

Karam doesn't just give us the freedom to make our dreams a reality, but they show us how."

– Sabah (Karam Scholar)

BUILDING AN ALTERNATIVE FUTURE FOR SYRIA

2018 Annual Report



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KARAM
FOUNDATION

LETTER FROM THE CEO

Earlier this year, during a communications brainstorming session at Karam House Istanbul, we challenged ourselves to answer a question: **What's your dream headline about Karam's impact in the future?** We wrote lofty headlines that evoked a new future of Syria founded on dignity and freedom, led by the young people we are investing in today.

In contradiction, here are a few of the 2018 media headlines on Syria:

How Seven Years of War Turned Syria's Cities into "Hell on Earth" – CNN

Thousands Flee Eastern Ghouta as Army Advances – BCC

Conflict Displaces Almost 700,000 Syrians in Deadly First Months of 2018 – The Guardian

The Worst May Be Yet to Come in Syria – The Atlantic

These headlines, and the hundreds more like them, convey utter despair and hopelessness. Where does one go from here? How can we, as ordinary humans, act? At **Karam, the somber headlines stay in the background** as we respond with our daily work to make Syrian lives better today and for the future.

Our work, across Syria, Turkey, Jordan, and the U.S., is creating an alternative narrative to the one that is often told. In fact, **here are some of the headlines that could have also been written about Syria** over the last year:

Syrian Girl Trapped for Hours Under the Rubble Miraculously Returns to School

Teams of Syrian and American Teens Design New Prosthetics

Syrian Refugee Teen Goes from Child Laborer to Engineering School

Second Innovation Community Center for Syrian Teens Opens in Istanbul

Karam Foundation's programs made all these stories and more a reality.

These headlines underscore the resilience and courage of thousands of Syrians who are determined to live and succeed – despite the despair and loss.

In our 2018 Annual Report, you will read all about Karam's impact in numbers, which we analyze across maps, programs, and costs. More importantly, **you will read success stories from our youth – our future leaders – in their own words.**

We close our report with a letter from Siba: one of our 2,131 youth on Karam's pathway to leadership. Siba's story is brave and inspiring. **She is the future we are building together.**



Lina Sergie Attar, CEO of Karam Foundation, with students at Karam House.

This year we are investing in more education for children, more innovation for teens, and more sustainability for families. We are strengthening refugee communities in host countries so everyone has the opportunity to contribute with meaningful and positive impact. Along the way, **we will continue to deliver amazing new headlines about our future 10,000 Leaders** and all their incredible accomplishments.

You are an integral part of each and every headline. You are part of this global community we are nurturing with innovation and hope. None of these success stories could be written without your generosity. Thank you for building them with us.


Thank you for being on the journey towards an alternative, and better, future.

With love & gratitude,

Lina Sergie Attar

P.S. My dream headline for the future was: Syrian Refugee Wins the Nobel Prize. The brilliant young minds at our Karam Houses make me confident that this will be a reality one day.

We can't erase the horrific daily headlines about the Syrian tragedy. However, **we are committed to writing new headlines every day** about the remarkable people we serve. One day, our vision of peace, prosperity, and a world of endless possibilities for every Syrian youth will prevail.



**IN 2018, WE
IMPACTED THE
LIVES OF 49,187
SYRIANS.**

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Karam Team members in Syria distribute our annual Ramadan food baskets.

INTRODUCTION

For the past eight years, we have witnessed **one of the world's largest humanitarian crises**. Since 2011, more than 5.6 million Syrians have fled their homes, seeking refuge in neighboring countries including: Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq (UNHCR). In the midst of this chaos that is forced displacement, dreams are put on hold, sacrifices are made, and families are separated. Yet, the world begins to forget as time goes on.

Karam Foundation, however, remains at the forefront of delivering impactful and innovative programs to Syrian refugees. In 2018, we continued evolving our programs to ensure that they met the needs of the communities we served. We challenged ourselves by asking: **What if we gave everything to those who lost everything?** What if we gave refugee teens **every tool possible** to lead - **what** would they do and **who** would they become?

In response to these questions, we launched our movement to build 10,000 leaders in the next 10 years. **A leader is every Syrian that we empower to build a better future for themselves and their communities.** We accomplish this by providing Syrian refugee youth and families with access to innovative education programs, higher education, and training for competitive job skills and careers.

We are proud to say that Karam Foundation programs put **2,131 leaders** on their pathways to leadership while impacting the lives of **49,187** Syrians total. Our growing team could not have achieved this accomplishment without the support of our generous donors and Karam Family at large. Thank you for believing in us.



Karam House students enrolled in the "Flyingbots Supercharged" studio pose with their finished drones.

OUR TEAM

We are proud that our team members are part of the communities we serve. **Most of our programs are implemented by Syrian refugees for Syrian refugees.** They are

talented professionals: architects, engineers, teachers, and more. Meet our international team of self-starters, risk-takers, and change-makers!



61
PEOPLE ON
THE TEAM



83%
SYRIAN
STAFF

**7 IN
SYRIA**



**45 IN
TURKEY**



**9 IN
UNITED
STATES**





2018 Climb4Karam Team at the summit of the Panorama Ridge in British Columbia.

1,798
NEW DONORS SUPPORTED OUR WORK!



Comedian and Talk Show Host, Chelsea Handler, with Karam CEO Lina Sergie Attar at a Karam Fundraiser in San Francisco.

“The young people touched by the Karam Foundation will be adults with skills, confidence, and a worldview that is just and equitable and inclusive. Their model is tried and true, and I have seen it in the lives it has transformed.” – **Michelle Ajami, six-time guest mentor and Karam Ambassador**

13 GUEST MENTORS TRAVELED 116 HOURS TO TEACH INNOVATIVE WORKSHOPS.

BUILDING LEADERS IN 2018

Karam House students and staff celebrate the final day of studios with a group photo.

Our core programs create pathways to leadership that take a refugee child, teen, mother, or father from **victim to leader**. Karam leaders are **problem-solvers, change-makers, and innovators** who are **driven to serve**. They know they must **build ideas together** and be **positive contributors** to their host communities. They are not passive bystanders but

have the **agency, skills, and courage to make social change**. They will build futures for themselves and for generations to come.

This year, we mapped out and tested these pathways and launched our movement to build 10,000 leaders in the next 10 years. Now we have 2,131 youth on their pathways to leadership.



2,131

FUTURE LEADERS



FOLLOW THEIR JOURNEYS!

SPONSOR A SYRIAN REFUGEE FAMILY

Karam's Sponsor a Syrian Refugee Family program provides refugee families in Istanbul and Reyhanli with a monthly financial stipend on the condition that

they send their children to school.

In 2018, we sponsored 339 children.



**166 GIRLS
SPONSORED**



**173 BOYS
SPONSORED**



100% FAMILIES
lifted from poverty.



49 CHILDREN
prevented from child labor.



44% CHILDREN
attending Karam House.



9 FAMILIES
reached self-sufficiency
(successfully exiting the program!).



Mohammed when he first went back to school in 2015.

“But now my dream is to become an electrical and communications engineer so that I can develop Syria and help the children of my country when I return.”

MOHAMMED’S STORY

My name is Mohammed. I’m 18 years old, and I’m from Aleppo, Syria - specifically Afrin. I came to Reyhanli, Turkey in 2014, so I’ve been here for about five years. I’m now in the second semester of my senior year, and I got a 3.7 GPA my first semester!

I immediately began working when I first reached Reyhanli: first as a blacksmith, then at a gas station filling up cars, and finally as a seamster in Istanbul, which I traveled to alone. **The work was so difficult, and there were days where I was standing for 24 hours.** I finally told my dad that it was too hard and that I’d rather go back to Reyhanli.

That’s when I got to know Karam Foundation. They were visiting my aunt, and my mom overheard that they support children who work, so she told them our story. One week later, we were registering for school. I was really nervous and shaking on my first day. **It had been forever since I last attended school, and I didn’t know anything — I even forgot how to write my own name.**

When I was working, I used to dream about becoming an engineer and how proud my parents would be, but I had no idea how I could do it. **Without this program, I would still be working, and my life would honestly be ruined. I would have lost my ability to dream.**



Mohammed and his siblings in 2018.

KARAM HOUSE

When we built Karam House Reyhanli, we knew we wanted to scale our innovative model. In 2018 we did just that. On September 30, **we opened the doors to our second Karam House in Istanbul** to reach hundreds more youth!

Karam House is a community innovation hub built specifically for Syrian refugee youth. It is a safe space where they work with mentors, develop competitive skills in technology, and design innovative solutions to solve real world problems.

The core curriculum at Karam House is co-developed with our partner NuVu Studio, an innovation school in Massachusetts. The curriculum is taught by our talented team of Syrian mentors.

At Karam House, youth also have access to advisers who offer guidance on higher education and lead college preparatory workshops. During the summer, visiting mentors deliver workshops on a wide range of topics including journalism, law, and entrepreneurship.



1,800 MEMBERS

from the community accessed both Karam Houses.



357 PRESENTATIONS

of student projects.



28 STUDIOS

held on innovative education.



522 YOUTH

attended innovative education studios (219 girls, 303 boys).

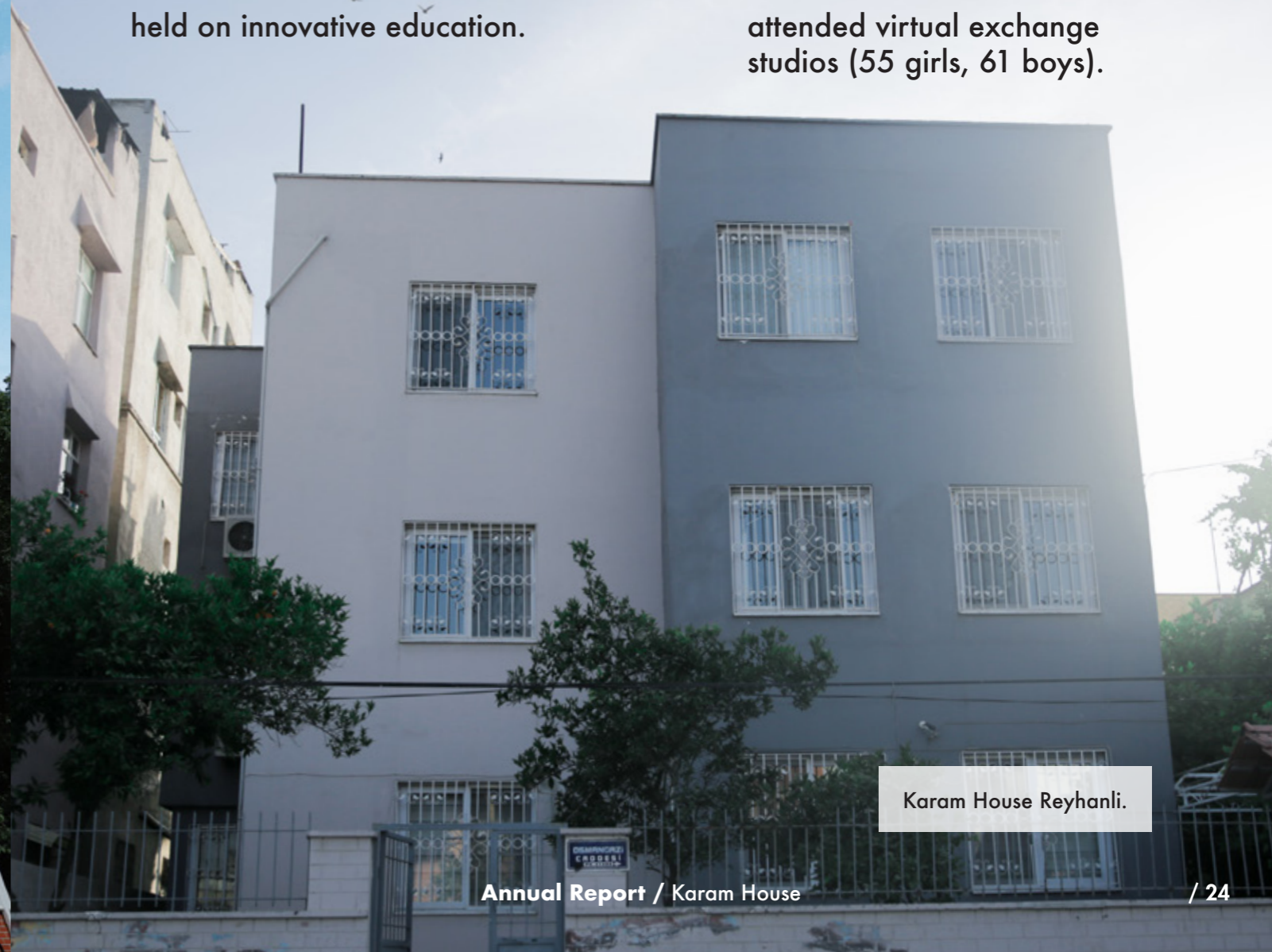


116 YOUTH

attended virtual exchange studios (55 girls, 61 boys).



Karam House Istanbul.



Karam House Reyhanli.

FROM PROTOTYPES TO PROSTHETICS

In 2018, Karam House and NuVu Studio participated in a virtual exchange powered by the Stevens Initiative. In one particular studio, Karam House students in Turkey collaborated with NuVu students in the United States on **building innovative yet inexpensive prosthetics for residents** of Reyhanli, Turkey. Here are two notable projects from the prosthetics studio.

THE CHANGEABLE LIMB

Mohammad, 7 years old, had both limbs amputated below the knee after being hit by a shell during the Syrian war. His left and right limbs are different sizes and still growing. This means that he needs to **change his artificial limb every year**. In response to Mohammad's situation, five students at Karam House collaborated with students in the United States on building the Changeable Limb: **a prosthetic that can adapt to Mohammad as he grows**. It has a changeable socket size and is extendable in length.



THE MOVEABLE CHAIR

Ashhad, 29 years old, was **diagnosed with quadriplegia**. Although his condition improved with physical therapy, his left foot remained weak, and he was unable to control his left hand. Upon moving to Turkey, Ashhad **worked as a photographer**, but his condition prevented him from being able to stand for long periods of time, impacted his

balance, and prevented him from walking long distances. Eventually, **Ashhad was forced to stop working**. To tackle these problems, two students at Karam House collaborated with American students on the Moveable Chair: **a device that allows Ashhad to balance while taking pictures in addition to resting after walking long distances**.



“If you have
creativity,
come here.”

ADEL'S STORY

My name is Adel. I'm 17 years old, and I'm from Idlib, Syria. I first came to Karam House last summer because my friends told me about it. At the time, there was a short workshop called "Writers of Reyhanli," and I decided to attend. I'm now in my second studio! **I like coming to Karam House because you gain a lot of skills that you can't get just anywhere, like coding and design.**

Before coming here, I only had access to language classes and school but not more than that. **Here, in my first workshop, I made a drone, a kind of airplane of sorts.** It was small, but the goal of the drone was to fly and put out fires. Here (points to drone picture) is the box that would hold the water.

In the future, **I hope to go to college and study law** because I'd like to be a lawyer. My dad was a lawyer, so it's something that I've always dreamed of and something that I love. Karam House has definitely helped me with this goal. As Syrians, our acceptance rate into college is very small, but I feel like I'm increasing my chances of getting accepted into college by coming here. **Everything at Karam House is great** - from the staff, to the friends I've made, to the workshops available.

If you have creativity, come here. Any idea you have, you can really develop it with your mentors and friends.



Karam Scholars host a workshop to guide Karam House students through the college application process.



**47 WOMEN
SUPPORTED**



**67 MEN
SUPPORTED**

KARAM SCHOLARS

Our Karam Scholars program provides Syrian refugee youth in Turkey, Jordan, and the United States with **scholarship opportunities** to advance their education, **access mentorship**

opportunities, and **attend workshops** on the application process.

This year, **we were able to support 114 young men and women** in accessing higher education.

**8 UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS
GRADUATED**

with degrees ranging from pharmacy, film studies, and medicine.



**5,472
VOLUNTEERING
HOURS**

completed by Karam Scholars.





ABDULRAHMAN'S STORY

My name is Abuldrahman. I'm from Homs, Syria, and I'm 20 years old. I'm studying electronics at Karabuk University. **When I first began university, I had a lot of financial problems.** That left me with two options - **quit school or find a job while studying.** I decided to find a job and continue my studies, but this decision really impacted my grades and my wellbeing. It was very difficult to balance time between the two.

I used to constantly think about how I was going to work and study at the same time until I was accepted to the Karam Scholarship. When that happened, I erased the idea of work from my mind and focused all of my time and energy on my studies. **After I got the Karam Scholarship, I noticed the difference immediately.** At the end of the semester, I got a 3.4 GPA!

The Karam Scholarship has motivated me to develop myself and have bigger goals. I used to just want to graduate. Now, I want to get higher grades, and I'm even thinking about graduate school!



**WE TRANSPORTED
115 GIRLS AND 101
BOYS TO SCHOOL.**

SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION

Karam's School Bus Transportation program transports Syrian refugee children in Reyhanli, Turkey to their respective schools, helping them

overcome a key barrier to education.

**This year, we transported 216
children to school.**



**FROM 0%
TO 76.19%
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE RATE!**

Gamila's Story

My name is Gamila Horana, and I'm 13 years old. I'm from Hama, Syria and am currently in 7th grade. **I only studied 1st grade in Syria, though, because we moved to a refugee camp.** We stayed in the camp for a year, which is where I finished 3rd grade. They let me skip 2nd grade because I knew how to read and write.

We've been in Turkey for five years now. When I first moved here, I was afraid because it was a new and unfamiliar place, but I like it a lot more now. **I think it's a beautiful place, and there's no war.**

This year, I started my new school, and I like it way better than my previous one. Everyday, I wake up at 7:00 AM. I change and go to the bus stop at 7:20 AM, and then the bus comes at 7:30 AM. It takes half an hour to get to school, but I like taking the bus because all my friends are on it, and we always talk or play cards.

I love going to school to learn.

Learning gives me the ability to read and to count, which is important to me. I can teach my brother at home the same things, and I can count how much I have to pay when I go grocery shopping. I actually was ranked third in my class! In my old school, though, I was ranked first, so **I hope to be ranked first at this school in the future.**



Gamila, in the red hijab, with the certificate she received for having perfect school attendance!



51 FAMILIES SUPPORTED.

Ahmad Aljelou and his son Mohamad with their new car they received through our Jumpstart program.

JUMPSTART

In 2018, our work expanded to the United States as we launched our Jumpstart program to **support newly arrived Syrian refugee families** in

various cities.

In its first full year, Jumpstart **supported 251 people** across eight states.



20% HOUSEHOLDS
were single-parent families.



20% FAMILIES
provided with
disability support.



120 YOUTH
connected to after-
school programs.

ALEEN'S STORY

Aleen comes from a family of five who were displaced from Syria and subsequently Turkey, which is where we first met her family. Aleen's father Mohammed was paralyzed during

the war in 2012: he was hit by sniper fire, which caused a permanent spinal injury. Through our Sponsor a Syrian Refugee Family program, we were able to send the children back to school. When they reached the United States, we continued supporting them through

our Jumpstart program: we were able to provide Mohammed with a wheelchair and accessible van that was needed to complete his rehabilitation. Now, Aleen and her two brothers can adapt to school and focus on being kids!

Read more about Aleen's story in her own words:

My family and I have struggled throughout the years, but my father has suffered the most as he's been bedridden for three years. When my family came to Turkey, I had to take care of my father and brothers while my mom went to work, **so I stayed at home instead of going to school.** I remember when Karam Foundation first came to my home to sponsor my family so that me and my brother could go back to school. It felt great being in school again!

When I heard that we were moving to America, I was really excited because it meant that we had a chance for a better future. Our biggest challenge when we arrived in Portland, Oregon was getting to know the area and learning the language. **I didn't understand anything when I started going to school, so I had to study extra hard to catch up with everyone.** It took me a year to really understand the language, become comfortable at school, and excel in my classes.

Now that I'm in 7th grade, I have made so many friends and am involved in a lot of activities. I like school a lot; my favorite subject is math, and I am getting straight A's in all my subjects. **When I grow up, I want to become a doctor and maybe specialize in spinal injury so that I can help people like my dad.**





SYRIA SCHOOL SUPPORT

As the war in Syria continues, it remains increasingly dangerous for children to go to school. At Karam, we believe that every child has the right to education.

In 2018, we sponsored **10 schools in Syria**, helping over **3,400 children** continue their education.

1,922 STUDENTS
moved onto the next grade.



150 STAFF
supported in a war zone.



259 STUDENTS
graduated high school.



180 HOURS
of Karam led activities.



NIVEEN'S STORY

Kawthar (Niveen's mom):

We were living in Damascus but **were displaced multiple times** because of the fighting. As a result of the displacement, the kids were cut off from school. I began to look for a teaching position, but the school was really destroyed. **Niveen became really depressed** because of how the school looked and how destroyed it was, **but Karam Foundation supported us in rebuilding.** Slowly, the school began to look better, so I brought Niveen to this school to get to know the girls. When she saw that we don't let the students miss out on anything, she acclimated to the atmosphere.

Niveen:

My name is Niveen. I'm in sixth grade, and I'm from Murak, Syria. I'm 11 years old. We fled our first home in 2014: I was six years old and in first grade. **I had just started school at that time and used to love it, but I stopped going because the government began shelling the entire town, including my city.**

A little while after my school was bombed, our house was shelled with rockets, too. **My entire family was buried under the rubble, and we were stuck there for two hours.** All I could think about were the stories from our neighbors – when story after story is told of entire homes being bombed and where the mother and father die while the kids survive.



When we were rescued, I found my mom, dad, and siblings, but I couldn't believe that they were all okay! **I was sad, though, because our home was destroyed, and we were forced to leave our town.** Every time we moved, everything would be destroyed by shelling. That is until we reached rural Idlib, which is where we settled down and began our life once again.

When I went back to school, I was afraid I was going to see a school that was destroyed – one with no windows and broken desks – but I saw something completely different. **The destroyed walls were fixed and repainted, and the windows were re-installed** so that we wouldn't get cold in the winter. Even the desks were completely new! **I was so happy that I wanted to spend all of my time at school.**

Every day I come to school so that I can play with my friends, practice my hobbies, and study. **I really like the teachers here because they make sure we understand the lessons well, and I know that they are here to help me accomplish my dreams.** I actually don't like when the weekend comes because I can't come to school!

EMERGENCY RESPONSE IN SYRIA

We provide sustainable solutions in response to both the long term and immediate needs of the communities we serve. In 2018, we continued our emergency aid projects to support families that were forcibly displaced inside Syria. Our staff on the ground delivered aid to **38,127 people in cities across Syria.**

In response to the alarming malnutrition rates among children in Eastern Ghouta in 2018, Karam Foundation partnered with the Directorate of Health in Rural Damascus and the Provincial Council **to make children's food locally.** These rates were a result of the brutal siege imposed by the Syrian regime: according to Al Jazeera, at least 400,000 civilians living in the region suffered for five years under the blockade – without access to water, food, and proper medical treatment. According to UNICEF, nearly half of those trapped in Eastern Ghouta were children.

In addition to **distributing 2,000 locally-manufactured food packets to children,** we shared the impacts of the ongoing siege on children's health and our response to the situation through multiple Facebook Live interviews, including one with Dr. Yahya from the Directorate of Health in Rural Damascus.

After the siege of Ghouta ended tragically with tens of thousands of people forcibly displaced from their homes to northern Syria, Idlib, **we stood by these families and continued to offer support: shelter and sustenance.**



**3,638
FAMILIES**
fed in Ramadan.



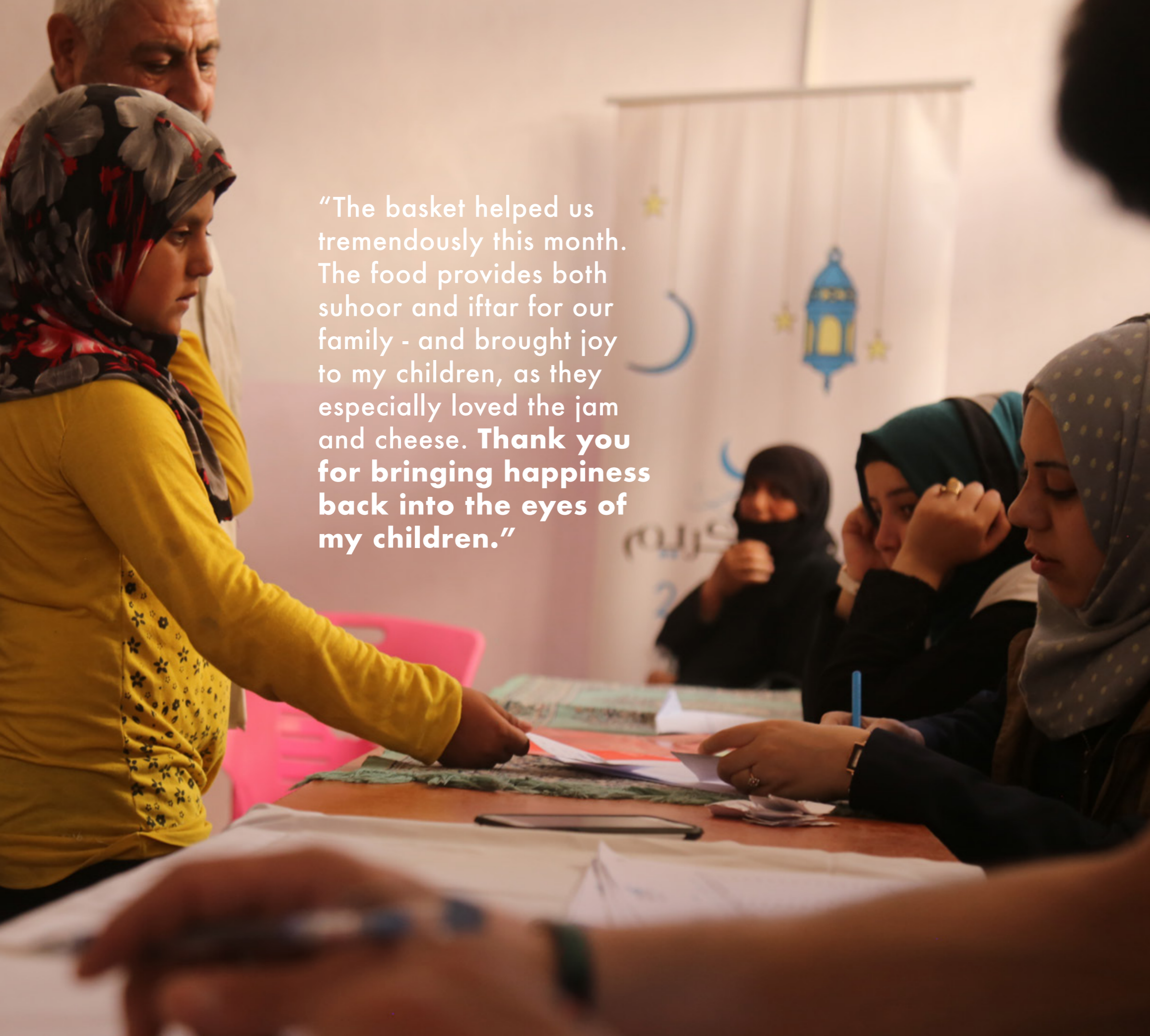
**4,041
CHILDREN**
fed who were
forcibly-displaced.



**2,000
BABIES**
fed under siege.



**382
PEOPLE**
supported with
basic-needs.



“The basket helped us tremendously this month. The food provides both suhoor and iftar for our family - and brought joy to my children, as they especially loved the jam and cheese. **Thank you for bringing happiness back into the eyes of my children.**”

KHALDIYE'S STORY

Khaldiye, a mother of 5, was displaced from her hometown of Hamouriye, Eastern Ghouta. When we met Khaldiye and her family, they were living in Atareb camp after fleeing intense bombardment only 3 months prior. Her family was dependent on humanitarian assistance, as her children were too young to work and her husband was unable to.



FINANCIALS

Last year, we had planned and saved ahead to invest in a year of scale and impact. We spent \$3,946,348.82 on expanding our programs, building capacity, and opening Karam House Istanbul. Here is our impact in numbers.

IN
2018
WE
RAISED
\$3,121,588!

PROGRAMS

Innovative Education:
\$1,688,513.57

Sustainable Development:
\$23,867.17

Smart Aid:
\$1,443,478.03

MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL: \$473,279.06

PROGRAMS: \$3,155,858.77

DEVELOPMENT: \$293,456.06

MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL

Staff salaries & Professional fees: 70.43%

Rent, Office Equipment, and Supplies: 19.26%

Marketing: 5.25%

Travel & Meals: 4.50%

Credit Card Fees: 0.56%

Mohamad Ojeh
Treasurer

Maya Khater
Director

Rasha Mansouri
Vice Chair

Omar Salem
Chairman

Razan Massarani
Director

Lina Sergie Attar
Founder/CEO

Aya Samman
Secretary

Anna Nolan
Director

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BOARD EMERITUS
Ghazi Jeiroudi

LETTER FROM A FUTURE LEADER

Dear Karam Family,

My name is Siba. I'm 16 years old, and I'm in 10th grade. I'm from Hama, Syria, but I've been in Reyhanli for about six years now. **The journey here was a bit hard, to be honest, because we were smuggled here,** and we passed through a lot of different landscapes, like mountains. All Syrians came like this in the beginning.

My uncle's family traveled to Reyhanli before us, so we stayed with them until my dad found a house. Once he did, **we began to establish our new life in Reyhanli.** Little by little, my mom went back to work. She's a journalist, and my dad is now in trade. He used to run a school in Syria as he studied teaching, but we had to leave the school behind.

The hardest part about leaving Syria was leaving our home. We had just built a new house but abandoned it because of the bombings in our area. Leaving was so hard, and my family didn't all come together - my sister actually stayed in Syria, despite the bombings. Even now, I meet a lot of students who have forgotten what Syria means to them, but, for me? I would return if I could - to my house, to our people, and to our language.

I first heard about Karam House through school. They brought us to Karam House to get to know more about it, and I ended up registering for Genius Camp, which turned out to be really fun! I got to meet new people, experience new things, and learn new programs, like Rhinoceros 3D and Fusion360.

Karam House is honestly amazing. I'm in a Turkish school, and it was really hard to acclimate there. It was a new and very difficult language, so, at the end of the week, I would come here.

When I was little, **my dream was to become a cinematic director,** and Karam House is definitely helping me with this goal. My favorite project that I completed here is actually a film that my friends and I made about our lives; through this project, I learned more about film, how to use Premier, and how to use movement to share an idea.

To me, Karam House is a place for innovation, friendship, and amazing experiences, but the best part about Karam House is the people. I've been in a Turkish school for two years, so I love that I'm

surrounded by Syrians here. We Syrians understand each other and treat one another with respect. My peers have really become like my sisters, and the mentors are so kind as they allow you to discuss your ideas. **It's such a beautiful thing to be a part of Karam.**

With love,



Siba

