



Annual Report



Before you is an account of our partnership. In the most profoundly challenging year of our lives we kept our nerve, pushed into the arena we have claimed as our own, and helped nearly half a million people.

Those men, women, and children are some of the most impoverished and abused humans this world is home to. They are the survivors of war. And despite the challenging year you had, you showed up for them.

Your support this year empowered our team to show them Good News, to give children on the run access to healthcare and education, to shelter those who flee with only what they had in their hands when attacks occurred, and in diverse situations of complexity and violence, through our love, bolster hope for a better future.



Children at a distribution of school bags in Yemen.



I just returned from my first site visit in over a year. Along with our brave and creative local staff members I visited four of the nine schools our partnership restored in Raqqa, NE Syria. I met students who survived under ISIS occupation, the destruction of their education, healthcare, and way of life. The children I met, now back in class and tagging along with their teacher on a tour of their school, are what you would expect: kind, smart, and alive to the potential they were born with. Now, because of us, they are back in the classroom and learning math, reading, and science.

It's with a heart full of gratitude that I write you today. You are the lever, the fuel, and the empowering force behind the impact you will read about in this report. Our team wouldn't function without your support. The longer I do this work, the more convinced I am that the world cares deeply about children who suffer, about injustice, and the violence created by autocratic leaders and the fight for resource control. You prove that.

Thank you for your support and for being part of every impact you will read here. Turn the page with me and keep believing that we, with loving action, can change the world to a better place.

For the children,

Steve Gumaer

Steve Gumaer



In March of 2020, convinced donations would dry up, I made contingency plans for my team. Our donors around the world were in lockdown, out of work/working at home, juggling homeschooling or loneliness or anxiety. I thought that with literally everything cancelled, they would cancel their donations too. I thought I was being responsible by planning ahead for a massive deficit in giving.

I thought wrong.

Instead, families who spent lockdown in comfortable homes - with central heat! And air conditioning! And running water! - tried to imagine how it was for families who had no homes to shelter in. Kids who missed their friends and teachers and the sweet rhythm of school days, understood better how awful it is for kids in Syria to miss years of that.

You responded to a terrifying pandemic with a groundswell of empathy and generosity.

When I told you families were sleeping in the cold, you bought blankets and heaters for them. When we asked you to support our Community Health Care Workers, you funded their training and supplies for all of 2021. You provided food, shelter, medicine, education and training for some of the world's most vulnerable families.

In the most uncertain year of our lives, you helped more people than ever. Of course you did; I should have known you would.

With so much gratitude,

Jenn



7

countries.

30

projects.

494,889

people assisted.

Woollen hats knitted by our supporters are delivered to children near Raqqa, Syria.



Where We Worked.

Middle East

 *Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Lebanon*

Extended and complex conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Yemen have resulted in a humanitarian crisis almost beyond comprehension that has resulted in the displacement of millions of people. Emergency relief, access to healthcare, and education opportunities are all areas of great need amongst the internally displaced in Syria, Iraq and Yemen. Additionally, our team was well positioned to respond rapidly to the catastrophic explosion in Beirut, Lebanon.





Southeast Asia

 Thailand, Bangladesh, Myanmar

Decades of military rule and oppression have left many in Myanmar without access to basic medical care and the opportunity to go to school, as well as resulting in the mass displacement of over a million people into neighboring Thailand and Bangladesh. The responsibility of providing aid to these refugees has predominantly fallen to international non-government organizations.



**Free, full lives for children
affected by conflict and
oppression.**

Mission

Ensuring children and communities affected by conflict and oppression are safe, healthy, and have access to education.

Methods

Emergency relief through the provision of food, shelter, medical care and basic survival necessities during crisis events.

Sustainable development that transforms community wellbeing, improves health and education, and provides a nurturing environment for children.



A young girl who received a blanket at a distribution in Yemen.



Emergency Relief.

If there is one aspect of our work that we seem to be known for, it is our ability to rapidly respond to a crisis event and to meet families and children in the worst week of their lives with emergency relief.

We do this in two ways:

Firstly, we fill the gap between when an acute crisis begins and relief from larger aid organizations arrives.

Secondly, there are always displaced people who - for various reasons - do not receive aid even when it eventually comes. They are at the end of the line. We are there for them also.

We are able to do both of these because **we have autonomy, we are nimble, and we know our lane.**

During the pandemic of 2020, our team went back and forth on that lane delivering masks, soap, food and blankets where they were needed most.





“I am very appreciative and thankful for the rice, cooking oil, and medicine given to us in this hard time.”

~ Tin Zar Win, 13

A food pack being distributed to a migrant family near Chiang Mai, Thailand.

In excess of...

855,568

...kilograms of food were given to communities facing food shortages.

232,632

...people received some form of COVID-19 assistance.

11,385

...people were provided with some form of shelter.



“We lived outside in the heat of the sun during the day and cold nights as well. If you did not build this tent for us, we could not do it one more day.”

~ Mushtaq Ahmed Rajeeb, Yemen

In war-weary Yemen, families in Sana'a Governorate were struck an additional blow when severe flooding destroyed their homes. Thanks to the generosity of Karmagawa, our team was able to send support to our local relief partners, who mobilized quickly to purchase supplies to start the process of rebuilding. Working hand in hand with the local community, families facing great hardship once again had roofs over their heads thanks to this partnership.





820
...people benefited from
the construction of
100 new shelters.

The whole community joined in to
rebuild shelters near Sana'a, Yemen.



Sustainable Development.

Sustainable development in the midst of a pandemic is... challenging. **Development is a collaborative process** involving site visits, meetings, and other face-to-face interactions not always possible in 2020.

COVID-19 forced us to pivot toward delivering emergency relief to displaced families who couldn't work during multiple lockdowns. Even so, our sustainable development projects continued in many places and gave us the foundational relationships to launch many of our relief efforts. Our local staff and partners did an exceptional job of keeping these projects running.

“Thank you very much to those who gave me the support [for medical treatment].”

~ Ohmar Aye, 38



Children being assessed for malnutrition near Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.





Children celebrate the reopening of a renovated school near Raqqa, Syria.

2,803

...people received some form of training through Partners' development projects.

10,617

... children in school because of Partners' education projects.

29,310

...people accessed healthcare as a result of Partners' health projects.



23

...people were provided
employment through our
newly started farm.

In Iraq, displaced families scraped by before the pandemic by working at local businesses. Lockdown prevented them from working indoors, so our team member Shihab - himself a displaced Yazidi father of two - leased some land and hired these families to farm it safely, outdoors. They had meaningful work in a stressful year and profits from the produce went to feed their families.





Salah is one of the farm workers
Partners employed near Duhok, Iraq.

“During COVID-19 there weren’t any jobs, this farm was the only place for us to work. It has helped us a lot and it is good, and even now we are still working.”

~ Salah, Iraq



Financials.

In a year of great uncertainty, one thing become absolutely clear: your generosity knows no bounds. This is how we stewarded all that you entrusted to us in 2020.

\$3,773,622

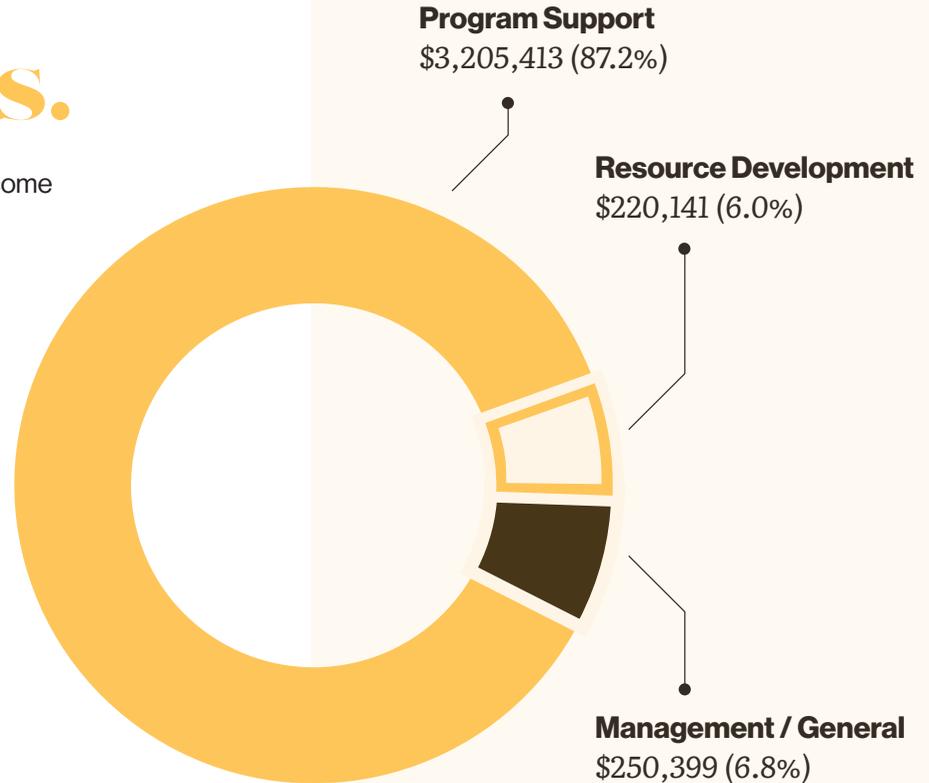
Total income.

\$3,675,953

Total expenditure.

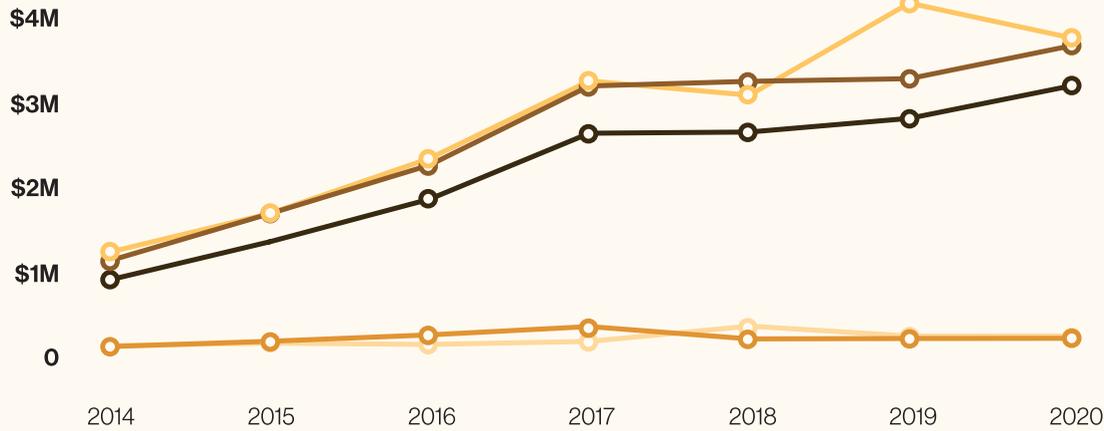
\$0.06

Cost to raise one dollar.



*Additional growth in spending was a result of retained earnings from 2019.

**While we desire to go deeper with the help we provide, cost per person helped was lower in 2020 due to economies of scale related to significant increases in relief assistance.



Income and Expenditure*

Past 12 Months

-9.8%

Total Income

+11.8%

Total Expenditure

+13.6%

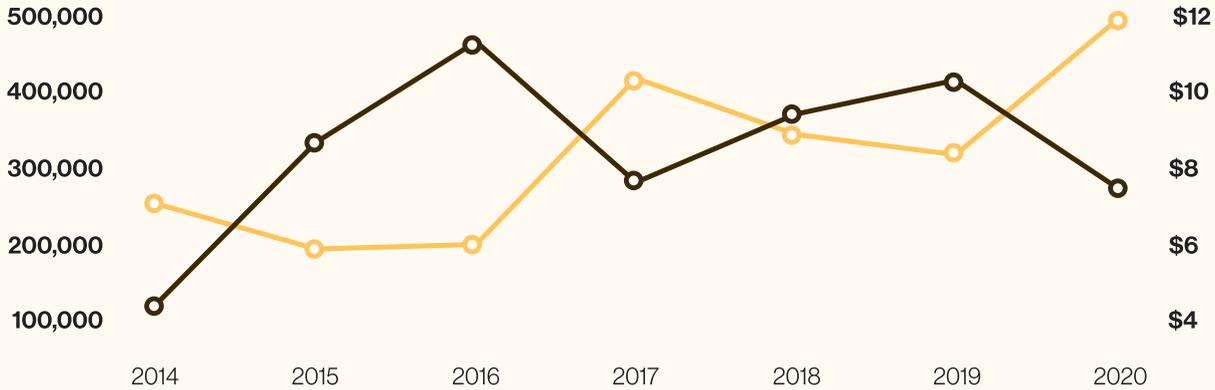
Program Support

+1.2%

Resource Development

+0.3%

Management / General



People Assisted vs Cost Per Person Helped**

+55.8%

People Helped

-28.2%

Cost Per Person Helped



When we discovered displaced families sleeping on freezing concrete in Syria, you stepped in and purchased 2,700 heaters.



This is what it looks like when
a global community decides
that to love is to act.

You ended one of the toughest years by donating an overwhelming \$275,970 to our most underfunded projects for 2021.





When COVID-19 hit, you responded immediately and raised \$77,158 on #GivingTuesdayNow to fund our pandemic response plan.



When we gave you new types of gifts you could buy for your loved ones that also funded our projects, you shopped and raised \$20,988.



You fully funded a lifeline of health care for thousands of refugees in Bangladesh, giving \$106,577 on #GivingTuesday.



Our Team.



Our global team gathered together in February, 2020. **It was the last time most of us traveled.**

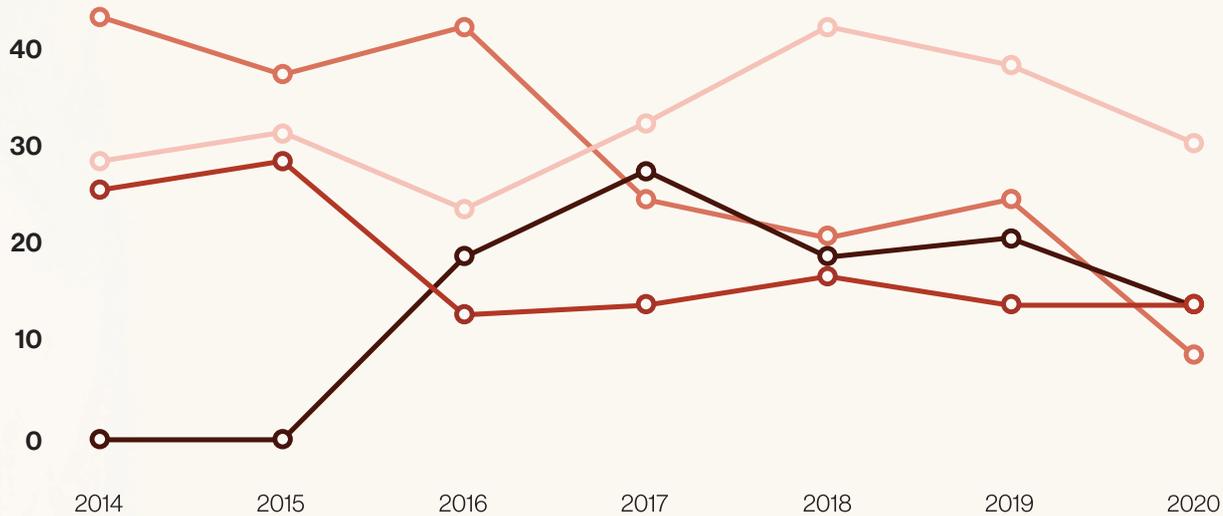
While we long to work shoulder to shoulder again, 2020 taught us that the model of raising up and hiring local team members works: in spite of multiple global lockdowns, our projects continued because local staff were embedded in the communities where we work.



Shihab is our first local staff member in Iraq.



Staff Trends



31

Field Staff
(-20.5%)

9

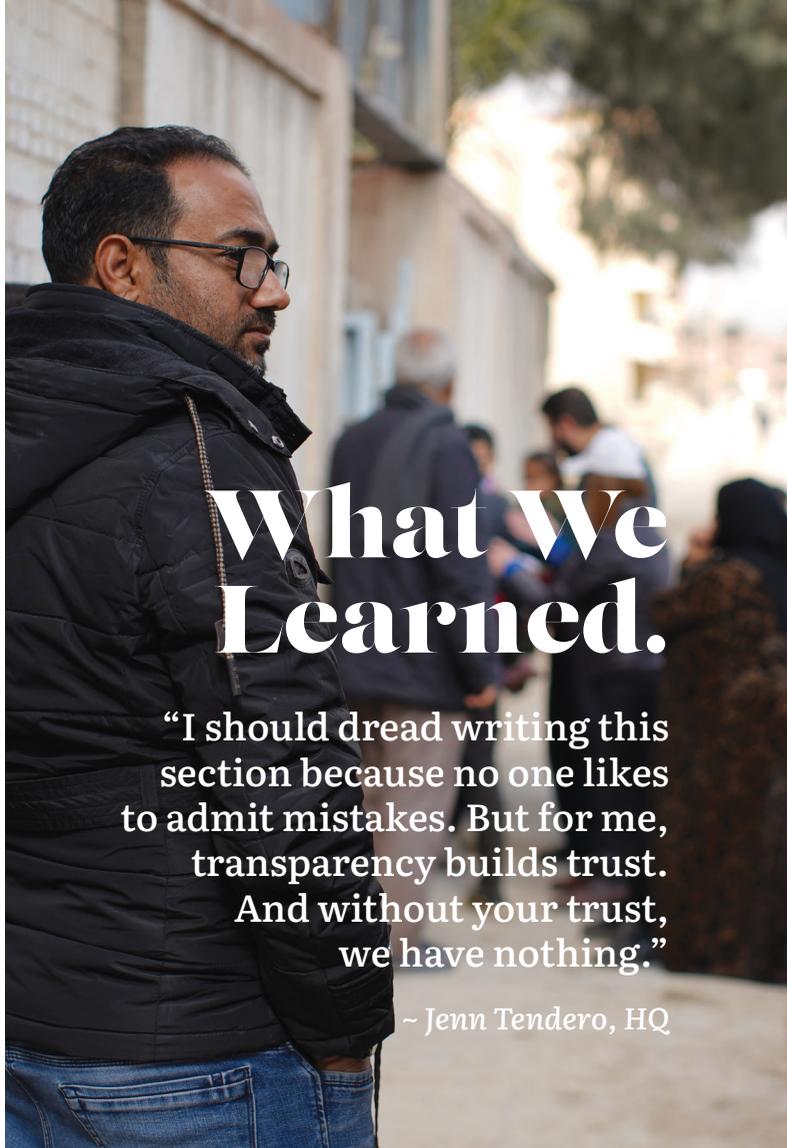
Short-term
Volunteers
(-64%)

14

International
Staff
(+0%)

14

International
Field Staff
(-33.3%)



What We Learned.

“I should dread writing this section because no one likes to admit mistakes. But for me, transparency builds trust. And without your trust, we have nothing.”

~ Jenn Tendero, HQ

1
Let's start with a real rookie mistake: because we hadn't ever sold actual merchandise in a Christmas catalogue and we didn't know how/if it would sell, we under priced everything (you're welcome) and couldn't send as much money to our projects as we should have.

Lesson learned: underselling ourselves - and you - doesn't pay.

2
We had a brilliant idea to partner with online retailers for Cyber Monday to give their customers the option to donate their Cyber Monday discount to Partners. We printed gorgeous proposals and sent them far and wide to retailers who had never heard of us. No one bit and we missed an opportunity to raise lots of money.

Lesson learned: relationships are gold.

Steve slept through a meeting at 4am (his time) with the International Board of Directors. Gulp.

Lesson learned: 4am is early.

We posted photos of our largest school rebuild to date, with the caption, “This is what happens when you let men pick the paint color.” Which turned out to be true, but not in the snarky way we thought. The Syrian fathers who rebuilt the school researched the effect that colors have on children affected by trauma. They discovered that pink and sky blue have a positive effect on students ages 7-15. So they petitioned the local council for permission to paint the school pink and give students a feeling of optimism and hope when they came to school.

Lesson learned: context matters.

In March 2020, two of our team members crossed the border into Syria so they could accompany our hospitainer to its destination outside of Idlib Governorate. We had no idea the border would close behind them. It took six days to evacuate them. Then they spent six more days zigzagging across the world in order to return to their respective countries as airport after airport shut down.

Lesson learned: assume nothing.



The pink school near Raqqa, Syria.



17

...media mentions.

170,779

...visits to our website.

436,284

...engagements on social media.

“We don’t just measure success on how much money we spent and what was distributed, we measure it on the long-term impact for the people that we have helped.”

~ Steve Gumaer, *The Arab Weekly*



Making voices heard.

Each time our work is written up in a publication, discussed on a podcast, or televised to the world, more kids affected by conflict get more help they desperately need and deserve. Here are some of the places that happened in 2020.

Newsweek



 INDEPENDENT

NEWYORKPOST

METRO

WORLD

THE CHRISTIAN POST



 THE GLOBEPOST
NEWS THAT MATTERS

Innherred

BRAVERY

The Telegraph

The Gisborne Herald



The Arab Weekly

INSIDER
MONKEY



Our Story.

What started 27 years ago as a simple decision to support a young girl orphaned by conflict in Myanmar has grown into a global movement of people choosing to respond to hate with love.

1994



Partners Relief & Development is founded when Steve and Oddny Gumaer meet Rose Mu for the first time and commit \$30 a year to supporting a young orphan.



2008



Cyclone Nargis devastates Myanmar's Irrawaddy Delta and 138,366 people die. Partners rapidly scales up and assists **over a quarter of a million people over the year.**



2012



An eruption of violence in western Myanmar leads Partners to **begin working with the Rohingya**, one of the most persecuted people groups in the world.



2016

After 22 years working towards free, full lives for children affected by conflict in SE Asia, **Partners begins assisting in the Middle East**, distributing tarps in Aleppo, Syria.



2017

Genocide of the Rohingya by the Myanmar Army forces 700,000 to flee to Bangladesh where Partners launches its **largest emergency relief effort** to date within days.



2020

Amidst a pandemic and shutdown of international borders, our global community of supporters banded together to **assist almost half a million people** caught in conflict.





PO Box 1992, Grand Rapids, MI 49501 | www.partners.ngo