



2019 IMPACT REPORT

Vision & Mission

We strive for a world where women and girls are safe, have access to education, are empowered, and drive social and economic change. We invest in women and girls' futures, so they can play a key role in rebuilding and strengthening their communities.

Our fundamental belief is that women and girls are powerful drivers of change.

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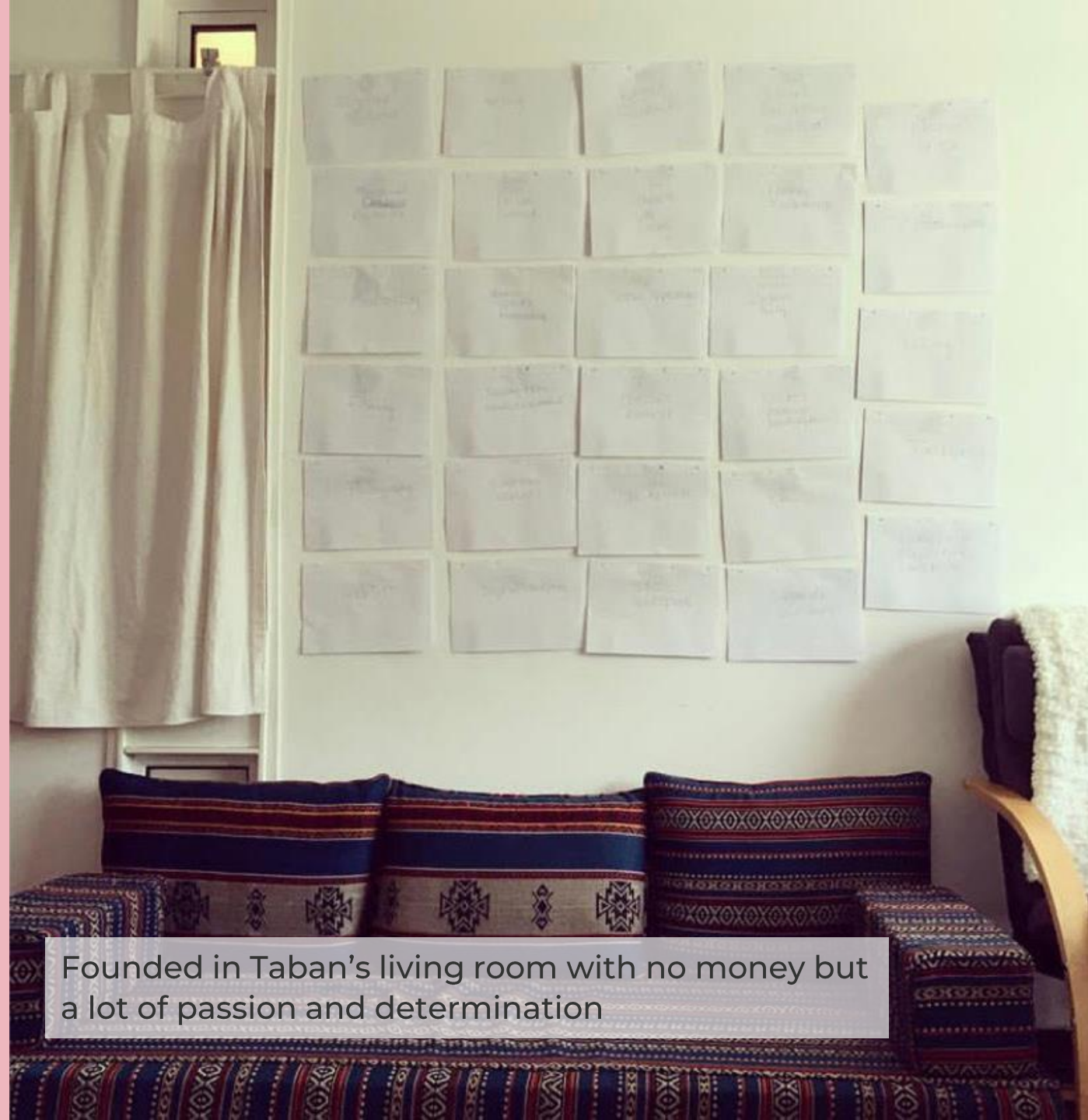


About us

The Lotus Flower is a nonprofit that supports women and girls impacted by conflict and displacement.

Born out of Taban Shores's passion, personal experience and a response to the humanitarian crises in 2014, The Lotus Flower open it's first women's center in March 2016 with only two full-time employees.

To date, we have opened 3 centers and implemented programs in a variety of locations throughout the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.



Founded in Taban's living room with no money but a lot of passion and determination

When women and girl conflict survivors arrive in camps



Photo: Diyana, Qadiya camp

They are deeply traumatized and many have lost and witnessed loved ones murdered.

Many have been victims of rape or sexual assault and are prone to further gender-based violence, harassment and sexual assault in the camp environment.

They are extremely vulnerable and with little or no income, they and their children face devastating poverty.

We operate three women and girls centers in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Their main role is to look after their family, which restricts what they can do as they face cultural and societal pressures to maintain this traditional gender role.

They often have little or no access to support services – such as counseling.

A sense of isolation in the camps contributes to severe mental health issues, culminating in a high risk of suicide.

We have
reached over
17,000
women and
girls in 3½
years.



Our Approach

As local implementers, we work at grassroots level to get right into the heart of the communities. We listen to the women and girls to implement our projects and ensure we meet their needs.

Our unique approach is to provide safe, designated spaces essential to help rebuild lives. All programming in our centers is bespoke to the region, culture and their specific needs

We are investing in their future because they play a vital role in resurrecting and strengthening communities.



Our 6 Pillars

We provide a safe and welcoming space for women and girls, as a base for activities and projects aligned to the 2030 SDG Goals to help rebuild their lives.



Mental Health

Support for those mentally traumatized



Livelihood

Economic independence



Health and Wellbeing

Physical health and hygiene



Human Rights

Legal support and education



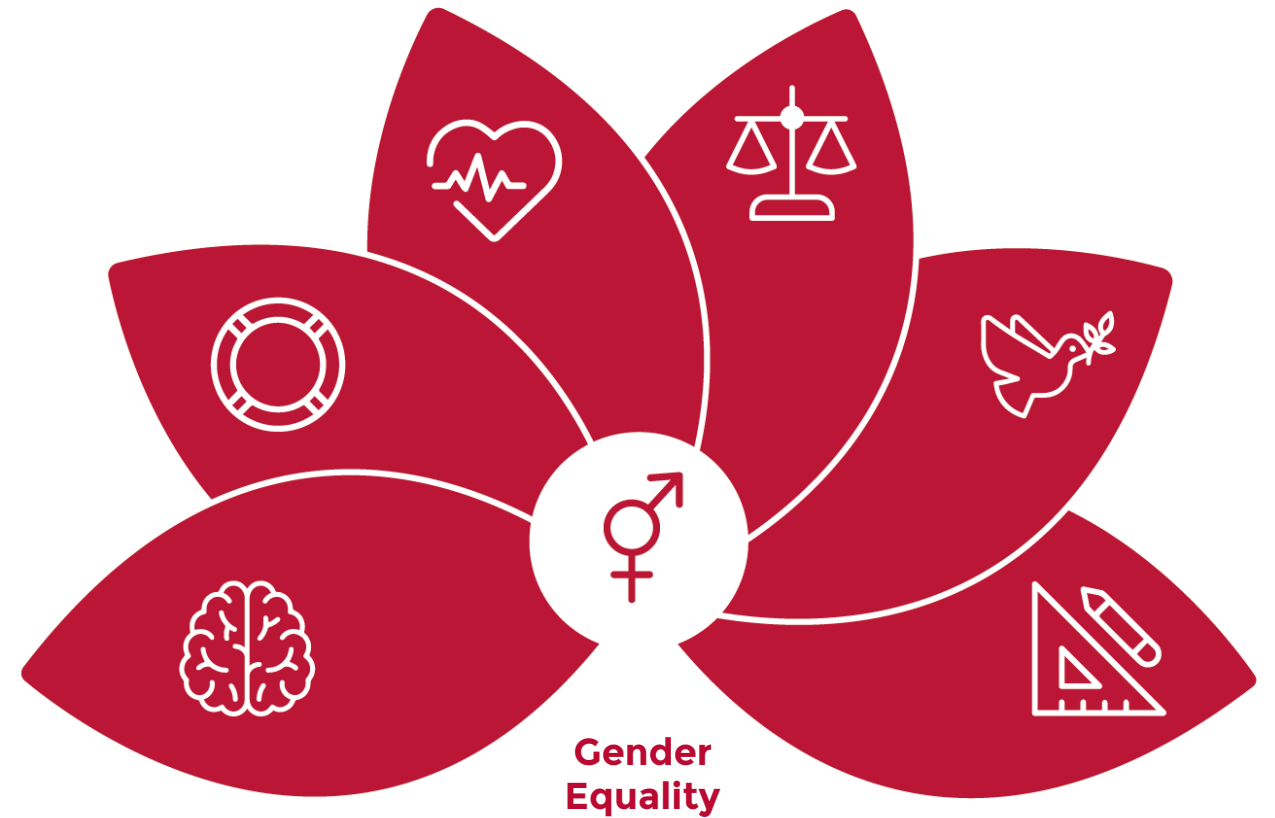
Peace-building

Improving community relationships



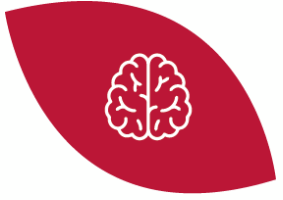
Education

Learning key skills for future employment



Gender Equality

Confidence building for female empowerment



Mental Health

Psychological support

We offer a variety of programming to support mental health including awareness sessions, group discussions, community outreach and home visits. Topics include SGBV prevention, domestic violence, emotional abuse, prevention of early marriage, women's rights.

Our teams conduct outreach campaigns to educate community members on mental health and gender-based violence in the privacy of their cabins in order to respect their privacy.

In May 2019, we launched a targeted program towards suicide awareness and prevention in a camp that had been devastated by an increase in suicide attempts. By providing direct support, a safe social space, and complementary educational programming, all participants reported an increase in mental and physical health.

As of November 2019, we recruited and employed a full-time, university-educated psychologist in response to the new wave of Syrian refugees who arrived in Kurdistan. She conducts mental health support through one-on-one sessions, group therapy, and case management.

For severe cases, we coordinate with camp management and other organizations to ensure the individuals receive the necessary care.

Art Therapy

We provide a variety of art therapy classes (knitting, painting, drawing) for women and youth to help mitigate symptoms of trauma.

Art is a means of communication and can help individuals explore emotions, address unresolved emotional conflicts, improve social skills, and increase self-esteem.

Program Spotlight: Emergency Situation

Since Turkey launched its offensive in Northeast Syria in October 2019, almost 14,000 Syrians have fled into the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) to seek safety.

International and local organizations, including local government institutions, immediately responded by rebuilding and expanding two existing camp sites, Bardarash and Gawilan, both located in Duhok Governorate.

Bardarash is now home to nearly 11,000 Syrian Kurds and Gawilan is estimated to host 2,000 refugees.

Of the newly registered refugees, nearly 75% are women and children and 25% are now female heads of household.



Our Response

The Lotus Flower has worked in this context for the past 3 years, providing services targeted towards women and girls in refugee and IDP camps

Since October 2019, we have provided the following:

Distribution

- Winter coats for 1,000 children
- Winter clothing for 1,500 women
- Winter clothing kits for 400 women
- Hygiene kits for 1,000 families

Mental Health Support: We have employed a university-educated psychologist for 1 year to provide the following:

- One-on-one therapy
- Group therapy
- Awareness Sessions

We are the only NGO to provide this level of psychosocial support in Bardarash Camp.



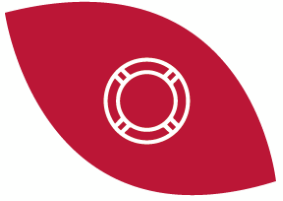
Livelihoods

Our livelihoods pillar includes our most robust programming this past year. We have launched 4 new initiatives and have witnessed incredible success as women-led businesses are thriving in the local communities and meeting market demands.

Our new livelihood initiatives include:

- Boxing Sisters
- Women's Business Incubator
- The Lotus Café
- Farming Sisters





Our Livelihood Projects

Boxing Sisters

Wellbeing and mental health program that focuses on boxing and self-defense. It's also a livelihoods project as we train women to become boxing instructors and hire them to run the sessions.

Women's Business Incubator

The Lotus Flower Women's Business Incubator (WBI) provides a financial foundation through small business grants and business training & mentorship for women-led small businesses.

Sewing Sisters

Our pilot program in 2016 that was designed and implemented based on requests by women in the camp. It is a 3-months intensive training program that teaches professional sewing skills. We work to bring in local and international contracts.

The Lotus Flower Café

The café is a social enterprise for women survivors. After training, the women will manage the café and provide a safe space where other women and girls can eat healthy and high quality food. Spaces like this do not exist in camps for women and girls.

Storytelling Sisters

We recently launched this project that teaches women and girls the power of storytelling through photography. The girls learn how to use DSLRs, photo editing software, and creative writing skills. One girl from each camp is now our photographer for all projects.

Baking Sisters

A social enterprise project where women are trained to become bakers and have space to create and sell their products to the local community to earn an income.

Farming Sisters

Our camps are located in rural environments and many residents have an agricultural background. Women have access to the unused land and supplies in order to plan and sell seasonal vegetables.

Program Spotlight: The Lotus Cafe

In July 2019, we launched our first Lotus Flower Café with the support of Asma Khan, founder of Darjeeling Express, in Essyan Camp, an IDP camp home to almost 15,000 individuals.

With a shortage of culturally accepted public spaces for women and girls to gather, as well as a lack of employment opportunities, it is difficult for them to rebuild their lives and their communities.

After initial training in small business management, the 3 female chefs are responsible for managing and operating the café on a daily basis. With The Lotus Flower providing the necessary space, equipment, and supplies, the women will continue to build their business and cooking skills, team work, and economic independence.

In addition, the café will continue to provide a safe space for women and girls to spend time together.



Program Spotlight: Women's Business Incubator

In Spring 2019, The Lotus Flower, with the support of Care International, launched the Women's Business Incubator (WBI), a program that provides small business training, mentorship, and seed funding for women-owned business ventures. The inclusion criteria for the pilot program placed an emphasis on female-headed households, single mothers, and survivors of ISIS violence. The goal of this program is to provide a foundation for women to create their own sustainable livelihoods.

The 15 graduates of this initial round received grants and support to launch their businesses, including a mobile phone shop, a beauty salon, and several small food markets, among others.

An additional facet of this program included mental health support and GBV awareness for the women, their family members, and the community. We conducted educational sessions attended by 500 people.





Health & Wellbeing

Yoga Sisters

We encourage wellbeing in our centers and try to give access to as many active projects as possible. Here we use yoga, mediation and breathe work to help alleviate trauma and stress.

First aid training

We host first aid classes in conjunction with local healthcare organizations. Basic first aid skills are demonstrated and then practiced by the participants so that they can use these skills in their daily lives and within the community.

Boxing Sisters

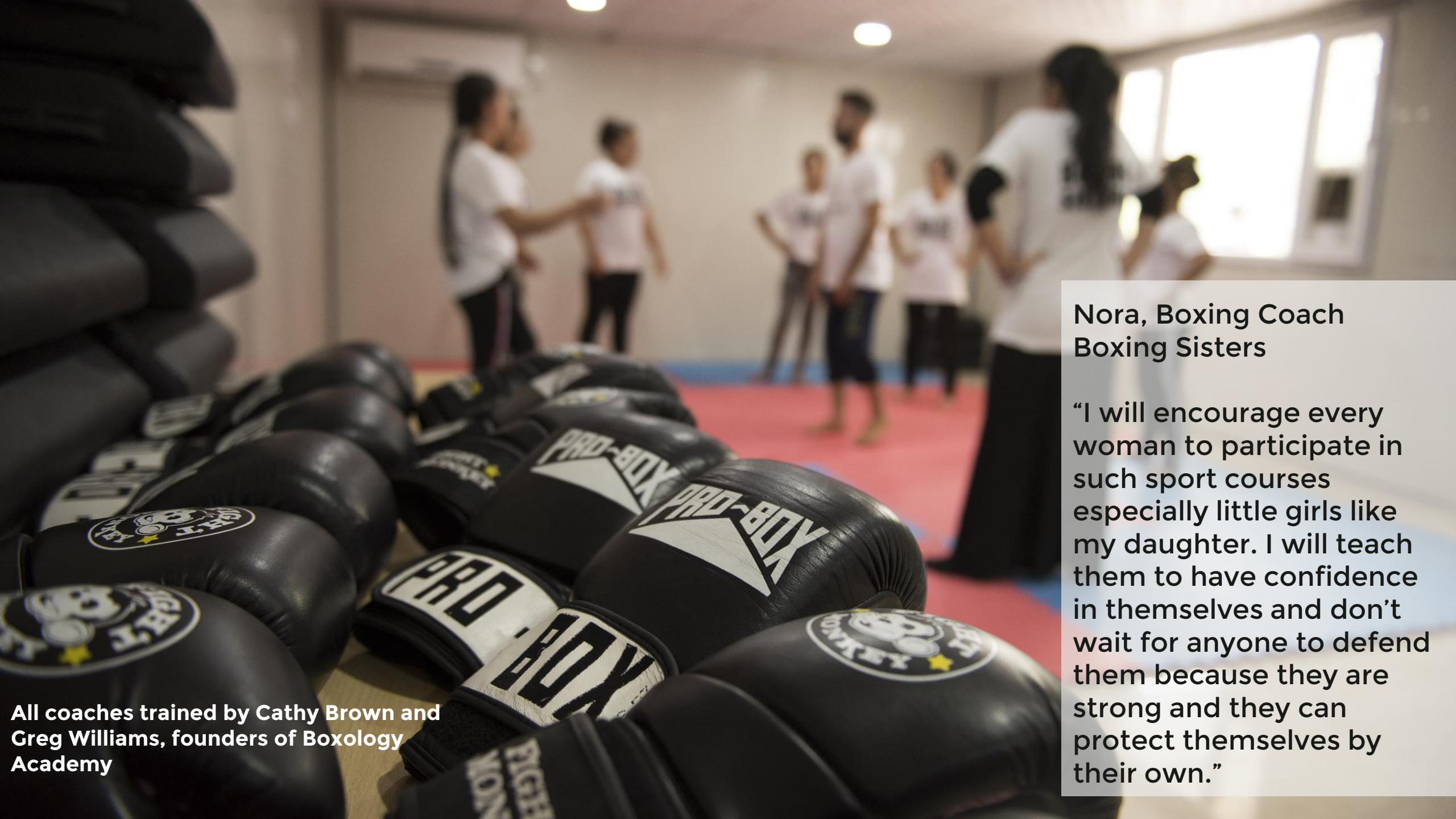
Wellbeing and mental health program that focuses on boxing and self-defense. It's also a livelihoods project as we train women to become boxing instructors and hire them to run the sessions.

Daily Exercise

The refugee camps have no access to exercise and movement for women and girls apart from in our centers. Outside of specific projects we try to implement a daily exercise sessions where women and girls can join.

Girls' Hygiene Education Program

Following our pilot project in 2018, we are now implementing this menstrual health education program to girls between 12-16 years old across our centres.



**Nora, Boxing Coach
Boxing Sisters**

“I will encourage every woman to participate in such sport courses especially little girls like my daughter. I will teach them to have confidence in themselves and don't wait for anyone to defend them because they are strong and they can protect themselves by their own.”

**All coaches trained by Cathy Brown and
Greg Williams, founders of Boxology
Academy**



Human Rights

Supporting Survivors Initiative - Global Compensation Scheme

Since 2016 we have formed a group of pro-bono lawyers and have been supporting 7 women on a civil litigation case. We are hoping this will pave way for new policy and legislation for victims.

We are looking to expand this program to enable more victims to have access. This is a very structured process and completed to high standards.



Awareness Session, Rwanga Camp

Awareness sessions

We run various awareness sessions on different topics related to human rights, legal rights, and women's rights. These sessions are very popular and women and girls feel safe to engage in our centers.

We have also launched targeted programming to understand and mitigate early childhood marriage, sexual and gender based violence, and domestic violence.



Peace Building - Projects

Displaced, refugee & host community reconciliation

We actively promote peace building projects to restore and rebuild harmony between women and their communities.

In emphasizing a sustainable culture of peace, we focus on conflict-resolution techniques, empowerment, non-violence, cooperation, self-esteem, social rehabilitation, and critical thinking.

We have hosted a youth peacebuilding week and self-development courses.

Awareness sessions

In emphasizing a sustainable culture of peace, we focus on conflict-resolution techniques, empowerment, non-violence, cooperation, self-esteem, social rehabilitation, and critical thinking through awareness sessions, workshops, and community outreach.

Holidays

Tolerance begins with religious and cultural understanding. Holiday events encourage different communities to come together to learn about other's traditions in order to rebuild relationships.



Education

Adult literacy

We provide a safe and supportive environment for women who were unable to attend school earlier in their lives to learn how to read and write. By the end of the course, they are able to comprehend the alphabet, numbers, and write simple sentences.

English Language

We offer beginner- and intermediate-level English courses for women.

Computer Course

This training provides a base level of computer skills, which are a valuable asset in most modern professions and continuing education..

Homework Club

Our centres also provide a safe, quiet space for primary and secondary students to study after school.



Total Impact

Pillar	Direct Impact
Mental Health	1,605
Livelihoods	156
Wellbeing	5,806
Human Rights	1,941
Peacebuilding	1,267
Education	889
GRAND TOTAL	11,664



Our Partners

Without the support and collaboration of our partners, we could not have achieved nearly as much in 2019.
Thank you!



Headquarters



Taban Shores
CEO, Founder



Krystal Garvin
International
Program Manager

Kurdistan Region of Iraq Staff



Vian Ahmed
Regional
Manager



**Ravin
Ramadhan**
HR & Admin



Seepal Sleman
Financial
Officer

2016 Taban founded The Lotus Flower and hired our full-time Regional Program Manager to oversee all projects on the ground.

2017 We hired an International Program Manager to oversee all aspects of programming, launch new centers, and oversee M&E and financial processes.

2019 Due to growth of projects and activities we have hired office staff in Kurdistan.

We have 15 staff members allocated to our three centers and projects. Project staff increase and decrease according to project needs.

**Total Staff
globally: 24**



Thank you!

 thelotusflower.org

  @thelotusf

 **f in** The Lotus
Flower