OF HOPE FOR REFUGEES AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

Anya and Albert Salama are committed supporters of the IRC and we are honored to have them as members of our community. In 2020, they joined Partners for Freedom, a group of IRC supporters who courageously offer a legacy of hope for future generations. By including the IRC in their wills, they will help refugees years from now to rebuild their lives.

"I'm most inspired by my mother's experience as a refugee from Russia during WWII.... The IRC was there for people like my mother in the 1940s. They are there for people in Syria now, and they will be there for others in the future," says Anya.

THE IRC WAS THERE FOR PEOPLE LIKE MY MOTHER IN THE 1940s. THEY ARE THERE FOR PEOPLE IN SYRIA NOW, AND THEY WILL BE THERE FOR OTHERS IN THE FUTURE.



**OPPOSITE PAGE:** Sarra Ghazzi, the IRC's Jordan country program director, speaks with a nurse at the IRC's clinic in Za'atari camp.



#### **SOTHEBY'S**

HOSTING A SPECIAL ONLINE AUCTION FOR PANDEMIC RELIEF

At the height of the pandemic in May 2020, Sotheby's and their partners at Google launched an online charity auction of unique virtual experiences to support the IRC's work combating COVID-19. The MayDay COVID-19 Charity Auction offered bidders the opportunity to engage with leaders from all walks of culture, business, politics and science via video calls. From a chance to record a song with Sting to a tea with Madeleine Albright, the experiences highlighted the commitment of luminaries across fields to support the IRC's frontline efforts in the U.S. and Europe.

With Sotheby's creative and collaborative partnership, the online auction raised an outstanding \$591,841. We are grateful for Sotheby's and all the leading figures who agreed to participate and donate their time in support of the IRC and the communities we serve.

#### **LEGO FOUNDATION**

PROVIDING REMOTE EDUCATION TO REFUGEE CHILDREN IN CRISIS ZONES

When the pandemic hit, the LEGO Foundation and the IRC knew what this would mean for refugee children: without the right tools and support, they would lose access to quality education. To ensure children in crisis areas were not left behind, the LEGO Foundation generously gave a \$2 million grant to the IRC's global education response to COVID-19.

Play Well, the program funded by the grant, is making remote learning a reality.

Originating in Latin America and expanding to East Africa to build upon the larger PlayMatters grant, Play Well has created and adapted play-based social-emotional learning content that is being delivered via radio and audio services and other digital platforms where internet access is limited. It is also providing modular content for caregivers to support a nurturing learning space at home. With the LEGO Foundation's incredible partnership, the IRC aims to reach more than 1.5 million children globally.

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On the following pages, we salute the generous donors who supported the IRC during the past fiscal year, which began Oct. 1, 2019, and ended Sept. 30, 2020.

The IRC is grateful for all the individual donors, corporations and foundations that have provided essential support for the IRC's life-changing programs and special projects around the globe

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#### **DONATE**

Give online by visiting our website at **Rescue.org.** Make a tax-deductible contribution by calling **1 855-9RESCUE** or by mail to:

#### **Donations International Rescue Committee**

P.O. Box 6068

Albert Lea, MN 56007-9847

The IRC accepts gifts in the form of securities. For more information, please contact Stock.Gifts@Rescue.org.

#### **FUTURE GIFTS**

Help the IRC support refugee families through a future gift in your will. Contact us at PlannedGiving@Rescue.org or 212-551-2954 for information or to indicate that you have already included the IRC in your plans.

#### **VOLUNTEER**

The IRC relies on volunteers to support its work helping refugees adjust to a new life in the United States. For information, visit Rescue.org/ Volunteer.

#### **FUNDRAISE**

Start your own fundraising campaign to support the IRC and make a difference. For information, visit Rescue.org/DIY.

Text **RESCUE** to **40649** to sign up with the IRC's online global community and receive important advocacy alerts and news about the humanitarian issues that are important to you, or visit **Rescue.org/Act** to see our latest actions.

#### **JOIN THE CONVERSATION**

- **y** @RESCUEorg
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### **CONSOLIDATED AUDITED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES**

Year ended Sept. 30, 2020, and Sept. 30, 2019 (in thousands)

(iii iii a a a a ii a a j		
	2020	2019
OPERATING REVENUES		
Contributions	\$ 184,349	\$ 174,707
Contributed goods and services	9,010	7,252
Grants and contracts	581,783	566,061
Foundation and private grants	41,143	37,631
Investment return used for operations	5,537	6,516
Loan administration fees and other income	3,750	4,314
Total Operating Revenues	825,572	796,481
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Program Services:		
International programs	542.590	523.111

**NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR** 

OPERATING EXPENSES		
Program Services:		
International programs	542,590	523,111
U.S. programs	93,121	93,555
Emergency preparedness, technical units and other	71,007	64,565
Total Program Services	706,718	681,231
Supporting Services:		
Management and general	54,431	57,692
Fundraising	47,114	46,413
Total Supporting Services	101,545	104,105
Total Operating Expenses	808,263	785,336
Excess (deficiency) of operating revenues over operating expenses	17,309	11,145
Excess related to Unrestricted Funds	8,809	2,971
Excess (deficiency) related to Temporary Restricted Funds*	8,500	8,174
Endowment, planned giving and other non-operating activities (net)	-1267	-4073
Increase in net assets	16,042	7,072
Net assets, beginning of year	229,748	222,676

#### THE IRC'S **EFFICIENCY** Program

87% Services Management & General 7% Fundraising 6%



38%

#### **PROGRAM SERVICES**

Health

Ποαιτί	30 70
Resettlement	12%
Education	11%
Protection	11%
Water &	
Sanitation	9%
Livelihood	9%
Distribution	6%
Other	
Programs*	4%
	Education Protection Water & Sanitation Livelihood Distribution Other

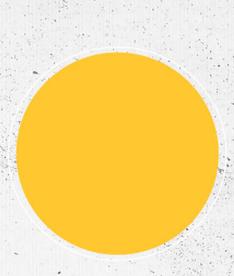
<sup>\*</sup> Includes shelter and community development



\$ 245,790 \$ 229,748

<sup>\*</sup> Unspent temporary restricted funds are carried forward and therefore may produce deficits in the years when expanded. Complete financial statements, audited by KPMG LLP, are available at **Rescue.org** 





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