

# PARTNERSHIP



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# THANK YOU

**Thank you to the IRUSA Board of Directors for their dedication to the mission.**

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Thank you to all who contributed imagery and content from around the world.  
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Partnership, IRUSA's flagship magazine, highlights the impact our community has when we work together for a better world. In this issue, you'll read about efforts and programs from 2023.



Assalamu Alaikum. Peace Be Upon You.



Islamic Relief USA (IRUSA) is the largest Muslim faith-based nonprofit organization in the US, and one of the largest in the world. Thanks to our donors, volunteers, staff, and partners, we were able to support the most vulnerable across more than 40 countries in 2023.

Throughout 2023, our hearts were one with those affected by poverty and forced displacement at the hands of natural disasters and conflict.

When Türkiye and Syria were devastated by two very powerful earthquakes, killing over 50,000 people and leading to extensive damage, IRUSA distributed food, blankets, and cash assistance for people to purchase any other immediate needs.

When an earthquake struck Morocco, killing over 3,000 and injuring more than 5,700, we were on the ground providing emergency humanitarian assistance to survivors including food, blankets, pillows, hygiene kits, and emergency shelter.

When heavy rainfall brought on by Storm Daniel in Derna, Libya, destroyed roads and bridges, and killed over 4,000 people, IR staff and local humanitarian groups moved swiftly to provide vital emergency aid to survivors.

When violence escalated in Gaza, IRUSA worked with local partners inside Gaza to provide emergency relief, such as medical supplies for hospitals, access to urgent healthcare to those injured, and food boxes to help families suffering from hunger.

When four major earthquakes devastated Afghanistan, killing more than 2,000, IR deployed teams who provided shelter, food, medical treatment, and cash assistance.

When a fire broke out in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, displacing more than 12,000 Rohingya refugees, we were there providing aid to the displaced by rebuilding homes and water and sanitation facilities.

But our interventions don't stop there. Right now, we're in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia, helping vulnerable families rebuild in the face of flooding, drought, and famine. We're also in Kosovo, constructing homes damaged by severe flash-flooding. And we continue our work across more than 40 countries, providing long-term aid to those in need.

We also recognize the responsibility we must take on in caring for the planet we inhabit. Promoting climate-friendly, sustainable livelihood efforts in countries riddled with ongoing man-made disasters, like our flood response in Pakistan or our winter response in Afghanistan, are essential first steps towards effective, long-lasting change. We are dedicated to advocating for such change as seen in our various advocacy efforts.

Our IRUSA Advocates are working on advocacy campaigns, non-partisan government engagement, and direct lobbying on Capitol Hill, to help make much-needed systemic changes. In 2023 alone, our advocates have taken 25,988 actions around refugees, food security, and climate change. Some of our efforts include our participation in the Campaign to Protect the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), our work around ending Early and Forced Marriage, our work around the Afghan Adjustment Act, and the Gaza Ceasefire, to name a few.

None of this would have been possible without you. As I embark on my new role as CEO of IRUSA, I envision a world free of poverty, and hope we can continue to work together towards that end. May Allah (SWT) reward all of our efforts.

*Ahmed Shehata*

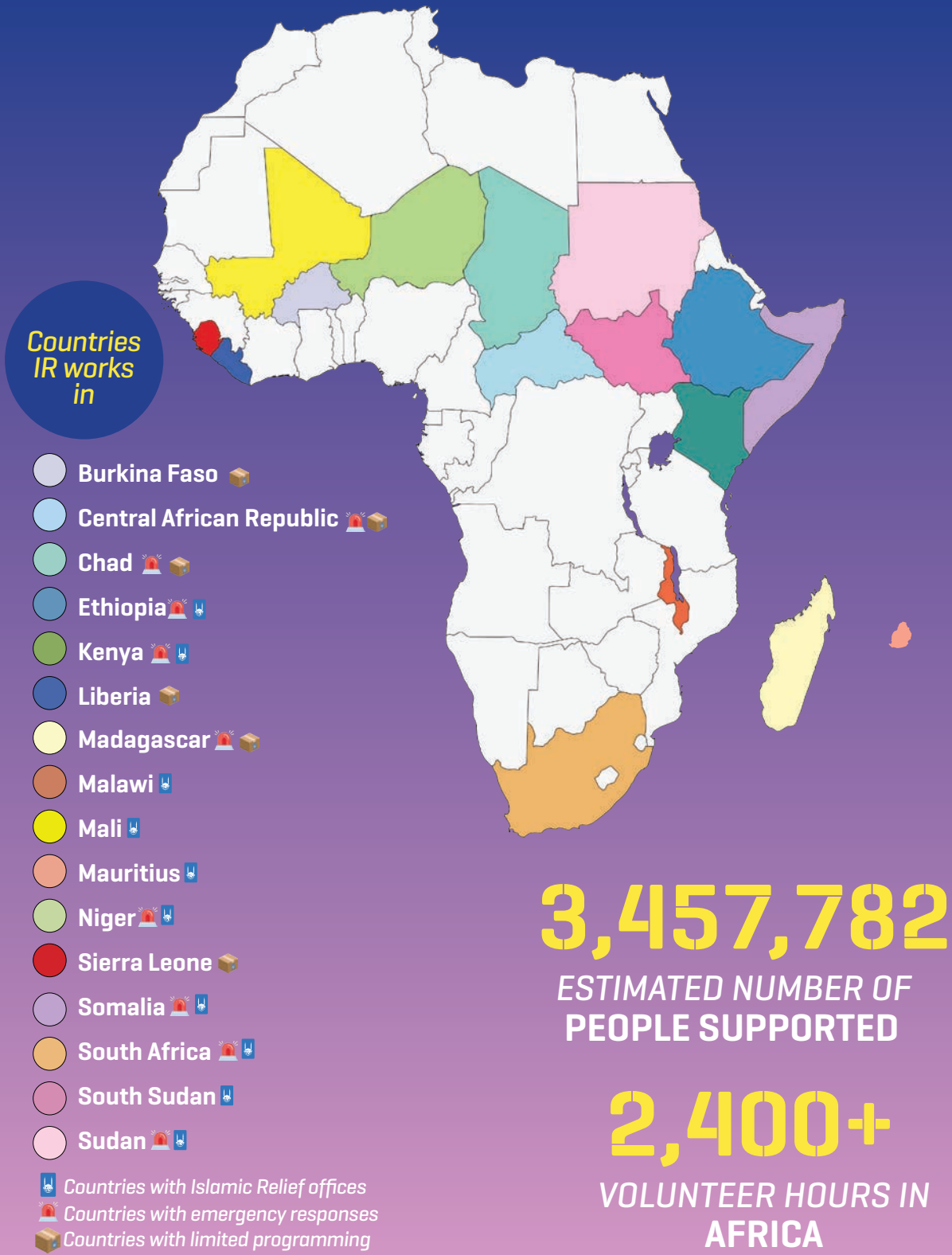
**Ahmed Shehata**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Islamic Relief USA

# WHERE WE WORK

Follow our journey  
of humanitarian programming  
and responses around the world.



# AFRICA




## PROJECTS BY SECTOR






**OrphanCare**  
ORPHAN SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

**6,627**  
NUMBER OF ORPHANS SPONSORED



**Zakat**  
Fulfill your Zakat

**5 Zakat Projects**





**RAMADAN 123,783** ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED



**QURBANI 103,350** ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED



# OUR WORK ACROSS AFRICA

The IR family has been providing emergency relief and integrated programming to families in need across Africa since 1984, starting with a call to provide humanitarian aid to Sudan.

In 2023 alone, IRUSA donors helped support over 32 projects in Africa through projects that provided a lifeline to orphan families in Malawi and Mali, improved access to food in Niger and Mali, and distributed aid and relief after the devastating droughts in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya, to name a few. That will allude to the emergency work we are doing across East Africa now.

Take a look at some of our work and read from the people you've helped serve across the region.

## ORPHANS & CHILDREN

Africa is a continent of over 400 million children – 50 million of whom are orphans. According to the United Nations, the population is expected to double and Africa will be home to two in five children by 2050. Poverty is a daily reality for children across the continent.

That's why IRUSA is working to improve the lives of orphans and children in Africa by protecting them from illness; providing them with educational opportunities; and giving them access to proper water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services. Our goal is to give them the tools they need to break the cycle of poverty and build sustainable livelihoods for themselves.



### Sackina's Story

📍 **Malawi**

Sackina lives in a small house with her two daughters and five grandchildren. As a sole breadwinner due to the passing of her husband, she often struggles to provide for her family, and worries greatly about her children's health and well-being. The little money she does make is through selling food at the local market.

Every morning, Sackina wakes up before dawn to collect water from the well for drinking, cooking, and other household chores. The well is located over 250 yards away, near various sanitation facilities and dumping sites.

Our Orphan Family Sponsorship program not only helps uplift an orphan, but also helps uplift his or her family by giving them the tools they need to thrive. Through the program, Sackina is able to develop her technical and business skills and generate sustainable income to provide her family with basic needs including clean water, food, and healthcare.

"I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity and support. IR's commitment to empowering [female]-headed households like myself gives me hope for a brighter future. I believe that with the resources provided, [I'll] be able to overcome the challenges I face and create a better life for myself and my children."

## WATER, SANITATION, & HEALTH (WASH)



According to the World Health Organization, water scarcity affects one in three people in the region, and the situation is worsening day by day. At IRUSA, our vision is a world free of poverty, and access to clean water is a stepping-stone in achieving it in Africa. Our WASH programs aim to rebuild community infrastructure through interventions like solar-powered water resources and raising awareness on best practices regarding sanitation and hygiene. Our hope is to ensure vulnerable communities have a sustainable source of clean water and easy access to proper sanitation for years to come.

### Cherifa's Story

📍 **Niger**

Cherifa lives in a remote village with her husband and children. Her husband is a farmer and relies heavily on the agricultural harvest to feed his family. Many children in the village suffer from malnutrition, including one of Cherifa's.

IR constructed a water supply system throughout the village; conducted training on best practices regarding agriculture, nutrition, and hygiene; created market gardens; and distributed seeds and other gardening supplies to farmers. Thanks to donors like you, families like Cherifa's have access to clean water, which allows them to grow their own food.

“In the future, I will apply the knowledge received and pass on my knowledge to other women in the village, so our children are protected from malnutrition. I really thank IR for everything they have done for us.”





## FOOD SECURITY

A fifth of the African population – **278 million people** – are undernourished, and **55 million children under the age of 5 are stunted due to chronic malnutrition**. Food aid is the largest sector of IRUSA's humanitarian aid, and Udhiyah/Qurbani is our biggest single food-sharing program. For many people who receive this gift, it is the only meat they will eat all year.

“*He is not a believer who eats his fill whilst his neighbor beside him goes hungry,*” [Bukhari].

Across the region, we're working hard to make sure that everyone has enough to eat.



## EMERGENCIES

According to the International Monetary Fund, countries across Africa suffer more from floods, droughts, storms, and other climate-related shocks than other countries, although they have contributed the least to global climate change.

Each year, three times more people are affected by natural disasters across Africa than in other continents. Armed conflict across the region has also created major instability.

## Halima's Story

### Mali

Halima lives on a farm with her five children. Since her husband's passing, she has been the sole breadwinner. The harvest from the farm is the family's main source of income, but in recent years, climate change has made it difficult to make ends meet. It's no longer possible to make one year's harvest last until the next.

To earn extra income, Halima sells groundnuts and cocoa to her neighbors in the village. This helps pay for some of their food, but they often rely on millet from the granary to sustain their diets.



With your support, families like Hamila's are provided with livestock, typically cows, and trained on fattening practices and animal care through our Qurbani Plus program. The program helps build sustainable livelihoods by training participants in good fattening practices and animal care. And on Eid, IR collects the cows for sacrifice or to be sold at market price. Halima decided to sell her cow and feed her family with the profit she made.

"Before this project came along, we did not have the means to make sacrifices for Eid and we didn't eat meat, but the project has changed all of this. We now get meat for Eid. In addition, the money we receive for the cow after fattening helps me tremendously [in providing] for my family. I would like to thank IR for this project, and may God reward its generous donors."



### Somalia



In the beginning of 2023, people across Somalia faced climate-induced drought. As many as 43,000 people are estimated to have died, half of them children under the age of five. Half of Somalia's population of 17 million is also facing famine as a result, and close to 1.8 million children are suffering from malnutrition. In response, IR is providing families in need with food aid, access to clean water, and cash assistance to meet their basic needs.



In addition, Somalia's flash floods over the summer of 2023 left at least 1.3 million people internally displaced without access to hospitals or vital government services. In response, IRUSA provided emergency cash assistance to pay for food, temporary shelter, and to meet other immediate basic needs.

## ADVOCACY

Vital to IRUSA achieving its humanitarian mission across Africa are our advocacy campaigns, non-partisan government engagement, and direct lobbying on Capitol Hill. Through our advocacy, IRUSA Advocates work to build the public and political will to end poverty, hunger, and inequality. The influence and impact of our advocacy is enhanced by the coordinated efforts of our national network of IRUSA Advocates.

On February 23, 2023, the Public Affairs, Research, and Advocacy (PARA) department hosted a panel discussion focusing on humanitarian access for faith-based organizations working in Africa. The discussion, which took place at the American University School of International Service, featured experts

### Sudan

On April 15, 2023, fighting erupted in Sudan as rival factions fought for control of the country's capital. More than 5,000 civilian deaths and 12,000 injuries have been reported since the start of the conflict.



On top of that, Sudan has already experienced one of the world's biggest humanitarian crises, with nearly 24.7 million people in need of aid.



In response, IR provided families in need with food aid, access to clean water, access to healthcare services, including psychosocial support, access to education, and temporary shelter.



and heads of nonprofit organizations — including IRUSA president Anwar Khan — describing their experiences and findings working in conflict zones in the world's second-largest continent.



Also in February 2023, Christina Tobias-Nahi, IRUSA's PARA Director, was invited to visit Addis Ababa to speak at an event held against the backdrop of the United National Interfaith Harmony week within the African Union Center in Ethiopia. This convening was attended by high-level dignitaries from across the continent, including video remarks by Madame President Sahle-Work Zewde of Ethiopia, faith leaders, and faith networks, including from traditional African religions, women's rights activists, academics, humanitarian practitioners, and peace builders.



IRUSA is also proud to have supported a project on building climate-change advocacy through training in Ethiopia, among other countries. Following the training, Ethiopia was one of the offices in 2023, along with Indonesia and the Philippines, to earn a grant. The project is creating advocacy and campaigning toolkits to be used by the local office and to share out to national partner organizations.



The aim of this education is to improve climate adaptation in pastoralist communities. Due to increasingly extreme weather events, such as drought and flash floods, pastoralist communities have lost their assets. They are abandoning their traditional livelihoods, moving to urban areas where many now live in destitution and resort to begging, and children have to drop out of school. Government policy response tends to focus on temporary social welfare rather than addressing climate change as the root cause of the problem. Through this new initiative, the hope is to convene discussions between community representatives, key government ministries, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and academics to develop new initiatives to improve local adaptation through community mobilization.

We recognize that the root causes of this suffering lie in global heating, driven by human activities and our addiction to fossil fuels, particularly in wealthier nations. IRUSA is calling for an end to fossil fuel subsidies and a swift, fair, and equitable transition away from existing infrastructure. We urge international cooperation to significantly increase financial and technological support to ensure widespread access to renewable energy.



Lastly, IR is working in countries across Africa with high and highest Early and Forced Marriage (EFM) prevalence, such as Niger, Mali, Ethiopia, and Malawi. Our teams identified EFM as a serious issue hindering females and communities at-large from improving their well-being. We have been addressing this problem through multi-sector and integrated approaches, applying culturally sensitive and sustainable strategies, to help communities achieve the most-effective development outcomes.



**THANK YOU!**

*Your donation goes a long way.*

With your support, IRUSA is able to help change the lives of our brothers and sisters across Africa. To learn more about your impact, visit [irusa.org/africa](https://irusa.org/africa).



*scan here*



# AMERICAS



212,585  
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF  
PEOPLE SUPPORTED

## PROJECTS BY SECTOR



20,780+  
VOLUNTEER HOURS IN  
THE AMERICAS



RAMADAN 70,850 ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED



QURBANI 56,610 ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED



# OUR WORK ACROSS THE USA



According to the most recent data from the US Census Bureau, some 12% of the population in the US lives in poverty – that’s 37.9 million Americans. That’s why it is so important to remember our neighbors in need when we give charity, build humanitarian programs, and show our compassion. And that is what IRUSA has been dedicated to since its inception in the early 1990s, and what it remains dedicated to now.

## FOOD AID

Making nutritious food accessible is an organizational-priority for IRUSA all across the world, including in the US. IRUSA volunteers, also known as Blueshirts, come together to pack food boxes with essential food items like oil, sugar, pasta, dates, tea, and more, so that families can boost their pantry staples. IRUSA Blueshirts pack dry food meals as well, so that families can prepare their own nutrient-dense meals when they want. In 2023, IRUSA’s Volunteer Management Office innovated a basmati-rice meal with custom flavors to accommodate families originally from the Middle East and South Asia, including refugee families.

IRUSA’s Assistant Director of Volunteer Engagement at the time, Said Durrah, elaborated on the significance of these IR-exclusive meals: “There’s never been a meal like this that, with its spices and ingredients, can be turned into *Kabuli pulao*, *Maqlooba*, or many other cultural dishes. These basmati-rice meals can be enjoyed without adding other ingredients, but the beauty of a supplemental meal is that you can add your own favorite protein to the mix. And what makes it even more special is that it was built out of love and community. Volunteers from different cultures, ages, and backgrounds served as a taste-testing focus group. We wanted to work, as a community, to create a meal that we would be proud to serve at our own dinner tables, so that we know those we serve would like it and feel seen and understood. We wanted it to be a spoonful of home that

someone can reach for in their new home pantry. We have a duty of custodianship and care, and of serving our sisters and brothers in a dignified way, and, so, that’s what we did.” More than 247,968 of these basmati rice meals were packed by volunteers in 2023.

Many of these meals, as well as the food boxes, are distributed before and during Ramadan so that families have food for the month. Additional seasonal food distributions, like those during the Qurbani season, further work to provide nutrition, in the form of halal meat protein, that families may otherwise not be able to eat all year! Halal turkeys distributed each November have a similar effect, and bring critical nutrients to vulnerable families who may otherwise have to go without. In November 2023, more than 26,000 halal turkeys were distributed, with the help of some 50 community groups, serving more than 100,000 neighbors in need.



Beyond the seasonal distributions, the IRUSA family brings food staples and fresh food to vulnerable neighbors throughout the year, including through our Hot Meal programs in IL, MI, and NY, and meal pack and food box deliveries throughout the country. This, coupled with our related advocacy efforts, centers the need for more equitable and permanent solutions to fair food accessibility.

In February 2023, IRUSA’s Senior Advisor for Advocacy and Government Affairs, Jihad Saleh, was a panelist at the Bread for the World “An Interfaith Voice on Hunger: The 2023 Farm Bill” forum. According to IRUSA intern Qudsia Saeed, “The panelist[s] addressed the Farm Bill in relation to their faith backgrounds and moral considerations, highlighting the need to move beyond mere kindness toward justice and collective responsibility. They acknowledged that charitable sectors and humanitarian aid are simply a bandage, naming that, ‘we will never food bank our way to a hunger-free world.’” Instead, they emphasized the need to center and prioritize policy as a long-term solution.

*And that is why IRUSA, while providing immediate food aid to help quell urgent hunger, works with community groups to develop longer-term, sustainable solutions that help individuals get the resources they need to thrive independently.*



# REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

In 2023, IRUSA took its community support to a new and landmark level: It embarked on the path to become a national refugee resettlement agency, and, once confirmed as such, will be the 11th agency, and the first Muslim organization approved by the US State Department’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) to be so.

IRUSA’s former Refugee Services Manager, Saja Awad, explains: “For an organization to become a national resettlement agency, they must establish a strong ability to effectively manage federal funds, utilize private resources to support reception and placement (R&P) clients for 90 days and more, and have a network of local resettlement partners to provide direct client services and case management.”

In working toward its goal to serve refugees in this direct way, IRUSA established an institutional partnership with International Rescue Committee (IRC) to train community groups throughout the

country to become reception and placement centers that will provide services and support to arriving refugees, and help them acclimate in their new neighborhoods. The aim is to work together to resettle some 1,000 refugees by the close of 2024.

“Many national nonprofits work to provide refugees with post 90-day services,” Awad says, adding, “however with the current administration’s goal to resettle 145,000 in fiscal year 2024, the need for PRM-approved resettlement affiliates has increased and therefore positioned IRUSA to build out an HQ and local infrastructure to help meet this national collective goal.”

She continues, “As a leading international and national nonprofit, IRUSA has always [been a leader in] efforts to mobilize Muslims in the West [to support] people in need. IRUSA has dreamed of embarking on the path to becoming a national resettlement agency for years. Through this partnership with the IRC, this

dream is becoming a reality for the American Muslim community as a whole.”

IRUSA’s support of refugees has been a long-standing focal point within its advocacy efforts. At the 2023 G20 Interfaith Forum, in cooperation with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), IRUSA’s Director of Public Affairs, Research & Advocacy, Christina Tobias-Nahi, moderated a panel discussion titled, “World Refugee Day with UNHCR: The power of inclusion in developing durable solutions for refugees.”

Panelists, including Mandi Lindner, US Public Engagement and Outreach at UNHCR; Ahmed Ahmed, former Refugee and Lancaster, PA City Council Member; and IRUSA’s own Advocacy Campaign Specialist, Aseel Elborno, all shared their insights into the global refugee crisis, according to a ReliefLab blog about the event written by JoAnne Wadsworth, Communications Consultant, G20 Interfaith Forum.

An estimated 108 million people

around the world are displaced, with the majority now coming from three specific countries: Afghanistan, Syria, and Ukraine. Elborno, herself a refugee, noted how important continued advocacy and humanitarian efforts for refugees are, especially considering the growing number of refugees each year.

*Coming as a refugee is difficult. You’re starting from absolutely zero. It took my mother 20 years to get over that trauma in her life. Now, I get to push advocacy campaigns to help refugees. I want to empower these people and help them make an impact.”*

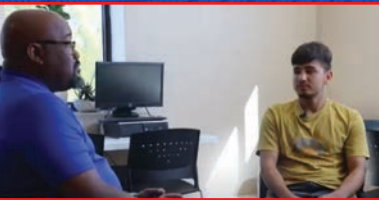
At the One Journey Festival in Washington, DC, Elborno and IRUSA interns, including Joy Kunda, encouraged attendees to keep raising awareness and support for refugees, and specially solicited for people to sign a petition for the Afghan Adjustment Act, which calls on Congress to provide a secure and permanent pathway for the tens of thousands of Afghan refugees arriving in the US. Kunda writes, “Currently, these individuals are only granted temporary humanitarian parole. Once their parolee status expires, they are left with the challenging and time-consuming process of seeking asylum, which requires presenting evidence of potential violence in their home country. Unfortunately, many Afghans were forced to destroy those documents while fleeing the Taliban. The Afghan Adjustment Act would enable Afghan parolees to pursue legal permanent residence, ensuring their long-term safety and stability in the US.”

The IRUSA group collected 400 signatures at the One Journey Festival. You can learn more a on at [irusa.org/advocacy](https://irusa.org/advocacy).

**Take a closer look at one of our first refugee resettlement partners: Hanan Refugees Relief Group.**

## HANAN REFUGEES RELIEF GROUP

Hanan Refugees Relief Group, or Hanan, is one of IRUSA’s first refugee resettlement partners. Based in Milwaukee, WI, their mission is to help integrate and empower refugees in their host communities through short- and long-term development, including access to housing, job opportunities, and everything in between.



Hanan offers airport transportation services, fully furnished homes, groceries, climate-appropriate clothing, assistance with paperwork, and more. During a visit to Hanan, we got the chance to speak with one of their star clients, Mirwauz. Mirwauz is a young, 20-year-old from Afghanistan. Afghanistan’s refugee crisis is one of the biggest humanitarian crises our world has faced, leaving 24 million Afghans in dire need of humanitarian assistance.

Mirwauz shared that the biggest challenge he faces is the language barrier. His inability to communicate has made his transition all the more difficult. Thanks to Hanan, he’s in English as a Second Language (ESL) training. He even brings in his mail for help with translation. When asked about his hope for the future, Mirwauz shared he hopes to be successful.

**“I’m very thankful for Hanan and those who support them.”**



Day of Dignity is a series of IRUSA day-long events that help low-income neighbors and those suffering from homelessness gain access to social services and other essential community resources, including food aid, medical screenings, school supplies, resume building and job search support, haircuts, and more.

“What we are trying to demonstrate here is that we care, and with the care, we hope to rejuvenate the hope in order for people to not give up, to get back on track, and for us to restore our community,” shared an event coordinator in Portland, OR.

And at the 2022 event in Detroit, MI, a volunteer added, **“We have people here from all walks of life: all colors, all shapes, all sizes. And that’s what we’re doing here ... we’re taking care of God’s people.”**

That’s the spirit that has driven this flagship IRUSA program for more than a decade. **In 2023, IRUSA sponsored 37 Day of Dignity events all across the country.**



You can learn more at [irusa.org/day-of-dignity](https://irusa.org/day-of-dignity).





# FROM **DISASTER** TO **RECOVERY**

## • PUERTO RICO

Devastation struck Puerto Rico [PR] in 2017 when Hurricane Maria, a Category 5 hurricane, hit the island. It was the deadliest hurricane to hit the region in about two decades, and accounted for almost 3,000 deaths. It left the island in disaster, and brought out the real need of the Puerto Rican people. IR teams responded initially to the disaster with emergency relief, but the impact people left on us showed us that there was much more work to be done.

The people of PR showed IRUSA gratitude, but they also showed us how to be neighborly, how to build a community, and how to be supportive of one another. When disaster struck on the island, they helped each other. Neighbors checked on neighbors, community members mobilized to provide essentials, and much more.

And we wanted to be a part of this continuous effort of building a community.

After the emergency response for Hurricane Maria, IR worked in Utuado to bring generators and funded the building of a well as that community had no access to clean water. This year we've funded a water tank that can hold 3,000 gallons of water so that when a storm does come, clean water access is always available. In another town, Mayaguez, we've had a continuous response since Maria. First we distributed food and household items. Then, we worked on a long-term recovery project to build flood shelves. These are emergency shelves that can be utilized when a major storm comes with the anticipation of flooding. Families can put valuables and necessary items on these shelves so they are protected from the water. We've also given back-to-school backpacks filled with supplies such as pens, markers, crayons, folders, binders, paint, and more to about 400 children. We intentionally bought these supplies from a local vendor in the community, so we could support local businesses, to help and support the Puerto Rican economy.

Overall, we are looking to expand our work in Puerto Rico, further working with the Muslim community and local mosques to help fill the needs of the Puerto Rican people. We hope to build resilience in the community and support them in their ability to respond quicker to emergencies when they do happen, and to eventually not rely on any support from outside organizations.

## • MEXICO

### Rio Camp Emergency WASH Relief

Each year, hundreds of thousands of asylum-seekers travel for months, often on extremely treacherous routes, and end up trapped in Reynosa, Mexico, while awaiting their asylum proceedings in US courts. The present reality in the camps is stark: asylum-seekers sleep in overcrowded tents or under tarps and have limited access to water, sanitation, shade, education, and other basic necessities. Due to the large population in the camp and the location's limited connection to the municipal water supply, there is a critical lack of access to adequate water, sanitation, and hygiene [WASH] facilities in Reynosa.

Like everyone, asylum-seekers deserve access to adequate WASH facilities for their drinking, hygiene, and sanitation needs. IR's WASH Relief project addresses these inhumane conditions and promotes the health and dignity of all current and future residents. The project provides emergency potable water, portable bathrooms, and 6-9 months of consumable hygiene supplies (menstrual pads, toiletries, toilet paper, etc.).

For a more permanent solution, IR is implementing stormwater management practices and providing WASH and shade infrastructure.

*"I have visited many camps for displaced people, but I am surprised by the conditions of the camps on the Mexican-US Border. There are many humanitarian needs including water, sanitation, and hygiene. We are concerned about the security of people on the border."*

—Anwar Khan, IRUSA President, on his trip to Mexico

## • ECUADOR

### Ecuador Emergency Earthquake Relief

On March 18, 2023, a 6.5 magnitude earthquake hit the Guayas Province of Ecuador, impacting the lives of over 2,574 people. The earthquake caused significant damage to homes, public infrastructure, schools, and health units. It is estimated that 494 people were injured, 718 homes damaged, and 162 homes fully destroyed. Preliminary results showed that the primary needs of those affected were food assistance, hygiene supplies, shelter repairs, and psychosocial support. The assessment also revealed that the emergency caused distress which required accompaniment and psychosocial support.

IRUSA's Emergency Earthquake Relief response provided basic necessities for 300 earthquake-affected households. Each eligible household received a cash transfer to purchase food, household supplies, cover emergency rental costs, and/or repair their houses. IRUSA also provided individual and group based psychosocial support to approximately 400 people.



# YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY

By Safa Elzanfali, PARA Intern

In an ever-evolving world confronted with humanitarian challenges, the need for impactful calls to action has grown increasingly essential. Over the past few weeks, as a Public Affairs and Research Advocacy (PARA) intern with IRUSA, I have had the opportunity to contribute to a project seeking to amplify young voices in addressing existing global and local disparities. The “Advocacy Toolkit” is IRUSA’s latest endeavor to engage university students in the call for humanitarian action. The project serves as a comprehensive framework equipping students and young adults with the tools and resources necessary to engage in effective local humanitarian activism.

A shining feature of the toolkit is its emphasis on establishing partnerships within the university and local communities. The spirit of collaboration is well infused in the toolkit strategies highlighting communication and outreach. Students are encouraged to research their systems of governance within their institutions, local communities, and even on a state and national level through a series of resources provided in the toolkit. The approach outlined in the project empowers

students to take active strides in bringing about change regarding causes they are truly passionate about. Being informed on how to develop well-structured advocacy campaigns, engage with decision-makers, and address policies that directly affect their university environment will mobilize students to reach a more expansive audience.



Throughout my undergraduate studies, I have learned about a number of issues the community grapples with. From housing insecurity to refugee access to healthcare, there are marginalized demographics struggling in their day to day lives to procure necessities. Working on this toolkit has educated me on the strategic planning required to succeed in advocating for local humanitarian causes. As an active member of several university clubs and organizations, I am eager to introduce the aims of the toolkit within my own college community this upcoming academic year. Under the mission of this toolkit, students have the opportunity to unify peers, professionals, and local community members in identifying themselves as catalysts for change and influential agents of transformation.

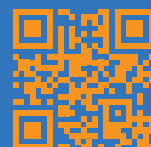
## Get Involved: Advocacy Toolkit



## IRUSA DVOCACY

### How to get started:

1. Request an advocacy training by IRUSA (virtual or in person)
2. Follow the Step-by-Step Guide on Organizing an Effective Advocacy Campaign
3. Let us know about your campaign: we can help amplify and spread your cause
4. Fill out our follow-up survey so we can better assist you moving forward
5. You can access the full toolkit here:



“It must have been encouraging to my colleagues that all of the interns found their experience at IRUSA incredibly valuable, as they weren’t presented with an endless stream of menial or servile tasks. Rather, they were getting hands-on experience, organizing a networking event for fellow interns (which was well-received for its diversity), a careers workshop at the US Capitol, various government relations activities, blog writing, grassroots organizing, among other things. All these assignments required critical-thinking skills, creativity, and imagination. We can only hope that the springboard Islamic Relief USA provided them will lead them to accomplish major goals, and that their dreams become reality — that seemingly small opportunities could lead to big breaks.”

—Syed Hassan, Sr. Communications and Media Specialist for PARA, in his article on IRUSA’s summer internship program



Scan the QR code to continue reading

“I have dedicated my life to advocating for refugees and all vulnerable people. Today, on behalf of IRUSA, I urge you to stand up for refugees, to help them create legal pathways for permanent residency and for them to be resettled in a dignified manner. Thank you.”

— Aseel Elborno, Advocacy Campaign Specialist for PARA, at the “Little Amal” tour in DC

“I engaged in various projects that expanded my understanding of effective advocacy. Some projects include creating a Ramadan Action Calendar, helping organize a panel discussion on Africa: Humanitarian Faith-Based Organizations Taking Action in Conflict Zones, and reflecting on an interfaith approach to the Farm Bill. I learned about Islamic Relief’s multifaceted approach to advocacy and witnessed this firsthand through various grassroots campaigns and political advocacy.”

—Qudsia Saeed, IRUSA Intern for PARA, on her internship experience

“IR is actively involved in efforts to combat gender violence, empower women, and advocate for gender justice. We have gender projects and initiatives in Bangladesh, Canada, Indonesia, Kenya, Kosovo, Mali, Pakistan, Palestine, Somalia, South Africa, and the US.”

—Mohamed Ali, Sr. Advisor for PARA, in his article on gender justice

## READ OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS





## FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS TO A POWERFUL FORCE:

# VMO VOLUNTEER JOURNEY

At the heart of our humanitarian mission lies the Volunteer Management Office (VMO), a department with humble beginnings that has become a dynamic force for change. Born in 2010, our roster of volunteers was just a handful of people from the DC metropolitan area. Fast forward to 2023, we stand tall with over **31,000 dedicated volunteers** from all over the US. Their unwavering commitment to our cause has been nothing short of inspiring.

Our volunteers have been the driving force behind our emergency response efforts, answering the call in times of crisis. From the hurricane-ravaged shores of Florida to the destroyed streets of New Orleans, and the devastated communities of North Carolina, our volunteers have been on the front lines, providing essential aid and support where it's needed most.

Food insecurity and homelessness are battles we've been fighting tirelessly, and our volunteers have been right there with us. Together, we've packed meal packs, food boxes, hygiene kits, school



kits, and more, ensuring that those facing adversity have the essentials they need to thrive.

But it doesn't stop there — our volunteers are a creative bunch: they've found ingenious ways to make a lasting impact. Take our paint night fundraisers, for instance. These events have become a powerful tool for raising funds and awareness for emergencies in places like Türkiye, Syria, Morocco, Libya, and Palestine.

As we celebrate this remarkable journey, we extend our deepest gratitude to each and every one of our volunteers.

**You are the heart and soul of our mission, and together, we will continue to make a difference in the lives of those we serve.**

## BUILDING BRIDGES OF COMPASSION: HOW WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY'S MSA & IRUSA ARE CHANGING LIVES TOGETHER

In early September of 2022, something remarkable happened at West Virginia University [WVU]. It all began when WVU's Muslim Student Association [MSA] reached out to IRUSA with an idea that would not only change their community, but also set the stage for an inspiring collaboration.

For IRUSA, this was an opportunity to venture into uncharted territory. We had never before engaged in a service project in the state of West Virginia. We began planning, and by November, a dedicated group of students and volunteers had come together at WVU to assemble a staggering 30,000 meals for those in need. What made this event even more heartwarming was that the students chose to skip a big football game to attend and make a difference in their community.

As the new year rolled in, and February of 2023 approached, we returned to WVU and took things up a notch. This time, our goal was to package 40,000 meals for people in need. The response from the

students was overwhelming. They eagerly joined hands with our fundraising team, allowing IRUSA fundraisers to speak at their mosque. The result? A staggering \$30,000 raised for the Türkiye-Syria earthquake.

But the story doesn't end there: they also collaborated with IRUSA to create their own page on IRaise, an IRUSA online platform for fundraising, for the Türkiye-Syria earthquake. The students showcased incredible dedication and drive, raising significant funds for the emergency response, which provided essentials including food boxes, blankets, and hygiene kits for thousands of earthquake victims.

What this remarkable collaboration between WVU's MSA and IRUSA demonstrates is the transformative power of community development. It's a beautiful reminder of how such initiatives not only allow IRUSA to support worldwide relief efforts, but also engage with passionate and compassionate young individuals who are driven to help those in need.

"If you want to soften your heart, feed the poor and pat the head of the orphan," (Musnad Ahmad, 7576)." The hadith provided me with the solution I was desperately searching for. I realized I must better the condition of others if I wanted to better myself. I discovered Islamic Relief USA shortly after my epiphany and immediately jumped at the opportunity.

Simply put, IRUSA has changed my life. It has helped me recognize my duty — both spiritually and morally — to assist others. Most importantly, I recognized that we at IRUSA are simply extensions of Allah's (SWT) mercy. After all, we are doing God's work."

—Muhammad Sheikh, Volunteer



Scan here  
for full  
article







# GIVING BACK, MAKING AN IMPACT: THE POWER OF VOLUNTEERING

By Zana Sahyouni

I arrived about 20 minutes late to the IRUSA MLK Day Food Box Pack Out event at Episcopal High School in Alexandria, VA in 2023. No one plans to be late (or least shouldn't), but between rushing my children out my front door, getting my clothes stained by my son's bloody nose, and then getting lost trying to find the Flippin' Field House on the school's campus, the last thing I honestly wanted to do was roll up my sleeves and volunteer. I felt like the Grumpy Monkey from my son's favorite book, who, despite the perfect weather, the friendly animals surrounding him, and the endless activities he could do, was just so... grumpy.

It's cliché, I know, to follow all that by stating that my mood was immediately changed the second I opened the field house doors, but that was the reality. The doors led me to the top of the stadium where I could see about 550 Blueshirt volunteers — 400 high school students, 70 school staff, 50 IRUSA volunteers, and 30 IRUSA staff — buzzing around diligently in organized lanes. It was overwhelming, really. To see hundreds of people from different backgrounds making boxes, filling them with pantry essentials, and then closing them before stacking them into a large truck was surreal as an observer. Volunteers were picking up trash, salvaging broken flour and sugar bags, and running around taking care of minor mishaps without missing a beat — everyone was so in sync you would think it was rehearsed.

You can't really begin to understand how powerful the IRUSA Volunteer Management Office (VMO) team is until you join an event and experience it yourself. I approached one young volunteer, Morgan, who shared with me that she came out to the event after volunteering last Ramadan. "I volunteered with IR before here during Ramadan, and that was a lot of fun. You guys are really professional. [Other places] don't have as great volunteer opportunities that are



fun and engaging, but you guys always do," she shared. In the previous year, IRUSA's Ramadan Meal Pack, the largest meal pack IRUSA had hosted at that time, had also taken place at Episcopal High School, and was the introduction for many of the students to IRUSA volunteering. "We are required to choose one volunteer opportunity, and I chose this because everyone said IRUSA is fun to volunteer with," shared Emma, another student volunteer. "The energy has been good."

The energy was contagious, too. I came in a Grumpy Monkey and found myself happily buzzing around with the amazing Blueshirts within minutes. Said Durrah, former Assistant Director of Volunteer Engagement, attested as well that, "The energy has been pretty good... everyone has been going good and working at a pretty good rate. So far, everyone has been really

excited and really hype to make as many boxes as we can."

The energy was also overwhelming — to witness firsthand people of different faiths come together and work in harmony sounds like something out of a cheesy inclusivity commercial. "This is our faith in action," Anwar Khan, IRUSA President claimed. "You have IRUSA working with Episcopalians, showing people of faith working together. Isn't it beautiful?"

It was really beautiful. The synchronized work allowed the teams to pack 4,000 food boxes in two hours — about 45,000 items packed to be distributed to families in need. Each box contained rice, flour, sugar, salt, pasta, tomato sauce, lentils, oil, tuna, and jam:

*“It is the basics that people ask for: healthy foods that all people need regardless of background or culture,”*

shared Jennifer Ayers, ALIVE!'s Executive Director.

The food boxes were donated to ALIVE!, a nonprofit organization in the metropolitan area that provides food to those in need and is currently serving 4,000 households a month. "This is an incredible donation," she continued. "Events like this are super important for letting people know of the good work IRUSA is doing in the community, but also for getting the food on the ground where it is needed most."

Taking this "day on" to honor Martin Luther King Jr was an incredible opportunity

brought together by IRUSA. For me, there is no better way to honor the civil rights leader than to give back within the interfaith community. Leaving the field house after accomplishing my goal, I noticed just how perfect the weather was that day and realized I was no longer a Grumpy Monkey — the volunteer event gave me a sense of fulfillment that transformed my mood.

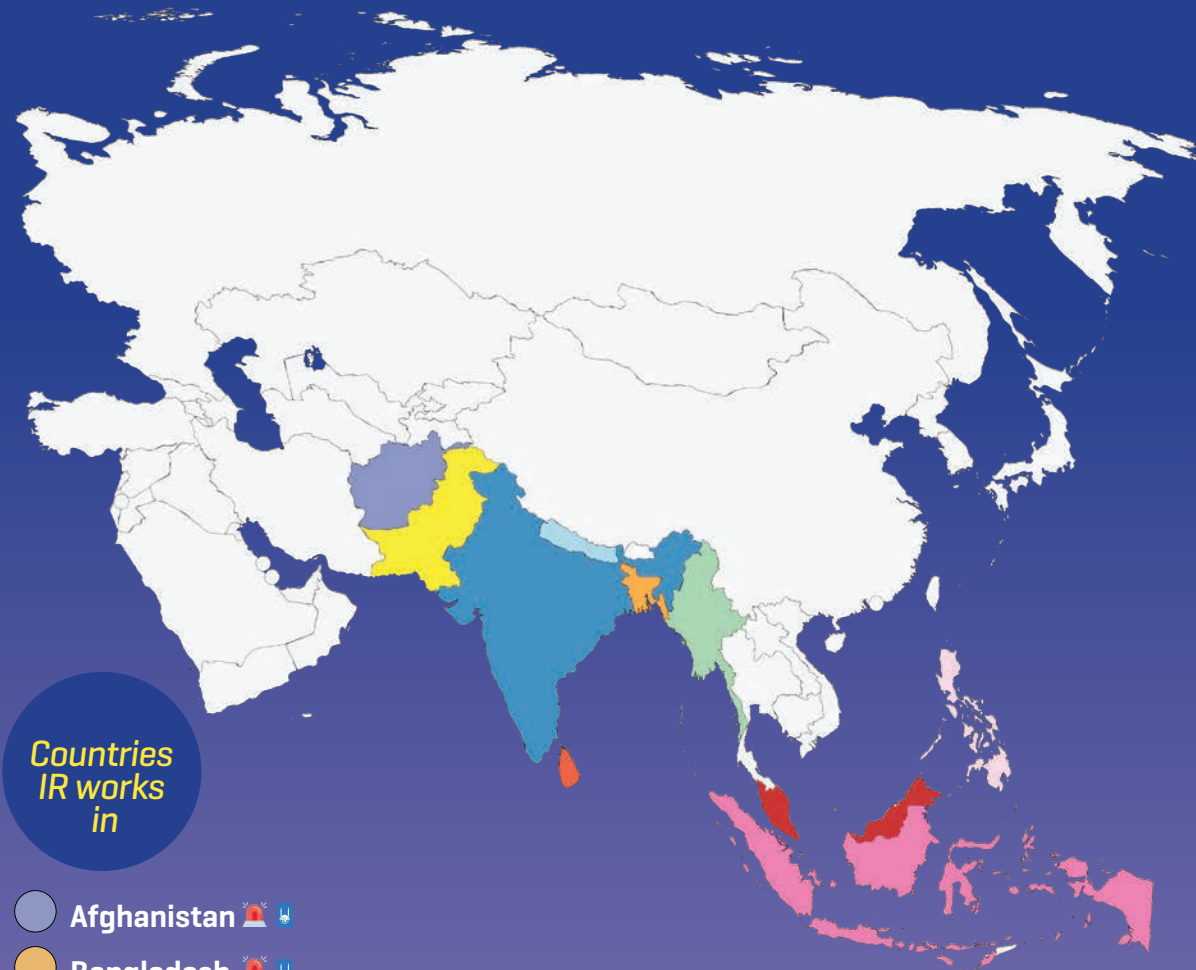


To find out  
how  
you can  
get involved:

[irusa.org/volunteer](https://irusa.org/volunteer)







Countries IR works in

- Afghanistan 🇦🇫
- Bangladesh 🇬🇧
- India 🇮🇳
- Indonesia 🇮🇩
- Malaysia 🇲🇾
- Myanmar 🇲🇲
- Nepal 🇳🇵
- Pakistan 🇵🇰
- Philippines 🇵🇭
- Sri Lanka 🇱🇰

🇮🇩 Countries with Islamic Relief offices  
🇬🇧 Countries with emergency responses

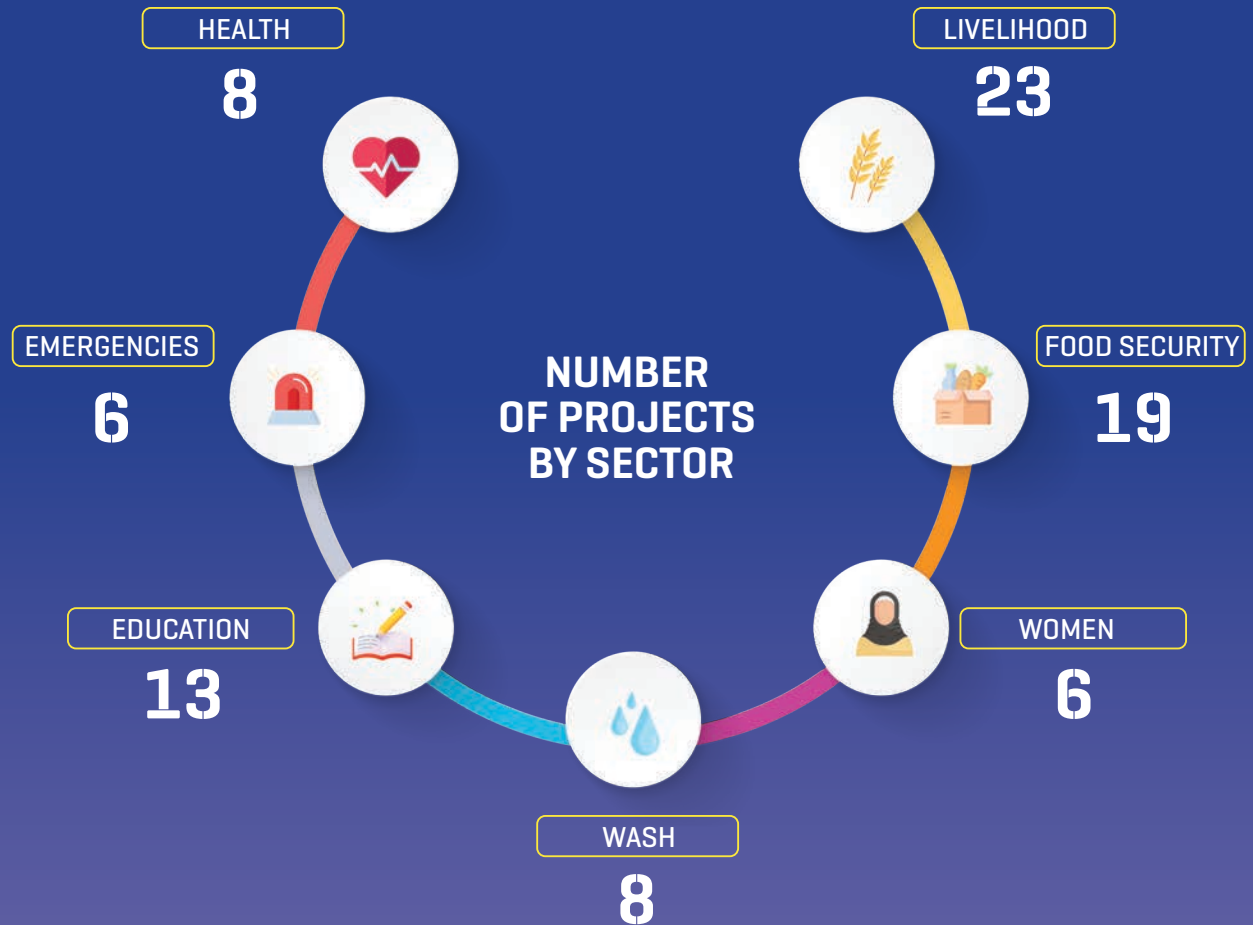
**2,607,254**

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED

**2900+**

VOLUNTEER HOURS IN ASIA

## PROJECTS BY SECTOR



OrphanCare

ORPHAN SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

**9,344**

NUMBER OF ORPHANS SPONSORED



7 Zakat Projects

Zakat

Fulfill your Zakat



RAMADAN **138,762** ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED



QURBANI **97,558** ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED



# OUR WORK ACROSS ASIA

The IR family has long established its presence in Asia, starting with our emergency relief and integrated programming in Bangladesh in 1991. Since then, we have expanded our efforts to a total of nine Asian countries, with field staff on the ground to address needs quickly, efficiently, and effectively.

In 2023, IRUSA donors helped to support over 41 projects in the region, including assisting girls' access to schools in Afghanistan, orphan family sponsorship in Bangladesh, building community resilience against climate change in Indonesia, livelihood development in Myanmar, building healthier and resilient communities in Nepal, programs for children in Pakistan, sustaining women economic empowerment and education in the Philippines, and access to clean water in Sri Lanka, to name a few.

Take a look at some of our work in Asia and read accounts from the people you've helped serve across the region.

## ORPHANS & CHILDREN

Prophet Muhammad [SAW] said:

“*I and the one who looks after an orphan will be like this in Paradise, showing his middle and index fingers and separating them,*” (Bukhari).

Asia holds the largest number of orphaned children in the world. IRUSA's programs for orphans and orphan-families help uplift orphans and his or her families into self-reliance by giving them the tools they need to thrive. What's more: the family gets the support they need all while building a sustainable living so they can break the chains of poverty that bind them.

### Nora's Story

📍 Afghanistan



Nora lives in a one-room cave with her six children. “Life in the cave is tough. It’s dusty and dry. We do not have toilets around. We go outside in the open to ease ourselves. For women and girls like me, that is too risky,” she says. There was no indication of furniture in her home, including bedding. Old carpet covered the floor of her home, and a few blankets were tacked to the corner of the house. She had a makeshift kitchen, and the only food she had on hand was a few slices of bread from breakfast.

Nora’s is among the 700 orphaned households that received livelihood support through skills training. “Very little support is available to poor people like us living in a cave. When I was enrolled for training and promised a sewing machine, I didn’t believe it until I received the machine. We needed food, and the opportunity was not there. The sewing machine was an opportunity and income for us,” she explained.

Thanks to donors like you, Nora is able to support

her family through her business: “I mostly sew clothes for the neighbors who believe in my work. I also started producing traditional fabrics like cushions and embroidered scarves for women. I make 1300 AFN [\$15] per month. I use this money to pay for my children’s education and medicines. We use the remaining for food.” “I don’t know how to thank you. I see things opening for us. My family is not the same as one year ago. Though small, I get some cash from this business. May Allah [SWT] reward all who sent us this support,” she concluded.

## LIVELIHOOD

According to the World Bank, more than 320 million people in Asia live in extreme poverty, which means hundreds of millions of people are living on less than \$2.15 a day. Poverty is a cycle, but it’s breakable. Growth is a cycle too, and by helping vulnerable communities build sustainable livelihoods, families can prosper for generations to come.

### Dalie's Story

📍 The Philippines



Dalie is a farmer who lives in a remote and flood-prone community with his wife and four children. He works with his

family to tend to rice fields, coconut plantations, and various indigenous vegetables. “The crops we harvest from these endeavors serve as our main source of income, supporting our daily necessities and livelihood,” he shares.

One of the challenges they face is livelihood: “The expenses are difficult to manage, particularly because our sources for essential items are far from our location. However, we continue to engage in agricultural activities, which serve as our primary source of income, to support our daily needs and overcome these difficulties,” he explains.

IR arrived at Dalie’s community with a noble objective – to provide support to his community’s needs. Through extensive discussions and assessments, they identified the most-critical need, which turned out to be access to safe and clean water. This need became even more apparent because the location is susceptible to flooding, rendering their usual water source, a deep well, non-functional during the rainy season or heavy rainfall.



“Prior to your help, residents, especially children, suffered from illnesses caused by consuming contaminated water. Stomach aches and diarrhea were common ailments resulting from drinking water from the deep well. “The intervention of IR in implementing the water refilling project has had a profound and positive impact on the health of the people in [our community]. Through this initiative, IR has not only provided much-needed assistance in setting up the water refilling station, but also empowered our community through various training sessions and seminars,” Dalie concluded.

### HEALTH

Global health inequity is an unfortunate and harsh reality. Around 70% of health outcomes in Asia are due to social determinants of health such as access to food, education, proper housing, and livelihood. The difference in life expectancy between high and low income countries is 19 years. That’s why IRUSA is dedicated to helping vulnerable communities build better, healthier lives for themselves.

### EMERGENCIES

According to UNICEF, over 60% of the world’s disaster victims live in Asia and the Pacific. This region suffers from the highest losses caused by natural hazards such as earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, typhoons, and volcanoes. At IR, we are dedicated to helping victims of emergencies.

#### Bangladesh

On March 5, 2023, a devastating fire broke out at Camp 11 in Cox’s Bazar, where over one million Rohingya refugees reside. The fire displaced 12,000 refugees — most who had fled a military-led crackdown in Myanmar in 2017. Thousands of shelters were lost in the flames and many facilities were damaged including hospitals, water networks, mosques, and learning centers.

Immediately after, IR launched an emergency response, where staff participated in joint needs assessments with emergency agencies. Our



#### Nilantha’s Story

##### Sri Lanka



Nilantha has been caring for his wife, mother-in-law, and his brother-in-law, since his father-in-law passed away. They live in a one-bedroom mud house in a risky area, where elephants come and eat their agriculture before they are able to.

For over 10 years, he had been suffering from a severe pain in his lower abdomen. He sought many doctors, but due to their financial situation, he could not afford to get proper medical treatment. When IR heard about Nilantha’s difficulty, we took steps to help him get the medical attention he needed. Nilantha is now completely healed, and he and his family are eternally grateful for this kindness.

“Thank you, IR, I don’t have words to convey my thanks to you.”

teams also provided aid to displaced people by rebuilding homes and WASH facilities such as latrines and bathing cubicles. A total of 1,073 affected households in Camp 11 received emergency shelter packages and technical support to install emergency shelters.

#### Afghanistan



Four major earthquakes, all within one week of each other, had a devastating toll on the mental health of people in western Afghanistan. The earthquakes, ranging from a magnitude

between 4.7 and 6.3, first hit the Herat region on October 7, 2023, killing up to 2,000 people and injuring thousands more across six districts in the province. More than 3,000 homes had been completely destroyed, and the number of people directly affected rose to more than 40,000, with many families now homeless and in need of aid.

In response, IR provided families in need with mental health support and counseling, as well as providing shelter, medical treatment, cash assistance, drinking water, and sanitation. IR deployed health teams to the earthquake zone which included doctors, psychosocial support counselors, midwives, nurses, and vaccinators. Also, IR also constructed new sanitation facilities, due to the high risk of disease spreading among the displaced communities.

#### Nepal

An earthquake with a magnitude of 6.4 struck the Karnali province of Nepal on November 3, 2023, and a 5.6 magnitude earthquake struck days later on November 6. There were 57 fatalities and 349 injured, and over 35,321 homes destroyed.

### ADVOCACY

Our IRUSA Advocates work endlessly on campaigns, non-partisan government engagement, and direct lobbying on Capitol Hill to end injustices across Asia. For Afghanistan specifically, our IRUSA Advocates have been urging congress to uphold our nation’s promises to at-risk Afghans by passing the bipartisan **Afghan Adjustment Act**.



On July 13, 2023, the Afghan Adjustment Act was reintroduced with bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate. If passed, the bill would establish a clear and streamlined path

## THANK YOU!

Your donation goes a long way.

With your support, IRUSA is able to help change the lives of our brothers and sisters across Asia. To learn more about your impact, visit [irusa.org/asia](https://irusa.org/asia).



Over 1.3 million people were exposed to the earthquake, and about 250,000 people needed humanitarian assistance.

IR teams in the region distributed winterization kits that consisted of blankets, mattresses, warm clothes, and tents to 400 affected families.

#### Philippines

On November 17, 2023, the Philippines faced a severe flooding crisis triggered by a Low Pressure Area [LPA], resulting in the displacement of 193,130 families [733,678 individuals] across multiple provinces. IR launched an emergency to enhance the well-being, food security, and living conditions of those affected by flooding in Lope de Vega. IR conducted a needs assessment and provided cash grants to 1,700 families. Each family received about 5053 PHP [\$90.60 USD] through this project.

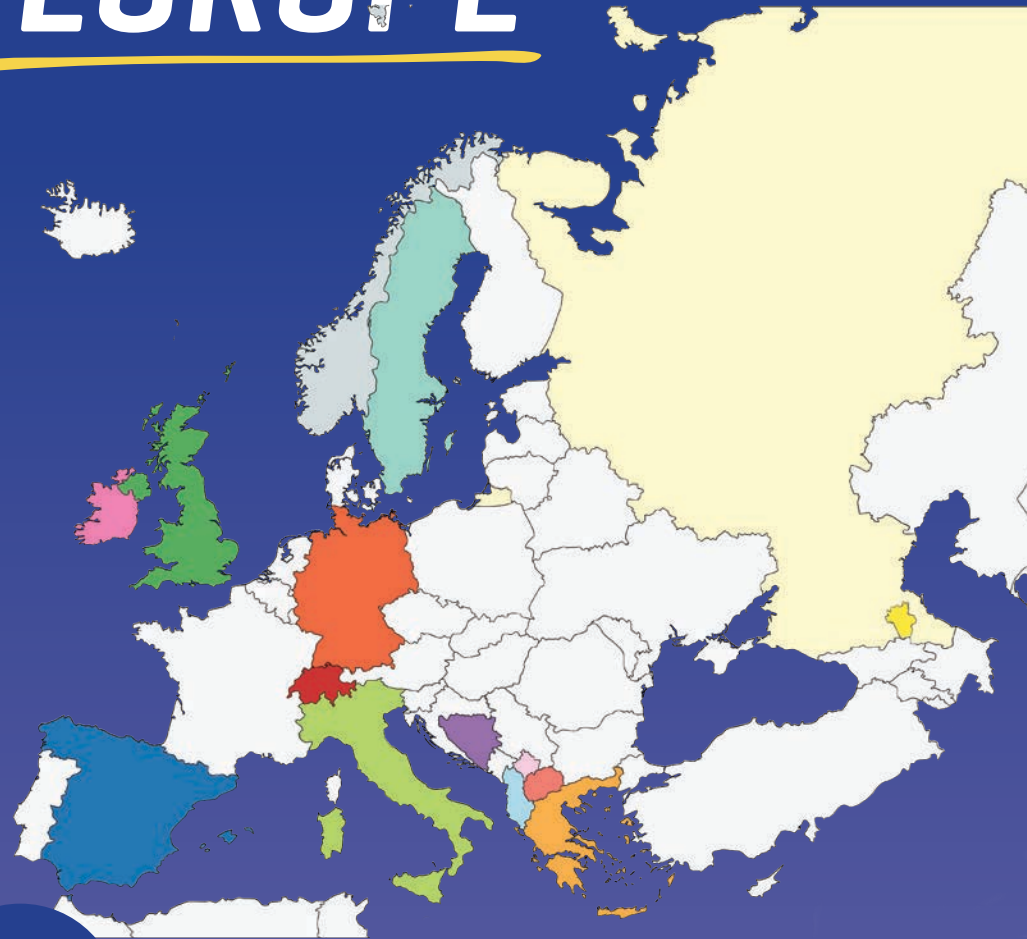
for displaced Afghans to apply for permanent status in the US and expand pathways to protection for Afghans who remain left behind and at risk. Since the fall of Kabul in August 2021, millions of Afghans have been displaced from their homes, including many who risked their lives in support of the US mission. During the evacuation, the US welcomed more than 76,000 Afghans via humanitarian parole, which provides only temporary protection and no clear path to permanent status. Even though the vast majority of Afghan parolees are eligible for asylum or Special Immigrant Visas, fewer than 10% have secured permanent protections due to long backlogs and processing delays. The recent announcement of a re-parole process for those facing the imminent expiration of protections only highlights how many Afghans are stuck in limbo on temporary status. Many more are still at risk in Afghanistan or nearby countries where the threat of violence remains.



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# EUROPE



Countries IR works in

- Albania 🇦🇱
- Bosnia 🇸🇯
- Chechnya 🇷🇺 (A Republic of Russia)
- Germany 🇩🇪
- Greece 🇬🇷
- Ireland 🇮🇪
- Italy 🇮🇹
- Kosovo 🇰🇲
- North Macedonia 🇲🇰
- Norway 🇳🇴
- Spain 🇪🇸
- Sweden 🇸🇪
- Switzerland 🇨🇭
- United Kingdom 🇬🇧

🇬🇧 Countries with Islamic Relief offices  
🇸🇯 Countries with limited programming  
🇷🇺 Countries with emergency responses  
🇨🇭 Countries with only seasonal programming

**145,576**  
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF  
PEOPLE SUPPORTED

**800+**  
VOLUNTEER HOURS IN  
EUROPE

## PROJECTS BY SECTOR



**OrphanCare**  
ORPHAN SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

**1,911**

NUMBER OF ORPHANS  
SPONSORED



**7** Zakat Projects

**Zakat**

Fulfill  
your  
Zakat



**RAMADAN** **11,111** ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED



**QURBANI** **3,458** ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED



# OUR WORK ACROSS EUROPE



IRUSA's first humanitarian response was in Bosnia in 1993, where we provided vital emergency aid such as food and water and helped rebuild homes, schools, and places of worship. Now, 30 years later, the IR global family continues to deliver life-saving aid across five European countries.

In 2023 alone, we had over 16 projects in Europe, such as sustainable livelihood support through livestock provision in Albania, fostering economic growth in Bosnia, emergency support for flood-affected communities in Kosovo, access to sustainable financing for agricultural development in Chechnya, and support towards sustainable development for the Haracina community in North Macedonia, to name a few.

Take a look at some of our work in Europe and hear from the people you've helped serve across the region.

## HEALTH

The healthcare sector in Eastern Europe deteriorated in the 1990s, making it hard for Europeans to get adequate healthcare. Only 10% of the population in Eastern Europe has access to medication [European Commission, 2023]. At IR, we are focused on rebuilding healthcare infrastructure to ensure that future generations can receive adequate healthcare.



### Isuf's story

📍 Albania

Isuf lives in a remote village in Albania with his wife and children, where he is able to make a living off the fertile land. However, being so far away from a city, they suffer due to the lack of healthcare services. "We don't receive any assistance from local institutions, and we have no access to healthcare services. This village has suffered for more than 26 years without any health center," he shared.

IR was able to successfully build a health center, the first time the village has had one since 1953. "Frankly, when [IR] came to visit us and explained your work and willingness to construct a health center, we never believed that you would really build it."



“We never believed that one day we would have a health center in this village. May God reward you greatly for this miracle that you are doing for us.”

## WOMEN

According to the World Bank, in Eastern Europe, 50% of working-age women have less than a secondary education. Employment rates among lower-educated women is less than 5%. Women are also more likely to lack work experience than men: 70% of Eastern European women in the age group 25-29 are not in employment, education, or training. That is why we are dedicated to helping empower women throughout the world, and providing them with the tools they need to become self-sufficient.

### Mirishahe's Story

📍 Kosovo



Mirishahe is a widowed mother of three who received vocational training in an IR project for tailoring. She suffered from severe depression after the passing of her husband, and couldn't find the energy or motivation to be present for her kids or become independent.

When she joined IR's vocational tailoring training, she found immense support and satisfaction:

“[Right away], I was happy that I could talk to women in the group, because I needed to express how sad I was. In the beginning, I cried all the time. Women would comfort me, and the trainer as well, and practicing tailoring helped me move away from this depression.”

Immediately after finishing the training, she was happy and realized the power of her independence. "I am so happy that my smile returned to my face. Even my kids are happy for me. Since we finished the training, and we got evaluated by the trainer and project coordinator, I promised myself to be happy. This training helped me have a profession which I love, and also helped me get experience and get a job."



## LIVELIHOOD

After years of war, destruction, and subsequent economic failure across Eastern Europe, the region has suffered from industrial collapse, financial distress and chaos, and a very low living standard. Add that to a history and tendency toward natural disasters, like earthquakes, floods, landslides, droughts, extreme temperatures, wildfires, and windstorms, and the toll on families in the region becomes even more severe. At IR, we remain committed to helping provide relief and long-term solutions.

### Nexhmije's Story

📍 **Kosovo**

Nexhmije lives in an old village with her husband and four children. They face difficult and poor living conditions: their one bedroom home is mold-infested due to high moisture levels, and they do not even have a sanitation facility. She



makes just enough money, by cleaning houses in her neighborhood, to buy her children milk and bread. Her husband is not able to work due to his debilitating illness.

Thanks to donors like you, IR was able to provide cash assistance and livestock for Nexhmije's family. They are able to get milk for their own family and sell some for profit.

“*Insha'Allah, I cannot find the words to express my endless gratitude and appreciation for all what you are doing for my children.*”

## EMERGENCIES

According to the World Bank, the climate is changing, and many Eastern European countries are experiencing the consequences. They are facing warmer temperatures and more weather extremes, which are causing droughts, floods, heat waves, windstorms, and forest fires.

📍 **Kosovo**

When flash flooding happened over the summer of 2023 in Kosovo, IR was there. We launched an emergency support project for flood-affected households, which provided food packs, hygiene kits, blankets, and clothes.



# THANK YOU!

*Your donation goes a long way.*

With your support, IRUSA is able to help change the lives of our brothers and sisters across Europe. To learn more about your impact, visit [irusa.org/europe](https://irusa.org/europe).



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# SIGN UP TODAY!



**BECOME  
AN ADVOCATE**

[IRUSA.ORG/ADVOCACY](https://irusa.org/advocacy)



**SERVE  
BY VOLUNTEERING**

[IRUSA.ORG/VOLUNTEER](https://irusa.org/volunteer)

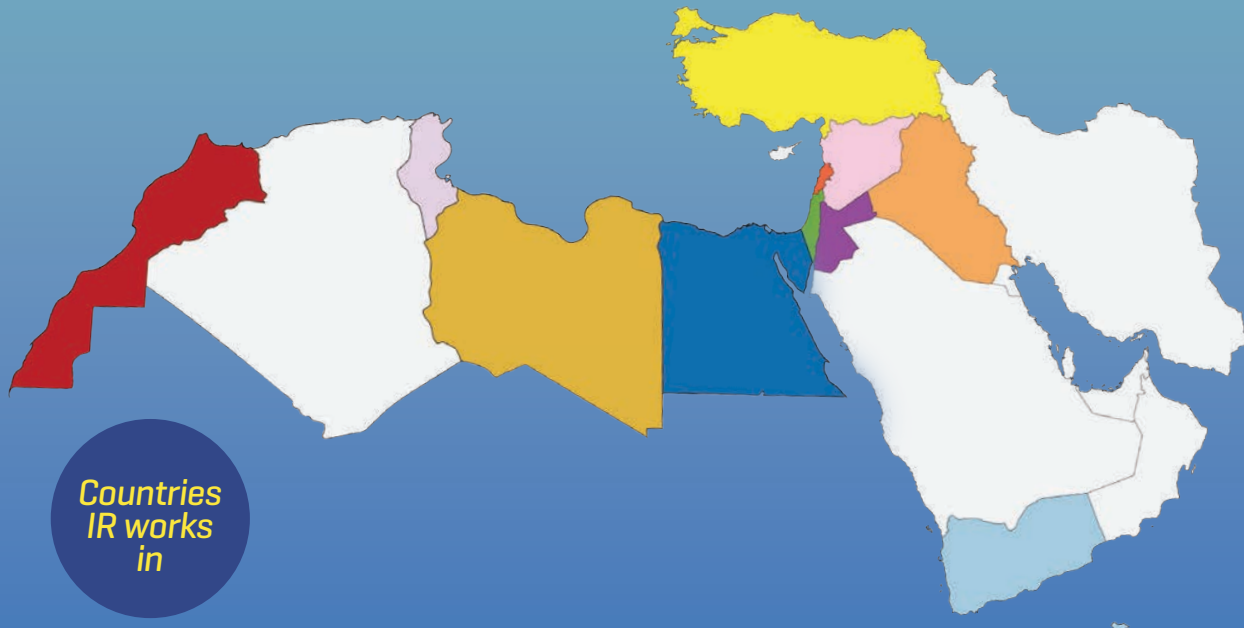


**STRIVE THROUGH  
OUR CHALLENGES**

[IRUSA.ORG/TEAM](https://irusa.org/team)



# MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA



Countries  
IR works  
in

- Egypt 🇪🇬
- Iraq 🇮🇶
- Jordan 🇯🇴
- Lebanon 🇱🇧
- Libya 🇱🇾
- Morocco 🇲🇦
- Palestine 🇵🇸
- Syria 🇸🇾
- Tunisia 🇹🇳
- Türkiye 🇹🇷
- Yemen 🇲🇪

- Countries with Islamic Relief offices
- Countries with emergency responses
- Countries with limited programming

**2,146,772**  
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF  
PEOPLE SUPPORTED

**5,605+**  
VOLUNTEER HOURS IN  
THE MIDDLE EAST

## PROJECTS BY SECTOR



**OrphanCare**  
ORPHAN SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM  
**9,771**  
NUMBER OF ORPHANS  
SPONSORED

**Zakat**  
Fulfill your Zakat  
**6 Zakat Projects**



**RAMADAN 102,752** ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED



**QURBANI 110,873** ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED



# OUR WORK ACROSS THE MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA

IRUSA has worked in the Middle East and North Africa for decades, serving the region since 1997. Not only have we been able to provide immediate and long-term aid, but we've also helped bring compassion, comfort, and hope back to families across the region.

In 2023, IRUSA donors helped to support more than 35 programs throughout the Middle East and North Africa, including economic empowerment and community inclusion initiatives for refugees and vulnerable populations in Jordan, climate innovation incubators in Morocco, mental health programs in Palestine, livelihood projects in Syria, basic needs supports for orphans in Türkiye, and livelihood support for vulnerable people in Yemen, to name a few.

Take a look at some of our work in the Middle East and North Africa and read from the people you've helped serve across the region.

## ORPHANS & CHILDREN



There are 191.2 million children in the Middle East, and 52.7 million are in dire need. To add, one in three children live in conflict zones in the Middle East, and studies show that children who live in conflict zones are at the highest risk of experiencing violence, psychological stress, hunger, loss of education, and lack basic resources [Save the Children, 2023].

That's why IRUSA is working to make a difference in the lives of orphans and children. Our sponsorship programs provide essential needs including improved health, nutrition, education, and mental and physical well-being to enhance the quality of life and socioeconomic status of the children's families.

### The Beydoun Family's Story

#### 📍 Türkiye

After her husband passed away in 2015, Sabiha left the ongoing conflict in Syria, with her four children. She brought her children to an orphanage in Türkiye to find the support she needed for her family, all while living with multiple sclerosis. In early 2023, her health began to deteriorate and her children and other women living in the orphanage began to care for her. Unfortunately, she passed away in April 2023.

Since then, a woman at the orphanage took on the role of caretaker for Sabiha's four children. Alhamdulillah, the children have been sponsored through IRUSA's Orphan Sponsorship program since April 2023. Despite all the adversity they've faced, they're doing well and have returned to school. The eldest, Shahd, graduated high school in 2023; the second, Raghad, is in the 9th grade; the third, Amer, is in the 7th grade; and the youngest, Mustafa, is in the 5th grade. The IRUSA Orphan Sponsorship program has been the lifeline the Beydoun family needed. The children, along with their caretaker and orphanage staff, are hopeful for the future.

## WATER, SANITATION, & HYGIENE (WASH)

"Seven out of the 10 most water-stressed nations are in the Middle East and North Africa. In those countries, 83% of the population is exposed to extremely high water stress," [World Resources Institute, 2023].

At IR, we're focused on improving access to WASH facilities, ensuring that communities not only have a safe and reliable source of water for today, but for the future as well.



### Nihad's Story

#### 📍 Jordan

Nihad, a widow, lives with her four children in Gaza camp in Jordan. Since her husband passed away, Nihad has served as the sole breadwinner for her family. Her day-to-day activities include taking care of her children, household chores, preparing meals, and buying necessities.

Nihad lives in a house within the camp that was recently renovated by camp authorities. "But the renovation was not sufficient, lacking features like tiling, sanitation facilities, cooking amenities, and many others. There is no water supply from the authorities. We suffer greatly in the camp due to the water issue. Everyone buys water, adding to the financial burden along with other expenses. The source of this water is unknown, and most complain about its cleanliness."

Nihad received a water heater through IR's Solar Water Heaters Project, making it possible for her to heat water to ensure safety and cleanliness.

"The Solar Water Heaters Project has made a considerable impact on my life. It has eased the cost of heating water and improved the overall living conditions."

Nihad is grateful for the support of IR donors.

“May God bless the donors and reward them abundantly. May their good deeds be added to his scales of righteousness, for they have provided us with much by saving us time, effort, and money.”



## FOOD SECURITY & LIVELIHOOD



"[The Middle East] is home to approximately 6% of the world's population; however, it accounts for 54.3 million — 12.2% — of the undernourished population," (Middle East Council on Global Affairs, 2023).

At IRUSA, we're focused on breaking the cycle of poverty by empowering individuals with the skills they need to support themselves and their families. Through our food security projects, we make change by providing financial support to small businesses, distributing livestock to support local economies, and aiding farmers who have been affected by severe climate change.

### Samia and Nadia's Story

📍 Syria



One of our newest programs in Morocco aims to provide access to entrepreneurial support for young people with climate-resilient business ideas. The program provides livelihood support by supporting these young entrepreneurs with access to land, infrastructure, and training for the purpose of honing skills and launching farm businesses.

Samia and Nadia, two young students, are co-founders of the Shrimp Green Water (SGW) start-up which offers an innovative water filter as a solution to water salinity. The product not only filters water to be used for agriculture, but also enriches the water to increase agricultural yield. In 2023, the two participated in the project's outreach event and were elected "best

innovation" by the attendees as well as one of the top three projects by the panel of experts. SGW has also been selected for a 100,000 MAD (nearly \$10K) grant. So far, the young start-up has already generated a 15,087 MAD (nearly \$1,500) turnover!

As Samia and Nadia continue in their effort to make meaningful change, the impact of their work towards climate readiness and resilience will be felt across Morocco.

## PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES



For many years, the region has been plagued with ongoing conflicts, detrimentally affecting the health status of the population, especially women and children. The region suffers from the highest rates of depression, anxiety disorders, post traumatic stress disorder [PTSD], and suicide (Middle East Medical, 2023).

That is why IR's psychosocial support programs are invaluable for families across the Middle East. Psychosocial support programs (PSS) help individuals practice self-control of their emotions, and deal with hardships and setbacks in better ways.

### Haya's Story

📍 Jordan

Haya is a mother of six children and has a husband who suffers from mental illness. On top of that, she struggles from financial difficulties. She used to clean houses, but the pay was low and it was starting to take a physical toll on her. She later had to have surgery.

All of this was starting to take a mental toll on Haya. She soon learned about IR's Psychosocial Support Services (PSS) sessions.

"My friend encouraged me to be a part of the (PSS) sessions provided by IR. The best thing about these sessions is confidentiality and the psychological support you feel through the sessions."

She also appreciated the individual sessions.

"The specialist is such a great person and I was eagerly waiting for every single session. Also, I wish sessions were being held more than twice a week."

Haya believes the sessions played a major role in improving her relationship with her husband and children.

## EMERGENCIES



According to the World Bank, the countries in the Middle East are becoming increasingly vulnerable to natural hazards – namely floods, earthquakes, and droughts. The region is also no stranger to escalation of hostilities, which has caused manmade disasters over the years. In 2023 alone, the region faced several major disasters:

### 📍 Türkiye & Syria

For example, early morning on February 6, 2023, two powerful earthquakes caused over 50,000 deaths and catastrophic damage in Türkiye and Syria. IR teams moved quickly to provide aid, distributing food, blankets, and cash assistance to purchase immediate necessities.



“ I have become a social person. Also, before I was nervous and irritable with my children.

However, I have become more patient with them. I learned how to count to 10 before taking any action.”

### 📍 Morocco



On September 8, 2023, a 6.8-magnitude earthquake struck near Marrakech, killing over 3,000 and injuring more than 5,700. IR teams immediately mobilized to provide emergency aid to survivors, including food, emergency shelter, 3,422 blankets, 2,622 mattresses, 2,422 hygiene kits, and 200 pillows.





Libya



On September 11, 2023, heavy rainfall brought by Storm Daniel caused two dams to burst in Derna, Libya, releasing huge volumes of water that raced down the valley and engulfed the area, destroying roads and bridges, killing over 4,000 people. IR staff, along with local humanitarian responses, moved as quickly as possible to provide urgent aid to survivors. They were able to provide 39,000 hot meals, 4,100 blankets, 4,100 mattresses, 1,100 pillows, 1,100 pairs of shoes, 1,100 hygiene kits [including toothpaste, toothbrush, shampoo, comb, bath soap, towels, and sanitary pads], 440 baby items [diapers and baby clothing], 220 kitchen utensils, 220 portable stoves, 600 food kits, and 6,900 liters of drinking water.

Palestine

Since the October 2023 escalation in violence in Gaza, more than 15,000 civilian deaths have been reported, 5,300 of whom are children. More than 29,000 civilians are injured.

In Gaza, we worked with local partners already inside Gaza to provide emergency pharmaceuticals and medical supplies to hospitals. We also provided access to urgent health services to injured and/or sick internally displaced person in shelters, distributed more than 2,500 hygiene kits to people in shelters, and delivered produce and food aid to families.



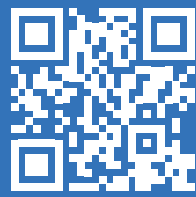
ADVOCACY

Through our advocacy work, we lobby federal legislators and government officials, who hold power over our most precious resources: food assistance, foreign aid, and humanitarian policy that directly affects the people we serve. This happens by mobilizing people like you – our IRUSAAdvocates – to amplify the voices of those most vulnerable in our communities and across the world. For Palestine specifically, IRUSAAdvocates have been pushing for humanitarian support to families in need. In July 2023, IRUSAAdvocates lobbied to convince two members of Congress to release \$75 million earmarked for food assistance to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and prevent a potential humanitarian crisis. Starting in October 2023, IRUSAAdvocates called for an immediate ceasefire and to allow urgent humanitarian aid in Gaza.

THANK YOU!

*Your donation goes a long way.*

With your support, IRUSA is able to help change the lives of our brothers and sisters across Middle East. To learn more about your impact, visit [irusa.org/middle-east](https://irusa.org/middle-east).



scan here

# WHAT WE DO

Read more

about our sectors

and see your impact.



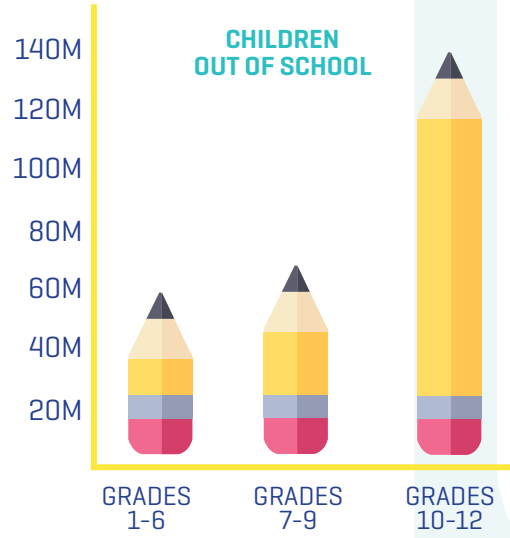


# EDUCATION

**258 MILLION**  
CHILDREN & YOUTH AGED 6-18  
*are out of school worldwide*



According to the United Nations, about 258 million children and youth between the ages of 6-18 are out of school worldwide. The total includes 59 million children in grades 1-6, 62 million in grades 7-9, and 138 million in grades 10-12.



Education has the power to transform lives. IR education programs prioritize access to education for vulnerable communities so that they can break the cycle of poverty and build sustainable livelihoods for generations to come. In Malawi, for example, IR donors supported a project to provide school-aged girls with hygiene kits containing a bucket, washing soap, body lotion, underwear, and reusable sanitary pads so they can attend classes during their period without worry. In Nepal, donations to IR's education funds help build school clubs to expand after-school education and learning. And, in the US, donors support the delivery of school supplies and hygiene kits for low-income children to help them have what they need to start the school year right. These are just some examples of the impact of donor support for education programs.

**4,011,336**  
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF  
PEOPLE SUPPORTED

**43**  
NUMBER OF  
EDUCATION PROJECTS



COUNTRIES WE WORK IN		
Afghanistan	Kenya	Sri Lanka
Bangladesh	Malawi	Sudan
Iraq	Nepal	Tunisia
Jordan	Palestine	United States



## MANISHA'S STORY

**Nepal**

Manisha lives with her grandparents, parents, and four siblings. Her parents are farmers who run a small furniture business. While taking care of a big family with their limited income, her parents have always prioritized their children's education.

"I was shy and scared to speak up in front of people. My world revolved around my schoolbooks, class, and homework."

Lack of resources often restricts schools, which impedes the all-around development of children. To provide more opportunities to children like Manisha, IR donors supported an effort to bring a children's club to three schools in her municipality.

The clubs have brought about a positive change in the children. "My confidence was boosted as I did more public speaking." Participating in various meetings and programs enhanced Manisha's understanding of child rights, child protection, disaster risk reduction, and personal and menstrual hygiene.

**“ These teachings are crucial for bringing social change. I not only practiced the learnings in my daily life, but also encouraged my family members, friends, and people around me.”**

Through small changes like these, we can help bring hope to the hearts and minds of children and their families.



# FOOD SECURITY

More than enough food is produced around the world to feed the global population. However, as many as 829 million people go to bed hungry each night – nearly 10% of the global population.



In Islam, it is incumbent upon us to feed those in need. “He is not a believer who eats his fill whilst his neighbor beside him goes hungry,” [Bukhari]. That is why food aid is the largest sector of IR’s humanitarian aid. For instance, in 2023, IR supported malnourished children in Somalia by providing food boxes with nutritious food. In Yemen, IR provided community awareness on the importance of nutritious food and breastfeeding. In Kosovo, IR created a local trade market for producers-farmers to sell their crops. These are just some examples of the impact of donor support for food security.

## 4,442,007

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED



## 143

NUMBER OF FOOD SECURITY PROJECTS

### COUNTRIES WE WORK IN

Afghanistan	Nepal	Sudan
Ethiopia	Niger	Syria
Indonesia	Pakistan	Türkiye
Kenya	Philippines	United States
Libya	Somalia	Yemen
Mali	South Africa	
Malawi	Sri Lanka	



### KAWSAR’S STORY

**Somalia**

The threat of famine looms over countries across East Africa, including Somalia, as conflict and climate-induced drought have left nearly 20.5 million people without food.

Before the drought destroyed their livestock, Kawser and her family were pastoralists. Now, she’s forced to live in an internally displaced persons (IDP) camp with her five children, where her only source of income is the small profit she makes from her shop.

Thanks to donors like you, IR is able to help Kawser provide for her family.



“ My family can [afford] basic food items after receiving monthly financial assistance [from IR], and my small business [is in better shape]. The shop provides [for] most of our daily needs, and we rely on it as our primary source of income. We are truly grateful for the aid provided by IR.

*May Allah [SWT] bless and reward you for your donations.”*



# HEALTH

Nearly 3.5 billion people, almost half the world’s population, lack access to the health services they need. Around 70% of health outcomes are due to social determinants of health, such as access to food, education, proper housing, and livelihood.



ALMOST HALF THE WORLD’S POPULATION LACK ACCESS TO THE HEALTH SERVICES THEY NEED

IR is dedicated to helping vulnerable communities build better, healthier lives for themselves and for generations to come. For example, in 2023, IR opened a mobile clinic for Syrian refugees and host communities in Jordan. In Niger, IR reduced malnutrition by distributing seeds, providing access to water, and training farmers on best practices. In Palestine, IR provided access to psychosocial support. These are just some examples of the impact of donor support for health.



4,792,325  
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED



### COUNTRIES WE WORK IN

Albania	Kosovo	Sri Lanka
Central African Republic	Niger	Sudan
Ethiopia	Palestine	Syria
Jordan	Sierra Leone	United States
Kenya	Somalia	Yemen

53  
NUMBER OF HEALTH PROJECTS

### LINA’S STORY

Jordan

Lina is part of a family of nine that lives in a small house consisting of two rooms, a kitchen, and a bathroom. In addition to her husband’s disability, she must look after her son who has autism, a daughter who is divorced, and a grandchild.

Somberly, Lina admitted that she contemplated taking her life because of severe depression. However, IR’s psychosocial support services program proved life-saving. One of the things she learned about was dividing tasks among her children. But, the biggest benefit was an improved state of mind.

“ I trained myself to release myself from any bad feelings. In [the] sessions, I got better and I solved my problems. I became patient and confident, and I left a positive impact on my family. I was nervous because my husband is disabled and can’t work.”

“I am thankful to [IR donors]. May Allah accept [their] good deeds.”





# LIVELIHOOD

According to the World Bank, more than 8% of the world, about 640 million people, lives in extreme poverty, meaning they live off less than \$2.15 a day. Poverty is a cycle, but it is breakable. Growth is a cycle too, and by creating sustainable livelihoods in impoverished communities, people can prosper for many years to come.



MORE THAN 8%  
OF THE POPULATION  
LIVES OFF \$2.15 A DAY

IRUSA donors help people acquire the skills they need to develop a reliable means of earning an income. For instance, in 2023, IR donors improved the agriculture tools and equipment for better productivity for families in Malawi. In Pakistan, IR provided financial support to help families start and grow business. In Albania, IR distributed livestock to families to help businesses flourish. These are just some examples of the impact of donor support for livelihood.

6,859,914

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF  
PEOPLE SUPPORTED

145

NUMBER OF  
LIVELIHOOD PROJECTS



## COUNTRIES WE WORK IN

Afghanistan	Kenya	Pakistan
Albania	Kosovo	Palestine
Bangladesh	Malawi	Philippines
Bosnia	Mali	Somalia
Burkina Faso	Mexico	Sri Lanka
Chechnya	Morocco	Sudan
Ethiopia	Nepal	Türkiye
Indonesia	Niger	United States
Iraq	North Macedonia	Yemen
Jordan		



## JAWAHAR'S STORY



Jawahar cares for his widowed mother along with his wife and four children. He decided to take a leap of faith and borrow money to open up a salon in his village. His monthly income was just short of Rs 300 [\$2.27], which was not nearly enough to support his family and pay back his debt. That, coupled with being robbed several times in his village, made life difficult for Jawahar and his family.

Jawahar was able to gain the knowledge and skills to expand his salon through IR's vocational training program. He was also provided with salon items that are normally hard to access. He now makes about Rs 1000 [\$7.57] monthly, which is enough to repay his debts, provide for his family, and support his children's education.

“Before the project intervention, I used to [only] cut hair and [trim] beards; I was unable to provide more [services] to my customers,” Jawahar shared. Through his participation in IR's program, Jawahar received eight days of training to learn new skills and techniques. Now, Jawahar is able to offer clients an expanded list of services, including hair coloring and bridal makeup, leading to growth for his business and his overall income.

Thanks to donors like you, Jawahar's life has completely changed for the better: “I cannot express how much change I have experienced in my life.”



# ORPHANS & CHILDREN

There are roughly 153 million orphans worldwide. And every day, nearly 6,000 more children become orphans. To add, one in five children lives in a conflict or war zone, and studies show that these children are at high risk of experiencing violence, psychological stress, hunger, loss of education, and/or lack of access to basic resources. Over 12 million refugee boys and girls have not only lost their homes, but are no longer able to make a future for themselves.

153 MILLION  
ORPHANS  
WORLDWIDE

6,000  
CHILDREN BECOME  
ORPHANS EVERY DAY



IRUSA is working to improve the lives of orphaned children through various programs. Some programs that IRUSA introduced in 2023 include: improved orphan sponsorship programming, a new orphan family sponsorship initiative, a new orphan higher education program, and medical support for orphaned families.



## COUNTRIES WE WORK IN

Afghanistan	Iraq	Pakistan
Albania	Jordan	Somalia
Bangladesh	Kenya	South Africa
Bosnia	Kosovo	Sri Lanka
Chechnya	Lebanon	Sudan
Ethiopia	Malawi	Türkiye
India	Mali	Yemen
Indonesia	Niger	

27,653  
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF  
PEOPLE SUPPORTED



## ZAHRA'S STORY

 **Afghanistan**

Zahra is a mother of two girls and her story is one of strength and resilience in the face of crisis, like that of many Afghan women. When she lost her husband, Zahra became the sole breadwinner and had to figure out how to support her little family.

Alhamdulillah, Zahra was one of 450 women selected to receive assistance from IR. Each woman received a solar-powered sewing machine as well as the business training and skills needed to become a self-sufficient businesswoman. Zahra's daughters were also selected to receive aid through the Orphan Family Support program to help Zahra meet her daughters' basic needs.

With her sewing machine and newly acquired business skills, Zahra established her own tailoring business – a stall in the city center – and began creating various materials, including rugs,

cushions, women's fashionable clothing, embroidered clothing, and other household textiles.

Through hard work and motivation, Zahra is now able to turn cloth into a source of income, a skill that is respectable in her community. She also serves as the chairwoman for a tailoring group of 17 women, and is a source of inspiration for fellow Afghan women struggling financially and reliant on humanitarian aid.

Zahra envisions growing her business by expanding to other cities and exporting her products to nearby countries like Pakistan. She thinks about hiring more Afghan women for her business and keeps them in her future dreams. She knows that the aid provided to her through Islamic Relief for her and her girls has given her family hope for their future.



# QURBANI

The Dhu al-Hijjah season is a sacred time of the year for Muslims, during which the tradition of sharing meat for Eid al-Adha is exercised. For IR, the Qurbani/Udhiyah program is our biggest food aid program of the year, and delivers nutrient-dense halal meat to families suffering from hunger.



One Qurbani donation is 50–70 pounds of bone-in-meat that is divided into five pound bags. A family of five receive a five pound package of meat. Families with more members receive 10 pound packages of meat. In 2023, IR provided Qurbanis to **371,849** people in 27 countries.



## COUNTRIES WE WORK IN

Afghanistan	Kosovo	Philippines
Albania	Lebanon	Somalia
Bangladesh	Malawi	South Africa
Bosnia	Mali	South Sudan
Chechnya	Nepal	Sri Lanka
Ethiopia	Niger	Türkiye
Indonesia	North Macedonia	United States
Iraq	Pakistan	Yemen
Jordan	Palestine	
Kenya		

**371,849**  
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF  
PEOPLE SUPPORTED

## FATIMA’S STORY

### Afghanistan

Fatima lost her husband six years ago, leaving her to fend for her two children alone. “After my husband’s death, our living situation became so hard. I do not have any money to provide basic things such as food, clothes, and education to my children.”

Rising food prices has meant that many essential food items are scarce and out of reach, and families like Fatima’s often don’t have enough food.

Fatima works in other people’s homes — cleaning and washing clothes — to try to make ends meet. Her meager income forces her to rely on relatives to provide food for her family, and she is unable to afford meat.

“How can a family who can hardly afford a piece of bread afford meat in their diet?” asked Fatima, who knows that her children are missing out on a healthy diet, which impacts their development. “I can clearly see the differences and how energetic my kids are when they have meat.”

IR’s Qurbani program provided much needed relief to Fatima and her children, and she was filled with pride and happiness to see her children smile. “Families like us only have the chance to have meat in our diet once a year, and that is Eid al-Adha.”



# RAMADAN

Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, is considered the holiest month of the year for the 1.9 billion Muslims around the world. During this month, Muslims observe fasting from dawn until sunset, abstaining from food, drink, and sin. Fasting allows Muslims to focus on their spiritual needs, rather than their physical needs, and encourages them to reflect on their actions, intentions, and priorities.



At IR, we prioritize making food accessible to families in need all throughout the year, including Ramadan. Ramadan food boxes can extend the food supplies for a family of seven for the entire 30 days of Ramadan, and include staple items that are sensitive to the local diet like oil, sugar, lentils, rice, canned fish, dates, tea, and more.



### COUNTRIES WE WORK IN

Afghanistan	Kenya	Philippines
Albania	Kosovo	Somalia
Bangladesh	Lebanon	South Africa
Bosnia	Malawi	South Sudan
Chechnya	Mali	Spain
Ethiopia	Nepal	Sri Lanka
India	Niger	Sudan
Indonesia	North Macedonia	Türkiye
Iraq	Pakistan	United States
Italy	Palestine	Yemen
Jordan		

447, 258  
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF  
PEOPLE SUPPORTED

### SULTANA’S STORY



Sultana helps support her husband and three children by harvesting potatoes during potato season, and tailoring clothing during the off season. She earns roughly \$2.25 a day harvesting potatoes, and \$1.80 a week from tailoring.

“My work is seasonal. I do not have any steady income. I feel bad when I cannot share family expenses. My husband does not earn much and it is difficult for him to [provide for] the whole family with his little income.”

Since they do not have a stable income, they often go hungry. “We eat one or maximum two meals a day instead of three meals. My daughters suffer from malnutrition due to lack of food and become physically weak.”

Thanks to donors like you, during the month of Ramadan, Sultana receives enough food to last the family the entire month.

“This Ramadan food pack is a great help to me. We are a family of five members. We hardly manage three meals. Now, IR has ensured our meals in Ramadan.”

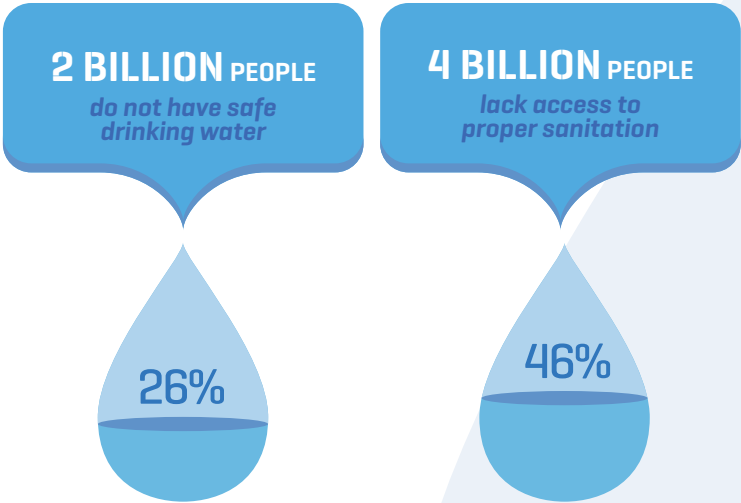
“I would like to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to IR from the bottom of my heart.”





# WATER

According to the United Nations, 2 billion people (26% of the population) do not have safe drinking water, and nearly 4 billion (46%) lack access to safely managed sanitation. Between 2 and 3 billion people worldwide experience water shortages. To add, nearly 1 million people die each year from water, sanitation, and hygiene related diseases. Children are the most susceptible, which, in turn, affects their ability to go to school.



At IR, we believe the right to water is for everyone, and means that everyone should have access to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically-accessible, and affordable water. We continue to provide vulnerable communities access to safe drinking water and improved water and sanitation infrastructure. Some of our projects from 2023 include our drought response intervention project in Somalia, where IR built wells to help with water scarcity. In Nepal, IR built 40 hand pumps to help with water accessibility. In Gaza, IR provided safe sanitation infrastructures. These are just some examples of the impact of donor support for water programs.

6,564,826

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED



## COUNTRIES WE WORK IN

Bangladesh	Nepal	Sri Lanka
Bosnia	Niger	Sudan
Ethiopia	Pakistan	Tunisia
Kenya	Palestine	United States
Malawi	Somalia	Yemen
Mexico	South Africa	

35

NUMBER OF WATER PROJECTS



## BANDAR'S STORY



Bandar is a grain and honey farmer who supports his wife and five children, along with his nieces and nephews who live nearby. Rainfall has been scarce so there has been little-to-no harvest to sell to support his family.

"We had the worst year of our lives last year," said Bandar. Unable to pay their tuition fees, all of Bandar's children were forced to drop out of school to help gather water. They'd leave at dawn and wouldn't return until noon.

"The poor rains last year affected us most, since there were only two wells for water for a population of approximately 5,000. Additionally, these wells were so unprotected and polluted that most animals, including dogs and donkeys, used to drink from them."

In response to severe drought in the region, IR launched an emergency program to provide adequate water and sanitation

access for families in Dhamar, Sada'a, Hudaydah, and Amran governorates in Yemen. A water pump was installed in the village where Bandar lived.

"Alhamdulillah, our lives have changed for the better. There has been a real reduction in our suffering through this project, as well as a real renewal of hope. [The water we need is now available to us]."

**"In the past, we had to walk almost 4,000 meters [2.5 miles] to bring undrinkable water, but now we only have to walk from 40 to 20 meters [130 to 65 feet] to reach a nearby source for drinking water. Now we do not have to suffer anymore."**

Now that water scarcity is not an issue, Bandar hopes to re-enroll his children in school so they can finish their education.



# WINTER AID

In the winter, over 600 million people struggle to heat their homes, feed their families, and make ends meet on just \$1.90 a day. Those who have been displaced due to conflict and political tension survive winter in tents and other makeshift shelters. In many parts of the world, climate change is leading to harsher winters, which is increasing the cost of production of key livelihood streams, driving up household consumption expenses, and compelling households to borrow indiscriminately.

IRUSA’s Winter Aid Fund has the power to make a difference during winter by heating homes, providing warm clothing, and delivering nourishing foods. In 2023, IRUSA provided food packages, blankets, mats, mattresses, winter clothing, wooden stoves, direct procurement of home improvements (central heating, doors, windows, firewood, etc.), vouchers to be exchanged either at stores for essentials, and cash assistance.



200,405  
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF  
PEOPLE SUPPORTED

COUNTRIES WE WORK IN	
Afghanistan	Lebanon
Albania	North Macedonia
Bangladesh	Nepal
(including Myanmar refugees)	Pakistan
Bosnia	Palestine
Chechnya	Spain
Iraq	Türkiye
Italy	(Including Syrian and Uyghur refugees)
Jordan	Yemen
Kosovo	

## MUJË’S STORY

 Kosovo

Mujë lives with his wife and three children in an old house that is in terrible condition. Their financial situation is tough: they live off only \$115 a month, which is not enough to cover Mujë’s medications for his various health problems. Unfortunately, their home was further damaged from the recent floods in Kosovo, which exasperated their situation.

“ We live in really hard conditions, and after the floods, it was extremely hard for us to escape those hard and cold days of winter.”

IRUSA provided his family with food packs, hygiene kits, blankets, and clothes to survive the winter. “We are really satisfied with the food packs and hygiene kits...the blankets help us a lot during the [winter] nights. We are more than thankful for this immediate response from IRUSA.”



# WOMEN

When living conditions worsen for vulnerable communities, they worsen at even higher rates for women. In destitute circumstances, many women are left widowed, making them the sole providers for themselves and their families. Providing women access to opportunities and resources is integral to the mission of IR.



IR is dedicated to serving women across the various sectors we work in including food aid; water and sanitation, health, and education; socio-economic empowerment; and sustainable livelihood opportunities. For instance, in 2023, IR donors helped women in Kenya achieve financial independence by providing cash grants, tools, equipment, and business training to help expand their businesses. In Bangladesh, IR donors centered opportunities for women with regard to economic and leadership development. In Kosovo, IR donors supported vocational training that helped women learn how to tailor, subsequently leading to work and entrepreneurial opportunities that would lead to financial independence. These are just some examples of the impact of donor support for women.

4,000,423  
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF  
PEOPLE SUPPORTED



22  
NUMBER OF  
WOMEN PROJECTS

COUNTRIES WE WORK IN		
Afghanistan	Kosovo	Philippines
Albania	Malawi	Sri Lanka
Bangladesh	Niger	Türkiye
Ethiopia	Pakistan	United States
Kenya	Palestine	



## AMAL'S STORY

 Jordan

Amal is a Syrian refugee living in Jordan with her mother, husband, and daughters. Due to her husband's health, Amal plays a central role in supporting her family.

Amal was accepted into IR's livelihood training program, where she learned cooking and catering skills to help her start her own catering business.

Now, Amal has a viable business and attributes it to the training she received.

“Through crafting and selling these products and marketing them, it will have a positive impact on my life. Moreover, I've learned to create items that are specific to the Jordanian community's preferences, including sweets,” Amal shared.

“Additionally, it has introduced me to the art of packaging and food preservation, where I lacked previous experience.”

Thanks to donors like you, Amal's days are often filled with attending to the orders she receives from customers. She works on crafting delicacies like kibbeh and stuffed vine leaves, ensuring she fulfills each customer's specific requests.



# ZAKAT

“ Establish prayer and give Zakat, and whatever good you put forward for yourselves—you will find it with Allah. Surely Allah sees what you do.”

—The Holy Qur’an, 2:110

Zakat, or almsgiving, is one of the five pillars of Islam, along with prayer, fasting, pilgrimage [Hajj], and belief in Allah [SWT] and His messenger Prophet Muhammad [SAW]. For every sane, adult Muslim who owns wealth over a certain amount – known as the nisab – he or she must pay 2.5% of that wealth as Zakat.

When you give your Zakat through IR, it’s powerful, impactful, and its potential grows by multiples. In 2023, your Zakat provided relief including emergency food, shelter for refugees, job training, and medication, to name a few, all in accordance with Islamic principles. These are just some examples of the impact of your Zakat.



## 5,786,663

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED



## 17

NUMBER OF ZAKAT PROJECTS

### COUNTRIES WE WORK IN

Afghanistan	Indonesia	Palestine
Albania	Kenya	Philippines
Bangladesh	Nepal	Somalia
Ethiopia	Pakistan	Sudan

### JAMILA’S STORY

 Sudan

Jamila is one of the victims of the conflict between the tribes of Hamaj and Hausa in the Blue Nile. She lost her husband during the conflict, and is now a widowed mother to five young children. She had no source of income, and lived in a camp with unlivable conditions.

IR helped Jamila transfer to a more livable camp, and there she receives food aid thanks to IRUSA donors like you.

“ I am very happy and grateful to them for all the things they are doing for us, I thank you, and may Allah [SWT] bless you.”





# EMERGENCIES

Climate change is directly contributing to humanitarian emergencies from heatwaves, wildfires, floods, tropical storms, and hurricanes, and they are increasing in scale, frequency, and intensity. Conflict is also rampant across the globe, causing humanitarian emergencies in already vulnerable communities.

Some of our 2023 emergency responses include our flash flood emergency response in Kosovo, drought relief response in Somalia, our emergency relief response in Türkiye, and our emergency response in Palestine, to name a few.

5,022,454

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED

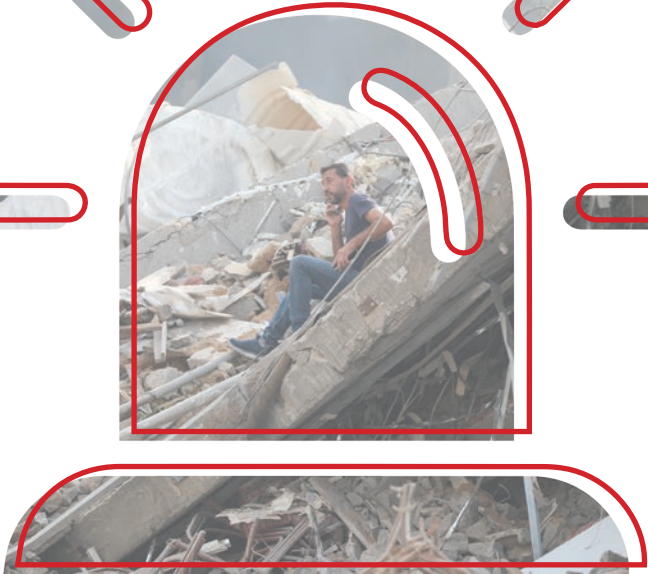
32

NUMBER OF EMERGENCY PROJECTS



## COUNTRIES WE WORK IN

Afghanistan	Greece	Palestine
Bangladesh	Jordan	Philippines
Bosnia	Kenya	Somalia
Central African Republic	Kosovo	Sudan
Chad	Libya	Syria
Ecuador	Madagascar	Türkiye
Egypt	Mexico	United States
Ethiopia	Morocco	
	Nepal	



## QAMILE'S STORY



After losing her home in the fatal flood that killed at least three people and destroyed thousands of homes in June 2023, Qamile was forced to move into a shelter with her husband and three children. The shelter provided them with another house that was in an uninhabitable condition.

Thanks to donors like you, IR was able to provide monetary assistance to Qamile so she could rebuild her home. When IR staff came to help her family, they were in disbelief.

“ I was really surprised when we heard the noise of the car in the yard. We thought, ‘who has come to visit us?’ It has been a long time since someone has opened the door. We live in really hard conditions, and after the floods it was extremely hard for us to escape in those hard and cold days of winter.

“Many thanks to you, first for opening my door, and helping me in those hard days. I’m really thankful and really satisfied with all the items I’m provided with.”





# STAFF ON THE GROUND

**United States**  
**Emergency Aid for Hurricane Victims**  
in North Carolina  
March 2023

**Mexico**  
**Emergency Aid for Asylum Seekers**  
in Rio refugee camp  
October 2023



**Morocco**  
**6.8 Magnitude Earthquake**  
September 2023

**Türkiye/Syria**  
**7.8 Magnitude Earthquake**  
February 2023

**Afghanistan**  
**6.3 Magnitude Earthquake**  
October 2023

**Libya**  
**Devastating Floods**  
September 2023

**Palestine**  
**Escalation in Violence**  
October 2023

**Nepal**  
**6.4 Magnitude Earthquake**  
November 2023

**Sudan**  
**Escalation in Violence**  
September 2023

While in **Morocco**, IR staff Belkacem Nahi said:

"This village was completely destroyed. Almost no survivors: the few [survivors] are five or six [young children.] You can smell the human bodies under the rubble. We are distributing blankets, and then some baskets of food. Just at least to cover a few days. This camp was established here because our brothers and sisters lost everything. They lost their houses, their animals, everything. They don't have anything left. They are waiting for Allah (SWT) to take care of them through your donations and through your support."



**Morocco**  
**Earthquake**  
**Emergency,**  
September 2023

When emergency strikes, Islamic Relief staff answer the call of survivors, and work quickly to deliver urgent aid. Unfortunately, 2023 was a year filled with emergencies, from natural disasters to man-made ones.

IRUSA's emergency aid efforts can include distribution of items such as food, water, financial aid, and more. Construction of temporary shelters and provision of vital medical aid are often priorities, too. And when applicable, we work with partners on the ground to assess what we can do to help with longer-term recovery, rebuilding, and revitalization efforts.

Read stories from IR staff who were in Afghanistan, Libya, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Palestine, Türkiye, and the US, helping emergency survivors.

While in **Türkiye**, IR staff Ahmed Shehata said:

"In my 20 years at IRUSA, the most difficult situation of my life was visiting Türkiye after the 7.8 magnitude earthquake devastated the region. If I were asked to illustrate the Day of Judgement, I cannot imagine something more horrific than what I experienced there.

"While listening to what our team was sharing, all I could think about was the phrase "hayat al mawt" (life of death). The survivors, especially the kids, all experienced death while living. There were people underneath buildings for days. There was one man who I spoke to that spent 36 hours underground and woke up thinking only one hour of time had passed — he was shocked to even learn that the earthquake took place at 4 am.

"Walking in Türkiye, the smell of death was still fresh. I was on the ground while aftershocks were still taking place. I have been to many countries around the world to help after catastrophes and wars, but this was my first time in the thick of it.

**The way the country looked, really was like the Day of Judgement."**

**Türkiye/Syria Earthquake Emergency, March 2023**



On the floods in **Libya**, IR staff Salaheddin Aboulgasem said:

"The flooding happened around 2:30-3:00 in the morning during the middle of the night. People heard a big bang as the dams broke. People opened their doors and water swept into their homes. One man was holding onto the top of a tall street lamp to avoid being carried away as the water rose so high. People were stranded and screaming for hours on top of buildings and lots of buildings were collapsing all around them.

"Thousands of people don't have anywhere to sleep and don't have food. In conditions like this, diseases can quickly spread as water systems are contaminated.

"An entire city is in grief and the psychological impact of people losing their families and homes in a split second is huge. Our partners in Derna met one young girl who saw her mother swept away before her eyes. The girl has barely spoken since and only speaks to ask where her mother is.

**"The city smells like death. Almost everyone has lost someone they know."**

**Libya Floods**  
**Emergency,**  
September 2023





While in **Gaza**, IR staff\* said:

"We are exhausted as the weight of each day grows still heavier on our shoulders. **Life is becoming unbearable.** The pain and suffering are increasing by the moment and people are desperate. I, too, am desperate, and starting to lose hope that there will be an end to this violence. Everyone in Gaza is just awaiting death.

"We have done nothing to deserve such brutality. We are just civilians - ordinary families - who want to live in peace. We do not care about politics, nor are we part of it.

"I know my people have lived under occupation for years and that they deserve to live freely, but right now everyone just wants this violence to stop. Right now, we have no aspirations or hope beyond survival.

"Here in Gaza, we are very vulnerable. All supply lines for basic needs come from outside. We do not control access to water, electricity, fuel, or communications.

"Having all these lines closed - or, at best, severely limited, with a small number of trucks now bringing in some food, water, and medicines - feels like a relentless suffocation and, for all too many, will become an express route to death.

"Yes, I am writing that frankly to you, my dear readers, because **we can't bear any more of this.**

"I know I need to be stronger and more resilient, but we are all tired here. We are all praying that the killing will stop. There must be brave people somewhere who are willing to talk and reach an agreement, but it feels like there is no one in the world who cares about civilian lives."



**Gaza Emergency, October 2023**

*\*name has been omitted for the safety of the staff member*

While in **Afghanistan**, IR staff Umair Hasan said:

"Our teams see survivors coming to them in such a state of shock they can barely speak. They have been traumatized by a week, which has seen four earthquakes flatten entire communities and wipe out generations of families. People were really suffering after the first earthquake, but more earthquakes and then a devastating sandstorm has taken a huge toll on their mental health. People don't feel safe and they are too afraid to go indoors. **They've seen loved ones and neighbors die under the rubble.** People will need long-term support to recover from this unprecedented disaster.

"The people of Afghanistan have already been through so much suffering. This earthquake is now a double calamity for many families who urgently need our support. We are appealing for as much financial assistance to help those affected by this disaster. Many people would have lost loved ones, and many will be injured. Their needs will be huge in the days to come."



**Emergency Aid for Asylum Seekers in Rio refugee camp in Mexico, October 2023**

While in **Mexico**, IR staff May Hassoon said:

"After two days of visiting the Rio refugee camp at the Mexican border, I am profoundly moved by the strength and resilience of the individuals and families. **It's a reminder that we are all neighbors on this [shared] planet, bound by our common humanity.** Our responsibility as human beings, as Muslims, is clear. It is to extend a helping hand, to offer compassion, and to provide support where it's needed most.

**"Let us carry this responsibility in our hearts and remember that our faith calls us to be compassionate and to show empathy towards those who are suffering."**



While in **Sudan**, IR staff Maha Bilal said:

"I am deeply saddened for my country, which is being torn apart by conflict. I never imagined that this violence could go on for six months, nor did I imagine all this destruction.

"I feel terribly sad about the destruction of our country office in Khartoum, which is currently inaccessible due to fierce fighting yet leaving many trapped. I built strong relationships with my colleagues through the years and made many beautiful memories there. I had an emotional attachment to that place, it was never just where I went to make a living.

"Although I hear frightening sounds of artillery almost every day, I continue my humanitarian work to fulfill my responsibility towards the people who need us. I hope and pray that this war ends soon."



**Afghanistan Earthquakes Emergency, October 2023**

**Sudan Conflict Emergency, September 2023**





IR staff Laxmi Joshi reflecting on his visit to **Nepal** said:

"I recently visited the earthquake-affected village in Tajarkot and Rukum West which was destroyed completely. The place, where they stayed until the earthquake on November 3, does not exist anymore. Many of the people escaped from their houses literally with nothing, just with the clothes they were sleeping in. They need long-term assistance to recover from this disaster. People expressed relief to have emergency food to eat and winterization to protect from cold. We [were] distributing blankets and food."

**Nepal Earthquake Emergency,**  
November 2023



IR staff Abdullah Shawky reflecting on his visit to **North Carolina** said:

"During our deployment to NC in March, we were working to repair the home of an elderly woman whose home had been damaged by one of the hurricanes. Due to her fixed income and age, she was unable to make the correct repairs to her roof, and the roof would leak every time it rained, and dangerous mold was starting to grow. When the Blueshirts (IRUSA volunteers) arrived and started work on her home, she was surprised that a group of Muslim college students came all the way from NY to come help her in rural NC. It was her first time ever meeting Muslims, and she told us: 'I've never met a Muslim before! Thank you so much for coming to help me!'"

**Hurricane Recovery**  
**Emergency,**  
March 2023



”

**THANK YOU!**

Your donation goes a long way.

With your support, IR is able to help change the lives of our brothers and sisters across the world. To learn more about our emergency response, visit [irusa.org/emergency-response](https://irusa.org/emergency-response)



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# GET INVOLVED

Look through some of our programming and see how you can get involved.





# JOIN OUR CHALLENGES

IRUSA Adventure Challenges and Inspire trips offer life-changing experiences that not only let participants explore new places and meet new people, but also raise awareness and support for important humanitarian work and programs.

Read what recent challengers had to say about their

## Bosnia Adventure Challenge

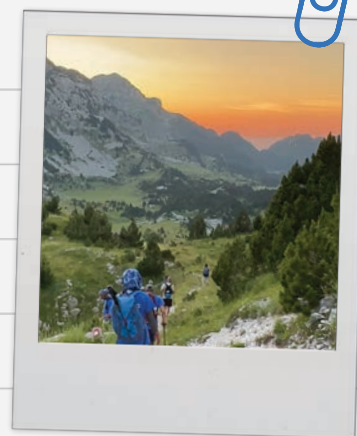
When I saw that IRUSA was hosting an Adventure Challenge in Bosnia, I knew I had to go. When I first arrived there, I was captivated by its natural beauty. The challenge took me through the charming streets of Sarajevo, where history seemed to echo from every corner. When I ventured into the countryside, the lush green hills and lakes left me in awe.

On our first day, we went to Sarajevo. We toured the city with our group and we got to know each other over the famous Bosnian dish, Cevapi, a grilled minced meat sausage. The next day, we toured the city and learned all the history of the area before rafting on the Neretva river. Although it was super cold, we had a lot of fun.

The next two days, we hiked and camped at Mount Prenj. There's nothing like walking in nature and sleeping under the bright stars. Afterwards, we did a full day of canoeing on the Rakitnica River. The water was cold, clean, and crisp - the guide told us it was perfectly safe to drink, so we did.

“While the whole experience was fun, the most memorable part was the warmth and resilience of the Bosnian people, who welcomed us with open arms and shared their stories over cups of strong coffee. Bosnia left an indelible mark on my heart, reminding me of the power of both nature and human spirit.”

- Omar



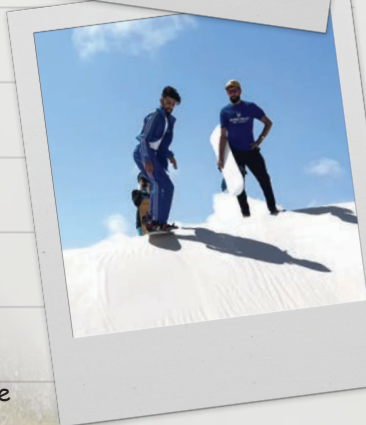
## South Africa Adventure Challenge

My first challenge was before I even set off to South Africa. I had to fundraise for a cause, and the project chosen was to fundraise for water in South Africa. After meeting my fundraising goal, I joined the Adventure Challenge trip, and instantly saw the reason for this fundraising. Plastered everywhere were signs advising tourists to be mindful of their water usage since South Africa is going through a water crisis. It really hit me hard, seeing the reality of South Africans, and knowing how privileged I am to have unlimited water in my home in the US.

On one of my first days there, we visited an IR women's empowerment project that aims to help women become financially independent by providing the essentials they need to start their own businesses, such as sewing machines, fabric, and a space to work in. Seeing the women work so hard to sustain their lives inspired and motivated me to donate, help, and volunteer whenever possible. Alhamdulillah, Allah (SWT) has blessed me and has given me so much. I should help others, since Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, "If a person relieves a Muslim of his trouble, Allah (SWT) will relieve him of his troubles on the Day of Resurrection." In Islam, generosity is greatly loved by Allah (SWT), and those who give to help others shall receive infinite reward from Him - be it in this life or the hereafter. A little really does go an extremely long way. Giving to others sparks recognition in those around you to help, too.

We also spent a day at a park with 70 orphan children. We ate together, played together, and sang together, making memories with the orphans. Witnessing their joy was an amazing experience: it made me stronger. It made me stronger in my faith and my work, knowing that we are helping these children at IRUSA. As Prophet Muhammad (SAW) says, "I, and the one who sponsors an orphan, shall be in Paradise like these two" - and he raised his index finger and the one next to it, holding them together, barely separate."

All in all, it was a great experience and very much inspiring. Being there as IR staff and seeing it in action helped me understand the work we do and left me wanting to do more.



- Yasmeen





## Pakistan Adventure Challenge

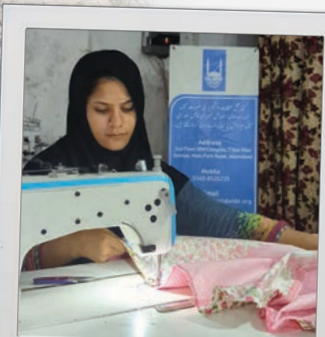
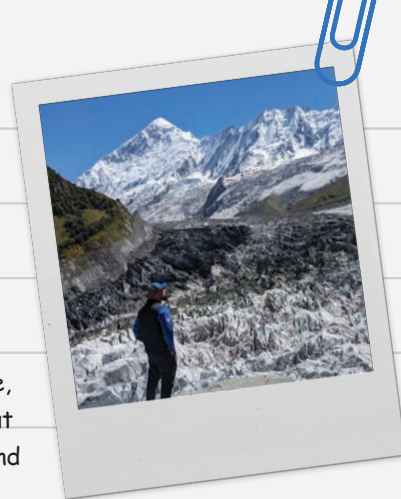
It's difficult to put into words how much of an impact the experience traveling with IR to Pakistan has been for me. Both my parents are from Pakistan, and on my trips there to see family, I would always stay in Karachi and would always hear about how majestic the north side of the country is. When the opportunity arose to join the team on the challenge, I knew the trip was going to be one that I wouldn't forget, but had no idea how much of it would affect me both physically and spiritually.

As a staff member of IRUSA, I have been blessed to witness our development projects here in the US, however, I never had a chance to really engage with our work elsewhere, or to see the impact it makes across the world firsthand. Having been given the opportunity to see our work in Rawalpindi with the children who are born into poverty, and for some, unfortunately who were orphaned, it was truly a moving experience being able to see how IR was able to completely transform these children's lives through education and by paving their path to a prosperous future.

The camaraderie and brotherhood/sisterhood one builds in challenges like these is unmatched. Having people from all walks of life and diverse backgrounds coming together to encourage you through the physical task of trekking a mountain, praying together while camping out under stars, and supporting you throughout the journey all for a good cause is what I will forever be grateful for.

**I highly recommend and encourage everyone to join a future challenge and be a part of the IR family!**

- Ali



## Türkiye Inspire Trip

"I joined the IR Inspire trip to Türkiye over the summer of 2023. We were there to help Syrian and Uyghur refugee orphans in Türkiye. IR offices that manage all the orphans hold an annual camp for a week for all the children in the program. They asked us volunteers to prepare activities and curriculums for all the kids, which we did before we arrived. Once we arrived, we trained and prepped with IR staff before we met the children. Then, they coupled every volunteer with a family of orphaned children.

I was with a family of three: two sisters and their little brother, who lived in a dangerous part of Türkiye on the second floor of an apartment building. All day they are cooped up inside because it's too dangerous for them to play outside, and they cannot make any noise inside either because their neighbors constantly threaten them when they make too much noise. When I visited the family, a couple days before the camp started, they just wanted to leave with me immediately to the camp. They could not wait to come with me, because not only was the camp a chance for them to have fun and interact with children their ages, but because it was a way for them to escape their harsh reality.

At the camp, the children played various games and activities that we had prepared for them. They were also given gift cards, and we accompanied them to a large department store so they could do some shopping. The program allowed them to shop on their own, with volunteers as chaperones, to teach them the responsibility of having their own money. They were really happy to be able to buy clothes, shoes, jackets, and bags for themselves.

Before we met up with the children, the staff at IR told us to not get too attached to them. Of course, that was hard. I cried constantly when we had to leave. The children were also crying, and begged us to stay. While sadness rushed through me, **I couldn't help but feel grateful that charity -- in any form, including volunteering -- is obligatory for us as Muslims."**

- Sarah



## JOIN US ON OUR NEXT ADVENTURE!

Join Islamic Relief USA for life-changing adventure challenges that not only let you explore new places and meet new people, but also make a meaningful difference in the world.

Visit [irusa.org/team](https://irusa.org/team)



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# FROM OUR AMBASSADORS

The hard work and dedication the IRUSA community has put in day in and day out for more than 30 years to serve millions of our brother and sisters in need around the world has inspired officials, influencers, leaders, interfaith organizations, Islamic scholars, renowned speakers, government representatives, community members, and many others to put in a good word.

Read what these IRUSA ambassadors had to say about their experiences traveling to emergency zones to help raise awareness and donations for relief work.



## KHALID LATIF

"We're here on our first day in Türkiye, subhanAllah, you can see all around us the debris from buildings that fell during the earthquake," shared Imam Khalid Latif of his emergency trip with IRUSA to Türkiye in March 2023.

"The sheer number of people who passed away who literally were pulled from the rubble of these buildings, day after day since the onset of this tragedy, is something that is innumerable at this point. So where we are at right now is a place where people actually lived, and you want to conceptualize that each of these buildings at some point performed a function. These were places where people lived, where people went to eat, where people frequented for entertainment and for fun, and all of a sudden were hit with this devastating earthquake that has left now what we see behind us," he continued.

"It's really important that all of us do our part to assist in whatever ways we can. To continue to make dua'a [prayer] for our brothers and sisters here in Türkiye as well as in Syria. That we give to the good work that IRUSA is doing to ensure that no one inshaAllah is left behind from this tragedy."

## MELANIE ELTURK

"Honestly, something in my heart told me I had to. When [IRUSA] first asked me, I actually thought of every reason I couldn't go, because I was scared. And then, subhanAllah, something in my heart was like – you have to go. So I was like ok, I have to do this. I didn't allow my mind to convince me out of it, and I followed my heart, I just listened to God's voice, alhamdulillah."

Melanie went as an ambassador to Türkiye, with one goal in mind: "I hope to raise as much money as possible through all the exposure we're all bringing to this disaster on our own social media platforms. I'm kind of acting as an intermediary between all the people who wish they could be here and the people who need to see what's going on in order to then help. Insha'Allah I can serve as that medium."

After her experience, Melanie shared this message: "Give of your money. And don't be stingy. Like really give, because Allah [SWT] will give it back to you tenfold. Now is the time to do this. And the best thing we can do is dua'a. [The Prophet (SAW)] said dua'a is the weapon of the believer, and it's true. Our prayers are so important, and we cannot underestimate the power of dua'a and praying for our brothers and sisters and our ummah. I know it doesn't seem like a lot, but it's a lot."



## YASIR BIRJAS

When disaster struck in Morocco, Sh. Yasir Birjas went with IRUSA as an ambassador. "Assalamu alaikum, brothers and sisters, we are here in an area called Orman, [located] in the Atlas mountains. [This area] is the major area where the earthquake had a great impact. Almost the entire village over here, you're going to see some of the videos and pictures almost completely gone, really. Even the standing houses, they won't be able to go back in again because they are unsafe," he shared.

"As we were standing here, we saw one house completely collapse before our eyes, subhan'Allah. And you see all these [tents] around us right now, these are all temporary accommodations for all the families and kids.

"The school is right here, and it is completely destroyed. They are unable to go back to their classrooms anymore. They are waiting, inshaAllah, for your help and support to bring them back into their schools and into their homes.



scan to watch

"They are very happy to know that their brothers and sisters in America and around the world are coming together to show their support. So please continue to do that. You have no idea how much joy you bring into their lives. May Allah [SWT] reward you all."



## ABDULLAH ODURU

Sh. Abdullah Oduru accompanied IRUSA as an ambassador to Türkiye. "May the peace and blessings of Allah [SWT] be upon you all. We say peace because sometimes it's internal. There has to be some level of internal peace that one must have in order to survive even psychologically through this turmoil. And it can be termed as a fitna, but the fitna can be a means of purification. It's all about how you perceive it, and allowing that to be a form of peace for you. Because you know that Allah [SWT] ultimately has a plan for you. And when we see these individuals, hear from the children, and hear from the elders, the children smile, subhanAllah," he shared.

"When I was in the tent with the children, you know, the orphans, and the ones who were affected by this, they asked, 'was your house affected by the earthquake?' And I looked at them and I just said, no. You know, realizing that this will be a normal normality for them, [being] in a camp. They don't know how long they'll be there. But it's important for you, someone that recognizes what they are going through, someone that has a financial capability, some type of skill where you're able to fund and help any projects here in Türkiye and Syria, to be that individual that gives back for the sake of Allah [SWT], that gives back wanting to help. If you were in this situation, you would cry out. But this is your opportunity to give back for the sake of Allah [SWT]."

## HAIFAA YOUNIS

Dr. Haifaa Younis accompanied IRUSA as an ambassador to Morocco, several months after her trip with IRUSA to Türkiye. "We are actually in the epicenter of the earthquake, behind me you can see the huge Atlas mountains. Very close to me, you can see all the destruction. So this is where it hit," she shared.

"Everything behind me is completely destroyed. These were homes. People used to live in them, and then subhan'Allah, within seconds, everything was destroyed.

"There are no words that can absolutely describe this, honestly. These people who are already living in remote areas don't have a lot of what we normally have. And now, in seconds, everything is gone.



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# ESTABLISH YOUR FOUNDATION



“Waqf” is an Arabic word meaning assets that are donated or bequeathed to be held in a perpetual trust for charitable causes that are socially beneficial. In many ways, the concept of waqf is similar to the Western concept of “endowment.” At IRUSA Waqf, the assets are invested in a well-diversified Sharia compliant portfolio and a portion of the returns are used to create a reliable stream of income to ensure the long-term sustainability of IRUSA’s projects, while the remainder of the returns are reinvested in the waqf portfolio, preserving the principal to ensure the perpetuity of the waqf.

The Well of Rumah, also known as the Well of Uthman ibn Affan [ra], is a historic water well in the city of Madinah. Today, part of the “Well of Uthman’s [ra] Waqf,” is located some four miles north-west of Masjid an-Nabawi, and north of Masjid al-Qiblatain. According to Islamic tradition,

the well originally belonged to a man named Rumah, who used to sell the water for profit. At that time, it was quite difficult for Muslims, who were already struggling financially, to pay for the water they needed. Seeing this, on the request of Prophet Muhammad [SAW], Uthman ibn Affan [ra] purchased the well from its owner and made a waqf for all — Muslims and non-muslims. This well is still active and the waqf tradition is still on-going. The well of Uthman [ra] is part of an Islamic waqf today — revenues from which are used to help the poor and pilgrims to the Haramain [Mecca and Madinah]. The waqf complex includes the historic water well, date farms, remains of an Ottoman era water reservoir, a mosque, modern water hole, reservoirs, and a water tower.

Following in this remarkable Islamic tradition of the waqf, IRUSA launched IRUSA Waqf in 2014, an endowment foundation program aiming to protect the

work we do in our communities, while also ensuring we can do it for years to come. There are several simple, inexpensive ways to contribute to IRUSA Waqf, such as a charitable bequest. A bequest is generally a revocable gift, which means it can be changed or modified at any time. You can choose to designate that a bequest be used for a general or specific purpose so you have the peace of mind knowing that your gift will be used as intended.

Another way to contribute to IRUSA Waqf is through beneficiary designation gifts. You can designate IRUSA as a beneficiary of a retirement, investment, or bank account, or of your life insurance policy. This is a flexible option, since you can continue to freely use your account. You can also roll over your Individual Retirement Account [IRA] to IRUSA, transfer your cash or assets to fund a charitable remainder unitrust, or transfer your cash or assets



to fund a charitable remainder annuity trust.

You can also provide a stream of income for your children while donating to IRUSA. The “Give it Twice” trust is a popular option that allows you to transfer your IRA or other asset at death to fund a term of years charitable remainder unitrust. We call this kind of unitrust a Give it Twice trust because you can use the trust to pay income first to your family for a number of years, and then distribute the balance of the trust to charity.

Lastly, you can donate cash assets directly to help fund various waqf projects.

IRUSA Waqf tailors one’s charitable gifts to their financial, tax, or estate planning objectives. Through donating to IRUSA Waqf, one is able to secure sadaqah jariyah for years to come, while also ensuring they are financially secure during their lifetime.

To find out more about IRUSA Waqf, please visit [irusawaqf.org](http://irusawaqf.org), or email us at [info@irusawaqf.org](mailto:info@irusawaqf.org).



[irusawaqf.org](http://irusawaqf.org)

## MORE WAYS TO GIVE



Protect your family with a shariah-compliant estate plan with Islamic Relief. Create a will, divide your estate according to sharia ruling, and add in a sadaqah jariyah. [irusa.org/wills](http://irusa.org/wills)



Did you know you can donate to IRUSA with a text message? Simply text **IRUSA** to **50155** and follow the prompts.



**CREATIVE GIVING**

There are several creative ways you can support IRUSA’s humanitarian programming. From turning your personal shopping into a charitable experience to crowdfunding, check out the full list at: [irusa.org/creative-giving](http://irusa.org/creative-giving)



Ready to get rid of your car, motorcycle, boat, or even jet ski? Donate your vehicle and the proceeds will support IRUSA’s humanitarian work. [irusa.org/cars](http://irusa.org/cars)



Your donations can be even more powerful when you register them for Matching Gifts! Employers often offer their employees the matching-gifts incentive to encourage charitable giving — sometimes, they even extend their matching program to include donations made by an employee’s spouse or by retired employees. Participating in Matching Gifts means the power of your donation can be multiplied with no additional cost to you. [irusa.org/matching-gifts](http://irusa.org/matching-gifts)



Donating stocks is a great way to use your securities to help Islamic Relief provide vital aid around the world. [irusa.org/stock-donations](http://irusa.org/stock-donations)



Represent Team Blue by visiting our digital store to grab some of your favorite IRUSA merchandise. You can purchase items from bed sheets to books that donate proceeds towards IRUSA. [irusa.org/shop](http://irusa.org/shop)



The IRUSA app makes it easy to donate directly, and can even round up your everyday purchases and donate the difference, if you choose. Search “Islamic Relief USA” in your app store to download.

**more ways to give**





**Assalaamu Alaikum. Peace Be Upon You.**



IRUSA celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2023. Over the course of those 30 years, IRUSA donors raised \$1.25 billion, translating into thousands of essential programs implemented, and millions of people helped all across the globe and right here in the United States.

I remember, when we first started, we were a group of mostly young people, doing our best to raise awareness for humanitarian causes, starting with Bosnia. Our aim was to collect funds for relief and development programs there and elsewhere overseas.

Since then, IRUSA has evolved into a leading Muslim humanitarian charity, supporting programs in more than 40 countries around the world and in the US, and being among the first organizations to drive urgent efforts during global emergencies. In 2023 alone, we responded to the calls of survivors of natural and man-made disasters in Türkiye, Syria, Morocco, Libya, the US, Afghanistan, Palestine, and Nepal, delivering essential aid in the immediate aftermaths, and, in many cases, working to provide long-term help to rebuild what was lost.

And, as we've grown these 30 years, our operational work has expanded beyond fundraising to include raising awareness, reporting, and advocating. In fact, some of our biggest advocacy efforts came into fruition in 2023, where we pushed hard for the Afghan Adjustment Act, called for extending the Child Tax Credit, and requested a ceasefire for Gaza.

2023 was also a landmark year for us: hard work within our US Programs has pushed us closer toward becoming the 11th US refugee resettlement agency, and the first Muslim national refugee resettlement agency in the United States. We've also worked in child protection, helping asylum seekers from Venezuela and Haiti on the Mexican side of the border, and bringing awareness for Rohingya children.

Although a lot has changed during these 30 years, one thing has never waived: our commitment to serve those in need, and show them the dignity and respect they deserve. Every child and adult that we have served is important to us. We help people from different ethnicities, nationalities, and faiths. We do not help people because they are Muslim, but because we are Muslim. We live the example of the Prophet Muhammad [SAW], who was a mercy to all mankind.

During the last 30 years, we have faced our share of criticism and obstacles, but with the help of Allah [SWT], we have received amazing support from those who believe in the work we do and that has enabled us to grow. We believe that by helping others, we come closer to Allah [SWT] and that our work, from health to livelihood to education to refugee assistance to care for orphans and children, and beyond, helps us show the world how we live our faith through our actions. May Allah [SWT] reward all of you for the support you have given IRUSA, and for the legacy you have helped us build these past 30 years.

Jazak Allahu Khairan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anwar Khan".

Anwar Khan  
IRUSA President

**Assalaamu Alaikum. Peace Be Upon You.**

As the newest chairman of the IRUSA Board of Directors, I am excited to take on this new role and am honored to do so with all of you – our volunteers, partners, and donors around the world.



Over the past 30 years, you have answered our call time and time again to serve those in need, from our first emergency response in 1993 to the Bosnian war, where we provided vital aid including food and water and helped rebuild homes, schools, and places of worship, to our most recent emergency response in Nepal, where we are offering relief to earthquake victims.

In 2023 alone, you helped deliver aid to more than 8,569,969 people across more than 40 countries. Thanks to you, IRUSA was able to provide food aid and clean water to countries grappling with drought and famine across East Africa, establish a mobile health clinic for Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities, sponsor 27,653 orphans and children in need, provide winter aid kits to 196,800 families in need, and much more.

In an effort to expand our reach, IRUSA entered into a three-year contract with the International Rescue Committee to help resettle refugees approved by the State Department's Federal Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration. The partnership enables IRUSA to call upon its network of refugee service organizations to set up as many as 10 sites in the coming year. By the third year, IRUSA hopes to achieve its goal of having 21 resettlement offices within partner organizations and will apply to become a standalone refugee resettlement agency.

Last year, IRUSA also worked with 27 partners across the country to resettle more than 25,000 people. Among the services provided were English as a Second Language [ESL] courses, rental assistance, financial assistance to help Afghan men, women, and children adjust and integrate into American society. We know none of this would have been possible without your support.

These past 30 years have taught us that we are stronger together, and insha'Allah, the next 30 years we will use that strength to see a world free of poverty. I am excited to be on this journey with you all, and I am dedicated to providing effective and efficient support to families in need both here at home and around the world. I pray that you continue on this journey with us.

From the bottom of my heart, Jazak Allahu Khairan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ahmed".

Ahmed Azam  
Chairman of IRUSA Board of Directors

# Thank You!



# ISLAMIC RELIEF USA

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