



Annual  
Report

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# KARAM


A FOUNDATION FOR  
THE FUTURE OF SYRIA.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

5	What We Made Possible During Impossible Times
6	Meet the Karam Team
9	Our Values
11	Putting the Team First
14	Karam Families
18	Innovative Education
26	Karam Scholars
30	The Future Leaders are Here
32	Karam Clubs
34	Emergency Support
35	Keeping the Community Safe
38	Celebrating Refugees: From Our Home to Yours
42	Financials
46	Our Supporters
48	Board of Directors
50	Letter from a Leader: Meet Nour
52	2021 Snapshots





“In one of the hardest years of my life, while stuck at home, I found Karam House. Suddenly, **I wasn’t alone anymore.**”

-Diana, 15, Future Leader



## What We Made Possible During Impossible Times

In a recent grant application, I came across a tough question: *Tell us about a time when you faced your biggest challenge. Where do I begin?*

Karam's work balances precariously on a cliff of uncertainty: a decade-long war, a broken homeland, mass displacement, devastated Syrian communities, and a generation of young refugees growing up with little opportunity. While the uncertainty of the global pandemic shook me along with the rest of the world, I had already learned that uncertainty was a part of life. Certainty can be pulled out from under you in an instant when a bomb drops on your home, when a family member is detained, when you decide to flee the violence and move to a new country, when you have to go to work instead of school, or when you are

mistreated and unwelcomed. Life is fragile. It always has been.

What we learned as Syrians is that when everything you know is stripped away, you start anew.

Leading Karam through the pandemic was definitely one of my biggest challenges, and being a refugee-majority organization that supports refugees compounded the anxiety. The Karam House team struggled through the lockdown in Turkey. In isolation, some began reliving the traumatic experiences of fleeing the war. Others were facing the challenges of working from home while taking care of their young children.

We prioritized our team's wellbeing first so they could continue serving the community. We examined our programs

through the lens of the new reality. We decided to take the challenges of social distance and quarantine, and make them an opportunity.

Our goal was to build a virtual community. From teaching the design studios online, to distributing laptops to Karam Scholars, and supporting the refugee families' access to Wi-Fi, we made it work. None of the kids dropped out of school. And as of summer 2021, over 20% of the teens accessing Karam House programming are located far from the two locations. In January 2020, if you had asked me if this was possible just one year ago, I would have answered no, with certainty.

We approached you, our generous supporters, early on and explained: refugees need you now more than ever. And you responded with a level of compassion that I will never forget. Thank you for making the impossible possible, once

again, with us.

I hope you find hope, beauty, and joy in our 2020 annual report.

We are proud of what we have accomplished. Thank you for walking on this journey with us, especially during a year like no other.

I wish you, your families, and your communities health, safety, freedom, and peace.

With gratitude,

Lina



## Meet the Karam Team

As a refugee-majority organization, our team and volunteers are our greatest asset that make all that we do possible. From knowing what the community we serve actually needs to what it takes to make it happen, these hard-working professionals will stop at nothing to see the greater community thrive.

In 2020, this team consisted of 62 employees, interns, and volunteers who combine a wide range of unique backgrounds, experiences, skill-sets, and qualifications. Meet the Karam Team:

Ahmad Alabed	Hadi Alhousami	Lina Sergie Attar	Omar Bozan	Tutku Çavuşoğlu
Ahmed Alkhateeb	Hala Nasrallah	M. Mamdoh Aldaggag	Rama Aljendi	Uzma Rentia
Ahmad Bandakji	Hamsa Seyidisa	Majd Abu Hantash	Rama Majzoub	Vathek Ahdaly
Alaa Alali	Hany Alsheekh	Majd Alabd	Ramzi Naja	Vicky Samia
Ammar Boudani	Hazar Almaghrabi	Mohamad Alsayed	Rashad Ramadan	Wdian Al-haj Rahmon
Anas Darkal	Hiba Kabbani	Mohammed Atrash	Rebecca Moore	Wisaal Khatib
Annie Lazarski	Heba Alnajjar	Mohamed Bekri	Samer Elmansur	Yisser Bittar
Assalah Shikhani	Husam Alshikhoni	Muhammad Hidan	Sarah Faour	Yusuf Gazel
Aya Saboh	Katie Centurione	Nada Hashem	Sima Alkanawati	Zeydan Alielfurah
Bilal Havut	Lainey Schmidt	Necah Diab	Suliman Faour	
Dehham Albarho	Lama Alkhidare	Noor Shaker	Taha Jilati	
Essam Safia	Leena Zahra	Nur Razaz	Tarek Addas	
Feras Shashaa	Lilah Khoja	Ola Hajjar	Tina Al-Khersan	










## WHO WE ARE

**54%** Female

**46%** Male

**82% Syrian**

## WHERE WE'RE FROM

-  Iraq
-  Lebanon
-  Pakistan
-  Palestine
-  Syria (Aleppo, Damascus, Deir Elzor, Hama, Homs, Idlib, Latakia, Rakah)
-  Turkey
-  United States



# KARAM

MEANS GENEROSITY IN ARABIC

We are creating a generation of future Leaders capable of transforming the future of their families and communities, wherever they are and wherever they may go.

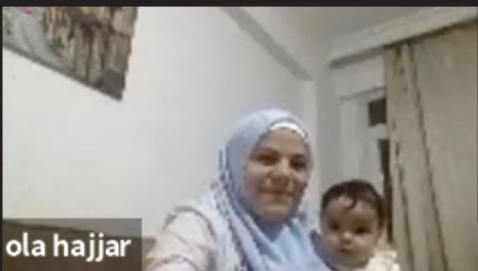
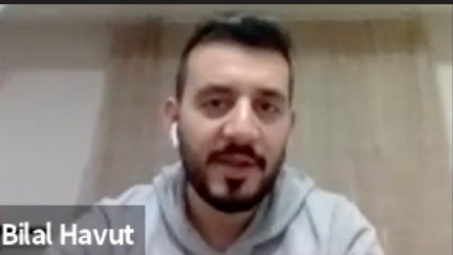
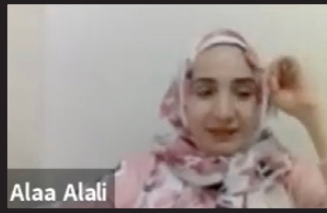
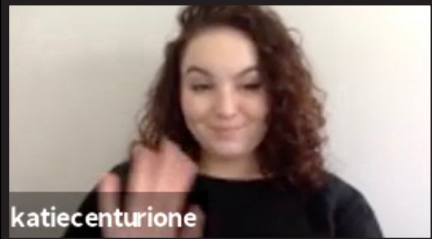
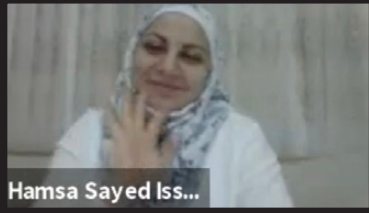
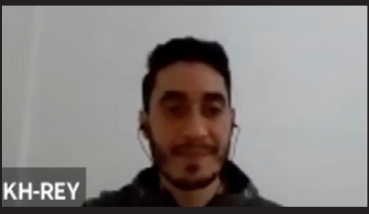
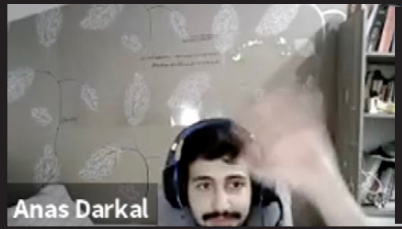
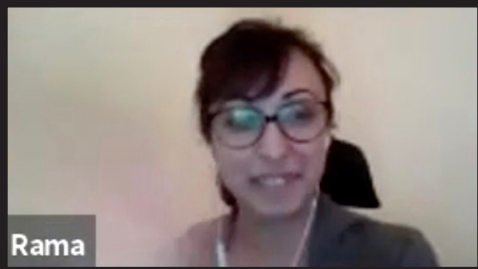
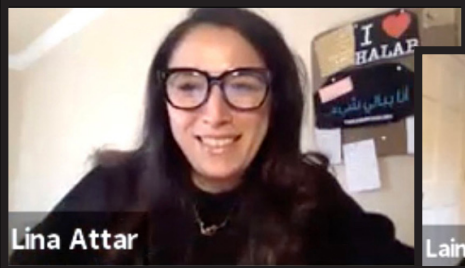
**AUTHENTICITY**

**GENEROSITY**

**EXPERTISE**

**BRAVERY**

# Our Values



**58**  
**HOURS**  
were spent  
bonding with the  
Karam Team!





## Putting the Team First

2020 was a difficult year for many across the globe, and it was particularly challenging for us at Karam.

From a financial perspective, we knew early on that with so many people losing their jobs and barely able to provide for their families, support to Syrian refugees and our programs will be heavily impacted.

From a health standpoint, closing Karam House was a must to keep the community safe, but we were terrified of the implications this would have on the youth and families who know the space as their second home. We were also concerned about the traumatic impact of quarantine and isolation on refugee and displaced communities.

So in this moment of great adversity, we grounded ourselves in our values and acted with authenticity, bravery, expertise, and generosity.

Starting with our team, we assured everyone, wherever they worked from and whatever their work was, that we value what they do, and they do not need to worry about losing their job.

Additionally, despite the many variations in working days and time zones, we made time for global all-team meetings so that we continue to feel close despite the distance. Sometimes, we would have guest speakers, others it would be an internal conversation about recent events. Whatever that hour entailed, what mattered is that we were connected, and we were one.

Furthermore, we ensured that professional mental health support was available to the Karam House teams in Reyhanli and Istanbul to help anyone struggling during this time of uncertainty.

Only when we knew that our Karam team, spread across various states and countries, was taken care of did we feel confident and prepared to face the hurdles that COVID-19 had imposed on our programming, and on the community. And as you read through this report, you'll find that not only did we overcome the obstacles, but we found windows of opportunity that allowed us to broaden our reach and empower even more Leaders for the future of Syria.

# A Virtual Karam House Welcomes You

IN 2020 KARAM HOUSE REACHED

97  
Families

1076  
Students

174  
Scholars

Ankara  
Antakya  
Gaziantep

Iskenderun  
Istanbul  
Kirikhan

Reyhanli  
Sanilurfa  
Yayladagi



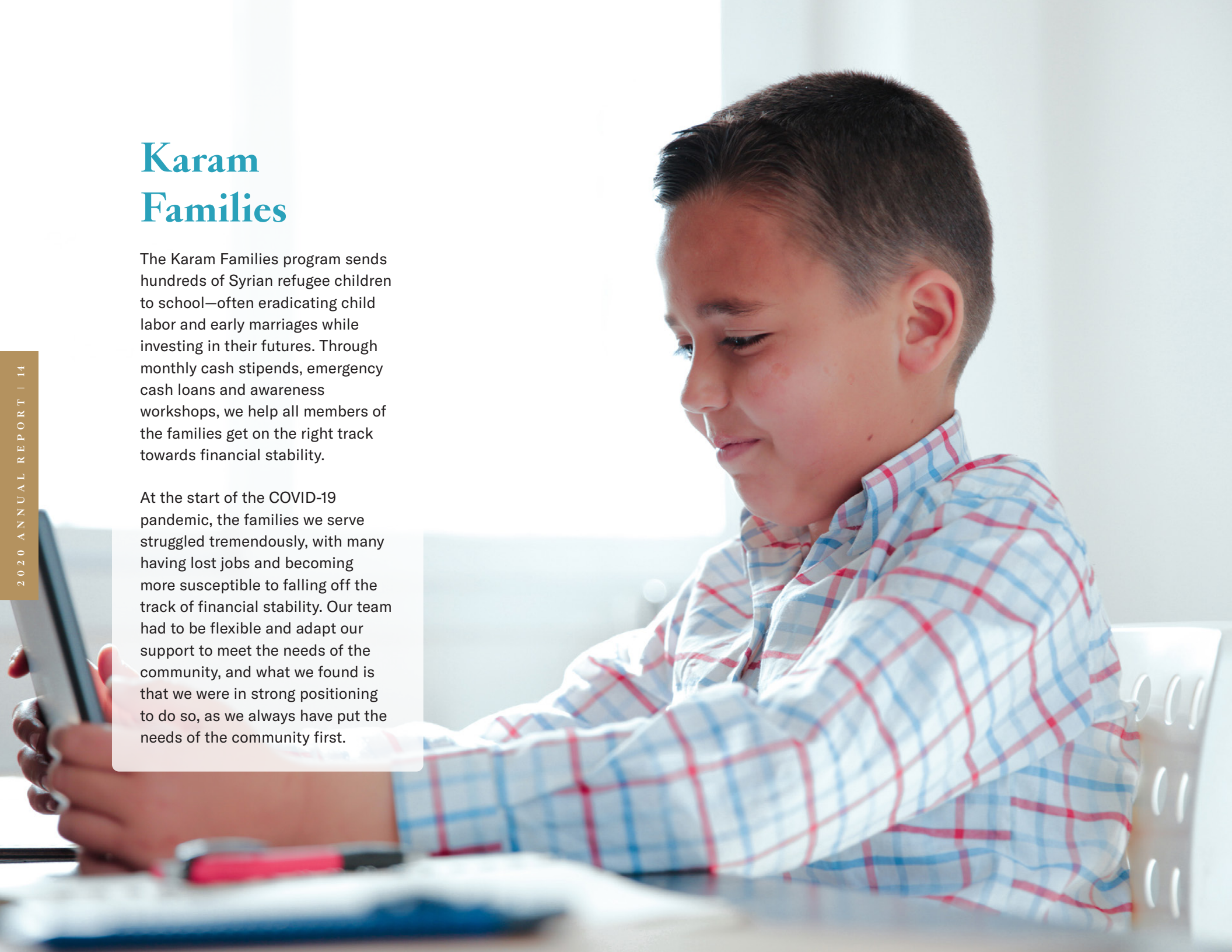




# Karam Families

The Karam Families program sends hundreds of Syrian refugee children to school—often eradicating child labor and early marriages while investing in their futures. Through monthly cash stipends, emergency cash loans and awareness workshops, we help all members of the families get on the right track towards financial stability.

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the families we serve struggled tremendously, with many having lost jobs and becoming more susceptible to falling off the track of financial stability. Our team had to be flexible and adapt our support to meet the needs of the community, and what we found is that we were in strong positioning to do so, as we always have put the needs of the community first.





## MAJOR CHALLENGE WE FACED IN 2020:

Unable to conduct home visits and intake due to social distance safety protocol measures.

## THE OPPORTUNITY WE FOUND:

Communicating with families actually became easier, as we used video calls to not only check-in but to host online awareness sessions and receive updates on progress and needs.

**97%** of the families had no computer or smart device to access online education. Our team distributed tablets to the families to ensure there was no interruption in the education progress.





**347**

children and **97** families  
supported in the program



**5**

families reached financial  
stability and graduated from  
the program



**236**

kids remained in school  
despite financial hardships  
and remote learning difficulties



**1**

child was pulled  
from forced labor



**45**

families were supported with additional emergency  
aid as a result of the global pandemic





"We always say that we are all one big family, and this year truly tested that. Beyond our typical support, it was important for us to stay in touch with the families via phone and video calls, and assure them that we will always be here for them. Despite the pandemic and all the hardship of 2020, we were able to give the families a constant sense of security and safety that all will be okay."

-Hazar, Karam Families Team



"The biggest impact I felt in 2020 was right at the start of the pandemic, when families were losing their jobs and starting to face challenges in affording basic necessities. Our immediate response was to listen, be present, and offer support how it was needed. This was met with messages of gratitude from those we stood by, thanking us for being there and offering hope when they were scared for what the future held. It was really inspiring to see how much of a positive effect we can have on the families."

-Lama, Karam Families Team



## Innovative Education

Innovative Education at Karam House breaks the boundaries of refugee youth education — pushing youth to reach their full potential as the changemakers of tomorrow. The dedicated team of Innovative Education mentors implements the NuVu-Karam curriculum that guides students through hands-on in-person and virtual studios exploring topics such as technology, urbanism, architecture, social impact, education, fashion, health, journalism, and media.

In the studio, refugee teens ask questions, challenge obstacles, and build their ideas. Not only do they dare to dream, but they dare to make those dreams a reality.





Part of the magic of the Innovative Education studios at Karam House is the access to state-of-the-art material, supplies, and machinery. But with limited internet connection and access to supplies as basic as a glue gun, let alone the absence of laser cutters and 3D printers, keeping the spirit of innovation alive during the COVID-19 lockdown posed a challenge for both the future Leaders and the team.

Despite distance, the team came together (virtually) to innovate solutions. Karam House Istanbul and Karam House Reyhanli were now simply Karam House, and this united team regrouped and re-envisioned the collaborative studio environment, all while the youth awaited anxiously.

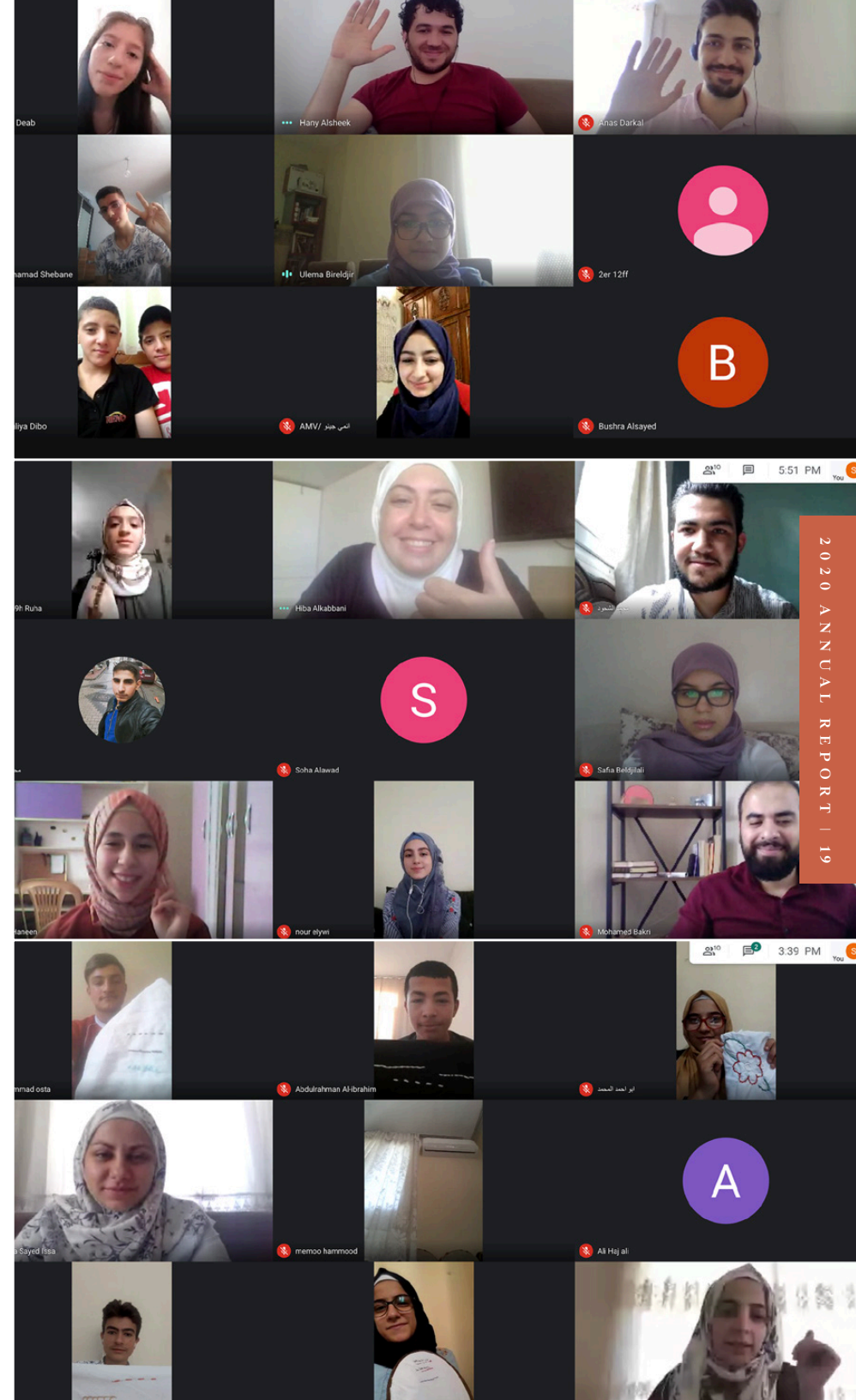
**How can we keep the leaders engaged, even in 3-hour online sessions?**

**What topics would 14-18-year-olds want to explore now, at home, under lockdown?**

**Is it even possible to offer a full Karam House experience away from the space?**

Questions that never needed to be pondered before were the core of the team's concerns, but they're not called the Innovative Education team for nothing. After much brainstorming, coordinating, and planning, kits with scissors, skewers, cardboard, rulers, and other supplies were safely distributed to the students and served as the confirmation they long-awaited for— the studios were back!

What we found was that remote studios were actually an opportunity we were missing out on. Now, we bring Karam House to youth all across Turkey. We expect the online program to continue even after our safe return to Karam House, and our hope is to provide a safe space and innovative environment for Syrian refugees longing for a sense of belonging and acceptance, no matter where they are.







# 772

projects created in 2020!



# 501

new students attended Genius Camp remotely, during the COVID-19 pandemic



# 297

new students joined Karam House, from 11 Turkish provinces



# 25%

of Karam House students are remote learners who live all throughout Turkey



THE MENTORS TAUGHT **77** STUDIOS,  
ATTENDED BY **1076** STUDENTS





## WHAT'S IN THE INNOVATIVE EDUCATION KIT?

To make up for the physical makerspace at Karam House, the Innovative Education team assembled and sent out kits that contain all the tools needed to participate in studios and complete a project.

The basic kit contains a set of tools such as cutters, scissors, glue, paper, and precision rulers, while studio-specific kits contain materials that are needed for each studio itself, such as wax paper, zip ties, or scalpels.



"This is my third year as a Karam House mentor, and I've learned that helping students find their voice is one of the most critical parts of growth in the studio. That's why I am always on the hunt for new, innovative, and virtual tools that allow me to connect with the students in authentic ways.

When I find something that helps me create personal interactions with the students, it's an incredible feeling because I want the students' needs to continue to be met in the virtual classroom. Coupling this with rigorous opportunities allows the kids to continue to take risks and think beyond all boxes has made me a better mentor, even during lockdown."

-Hani, Innovative Education Mentor



"2020 was a very difficult year filled with many challenges. I learned to allow myself to listen to my feelings, my needs, and my fears, and to reflect this with the students. Through this practice, I can now help the students process their emotions and better express themselves when they are feeling overwhelmed. Despite the fact that we couldn't spend time with the students in-person, we were there for them in other ways. The lockdown distanced us in many ways, but we also found opportunities to be closer than ever."

-Hiba, Innovative Education Mentor





## DID YOU KNOW?

### THE LEADERS ARE LAUNCHING A SATELLITE INTO SPACE!

In collaboration with the European Space Agency and Open Cosmos, Karam House students are taking part in a cutting-edge program based on the central theme of space and space science, combining mathematics, electronics, engineering, physics, and project management.

This one-year-long journey will culminate in launching a satellite into space that will not only be partially constructed and programmed by the students, but will also broadcast their message into space!

Taking part in Phoenix studio has been a very nice experience. From the start, the name of the studio really attracted me, and it only went uphill from there. We learn all about space and how to use math to calculate cool things like the speed of a missile or a car. All in all, it's been really fun and I'm learning a lot!

-Rua, Future Leader

## FAVORITE STUDIOS OF 2020 INCLUDE:

### TECHNOLOGY

**Code Jam:** Students use C++ to write competitive interactive games for others to play.

**Space Crafts:** Students dive into the challenges space poses on the human body and design wearables to increase the comfort and performance of astronauts during spacewalks.

**Mobile Furniture:** Students create furniture pieces for the SpaceX Dragon to prepare for the human-operated launch, with respect to the research initiatives each mission aims to explore.

### COMMUNITY

**Memory Haven:** Students explore past memories and come up with creative ways to document the feelings they had during their unique experiences.

**Quarantine Comics:** What were things you intended to do and could not because of the COVID-19 pandemic? Express these interesting stories in your own way, and capture them through comic drawing!

**Thresholds:** Students identify a particular threshold or series of thresholds, operating as a transition between a series of spaces, and design them as interior installations.

### MEDIA

**Socially Engaged Illustrations:** Students select a social issue that is particularly meaningful and important to them and create an in-depth illustration visualizing a character affected by the issue in the present day, and a future in which the problem is resolved.

**Devices for Activism:** Students select a meaningful social issue for them and design and implement devices to be placed around town or physically worn to bring awareness to the cause.

**Together We Campaign:** Students translate their thoughts into visual messages to launch a social media campaign focusing on the importance of learning and future planning while staying at home.

### EXCHANGE

**Where I'm From:** Despite the distance, Karam House students (virtually) came together with students from Woodstock High School in Vermont for an exchange studio. Students get to know and express themselves through texts, poems, and videos, and exchange this information with the new friends they made.



## FIRST STEPS AS FUTURE LEADERS

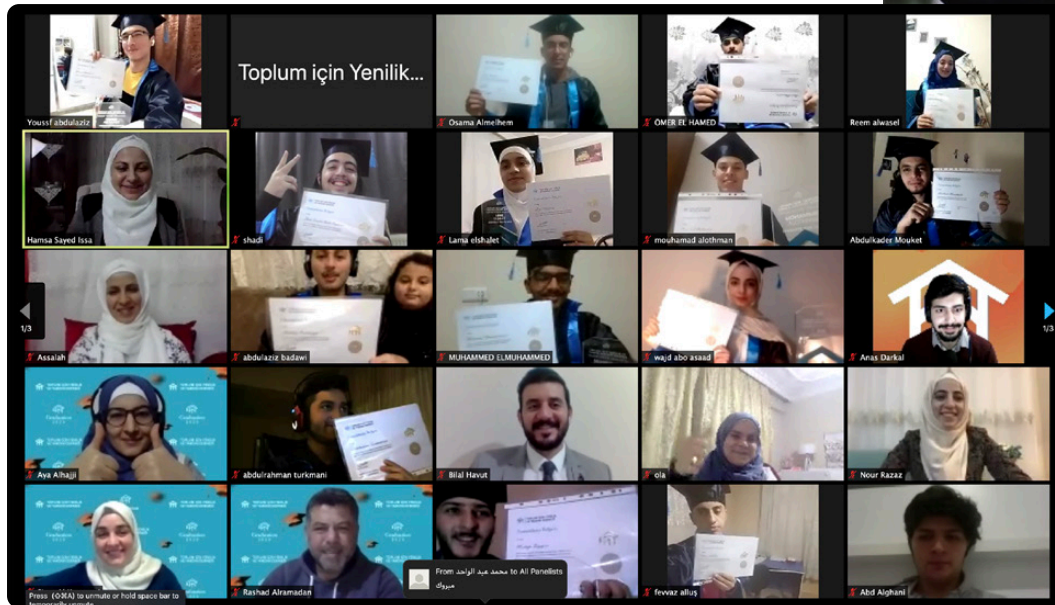
In late 2020, 58 changemakers put on their caps and gowns and sat in front of their computers to attend their virtual Karam House graduation ceremony. From five countries and six different time zones, family, friends, and of course, the Karam team were all in attendance to cheer on the graduates and learn about their accomplishments and successes during their Karam House journey.

With musical performances, video interviews, and artistic displays from the graduates and greater community in Turkey, it was a celebration that marked their time at Karam House and reminded everyone that no matter where we are or how apart we may feel, Karam House will always unite us.

"My time at Karam House was fun and so different than anything else I've ever experienced before. I built my skills and learned who I am here. I met amazing people and became much more social and less isolated. This helped me build strong relationships not just at Karam House, but even outside of the space.

Now I'm in a constant state of development, always doing my best to be my best."

-Abdulkader, Karam House Graduate





## Karam Scholars

Karam Scholars guides Syrian refugee students in Turkey and Jordan on their journey to leadership through higher education. With scholarship opportunities, hands-on workshops, and peer-to-peer interactions with current college students, we strive to empower a generation of young adults with the tools needed to build their bright futures.





The strain COVID-19 put on higher education was felt across the globe, and this is especially true for the refugee scholars in Turkey and Jordan. For many students, this was their first experience with remote learning. Most scholars did not own laptops, so even accessing lectures—let alone absorbing them — wasn't easy. And with parents losing their jobs due to the lockdown, many of the scholars had to find jobs and work to help their families.

In order to best support the scholars, we distributed laptops to all those who needed them so that they can continue to attend classes.

### **WE DISTRIBUTED 41 LAPTOPS TO STUDENTS IN TURKEY AND JORDAN.**

Those who were forced to work had limited availability in the summer to fulfill their volunteer time. Therefore, we made the decision to count any online course or workshop they took towards this requirement in an attempt to provide them with more time and maximize their study, work, and personal growth efforts.

Beyond logistical support, college students need interaction. After all, what is a college experience if students don't have opportunities to explore beyond their comfort zones? So we held online forums for all the students —wherever they were— to discuss various topics relating to their education and experience as college students. We also conducted check-in calls with the students to hear about their progress, what issues they were facing, and offered them guidance on how to make the most of their year of remote learning.

### **THE TEAM HAD OVER 100 ONE-ON-ONE CALLS WITH STUDENTS!**



In 2020,



**174**

college students received financial support.

**57**

females

**117**

males

**149**

in Turkey

**25**

in Jordan



**6576**

hours were spent giving back to the community or on personal growth!





“The pandemic wasn’t at all easy on university students. In fact, they were heavily affected by the impact of COVID-19. The technical problems and the psychological state associated with studying from home were the biggest obstacles for the scholars, but through our continuous communication with them, we tried as much as possible to help them overcome these difficulties.

We encouraged students to think outside the box when it came to their college experience. Some students started taking supplemental courses to learn new skills or enrolling in certain courses to get deeper dives into their curriculum. What we found is that the scholars were able to be distinct in their achievements and receive high rankings and honors. Many of the scholars who graduated this year did so at the top of their class. We’re so proud of the work they’ve done and can’t wait to see what they do next!”

-Yusuf, Team Karam Scholars



# The Future Leaders Are Here



#10000LEADERS





Since 2018, We've Empowered

2855  
LEADERS

Our goal:  
10,000 Leaders by 2028



## Karam Clubs



Karam Clubs are student-run initiatives that operate at Karam House. Covering a wide array of focuses, the clubs allow participants to further shape their skills and learn more about their passions. Here, students are able to apply and further explore all they learn in the studios, while putting their leadership skills to the ultimate test.



### BASMATUNA

The journalism club, reporting the latest news, opinion pieces, and investigative articles to the local and greater community. Through Basmatuna, students have opportunities to research, write, edit, and even illustrate their articles and content.



### KARAMCAST

KaramCast allows students to let their voices be heard through the medium of podcasts. Students write, record, and produce their podcasts to share stories and content that matters.



### FIKR

Meaning “thought” in Arabic, Fikr is Karam’s discussion club that meets to dissect and analyze topics with the goal of expanding one’s horizons, learning new ideas, and challenging preconceptions.



### TEMPEST TEAM

Bringing the spirit of theatre to Karam, Tempest Team students rehearse and act out plays and scenarios written entirely by them.



## 2020: A YEAR TO REMEMBER

One day at school, Karam House's journalism club, Basmatuna, visited us to write a report on Syrian students in Turkish schools. Because of my love and passion for photography, my eyes kept following the photographer with his camera in hand.

I set the goal of becoming a photographer and enrolled at Karam House. I finished Genius Camp and started attending Karam House studios. It was an incredible experience.

A few months later, Basmatuna opened slots for new members to join, and I immediately enrolled as a photographer for the club. It was one of my happiest moments. I even remember when I got the news: January 18, 12:30 sharp.

The first article I worked on was titled "*Machines for Good Cause.*" We did a report on one of the prosthetic centers in Reyhanli, and I was the photographer. My dream was finally coming true. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to finish the report due to the pandemic. The center stopped allowing guests and we had to stay home. The good news is that Basmatuna kept going online. At first, there were some difficulties in coordinating and meeting, but eventually, we got the hang of it and were able to resume our work.

Now that we were online, I also joined some of the other Karam Clubs. In Fikr, I did some self-development and learned skills like public speaking. In KaramCast, I also worked on podcast production. All of this gave me more experience which helped me to start volunteering with the communications team at Karam!

Volunteering was the most beautiful thing I did this year. I loved the work of the team, and I have a goal that one day I will return and become one of the employees at Karam House, specifically on the communication team, and I will pay forward all that Karam House gave me.

- Mohammad, Future Leader



## Emergency Support

In the wake of the COVID-19 global pandemic, Karam's response placed the health, safety, and wellbeing of our team, their families, and the community as a top priority.

As such, our commitment to Syrian refugees drove us to act immediately. In March and April of 2020, we reached out to the families and communities we serve in the United States and were devastated to hear that they were greatly impacted by the pandemic. Many had lost their jobs. Family members were feeling isolated, and this was compounded by the fact that many had disabilities resulting from the Syrian crisis. And with many households without an internet connection, navigating online learning was difficult.

*"I work as a custodian in college, but since the pandemic, my hours were slashed. I am the sole provider for four children—one of which is a disabled daughter."*

*"The biggest struggle of coronavirus has been transportation. My son has a condition that makes him unable to walk or talk, and we need to visit the doctor regularly. Since I don't have a car, we run the risk of getting sick every time we need to leave the house. You'd be surprised to hear that not all the drivers are wearing masks. I just hope the situation gets better so that he can stay healthy and continue visiting the doctor."*

*"We're all in the house together, but no other good has come out of this."*

We pulled up our sleeves and got to work. First, we offered local resources and information to help them within the areas they were struggling with most. In parallel, we launched our COVID-19 emergency response campaign to provide gift cards for these families to secure basic living essentials.

**THANKS TO YOUR SUPPORT, WE WERE ABLE TO RAISE \$613,101.94 AND BRING RELIEF TO THESE FAMILIES IN A TIME OF MOST NEED AND EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO PRIORITIZE THEIR STUDIES DURING A YEAR OF UNCERTAINTY.**





## Keeping the Community Safe

We do our best to give everything to those who lost everything. This is often in the context of opportunity, providing mentorship, educational support, and impact-driven programming to the communities we serve. But our promise of radical generosity entails so much more than all of this.

In the midst of the global pandemic, masks quickly became a part of everyday life. And in doing our part to provide support to those who need it, we worked with The Women Behind the Soaps in Syria and Turkey to create face masks and make them a staple at the Karam Shop. Not only were we able to keep these displaced women employed and empowered during a global pandemic, but we also provided protection to communities in the United States.

These masks support the local Syrians who weave the Sayeh silk fabric, the women who stitch them, and the refugees supported through our programs. Thank you for staying safe and for masking with Karam!



## A SAFE RETURN TO KARAM HOUSE

As an organization, we took the responsibility to stop the spread of COVID-19 given our available resources, and many of our actions were taken immediately. Karam House Istanbul, Karam House Reyhanli, and Karam Foundation HQ all closed their doors, and our entire team worked from home. In every step and every decision, the health and safety of the team, as well as the local and global community, remained the sole priority.

But as the months progressed, keeping our goals in mind and following the health guidelines of the Turkish ministry, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the World Health Organization, we started to outline a phased plan for a safe return to Karam House.

### **VOLUNTARY PHASE**

Karam House and Karam HQ are closed to the public but open for team members who want to come and work in the space.

### **SHIFT SCHEDULE PHASE**

The Team is divided into subteams to maintain proper social distancing. Each subteam comes to Karam House and Karam HQ twice per week.

### **PARTIAL/HYBRID TEAM RETURN**

Full team returns to work at Karam House and Karam HQ three days per week and remotely two days per week.

### **FULL TEAM RETURN**

Full team returns to work full-time out of Karam House and Karam HQ. Karam House continues to be closed to the community.

Karam House's logistical team worked on the frontline to ensure everyone's safety. Some of the safety measures taken include:

- Temperature check at entry.
- Disinfecting of shoes and bags at entry, and of high-touch items every four hours.
- Installation of disinfection dispensers outside of each room and common space.
- Ventilation of air every fifteen minutes.
- Health guideline posters (in Arabic and English) placed all throughout the space, and optimal health practices on video loops in main areas.







“With the crisis of the pandemic and the long quarantine we all went through, it was necessary to take action—once safe to do so— that brings new hope in light of all the difficulties we were facing. Karam House is not only a place where staff and students meet in order to provide the available services, it is a space that houses feelings, ambitions, and dreams. The team’s in-person return was the first step in being able to bring this energy back.”

-Husam, Karam Logistics Team

“The return of the Karam House team brought the building back to life. I spent many of the past months coming into Karam House during the volunteer phase, and most of that time was spent alone. So the return of the team was very special for me, and very beautiful. Of course, safety concerns are always present, but we’ve implemented strict measures and follow the guidelines of the CDC, WHO, and the Turkish Ministry of Health. All in all, I feel confident in our decision to reopen and in our phased plan. Our priority will always be to provide a safe environment for the team, and we are doing everything we can to ensure that.”

-Essam, Karam Logistics Team



## Celebrating Refugees: From Our Home to Yours

On June 20th of every year, we at Karam come together to celebrate the accomplishments of Syrian refugees wherever they may be.

With the coronavirus pandemic, we, like many other organizations took our annual event to Zoom. This was a scary move for us, to say the least. We were worried about the implications a virtual event might have on attendance, program, special guests, and of course, donations. But we planned, rehearsed, and did all we could to put on an event that was equally uplifting as it was engaging. And you didn't disappoint.

Be it current donors, new faces, team members from around the country and world, and even the Leaders themselves, everyone showed up for a *A Shared Humanity: From our Home to Yours*. Because of you, it was our most successful World Refugee Day Benefit to date, and we were awestruck by the magnitude of your support.

## SPECIAL GUESTS FOR THE EVENING INCLUDED

Hip-hop artist and Activist Omar Offendum

CNN Journalist Hala Gorani

Singer Nano Raies

Actor Riz Ahmed

Artist Molly Crabapple

and many others!







A message from longtime Karam Supporter Riz Ahmed



**170**  
inspiring donors raised a grand total of  
**\$195,921.46**





## THE JOURNEY

The Journey is Karam's monthly giving program made up of some of our most passionate supporters. Through their contributions, this connected group of global givers makes a difference in the lives of so many refugee children and families across the world.

Journey Members consistently go above and beyond to help us achieve our goals and build a generation of future Leaders. We are eternally grateful for your support and so happy you took this journey with us.

### Members of The Journey receive:

- Pathways, The Journey's monthly newsletter
- Journey Magazine, a quarterly digital magazine
- Exclusive pricing on the Karam Shop
- Early access to Karam news and updates  
*...and so much more!*

BY THE END OF THE YEAR:

**182**

members joined The Journey

These supporters contribute

**\$11,402.06**

monthly towards Karam programs.





## MEET THOMAS!

I'm a first-generation Syrian American born to Syrian immigrant parents from Damascus, Syria, and I am currently finishing my training to be a doctor. I used to visit Syria every summer and spend three months there, which helped me fall in love with the beautiful country and its even more beautiful people.

I'm particularly passionate about education, especially for those in need, and seeing that I could have a chance to help put a Syrian brother or sister through school was an opportunity I absolutely could not turn down. After I saw how Karam was going directly to areas with Syrian refugees and helping them secure their future, especially children, I knew I had to offer support.

My favorite part of being a member of The Journey has been seeing the newsletters, reading Journey Magazine, and being able to follow the progress of these beautiful young men and women as they chase their dreams. Nothing is more satisfying than watching beautiful, innocent souls become accomplished individuals.

It's important for me to be a part of The Journey because I want to make sure I help as many Syrian youth and families reach their dream careers and passions, and help build the next generation of Syrian Leaders.

I believe that a country is defined not by its geographic borders, but by its people. And the prosperity of its people, particularly the young and upcoming generation(s), is what will most accurately predict that country's success. Hence, I support The Journey in order to be a part of the rebuilding of my beautiful country and its people.

## Financials

When you give to Karam, the impact of your donation goes beyond the monetary amount. You support an organization that prioritizes the following values:

### Uplifting Refugees

We want the families, scholars, and youth we support to feel empowered and emboldened.

### Sustainable Aid

We don't do handouts. Instead, our work is grounded in long-term investments in the future of the community, with impact for generations to come.

### Expertise

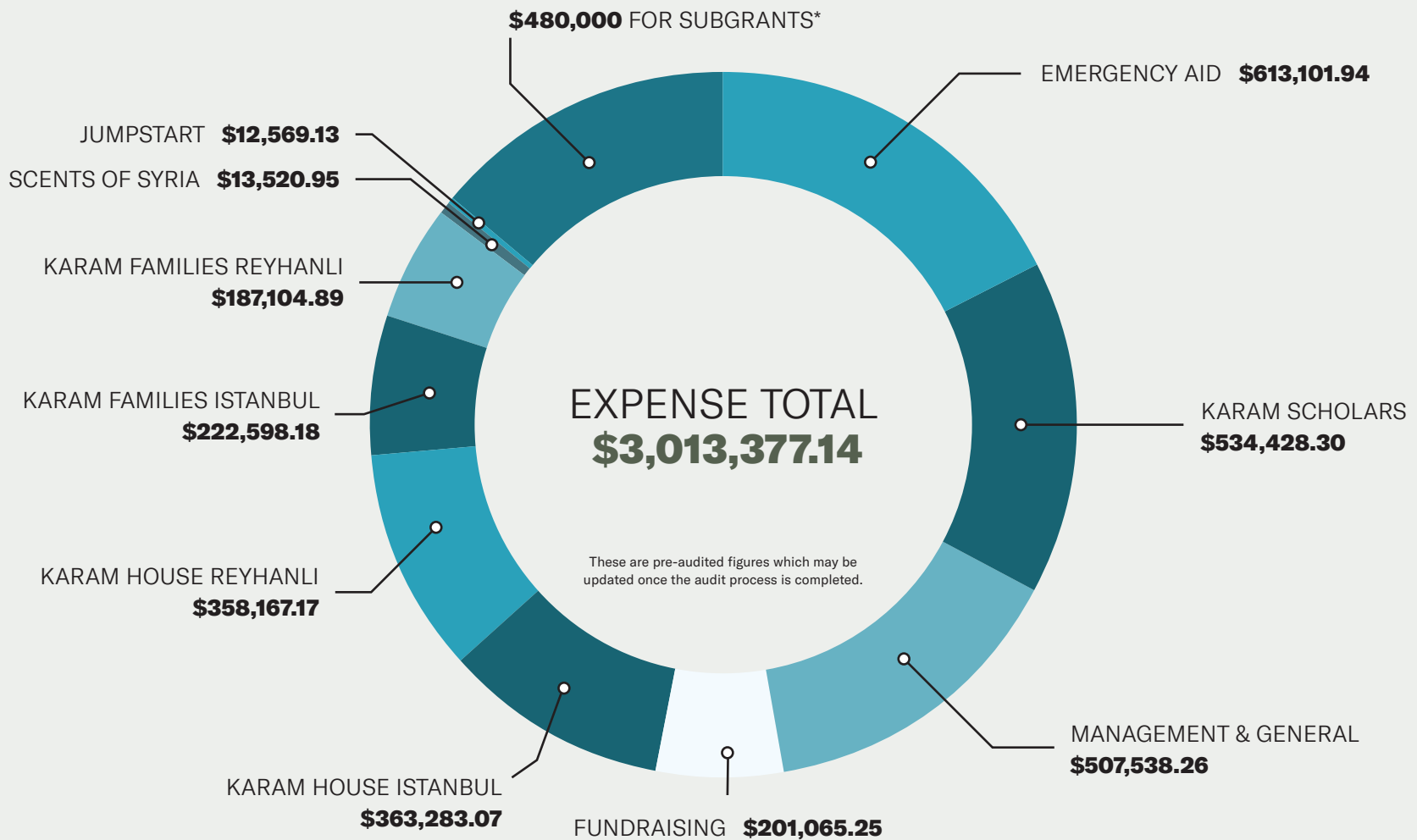
With over ten years of experience in the refugee space, we know exactly what the needs of the community are and how to make support possible.

### Community-led Initiatives

Our programs are implemented and managed by members of the community we serve.



## IN 2020, WE RAISED \$3,167,216.89 FROM 6,235 DONATIONS



\***What is this?** Every year Karam partners with other funders to support NGOs and initiatives that support refugees in Turkey and displaced persons in Syria, such as a prosthetics lab in Aleppo and Idlib.

# 900

donors  
participated  
in **five** major  
campaigns.

# 12

**multi-year commitments totaling \$1,138,300**

We're fortunate to have generous donors who express their loyalty over the course of multiple years, allowing us to better plan for growth and scaling across the organization.

# 1735

donors returned to Karam in 2020  
after more than two years since  
their last gift.

**Our World Refugee Day campaign was the  
most successful ever, bringing in**

# \$195,921.46

**from 170 donors!**



Thank you to our donors for your continued support and took Karam on as part of their giving in a rather difficult year.

## Our Supporters

In one of the hardest and most challenging years many of us have faced, you, our inspiring and passionate supporters, had our backs and kept us going. Your determination to continue striving for a better future for Syrians empowered us to find opportunities for our programs and even expand our reach.

Your radical generosity isn't lost on us, and neither is the reality of our ever-changing world. The obstacles imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic are far from over, but with you by our side, we promise to do all we can to continue our mission and unravel new possibilities.

Giving Range	Number of Gifts	Percentage of Total Giving
\$100,000+	10	36%
\$50,000 - \$99,999	11	18%
\$25,000 - \$49,999	4	4%
\$10,000 - \$24,999	26	10%
\$1,000 - \$9,999	234	15%
\$500 - \$999	192	3%
<\$500	5758	15%

### In 2020, we had:



**6,235**

DONATIONS



**3,551**

RECURRING  
DONORS



**637**

FIRST-TIME  
DONORS

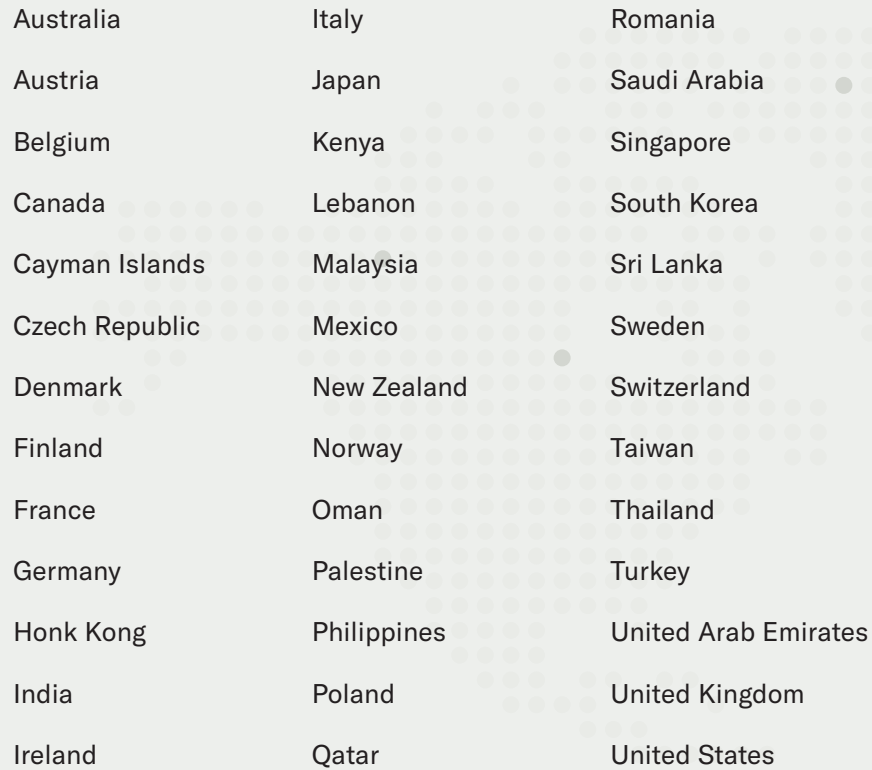


**12**

MULTI-YEAR  
COMMITMENTS



## BREAKDOWN OF GIFT BY COUNTRY



Australia	Italy	Romania
Austria	Japan	Saudi Arabia
Belgium	Kenya	Singapore
Canada	Lebanon	South Korea
Cayman Islands	Malaysia	Sri Lanka
Czech Republic	Mexico	Sweden
Denmark	New Zealand	Switzerland
Finland	Norway	Taiwan
France	Oman	Thailand
Germany	Palestine	Turkey
Honk Kong	Philippines	United Arab Emirates
India	Poland	United Kingdom
Ireland	Qatar	United States

## 2020 Board of Directors

Our board brings unique expertise to assist and help guide us on the pathway of building a better future for Syria.

### **Lina Sergie Attar**

Founder/CEO

### **Omar Salem**

Chair

### **Rasha Mansouri**

Vice Chair

### **Mohamad Ojeh**

Treasurer

### **Aya Samman**

Secretary

### **Maya Khater**

Director

### **Razan Massarani**

Director

### **Anna Nolan**

Director

### **Mamak Shahbazi**

Director

In 2021, we were thrilled to welcome three new board members: John O' Farrell, Sana Mustafa, and Sharad Samy.







At the end of 2020, Omar Salem stepped down from his duties as Chair of the Board. He continues to serve on the Karam Board as Director. We thank Omar for always going above and beyond for Karam and Syrian refugees, and look forward to welcoming Rasha Mansouri as our new Chair.



## Letter from a Leader: Meet Nour

Moving to a new place is very difficult. You leave all your friends, your school, and the places you know so well all behind and come to a country where you don't know a single thing. No friends, no familiar faces, nothing. That's how I felt when I was forced to leave Syria and come to Turkey. How was I supposed to find my place and fit in with a new community that I knew nothing about?

It was hard, but the only place I really found myself was in Karam House. The overall atmosphere here makes me feel like I have to participate in discussions and speak my mind. But I didn't have to — **I wanted to.**

Here, it was the first time that I felt learning could actually be fun. I would count down the days until it was time to go to Karam House again. The skills I acquired here are skills I have used and will continue to use in real life.

When the pandemic hit, Karam House had to close down, but that didn't stop us from continuing the work we do. To be honest, I was shocked (in a good way!) at

how awesome the online studios were. Even though we were all spread apart, the mentors managed to make the studios interactive and easy to follow along with, despite anyone's resources.

One cool thing that came from online studios is that both Karam Houses merged. So we were able to spend time with the kids from Istanbul, take studios together, and make new friends. Even when we go back to Karam House in person, we'll still see our friends in Istanbul via online studios.

Now, I feel confident in my communication skills and know that wherever I go, I can make friends and meet new people. I'm so grateful for my experience at Karam House. I will use everything I learned here to build and create a bright and hopeful future.

-Nour, Karam House  
Reyhanli, Future Leader





After a year of global uncertainty, we extend a big thanks to our supporters. Whether it's by continuing your donations, attending our events, reading our newsletters, interacting with us on social media, or even by sharing our mission with your friends and families during a year of infinite Zoom calls, your support kept us going in a challenging and unprecedented time. With every act of solidarity, you showed us that we are on this journey together. Thank you for caring about Karam's mission and for your dedication to supporting Syrian refugees. We will always be inspired by your radical generosity.



Second annual virtual event hosted by Omar Offendum!



World Refugee Day: Creating a Community of Hope



Welcome the New Board

We're excited to welcome John O'Farrell, Sana Mustafa, and Sharad Samy as our new board members, and Rasha Mansouri as Karam's Board Chair.

## 2021 Snapshots

41 graduates bid farewell to Karam House.



Innovative Education Graduation

28 students in Turkey and Jordan graduated university!

We were a launching partner with Good Chance Theatre, sending Amal on her 8000km journey from Gaziantep!



The Walk with Amal



Scholars Graduation



**All-women virtual panel commemorating Syria's past decade.**



**Ten Years of Revolution: Loss, Hope, and Action for the Future of Syria**

Clarissa Ward, Lina Sergie Attar, Waad Al-Kateab, Wafa Mustafa, Josie Naughton, Ghalia Rahal

**Ten Years of Revolution**



**Karam in new geographies**

**13** provinces in Turkey.  
**61** remote Innovative Education students.



**New Catalyst reach**

Scholarship support now includes students in Finland, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, and South Africa.




**Continued support for refugees**

**316** children in Karam Families reached; **455** people total.

**Our founder is one of 21 finalists for the Elevate Prize (powered by MIT Solve)!**



**Elevate Finalists**



**We returned to Karam House!**

The Turkey team now works from Karam House five days a week.

**Our team is growing**

We welcomed six new team members across Turkey and the US.

**BE ON THE  
LOOKOUT FOR  
MORE DETAILS  
IN OUR 2021  
ANNUAL REPORT.**

**[www.karamfoundation.org](http://www.karamfoundation.org)**

Karam Foundation is a 501(C)3 Non-Profit Organization

Federal Tax ID: 1548241-37

**GIVING SINCE ♥ 2007**