

INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT 2017





A portrait of a New Roots gardener in San Diego, California.

Shaun Boyte/IRC



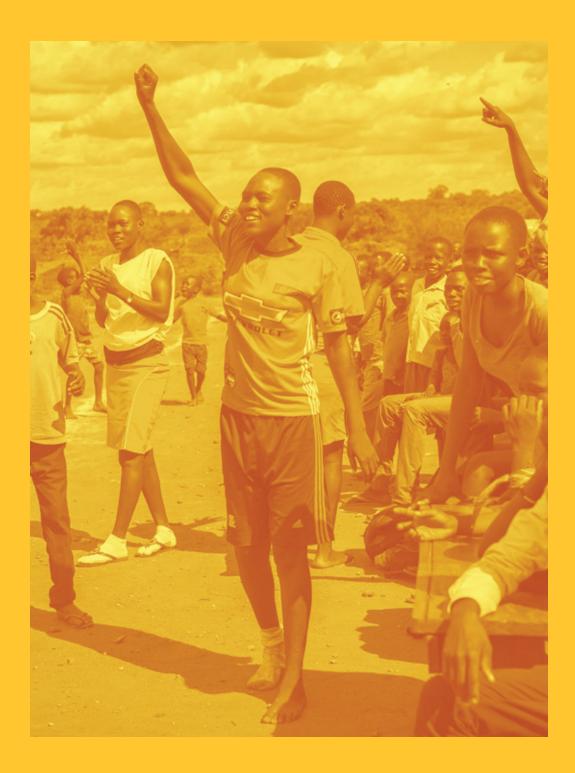
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CHAIRS OF THE IRC BOARD OF THE IRC AND SESA SURVIVAL RECOVERY RENEWAL OUR SUPPORTERS BOARD OF DIRECT FINANCIAL REPOR HOW YOU CAN HE

Children collect water from IRC-filled water tanks in their village in Yemen. Kellie Ryan/IRC

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**The International Rescue Committee has stepped up at** this critical moment—helping more people than ever before and using its voice for the world's most vulnerable people. We are a committed advocate for refugees and displaced people, and the communities which host them, no matter their race, religion or country of origin.

DAVID MILIBAND PRESIDENT AND CEO



# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CHAIRS OF THE IRC BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND OVERSEERS

#### Dear Friends.

We are living in a time of pressing and growing humanitarian need. More than 65 million people have been displaced by conflict or disaster and half are children. Compounding this global crisis, the families desperate for safety-and even the humanitarian workers who endeavor to help them-are increasingly under assault.

The International Rescue Committee has stepped up at this critical moment—helping more people than ever before and using its voice for the world's most vulnerable people. We are a committed advocate for refugees and displaced people, and the communities which host them, no matter their race, religion or country of origin. Year after year, we bring hope and lifesaving care to millions whose lives have been shattered by crisis.

As we meet the challenges in front of us, we are proud to present our 2017 Annual Report, which offers a glimpse into our work-and the impact of generous support from governments, corporations, foundations and individuals. An exciting new development featured in this report is our partnership with Sesame Workshop.

Together we won the MacArthur Foundation's firstever \$100 million "100&Change" award to bring education and healing to a generation of Syrian refugee children.

Today, the IRC's leadership, expertise and over 80 years of experience have never been more needed. The Syrian war has driven 13.5 million people from their homes. We have seen the tragic re-emergence of famine in South Sudan and the devastating effects of hunger in East Africa, Nigeria and Yemen. In Myanmar, deadly attacks caused 671,000 Rohingya civilians to flee to Bangladesh.

In more than 40 countries, we help refugees survive, recover and rebuild their lives. We provide not only emergency aid, such as clean water and health care, but also economic support, education and job skills training. In the U.S. we empower refugees to restart their lives. And we are a growing presence in Europe, bringing our expertise in refugee resettlement to the fore.

How we respond to the global refugee crisis is a test of our character and what we stand for. When we welcome refugees, we safeguard democracy



Popuire Fully Katherine Farley Co-Chair IRC Board of Directors



Timothy F. Geithne

**IRC** Overseers

Chai



Tracy R. Wolstencroft Co-Chair IRC Board of Directors

as a refuge from dictatorship—and express solidarity with the countries bearing the greatest burden of the crisis.

We are sad to report that in the U.S. refugee admissions have been reduced to a historic low. The figure set for Fiscal Year 2017 was 45,000half the average of recent years. IRC research suggests only 21,200 refugees will actually be admitted, significantly reducing support for refugees and weakening America's longstanding commitment to the world's most vulnerable.

At the IRC, we run towards problems and not away from them. We seek new solutions, pushing the boundaries of humanitarian aid in some of the toughest places on earth. At times, we are called upon to address challenges so great that history offers little instruction in how to solve them. It is through the passion and persistence of our frontline workers, and the partnership of visionary donors, that we will discover the roadmap forward.

Binding us in everything we do are our values, commitment to excellence and strong moral grounding. To ensure our field staff can make an even greater impact, we are investing in our

We thank you for standing with us and ask for your continued support as we tackle the challenges and harness the opportunities that lie ahead.



**David Miliband** President and CEO

infrastructure across finance, procurement and human resources. We are proud and determined to uphold the highest standards of professionalism, set out in the IRC Way and related policies, in which all staff are trained and held accountable.

Our efforts to continually improve outcomes for the people we serve and our cost-effective stewardship of your generous contributions are primary reasons that the IRC continues to earn top marks from charity evaluators: A+ from CharityWatch; "meets all 20 standards" from the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance; and four stars from Charity Navigator for an unprecedented 11th consecutive year.

Tonton the Muppet interacts with a Syrian refugee girl during a kindergarten class at the Fneish camp in eastern Lebanon.

Tara Todras-Whitehill/IRC

SESAME WORKSHOP

# THE LARGEST EARLY CHILDHOOD **INTERVENTION** IN THE HISTORY OF HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Together, the International Rescue Committee and Sesame Workshop are committed to changing this.

The IRC and Sesame Workshop first came together in 2016 to develop an innovative approach to early childhood development in crisis settings.

In December 2017, our partnership was awarded the MacArthur

**Sesame Workshop and the International Rescue Committee bring education and hope** to refugee children.

Joy, learning and laughter.

This is sadly not the experience of the 32 million children around the world whose homes, communities and lives have been shattered by conflict and crisis.

For the past seven years, Syria and its neighboring countries have been the epicenter of a global refugee crisis, with millions of children born into chaos. Many of these children lack a safe place to learn, to play and to heal. They will suffer the invisible scars of war for years to come.

Foundation's inaugural \$100 million 100&Change grant to make real progress toward solving a critical problem of our time.

With this extraordinary investment, our partnership will transform the language, early reading, math and social-emotional skills of a generation of children affected by the Syrian war. Focusing on children in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria over the next five years, the plan combines the depth of in-person services, reaching 1.5 million children, with the breadth of mass media, reaching 9.4 million children. It will be the largest early childhood intervention in the history of humanitarian response.

By creating and rigorously testing new models for effective, scalable and sustainable early childhood programming, this investment will change the way the humanitarian system responds to refugee crises around the world. Through our work with Sesame Workshop, we aim to transform the humanitarian sector so that early childhood interventions become an essential component of any response.

**Right:** Sesame Street Muppets visit with children in a refugee camp in Lebanon. Ryan Heffernan/Sesame Workshop

#### **OUR PROGRAM HAS THREE LIFE-CHANGING COMPONENTS:**

#### Support for parents

to help them provide the nurturing care and stimulation young children (ages 0-3) need to mitigate the impact of stress, violence and displacement. Support will be delivered through trained home visitors, group facilitators and mobile devices. Early learning centers within formal and informal settings to provide children (ages 3-6) with highquality, play-based learning. We know from decades of scientific research that early childhood interventions have longterm benefits for the health and economic wellbeing of individuals and their communities. A new educational television show featuring Sesame Street Muppets that will introduce characters and role models who reflect the unique experiences of refugee children and their families. In addition to being available on television, this program will be delivered through mobile phones and digital platforms.





# SURVIVAL

With conflict and natural disasters forcing 24 people from their homes every minute, the International Rescue Committee's work is more urgent than ever.





**Before my** daughter was in the nutrition program, she was very sick. Now she is healthy. I am happy with the IRC.

Angelina, a mother in South Sudan

Top: Two South Sudanese men stand on a canoe off the shores of Nyoat Island, a small island located within the swamplands surrounding Nyal, South Sudan.

#### Kellie Ryan/IR

**Opposite Page Left:** The IRC is responding to the cholera outbreak in Yemen by providing clean water, running diarrhea treatment centers and educating local communities on how to prevent cholera.

Kellie Ryan/IRC

# FEAR, HUNGER AND DISEASE—TENS OF MILLIONS SUFFER WORLDWIDE

on earth.

As first responders, we strive to respond to an emergency within 72 hours in order to help as many refugees as possible. When people are forced to flee their homes, we are there to provide them with clean water, shelter, medical care, emergency cash assistance and other critical aid. As a global leader in humanitarian aid, our efforts are cost-effective and resultsoriented and we emphasize local solutions in addition to rapid response.

With the support of our generous donors, and because of our expertise and deep roots in crisis-affected countries, we are able to respond effectively to the devastating events currently unfolding around the world.

The International Rescue Committee responds to the world's worst humanitarian crises, helping to restore health, safety, education, economic well-being and power to people devastated by conflict and natural disaster. We are committed to providing rapid humanitarian relief whenever and wherever we are needed, including some of the most dangerous and hard-to-reach places

In 2017, crises in Myanmar, East Africa, Nigeria and Yemen caused suffering on a massive scale. We are on the ground in these areas and in conflict-ridden places worldwide helping refugees and displaced people in desperate need. Here is a



#### **CASH WHEN AN EMERGENCY STRIKES**

When a crisis hits, the International Rescue Committee prioritizes cash relief for refugees. Today, 60 percent of refugees live in cities rather than camps and cash relief has proven to be an effective way to reach them faster. It is also a more cost-effective solution than delivering food items, clothing and in-kind donations in crisis settings. Choice empowers refugees to take control of their lives and decide for themselves what they need most. It also helps the local economy by bolstering markets and the vendors who operate within them. Research shows that refugees use cash relief to purchase basic items such as food and clothing, or use it to pay medical bills and purchase school supplies. In addition, households receiving cash relief are twice as likely to send their children to school rather than to work. The IRC is currently providing cash relief in 23 crisis-affected countries. In each country, we use context-appropriate and safe methods to deliver cash and prioritize the use of digital payments. Notably in 2017, the IRC used cash to respond to emergencies in northern Uganda, reaching nearly 4,000 South Sudanese refugee households; and in Mosul, Iraq, where we reached 4,856 families who fled deadly violence. By 2020, the IRC is seeking to deliver 25 percent of our humanitarian assistance through cash, and we are continuing to develop innovative program models and cash-delivery mechanisms that meet the needs of refugees in the best way possible.

snapshot of our work and stories about some of the people we are helping to survive.

### THE FASTEST MASS EXODUS SINCE THE RWANDAN GENOCIDE

"I had to leave my disabled daughter behind," recalls Daw Phya Ma, a widowed Rohingya mother of four driven from her home by violence in Myanmar in 2012. Phya Ma could not carry her grown daughter, unable to walk on her own, on the five-hour journey to a camp for people in need of refuge. Their village had been burned and Phya Ma knew she had to lead her other children to safety.

"I cried every step of the way," she says. Thankfully, one month later, she found her daughter in another camp in northern Rakhine State. Her family is together now, but like many other displaced Rohingya in Myanmar, they are living in substandard, heavily restricted camps, still unable to return home.

The latest outbreak of violence in August 2017 further impacted this vulnerable population and forced an estimated 671,000 Rohingya women, men and children to flee to Bangladesh. The widespread violence and destruction of villages caused the fastest mass exodus since the Rwandan genocide and one of the world's biggest humanitarian crises. IRC advocates quickly acted to influence decision-makers across the globe to demand humanitarian access to, and accountability and international support for, those affected by the crisis.

As refugees crossed the border into Bangladesh and crowded into makeshift camps, the need for treatment of gunshot wounds, burns, malnutrition and disease became urgent. The IRC rapidly



Rohingya families visit an Action Contre la Faim (ACF) health center, which is supported by the IRC. Andrew Oberstadt/ IRC

responded by working with partners to open three stabilization centers to save children facing starvation. IRC-supported women's centers and a primary health care post are also up and running as well as six "one-stop shops" that provide lifesaving services under one roof. These services include nutritional support, medical care and protection for those who have experienced violence.

In Myanmar's Rakhine State, where we are one of the largest health care providers, we also ramped up our response to help displaced people and other vulnerable families. As part of our efforts, our mobile health teams are providing primary and reproductive health care. We have scaled up our health education sessions and are distributing baby supplies and dignity kits, which include soap, clothing and feminine items. At the same time, we continue to provide longer-term health, protection, livelihoods and food security programs in vulnerable and marginalized communities across Rakhine State.

### ON THE BRINK OF STARVATION

This past year, a deadly combination of conflict, drought and economic collapse pushed 30 million people around the world to the brink of starvation. The IRC is on the front lines of the hardest hit areas, including South Sudan (where famine was officially declared in February 2017), Nigeria, Yemen, Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya. We are also providing critical aid in Uganda, where many South



Sudanese refugees have fled.

Angelina Nyatuoy remembers when war came to Mirmir, her village in South Sudan. Armed men began burning houses, forcing Angelina and her five children to flee through swampland to a remote island. After 24 hours, she returned to her village to search for her husband. "He was shot in the head," she says.

Angelina and her family coped as best they could back on the island. They ate water lilies to stave off hunger pains. She feared their days were numbered, especially after her 2-year-old daughter became ill. Little Teresa had sunken eyes and a distended belly.

Angelina returned to her community again, but there was nothing left and no one to help them. She then took her family to a village in Kol, a nearby province, where fortunately she found an IRC health clinic. Teresa was diagnosed with severe acute malnutrition. Our expert team took immediate action and helped to save her life.

"Before she was in the nutrition program, she was very sick," says Angelina. "Now she is healthy. I am happy with the IRC."

Thanks to the continued support of generous donors, we have been able to expand our response to reach the most vulnerable—children under age 5 and expectant mothers. We are able to provide them with urgent health care, lifesaving support at our emergency nutrition centers, clean water and protection.

In South Sudan, IRC mobile clinics have been able to expand nutrition, health and protection outreach to remote areas, reaching 27,219 beneficiaries to date. In Kenya, we aided nearly 100,000 children under age 5 and more than 14,000 pregnant women and new mothers.

Thus far in response to the global hunger crisis, donors have helped us reach 2 million people with lifesaving care.

### ONE CHILD DIES EVERY 10 MINUTES IN YEMEN

The civil war in Yemen continues to fuel a dire humanitarian crisis. The country is on the brink of famine; its health care system has collapsed, resulting in the death of a child every 10 minutes. More than 22 million people require humanitarian assistance, 17 million do not have enough to eat and 2.2 million children are malnourished. Suspected cholera cases have surpassed 1 million, the largest outbreak in modern history. Statistics, however, can't express the hardships people in Yemen face. Dima, a child who lived with her parents in a remote mountainous area, suffered from hunger—her father, a government worker, hadn't been paid in six months. Then Dima began vomiting and experienced diarrhea.

"We panicked because of this disease that people were talking about, so we took her for treatment," recalls her mother, Rawiyah. They rushed her to an IRC mobile health clinic operating in the area, where she was diagnosed with cholera and provided with immediate lifesaving care. Untreated cholera is especially dangerous for young children.

"When we arrived, they tested her, gave her injections, intravenous feedings and medicine," says Rawiyah. "She has recovered and is feeling better now. Thanks be to God, she went back to playing again."

The IRC is one of the most active providers of humanitarian assistance in Yemen. Ongoing fighting and the Saudi-led blockade, which closed the main airport and seaport, have posed challenges to humanitarian operations, but we are proud to report that the IRC has maintained access to affected populations.

Each week in Yemen, we provide health services for 10,000 individuals; deliver clean water to 52,000 people; offer nutrition assistance and treatment to 500 children; provide cash transfers and food vouchers to 5,000 families; and support 250 women in safe spaces.

**Opposite page:** Dima, a little girl treated by the IRC's mobile health team for cholera and malnutrition, stands in the doorway of her home in Radfan Village in Lahj, Yemen.

Kellie Ryan/IRC



In 2017, the IRC and our partners helped nearly

### 23 Million

people access primary health care.

In 2017, the IRC and our partner organizations provided cash and asset transfers to

### 179,491

households of refugees and vulnerable people.

In 2017, the IRC's response to the hunger crises in East Africa, Nigeria and Yemen reached an estimated





# RECOVERY

The International Rescue Committee understands that education for crisis-affected children is not a luxury, but a lifeline, and that meaningful work restores dignity and hope in adults who have lost everything.

# EDUCATION AND WORK—ESSENTIAL LIKE FOOD AND SHELTER

The war in Syria has sparked the worst refugee crisis since World War II and the largest global displacement ever recorded. The International Rescue Committee, with the support of our donors, is the only humanitarian aid organization responding on all fronts of this crisis. We assist people inside Syria as well as those who have fled to neighboring countries—Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq—and to Europe. We also provide critical support to refugee families granted sanctuary in the United States.

When it comes to humanitarian aid, education is rarely at the top of the list—but it should be. Schooling restores a much-needed sense of stability and provides children with the opportunity to build supportive relationships with peers and caring adults. Without education, children are more vulnerable to exploitation and radicalization. And if we don't educate Syrian children today, there will be no doctors, teachers and engineers to rebuild Syria tomorrow.

Adults, too, benefit from services that help them heal from emotional as well as physical trauma. Allowing refugees to work and start small businesses not only empowers them with income and a sense of dignity, it also contributes to local economies and helps integrate new arrivals into their host communities.

The stories that follow illustrate the importance of education, work and compassionate support for refugees as they recover from crisis.



Children in a makeshift school run by the IRC at the Karameh displacement camp in Syria's Idlib governorate. Peter Biro/IRC





**Top:** Across the Bekaa governorate in Lebanon, the IRC is helping to provide educational support to Syrian refugee children, like 13-year-olds Yusef and Hamza.

**Left:** The 13-year-olds show a photo of themselves when they were younger in Syria. Kulsoom Rizvi/IRC

### HOLD ON TO YOUR DREAMS

Yusef and Hamza, 13-year-old twin brothers, grew up in Damascus, Syria, and loved going to school, even when war broke out seven years ago. Their mother, Bashira, would escort them on their daily journey to the classroom, well aware of the risk but determined to see her sons educated.

"We knew the war was not something that would last for one or two months, so I couldn't take them out," Bashira explains. "The risk is also great not to go to school."

Three years ago, the family left Damascus to visit relatives in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon. They fully intended to return to Syria—until they learned that bombs had hit their house and the children's school.

Yusef and Hamza are just two of the 625,000 school-aged refugees living in Lebanon, 43 percent of whom have no opportunity to study. Local schools have reached a breaking point—they lack resources and physical space, even with the government mandating "second shifts" at public schools so Syrian children may attend classes.

As soon as they could, the brothers enrolled in the second-shift classes. Top students in Damascus, they now struggled in Lebanon. Yusef found it difficult to understand Arabic grammar, while Hamza grappled with English, a language he hadn't studied in Syria. They had trouble making new friends.

"I felt like a stranger," Yusef admits, "like I didn't belong because I am Syrian."

But the boys refused to give up. They enrolled in support classes offered by the IRC to Syrian children struggling in Lebanon's public schools. The program builds core competencies in math, Arabic and a second language (French as well as English) with structured tutoring and learning activities. To date, the IRC has reached more than 4,300 Syrian refugee children across the Bekaa and Akkar governorates.

The boys' IRC teacher, Iman Al-Hajj Hasan, found them discouraged and timid at first, but describes "They just needed that extra push and encouragement," she says. "It's important to create an encouraging environment, especially for children who survived a war."

### I felt like a stranger, like I didn't belong because I am Syrian.

Yusef, a 13-year-old Syrian boy

Iman noticed Yusef and Hamza's passion for literature, particularly poetry and short stories. To help them improve their language skills, she encouraged them to write—at home as well as in the classroom. The brothers' test scores improved. They developed a new sense of confidence and began to interact with other students. They even shared their writings with their new friends at the public school.

The brothers dream of becoming professors; they see themselves as helping to educate the next generation. When asked what advice they have for children unable to attend to school, Hamza stresses the need to hold on to dreams.

"I'd say not to lose hope," he responds. "Study on your own if you have to—just don't lose hope."

them as extremely intelligent and eager to learn.





#### SOMETHING I CAN CALL MY OWN

Kholood\* had a good life in Dara'a, Syria, where her family of shopkeepers and small-business owners had earned the trust of their neighbors. Then the war began to escalate. Armed men would raid people's homes.

"My 19-year-old son, who has cerebral palsy and paralysis, would be very scared," recalls Kholood. "His condition started getting worse because of these incidents, so we decided to leave the country...my husband was already working in the Emirates."

They fled to Jordan and moved from village to village searching for care for her aunt, who had broken her hip, and for Kholood's son, who now needed medical attention. In Ramtha, they were able to get help at an IRC health clinic.

"When we went to the IRC clinic, they told us about the recreational classes at their women's center," says Kholood. "My cousin Naheda and I went to the center and felt very comfortable."

In Dara'a, Naheda had operated an embroidery business that generated a good income, so she persuaded Kholood to join her for crochet and knitting sessions. "I wasn't interested at first," admits Kholood. "I went to support Naheda. But session after session, I realized how much I enjoy knitting. Going out of the house and socializing with the women in the class helped improve my state of mind."

The classes also helped Naheda perfect her techniques, so much so that women at the center began buying her clothing. "I also sold some knitted dresses at the center," says Kholood. "Another woman at the center told us that she could display our work in the market. We gave her some items and she sold them immediately."

The IRC staff noticed their work and encouraged them to sign up for a small-business training course. They did and they received \$1,265 to start a business.

"The first piece of advice we received—stay persistent and stick to your goals!" says Kholood. "I'm the kind of person who doesn't believe I can achieve anything. Naheda, on the other hand, is very determined. If she wants to learn something, she will work tirelessly to learn it. Her determination rubbed off on me, so I overcame my fear of failure."

The budding entrepreneurs continue to learn and adopt good business practices. "Don't buy lowquality materials just because they're cheaper," says Kholood. "With high-quality products, we will attract customers.... Our prices are lower because we're still trying to attract business."

Says Kholood, "Women aren't meant to stay alone in the house; everybody has to have something to do, something that can make her feel valuable. Now I feel like there's something I can call my own. I'm working, producing."

\*Names changed for privacy reasons

**Opposite Page Top and Bottom:** A crochet course organized by the Women's Protection and Empowerment Centre run by the IRC in Jordan allows women to learn how to crochet and generate an income with their new skills.

Timea Fauszt/IRC

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# In 2017, the IRC provided **1.14 Million**

children with schooling and education opportunities.

In 2017, the IRC and our partner organizations helped to create or support 16,179 businesses—

## **73**%

of which are female-owned.

In 2017, the IRC and our partner organizations provided support through safe spaces to

### 135,598

children and 116,580 women and girls.

### THE NEXT BREAKTHROUGHS IN AID

The best organizations never stop learning and improving.

At the International Rescue Committee, we are significantly invested in solutions that reach more people, deliver more value for each aid dollar and make a bigger impact on people's lives. As part of this commitment, we have established a dedicated research and development department. We call it the Airbel Center.

In 2017, Airbel prototyped 10 interventions in six countries focused on improving outcomes in violence prevention, early childhood development, employment and other areas.

#### Interventions include:

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**Becoming One** is a new couples-counseling curriculum designed to help local faith leaders strengthen relationships and prevent violence. Drawing insights from behavioral science, this curriculum teaches skills on communication, emotional regulation, shared control over finances and sexual consent. Faith leaders learn from video-based instructions, while couples learn in sessions with faith leaders and practice their newly learned skills at home. The IRC and our partners conducted a pilot with 350 couples and 35 faith leaders in Gulu, Uganda, and are planning a large-scale expansion of the program.

Vroom is a mobile-based service that helps parents boost their children's learning in the critical early years. Vroom puts the latest childhood development techniques in the hands of parents in the form of fun games and easy-to-follow tips and advice. IRC technical experts and Airbel designers adapted the service for Syrian refugee families, creating videos and animation for delivery through digital platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook. During the initial test phase, this program supported over 10,000 families.

The Mahali Lab is an Amman-based program that invites Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians to develop solutions to challenges impacting their communities. Mahali provides these social entrepreneurs with skills, advice and funding to help launch, sustain and scale new products and services.



in Amudat, Uganda. Andrew Oberstadt/IRC



Sister Magdalene stands in one of several dormitories which house girls who have fled violence and early marriage and live full time at Kalas Girls Primary School

Girls play outside after class at Kalas Girls Primary School in Amudat, Uganda.



# RENEWAL

In 28 U.S. cities, the International Rescue Committee ensures that refugees, asylees and other immigrants have the support they need to rebuild their lives free of fear and discrimination.

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Iraqi refugee Adil Nimr embraces members of his family at the airport. Their reunion was delayed because of the travel ban.

Nick Hall/IRC

# A SHINING LIGHT— AMERICA MUST EMBRACE THE MOST VULNERABLE

Since President Trump took office, his administration has implemented policies that have deliberately and methodically dismantled America's successful refugee resettlement program. In 2017, his administration put forth unjust and unsubstantiated travel bans, temporarily suspended the entire refugee resettlement program, and set the lowest refugee admission cap in the history of the United States.

"The human toll on families who have waited for years to find refuge, gone through rigorous vetting and prepared to travel to safety is wrong," says IRC President and CEO David Miliband of the travel ban. "This defective policy sees America turn its back on the world's most vulnerable people."

Since 1975, the IRC has resettled more than 370,000 refugees representing 119 nationalities across the U.S. Just two years ago, 85,000 refugees came to the U.S. to rebuild their lives as our neighbors. Now, as a result of the Trump administration's historically low admission cap and arbitrary vetting measures, we project that only 21,200 refugees will enter the U.S. in Fiscal Year 2018—missing the administration's own target.

As the resettlement program comes under assault, the IRC is fighting for refugees' place in America. We are amplifying the voices of the families we serve and advocating to improve their lives. We are also reuniting families separated by the administration's policies and protecting the tens of thousands of people who remain stuck in conflict-ridden regions—the vast majority of them women and children.

And with the support of our donors, we are continuing our critical work with refugees given a second chance in the U.S. When refugee families arrive at the airport, we greet them and help them settle into apartments, find jobs, register for school, learn English and integrate into their new communities.

Here are three stories that illustrate why the IRC is committed to being the voice for this vulnerable population and strengthening America's long tradition of welcoming newcomers.

### **A SYMBOL OF AMERICA**

Little Steven, almost a year old, takes a few tentative steps in an apartment in the suburbs of Seattle. His father, Adil Kheder Nimr, smiles at him lovingly and declares, "Steven is a symbol of America: freedom, opportunity, safety and a chance at life."

Adil, his wife, Shatha, and Steven arrived in the U.S. on Jan. 19, 2017, the day before President Trump's inauguration and just one week before his executive order banning refugees from seven majority-Muslim countries—Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Yemen and Iraq. If his family's flight had been scheduled a mere seven days later, they could still be waiting and in danger. Too many other refugee families suffered this fate.

Adil couldn't fathom the news of the travel ban: Why were Americans afraid of people like him? They were the ones escaping terror. He and his family are Yazidis, an ethnically Kurdish people and one of Iraq's oldest religious minorities, many of whom have faced unspeakable atrocities at the hands of ISIS. Adil himself remembers waking to gunshots early one August morning in 2014—ISIS was rounding up families, killing the men and taking women and girls captive.

He, his parents and his siblings were able to escape to Mount Sinjar, a craggy mile-high ridge where for days they found themselves stranded with 200,000 others. Adil survived the ordeal, and found refuge in a displacement camp where he met his future wife. They had a child and pursued their resettlement application, a process Adil had begun in 2011 when his father was receiving death threats for serving as a translator for U.S. personnel.

"It was a dangerous job, but he was happy doing it," Adil says about his father, who worked with Americans for 10 years. "He is for democracy and freedom."

The family had their first interview in 2013. "It was a difficult process, but we remained patient," says Adil. "We had nothing to hide. My father showed his patriotism to America." One of his father's American friends was named Steven—thus the name of their first born.

"The Nimr family has given America so much, and they had lost everything," says Nicky Smith, head of the IRC in Seattle. "They hoped that once they fled the horror and atrocity of war, they would be joined by their family members and they could rebuild their lives in a safe place without pain and suffering."

As it turned out, 13 other family members who also

had undergone the exhaustive vetting process, but who had been denied entry under the Trump administration's travel ban, were eventually admitted into the U.S. with assistance from the IRC. We are helping them adjust to Seattle and begin new lives.

#### WE ARE NOW ONE FAMILY

On a winter afternoon, Jamie Utz drove Naima Samatar and her son, Muhammed, to Camel's Back Park in Boise, Idaho. The 8-year-old hopped out of the car and slipped on a pair of baggy snow pants, gloves and an oversized winter jacket.

**Right and Bottom:** Muhammed, a refugee child from Somalia, goes sledding for the first time with his family mentor, Jamie Utz.

Jonathan McBride/IRC



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Hand in hand, Jamie and Muhammed walked up the snowy slope. The boy plopped down on a sled, while Jamie squatted behind. He was nervous but all smiles: It was his first time sledding.

Naima and Muhammed had arrived in Boise from Somalia a few months earlier. Naima admits she was afraid to navigate the city alone as a single mom without friends, family or personal income.

"But then I met Jamie," she says.

A 32-year-old wildlife biologist, Jamie had worked with refugees as an English instructor. Then she discovered the IRC's mentorship program which pairs Americans with refugees to help them get acquainted with services and resources in the community. "I wanted to be a part of helping someone make that transition and feel like they're welcome here," Jamie says. "It all comes down to just being a friend."

Friends and family are very important to Naima, who lost everything when, as a teenager, she fled from Somalia after her father and twin brother were kidnapped during a raid on her village. Her mother, whom she hasn't heard from since that day, urged her to leave for Uganda, where Naima found safety in a refugee camp.

Away from her family, Naima tried to create her own. She married and became pregnant with Muhammed. Her husband never saw his son, disappearing after leaving the camp to find work.

Soon after Muhammed was born, Naima applied with the United Nations for refugee resettlement in a country where she would be able to build a new life—a process that took eight years, three of which consisted of rigorous security screenings,



### It all comes down to just being a friend.

Jamie, a 32-year-old wildlife biologist

interviews and background checks.

"I came here for my son," Naima explains. "I want him to go to school and be a good person"

Meanwhile, Naima takes comfort in her new friendship with Jamie, who has learned firsthand the value of the IRC's mentorship program. She's taught her friend how to cash checks, pay bills and shop at thrift stores to save money. Jamie was thrilled when she learned Naima found work in the laundry room of a local hospital.

"She's industrious and inspiring," says Jamie. "She wants to make herself a new life here and that's really wonderful. Naima is living proof that refugees do work hard."

Jamie continues to spend time with Muhammed as well and has watched him take massive strides learning English and making friends-not an easy task for a child who never attended regular school while growing up in a refugee camp.

"We are now one family," Naima says. "I don't sleep without saying goodnight to Jamie."

### STILL THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY

in America.

Forever grateful for the opportunity her parents gave her, Kathy went on to forge a career helping other refugees and immigrants. Then, after her fourth child was born last year, she decided to run for public office.

"After the election, my husband and I were really concerned about the direction our country was taking," she says. "So I made the decision to run for office when my daughter was just a month old.... I couldn't rest upon her shoulders the responsibility of fighting for the future, for herself and her generation."

Says Kathy, "America truly is still the land of opportunity, and we need all of our youthincluding our refugees and new Americans-to get engaged and to participate civically. I want to make sure that our refugee youth understand that so many people here in America welcome them and want to support and help them achieve the American Dream."

On Nov. 7, 2017, Kathy Tran, a refugee from Vietnam, made history by becoming one of the first Asian-American women elected to the Virginia House of Delegates. Her experience as a refugee inspired her to run for office and build a more welcoming culture for refugees and immigrants

"I came to the U.S. as a refugee from Vietnam in the early '80s when I was almost 2 years old," Kathy says. When they arrived, the IRC was there to help them begin again. "Knowing that we had support through the IRC's refugee resettlement office and program helped us get on our feet."



### **A CALL TO ACTION**

Through our advocacy efforts, the International Rescue Committee is bringing policy-makers and the public together to take action on behalf of refugees. Here is a snapshot of our achievements in 2017.

In the spring of 2017, the Trump administration proposed a 32 percent reduction in the U.S. foreign aid budget in FY 2018, and a 45 percent cut to humanitarian assistance accounts. We fought back with written testimony, briefings and meetings with budget leaders in Congress. The IRC emerged as the go-to humanitarian organization on budget issues. Thanks in part to our efforts, Congress proposed much less dramatic cuts to the foreign aid bill, with continued support for humanitarian aid accounts.

As bipartisanship fractured in Washington, cultivating resolute support among policymakers at the state level took on new importance. We scaled up engagement with state legislatives, advocating for the defeat of 36 anti-refugee bills in 20 states and supporting more than 30 pro-refugee proposals in 18 state legislatures. The IRC also moved from ad hoc to sustained engagement with indistrict federal congressional offices, meeting with 78 congressional field offices, and organizing 15 events with the participation of members of Congress or their staff.

**The IRC mobilized to protect the refugee admissions ceiling**—although the Trump administration's 45,000 figure is a record low, our efforts helped raise it three times higher than the initial proposal. We shaped the public narrative around this issue, strengthened grassroots advocacy through a digital advocacy pilot campaign, and led the development of a letter signed by 80 CEOs, former CEOs and business leaders from 77 companies across 12 industries. The letter, sent to President Trump, urged him to uphold refugee and immigration policies affirming the equal opportunity of the American Dream.



Men watch a soccer match in Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement in northern Uganda.

Kellie Ryan/IRC

# HOW WE HELP

In 2017, the IRC helped **10,665** 

refugees and special immigrant visa recipients resettle in the United States.

In 2017, more than **5,200** volunteers supported the work of IRC's network of offices around the United States.

In 2017, the IRC helped to create



refugee-owned small businesses in the United States.

### **OUR SUPPORTERS**

The International Rescue Committee extends its deepest gratitude to our supporters, who help us restore dignity and hope to those whose lives are profoundly affected by war, conflict, oppression and natural disaster. The commitment of our donors, whether they be individuals, foundations, corporations, volunteers, governments, nongovernmental organizations or multilateral agencies, is what enables the IRC to respond swiftly in emergencies and help communities recover from crisis.

The IRC is grateful for all the individual donors, corporations and foundations that have provided essential support for our lifesaving programs and special projects around the globe.

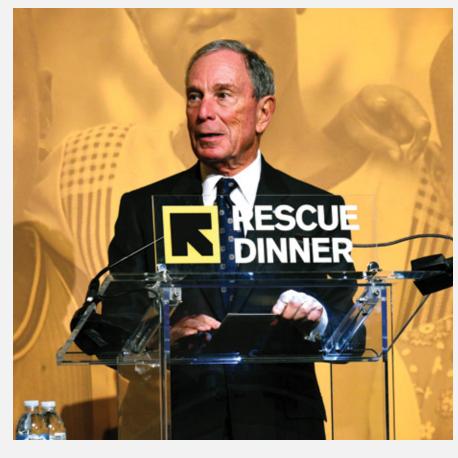
We salute the generous donors who supported the IRC during the past fiscal year, which began Oct. 1, 2016, and ended Sept. 30, 2017. Right Top to Bottom: At the IRC 2017 Rescue Dinner, model Praya Lundberg (top); Freedom Award honoree Michael Bloomberg (middle); and performer K'naan celebrate and support the IRC's work.

Bryan Bedder/Getty Images for IRC

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A GenR volunteer shows her support for the IRC's work in the Bay Area. Anna Ruch/Getty Images

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Jay Ellis paints a t-shirt during his visit to an IRC partner organized Social Cafe inside the Krnjaca refugee camp in Serbia.

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**Opposite Page:** Actor Mandy Patinkin, left, talks to Farhad Faez, an Afghan refugee. Mandy's wife Kathryn Grody, center left, and IRC's Lucy Carrigan look on outside the Principovac accommodation center, in Sid, Serbia.

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Actress Lena Headey listens to German Minister for Migration, Frau Aydan Özoguz, during a press conference at the CareForward offices in Berlin, Germany. Tara Todras-Whitehill/IRC

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(in thousands)

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#### DONATE

by mail to:

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

#### **FUTURE GIFTS**

Ensure that displaced people make their way from harm to home in the future through a bequest to the IRC. Contact PlannedGiving@Rescue.org for information or to indicate that you have already included the IRC in your estate plans.

### JOIN THE CONVERSATION

- ♥ @thelRC

FINANCIAL REPORT

Year ended Sept. 30, 2017, and Sept. 30, 2016

**CONSOLIDATED AUDITED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES** 



**THE IRC'S** 

**EFFICIENCY** 

4%

7%

89%

#### 2017 2016 Fundraising Management & **OPERATING REVENUES** General \$ 155,361 \$ 101,444 Contributions Contributed goods and services 11.344 6,827 Program Grants and contracts 552,229 602,449 Services 24,286 20,257 Foundation and private grants 5.271 4,956 Investment return used for operations 3,958 Loan administration fees and other income 5,016 **Total Operating Revenues** 753,507 739,891 **OPERATING EXPENSES** 70 **Program Services:** 493,988 533,294 International programs 94,012 86,227 U.S. programs Emergency preparedness, technical units and other 52,863 44,915 **Total Program Services** 640.863 664.436 Supporting Services: 46,519 40,334 Management and general 30,190 17,966 Fundraising **Total Supporting Services** 76,709 58,300 **Total Operating Expenses** 717,572 722,736 Excess (deficiency) of operating revenues over operating expenses 35,935 17,155 Excess related to Unrestricted Funds 6,136 4,671 29,799 12,484 Excess (deficiency) related to Temporary Restricted Funds\* Endowment, planned giving and other non-operating activities (net) 8,482 (3,094)44,417 Increase in net assets 14,061 Net assets, beginning of year 175.835 161,774

\* 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** 

**PROGRAM** SERVICES Health 32% 16% Education Resettlement 15% Water & 10% Sanitation Protection 9% Distribution 8% Livelihood 8% • Other 2% Programs\*

> \* Includes shelter and community development

\$ 220.252 \$ 175.835



ANNUAL	REPORT	2017	

**NET ASSETS. END OF YEAR** 

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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.

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