



**PREEMPTIVE  
LOVE**

**IMPACT REPORT**

**2020**



# RELIEF

**Relief disrupts the cycle of violence, so families can start to rebuild.**

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We help fast on the frontlines of violence, poverty, and disease. When a deadly explosion ripped through Beirut, we were serving people within hours. When families in Venezuela go days without food, we show up with food packs. In communities in Syria that have to cope with a decade-long war and a pandemic at the same time, we provide essential medical care, masks, sanitizer, and more.

# LIFESAVING RELIEF

## in 2020

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You served 303,950 meals to keep families going after the Beirut blast.



You fed 76,191 hungry men, women, and children in Venezuela, Iraq, and Syria.



You provided 42,581 medical consultations for Syrian families with no other way to get the care they need.



You repaired 100 blasted-out homes in Beirut, securing them with new windows and doors.

The hunger crisis in northwest Venezuela is so dire, we had to come up with a new way to measure it. Instead of counting how many meals a day kids here miss, we have to count how many days they go without anything at all.

You helped close that gap.

We deliver bags filled with everything a Venezuelan family needs to make meals for about a month—items such as eggs, margarine, meat and chicken, oil, sugar, pasta and rice, powdered milk, and coffee. We include both the foods families like to eat and foods specifically chosen to help malnourished kids recover safely.

You're also providing soap and laundry detergent for families in Venezuela, to keep them safe from regular germs that cause illness, as well as to prevent COVID-19.

Because gasoline is so expensive and nearly impossible to find, our team delivers much of the food themselves, on foot. They carry parcels on their backs or use hand carts to navigate the narrow windows of time between COVID-19 curfews.

That's how committed we are to getting food into the hands of those who need it most. Into the hands of women like Francis.

Francis works from sunup to sundown every day, sweeping the streets of her city clean. Each month she earns less than half of the \$5 she needs just to buy milk for her son.

Feeding her family? It hardly seems possible.

But you showed up with a month's worth of food for Francis—including milk for her son. Now she doesn't have to worry where her next meal will come from or how she will provide for her son. You're helping push back the hunger in Venezuela, bringing food and hope to families.

## DELIVERING FOOD ON FOOT



Lillian thought they were being bombed.

She was parking on the street, not far from the apartment she shares with her elderly mother, when the blast at Beirut's seaside port tore through the city.

Lillian ran through the wreckage and dust, glass crunching under her feet, up the stairs, and into her apartment. She found her mom on the floor, bloodied, surrounded by shattered glass and the remnants of their shattered life.

"All I could think was: thank God we are alive!"

The blast that rocked the heart of Beirut left 300,000 people homeless. People from all walks of life, all backgrounds. People like Lillian and her mom, who loved nothing more than tending flowers on the balcony, and looking out over the neighborhood they called home.



# BEIRUT

## Repairing What Was Broken

After the blast, Lillian returned to her apartment every day to water the flowers, unlikely survivors of a force so strong it blew out windows and doors in a third of the city. She knew the thin sheets of clear plastic weren't going to protect her and her mother when the weather turned cold.

But how would they manage?

Then you showed up, with new windows and doors. Putting back an apartment utterly broken.

Lillian kept returning to water the flowers—a daily act of defiance against hopelessness, a small token of love to any of her neighbors who happen to lift their gaze from the brokenness.

When you bring hope, you help our friends carry hope to others in their community, too.

# **JOBS**

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**When people have the jobs they need,  
the risk of violence fades.**

**We create jobs that can withstand  
war, violence, upheaval... even a  
pandemic. Jobs that provide for  
families and put food on the table.  
Jobs that restore dignity to those  
who lost everything. Jobs that  
rebuild devastated communities.  
And crucially, jobs that can be done  
anywhere, with just an internet  
connection and a cell phone.**



# LIFE-CHANGING JOBS

## in 2020

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For every business you launch, a family's income grows by an average 305%.



Microworkers at our four tech hubs grew their income by an astonishing 14.7 times.



9 in 10 refugee-owned businesses are still open one year later.



94% of business owners are confident where their next meal will come from, more than double the rate before opening their business.

# Jobs in a Recovering War Zone

Sarah desperately wanted to work as an accountant for one of the largest telecommunication companies in Mosul, Iraq. But she didn't have the tech skills she needed to stand out. Then Sarah enrolled as a worker at our tech hub in Mosul, Iraq.

After two months of one-on-one coaching, Sarah was able to deliver her first public speech confidently. Then she chose to take our advanced online accounting course and became a certified bookkeeper. After two weeks of freelancing, Sarah got her dream job.

Because of you, even more women like Sarah are finding their dream jobs, providing for their families, and becoming problem-solvers and change-makers in their communities. Since 2019, 72% of our tech alumni have been women.

With just an internet connection and a cell phone, women are able to do tech work anywhere, at any pace. It means women don't have to choose between taking care of their family or having a job—they can do both, on a schedule that works for them.





# A Sisterhood of Makers

This past year, you transformed a disused warehouse in a refugee camp into a beautiful space for women to work, with studios for candle-making, sewing, pottery, and crocheting. This maker space also includes rooms for childcare, so their kids can play safely while they work.

Najbeer is one of the makers who uses this space. She loves to crochet. And she loves plying her craft in a community, side by side with neighbors and friends from the camp, swapping stories and laughs as their hooks and fingers fly.

Before, it was hard to find space to work. Najbeer is a wonderful hostess to all, but her cinderblock home in the refugee camp in Iraq is tiny. The main living area is living room, dining room, and bedroom all in one. A single wardrobe against a wall holds all her family's possessions.

With three young children and a brand new baby, Najbeer's hands, home, and life is full. Here at our maker space, Najbeer can sit and crochet with other women. She can work with peace of mind, knowing her children are enjoying themselves in a safe preschool setting, and her new baby is being loved and cared for in the nursery.

For Najbeer, this space allows her to be a mother and a businesswoman, without having to choose between the two. It keeps her woven into the fabric of sisterhood, right in her own community.

# Stopping a Crisis Before it Starts



What does it look like to create a world where we stop the next crisis before it starts?

In the mountains of southern Mexico, it looks like a tiny piece of amber, chiseled from deep within the mountains, carefully shaped and polished by hand, crafted into jewelry.

Luz and her husband Hosue (pronounced ho-SWAY) handcraft jewelry while their children play nearby. They are a close-knit family in a close-knit community, living in the remote mountains of Mexico's southern Chiapas region, near the border with Guatemala.

It's not always easy to stay in this community. Floods this past year took out homes. The continual stream of migrants passing on their way to the US-Mexico border is a constant siren-call of opportunity that might still be out there.

When you purchase handmade goods from artists and makers like Luz, the income they earn helps them meet their daily needs. It buys groceries. It helps them stay instead of flee. And it shows communities like theirs that they are not alone.

# COMMUNITY

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This is the year the world was unmade.

This is the year a pandemic brought us to our knees, the world's legacy of racism was thrown into stark relief, and our division nearly tore us apart.

This is the year we all came face-to-face with just how tired and lonely we are. And just how broken our world is.

But this is not how our story ends.



# LIFE-GIVING COMMUNITY

## in 2020

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1,122 of you showed up for an important conversation about peacemaking, racism, and how to take action.



1,673 of you participated in a post-election workshop on peacemaking and politics, to explore how we can have difficult conversations with those who vote and believe differently.



7,644 of you joined virtual workshops, rallies, panels, and events to pursue peacemaking and change in ourselves and our neighborhoods.

# Tech Hub Gatherings

At our tech hubs in Iraq, workers regularly learn about creating a resume, how to interview well, and other professional development topics. But in 2020, they completed a new kind of learning experience together: a Love Anyway workshop.

It's the same workshop many of you have participated in, exploring topics like racism, political polarization, and waging peace in our communities. These workshops are about all of us healing what's tearing us apart—from Baghdad to Birmingham—engaging these issues in our own unique context, for the purpose of remaking our world.

Not unlike other workshops we've held, some were understandably skeptical going in. Many of our tech hub friends have bigger issues weighing on them—displacement from their homes and countries, the constant challenges of life in a refugee camp, an already weak job market getting worse in Iraq, and the growing financial crisis. What could a workshop about listening or community really accomplish?

But the difference was noticeable, week after week. During each session, held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the chat box would explode with comments from people sharing their experiences, their stories, their perspectives. After each session, workers would readily talk about workshop topics in classes, continuing the conversation. It brought a new level of emotion and vulnerability that tech hub instructors hadn't yet seen from their workers. Kurds and Arabs, Iraqis and Syrians, and Muslims, Christians, and Yazidis all were connecting with each other in a way completely different from their prior classroom interactions.

Seven weeks of a workshop doesn't fix everything. But it starts here, just like it does for us in our own communities—listening, sharing ideas, building a framework of thought that is inclusive and loving. Creating change in ourselves so we can create change in our family, our neighborhood, our community.





## COVID-19

COVID-19 brought so much to a halt in 2020, but it did not stop our work. All year long you showed up to protect the most vulnerable from COVID-19—providing lifesaving relief and creating jobs that can withstand almost any upheaval, including a pandemic.



All of us felt the effects of COVID-19. We saw empty grocery store shelves. We struggled with isolation and quarantines. But for Syrian refugees, the situation was dire. Families who couldn't afford to feed themselves even before COVID-19 were suddenly pushed into an even worse position. Even those who could afford food before the pandemic were suddenly forced to dig through trash for something to eat, as camp lockdowns kept people from working and earning a living. Some parents were so desperate, they begged others to take their children to feed them.

We acted quickly. Instead of scaling back, we worked to increase the amount of help we could provide. Our CEO, Jeremy Courtney, temporarily cut his salary to \$0 for 3 months so that our work didn't have to stop.

You showed up in the camps, in the middle of lockdown. You provided food packs to keep families going. In the first weeks of the pandemic, we were one of the only aid organizations in Iraq responding to urgent food needs.

At our clinics in Syria and on the Venezuelan border, you showed up with personal protective equipment—gloves and masks—as well as sanitation supplies. You installed sinks, so people could safely wash their hands, and provided critical COVID-19 education so families could learn how to protect themselves and prevent the spread of disease.

And you kept families working. Like so many schools around the world, our four tech hubs had to temporarily suspend in-person classes. But because our digital jobs platform allows refugees to learn and work anywhere, they were able to keep going, keep studying, keep working and earning an income. In fact, the shift to online learning allowed us to virtually open our tech hubs to students across Iraq, many of whom live miles from the nearest campus. Some of our workers launched new online businesses during quarantine in fashion, home design, accounting, and jewelry. Our instructors pivoted, too, taking classes to sharpen their skills and creating video lessons for students.

COVID-19 didn't stop us from building community across dividing lines, either. We took our workshops online, and saw a record number of participants show up to learn how to have hard conversations, to unpack implicit biases, and pursue racial justice.





You kept people from falling through the cracks exposed by a global pandemic. You sacrificed, you gave—so we could keep showing up with emergency food and medicine. So our digital job platform could keep going. So the more beautiful world we know is possible didn't have to get delayed until after COVID-19.

**We can keep building it. Right now. Together.**