



# IMPACT REPORT 2022

**ENABLING DISPLACED**

**WOMEN AND GIRLS TO BUILD**

**SUSTAINABLE FUTURES**



# Who are we?

## What we do

We provide women, girls, children and other community members impacted by conflict and displacement with the tools and opportunities they need to rebuild their lives.

## How we do it

We run safe community centres inside refugee camps for displaced women and girls, where our programmes help them heal, learn and grow.

## Our hope for the future

We aim to sustainably serve vulnerable displaced women and girls in all camps around the world.

# The Challenge

Women and girl conflict survivors are traumatised and extremely vulnerable. Many have lost loved ones and suffered rape or sexual assault, and in camps, they are prone to further gender-based violence and harassment.

Many women are head of their household, but have little or no income. There is also a critical lack of support services, such as counselling and legal aid.

Covid-19 made the situation even worse.

- In a needs assessment we conducted with more than 300 respondents, 89% told us they saw or experienced increased gender-based violence during the pandemic. Meanwhile, 81% of respondents in our study reported critical financial hardship because of the virus, and 86% of women said they had increased mental health issues.



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**Our Solution**



**Heal.**



**Learn.**



**Grow.**

# We believe that women and girls are powerful drivers of change.

We create sustainable projects which equip them with the skills they need to earn an income to support themselves and their families.

Our programmes are not based on what we assume women and girls need, but on what they tell us they need.

We also provide support and awareness to help combat gender-based violence, alleviate their mental health problems and improve their human rights.

Our safe spaces allow women and girls to collectively heal from past trauma, and grow in strength, confidence and self-belief.



# Our Three Core Pillars

## Peacebuilding & Human Rights

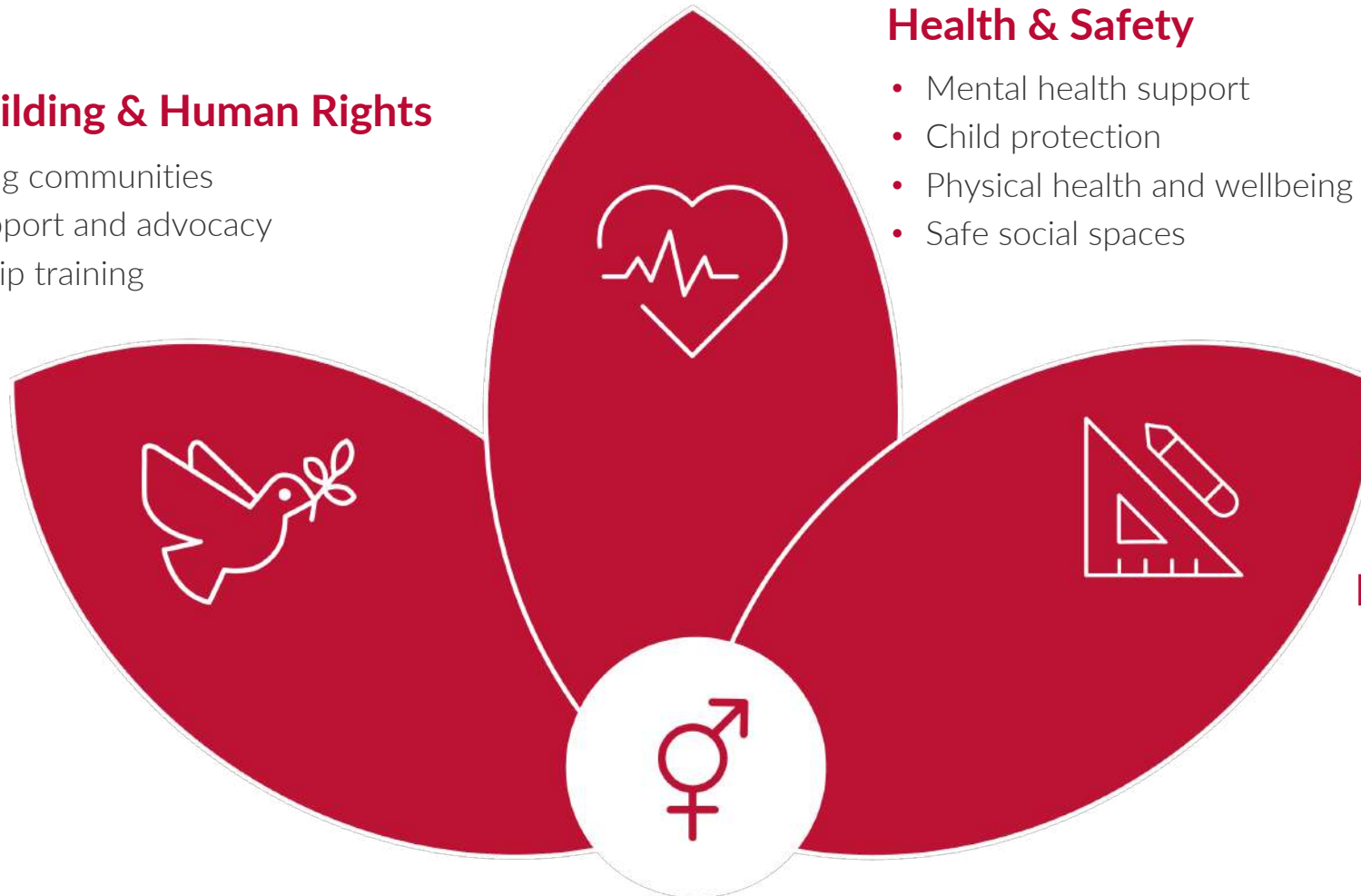
- Rebuilding communities
- Legal support and advocacy
- Leadership training

## Health & Safety

- Mental health support
- Child protection
- Physical health and wellbeing
- Safe social spaces

## Education & Livelihoods

- Literacy, language, technology
- Upskilling, livelihoods and income-building
- Climate change awareness
- Safe study spaces for children



# Our centre locations in Kurdistan Region of Iraq

## Rwanga

This IDP camp is home to approximately 15,000 individuals, mostly of Yazidi origin and from the Sinjar area.

## Duhok

Our most recently opened centre in Duhok city mainly serves those living outside of camps, including Yazidis, Syrian refugees and host communities.

## Domiz 2

One of the largest camps for Syrian refugees, Domiz 2 hosts more than 9,000 individuals.

## Essyan

Another IDP camp, Essyan houses around 14,000 displaced people, of Yazidi origin.

## Other locations in KRI

As of 2023, we also operate child-friendly spaces in Bardarash and Gawilan camps for Syrian refugees.

Additionally, we have a mobile team in Duhok City, Sumel, Akre and Zakho City to provide child protection and GBV prevention services to Syrian refugees, IDPs and host communities.



# Our Impact

To date, we have positively impacted on **61,259** women, girls, children and community members\* through our centres in Kurdistan.

\*Total reach is total participants – including women, girls, men and boys – in all programmes, not unique users, from March 2016-December 2022. This means that individuals participate in multiple programmes throughout the years.





Specific project impact numbers under our **three core pillars** are as follows:



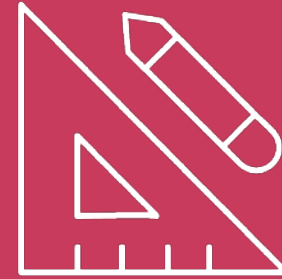
12,040

Peacebuilding &  
Human Rights



37,364

Health & Safety

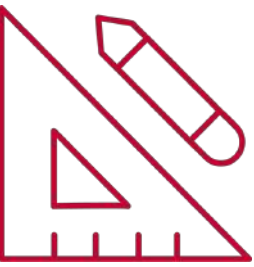


11,855

Education & Livelihoods

\*Total reach is the total participants in all programmes - including women, girls, men and boys - not unique users, from March 2016-December 2022. This means that individuals participate in multiple programmes throughout the years.

# Education & Livelihoods Projects



- **Adult literacy**

We provide safe and supportive environments for women who were unable to attend school earlier in life to learn how to read and write. By the end of the course, they can comprehend the alphabet, numbers and write simple sentences, and it means they can send and receive text messages and read their doctor's prescriptions for the first time.

- **English language**

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

- **Computer course**

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

- **Arabic**

We believe it's important for women and girls to have multiple language skills.

- **Homework club**

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

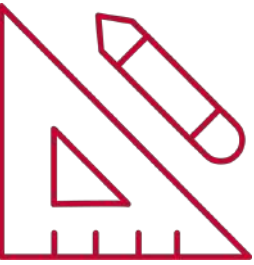
- **Women's Business Incubator**

We provide business and management training, mentorship and start-up grants so that women can start businesses of their own choosing.

- **Children with Special Needs**

Aimed at increasing participation and inclusivity, we provide support to children with special needs and disabilities, through recreational activities and awareness sessions.

# Education & Livelihoods Projects II



- **Baking Sisters**

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

- **Farming Sisters**

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

- **Sewing Sisters**

Our pilot programme in 2016 was designed after requests by women in the camp. The training project teaches professional sewing skills, and we work to bring in local and international contracts.

- **Storytelling Sisters**

This project teaches women and girls the power of storytelling through photography. They learn how to use DSLRs, photo editing software and creative writing skills.

- **The Lotus Café**

The café is a social enterprise for women survivors who receive training that enables them to manage the café and provide a safe space for other women and girls to eat healthy and high-quality food.

- **She Leads in Food Security**

New for 2023, this climate change-related project enhances food security and the economic status of refugees and IDPs, through climate-smart agriculture and income-generating initiatives.

# Health & Safety Projects



- **Mental health therapy**

As a key priority due to rising psychological issues, many of our projects incorporate group or individual mental health therapy with a qualified psychologist.

- **Girls' hygiene**

After a 2018 pilot, we now implement menstrual health education to girls aged 12-16 in our centres.

- **Yoga Sisters**

We encourage wellbeing in our centres and use yoga, meditation and breath work to help alleviate trauma and stress.

- **Boxing Sisters**

This wellbeing and mental health programme focuses on self-defence. It's also a livelihoods project as we train women to become boxing instructors and hire them to run sessions.

- **Sports and recreation**

Outside of specific projects we implement regular

exercise sessions which women and girls can join.

- **First aid training**

In conjunction with local healthcare organisations, we provide basic first aid skills for use within the community.

- **Online safety**

With exploitation rife in online settings, we teach women and girls to be safe while using the internet.

- **Men & Boys' Trauma**

We launched a men and boys' trauma project which encourages open dialogue and the sharing of past experiences to enable healing.

- **Child protection**

New for 2023, we are working in partnership with UNHCR to provide essential protection services for vulnerable child refugees.

# Peacebuilding & Human Rights Projects



- **Awareness sessions**

We hold regular community awareness sessions on topics such as gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, trafficking, early marriage.

- **Advocacy on women's rights**

We run awareness sessions on topics related to human, legal and women's rights. These are very well-attended and women and girls feel safe to engage. We have also launched programming to mitigate early childhood marriage, sexual and gender-based violence, and domestic violence.

- **Peace Sisters**

We train women and girls to become peace defenders and mediators within their communities so that they can play a more active role in leading

change. We also ran an iteration including men in 2022, called Peace Sisters & Brothers.

- **Supporting Survivors**

Since 2016 we have been working with a team of pro-bono international lawyers to pursue civil litigation cases for women ISIS survivors. We are hoping this will pave way for new policy and legislation for all victims of sexual abuse in conflict.

- **Positive Masculinity**

We have run positive masculinity workshops for men and boys, aimed at raising awareness of women's rights, and altering traditional perceptions of female roles in society. These sessions have proved very popular.

# 2022 Impact

Pillar	Unique Users
Health & Safety	692
Education & Livelihoods	648
Peacebuilding & Human Rights	7,217
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,126</b>
Total Indirect Beneficiaries	60,756

Total Unique Users by Pillar is higher than Total Unique Users because individuals participate in multiple programmes.

Indirect beneficiaries are calculated based on average household size in Iraq and KRI. The figure is our direct beneficiaries multiplied by six, which is the UNHCR standard calculation.



# A typical week's activities at our centres

- English language classes
- Literacy classes
- Girls' hygiene and first aid courses
- Yoga
- Boxing classes
- Sewing/ craft courses
- Online safety
- Photography classes
- Women's sports
- Running the Lotus Café & bakery
- Arabic lessons
- Girls' sports and recreation
- Community awareness on gender-based violence (GBV)
- GBV case management
- Women's Business Incubator
- Non-formal education for children
- Child protection case management
- Structured and non-structured psychosocial support for children and parents.

# Project spotlight: Women's Business Incubator

Since spring 2019, the Lotus Flower has run several iterations of the Women's Business Incubator (WBI), which provides small business training, mentorship and grants for women-owned business ventures. The goal of the project is to provide a foundation for women to create their own sustainable livelihoods, and we prioritise female-headed households, widows, single mothers and ISIS survivors.

Businesses that have launched include a mobile phone credit shop, hair and beauty salons, small food markets and clothes stores.

The program also includes vital mental health support and GBV awareness for the women and their families.





# Project spotlight: Youth Suicide Prevention

In recent years, reported suicide rates and mental health disorders of all kinds have been rising sharply amongst young people living in displacement.

Recognising a growing need to support youths who have been impacted by conflict ever since childhood, we launched a Youth Suicide Prevention project, which not only provided mental health support, but also creative therapies through art and music, as well as yoga and healing.

The project also included English language classes, in order to better prepare youths for employment opportunities.

The project has proved extremely popular, and gives participants the chance to bond and heal together.



# Project spotlight: Peace Sisters

In Spring 2021, the Lotus Flower launched the new Peace Sisters project, which provides women and girls with training so that they can lead peace processes and take a more active role in rebuilding their communities.

In partnership with the German Consulate in Erbil, the innovative project sees participants learn new skills in critical thinking, teamwork, communications and public speaking, with the aim of empowering them to recognise their human rights and take on prominent leadership roles.

Although there are other projects that foster peacebuilding and social cohesion, we believe Peace Sisters is the first to focus on women in this way, training women to become mediators, peace defenders and active community leaders.



# Project spotlight: The Lotus Cafe

In July 2019, we launched the 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 or communities.

After training in small business management, the female chefs are responsible for managing and operating the café daily. We provide the space, equipment, and supplies, and the women continue to build their business and cooking skills, teamwork and economic independence.

The café also provides a safe space for women and girls to spend time together.



# Project spotlight: Children with Special Needs

Another programme which has been very well-received is our project for children with special needs and disabilities.

The project is designed to encourage greater participation and inclusion for all, and includes activities such as accessory-making and crafts, music and singing, plus games and recreational activities.

We also provide awareness sessions on a range of topics that aim to enhance greater equality, as well as much-needed support for parents and caregivers.



# Project spotlight: Men & Boys' Trauma

With the poor mental health of refugees and the displaced continuing to present a huge challenge, we launched our Men & Boys' Trauma project at Domiz 2 camp, where there has previously been no psychosocial support for male Syrians.

The project focused on healing activities such as art, music and English language classes, as well as individual and group counselling sessions.

Both iterations of the programme to date have been hugely over-subscribed, paving the way for men and boys to begin expressing their inner grief and anger post-conflict – which was previously culturally unacceptable.

We are currently looking for support to repeat this project so we can reach many more beneficiaries.



# Project spotlight: She Leads In Food Security (SLIFS)

The objective of our She Leads in Food Security (SLIFS) project is to enhance the food security and economic status of IDPs, refugees and returnees through climate-smart agriculture and income-generating initiatives.

To date it has included training sessions for a group of chosen female ambassadors, covering nutrition, food preservation, food wastage and environmental issues. These ambassadors then provided awareness sessions on these and other important climate-related topics, reaching hundreds of other women and girls.

The issue of food insecurity is increasingly worrying in Iraq, especially as the country is fifth most susceptible to climate change in the world.



## What our partners say...

'It is with our great pleasure to endorse the work of Taban Shores and her brilliant team... they are a shining example of effective, flexible, grassroots humanitarian response. Their work is needs-led and they adapt quickly to changing situations and emergencies.'

### Choose Love (formerly Help Refugees)

'The Lotus Flower showed commitment and professionalism in implementing the project and CARE is very satisfied with their performance and deliverables...we are exploring future options for partnership.'

### CARE International



## CASE STUDY



# Nisreen

“I didn’t have the chance to go to school, and would spend most of my time in our small tent. One morning, I woke early and feelings of hopelessness, anxiety and depression took over me.

“I went outside, took some oil and set fire to myself, without even thinking twice. I won’t ever forget the moment when I screamed and my family and neighbours rushed to put out the flames on my body.

“Now it’s been almost a year [since I’ve been seeing a Lotus Flower therapist] and I’ve been able to speak to someone about my suffering, who can really help me. I hope others like me in displacement can receive proper psychological support, because it’s a lifesaving service.”

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‘I set fire to myself  
without thinking twice’



## CASE STUDY



# Ghazal

“Life in a camp is hard. In the eight years I have been here, we have never lived in a building with walls. These torn tents can’t protect us from the cold, and on rainy days water enters the tent and everything is suddenly wet.

“Taking part in the Lotus Flower’s Women’s Business Incubator really helped change my life for the better, as I got to open my own restaurant and support myself financially.

“I am also able to provide medication for my husband without borrowing money from anyone.”

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‘I can support myself financially’

## CASE STUDY



# Shukriya

“When the forces [in Syria] began attacking protesters and killing people, and the government began forcing men and boys to join up, I decided to leave the country. I couldn’t put my son’s life in danger, as he and my daughter were all I had.

“In camp, all three of us suffered from loneliness and anxiety and we didn’t notice we were actually getting sick.

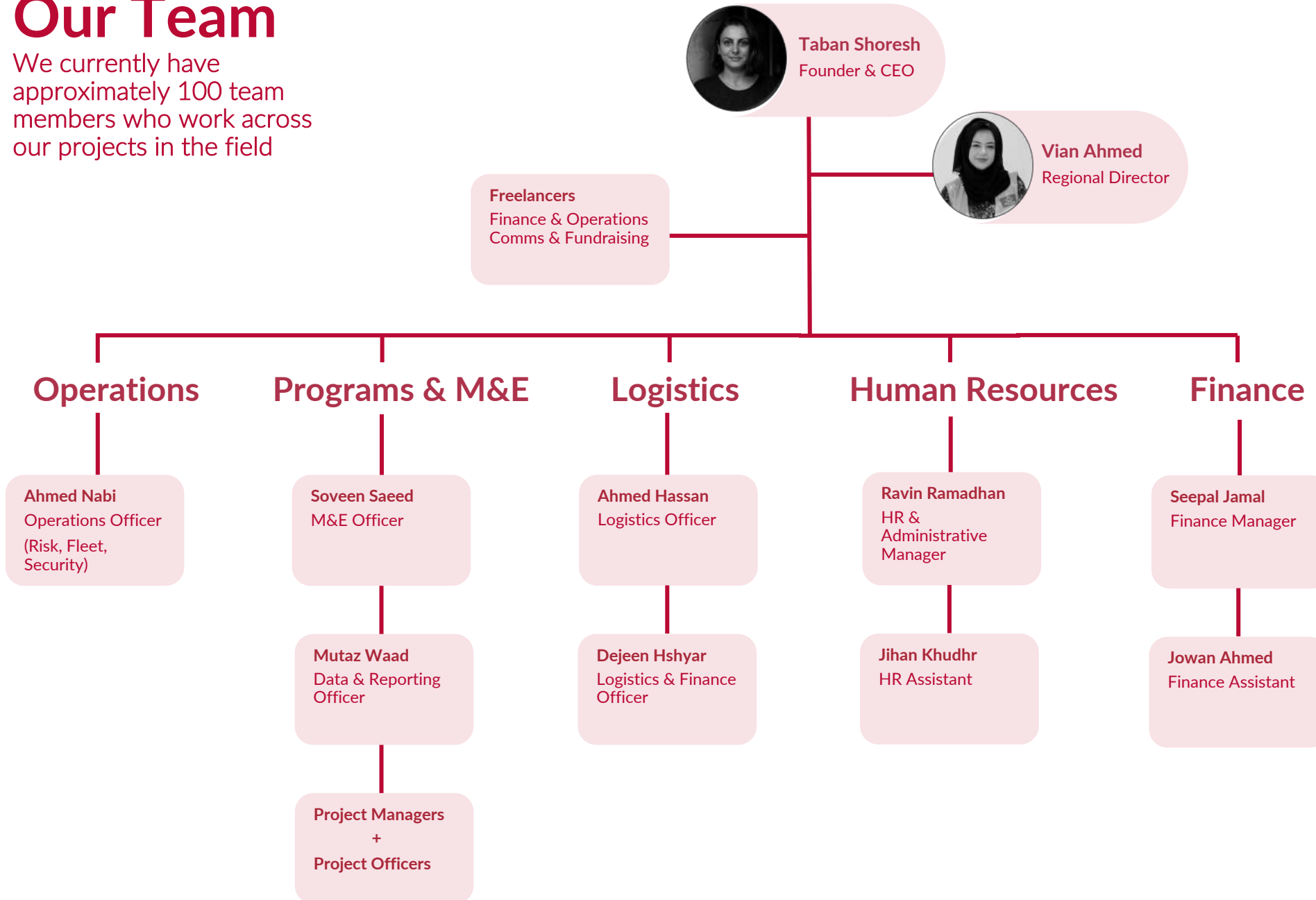
“I decided to give the Lotus Flower’s training a shot, because I knew I needed help to stand on my own two feet again. It was one of my biggest dreams to read books and write letters, and I reached my goal at the age of 50.”

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‘It was my dream to read books and write letters’

# Our Team

We currently have approximately 100 team members who work across our projects in the field



In Kurdistan, our charitable registration number is 4054-F.

In Iraq our charitable registration number is 102109035.

In the UK, the Lotus Flower is a restricted fund under the auspices of Prism the Gift Fund, registered charity no. 1099682.

# Awards in 2021-22

We have received the following awards and nominations:

- UNHCR Award for Innovation
- CARE International Partnership Prize 2022
- Finalist in UK Charity Awards
- iValues Award for Innovation
- Mother Teresa Award for Social Justice (received by our Founder)



# To our partners....

Without the support and collaboration of our partners, we could not have achieved nearly as much as we did throughout 2022. We are grateful for everyone's support, even more so during a global pandemic, via our crowdfunding campaigns.

Thank you!

UNHCR	Joffe Trust	Presbyterian Church USA
GIZ	Asma Khan / Darjeeling Express	Hogan Lovells
BMZ	HAWAR	Evan Cornish Foundation
Care International	Khaima	SEZ
Choose Love	Migrate Art	UN Trust Fund
German Consulate – Erbil	Ninety One UK Limited	Travers Smith Foundation
EU ECHO	One Young World	Zarok Kinder
Migrate Art	Operational Hope Australia	Hug London
Cordaid	Peter Stebbings Memorial Trust	NAMA
Clarksons Foundation	ICVA	The Big Heart Foundation (TBHF)
Give It Forward Trust (GIFT)	FCDO	



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