



THE AZRAQ CENTER // 2019 REPORT

A PROJECT BY
THE SYRIA FUND, HELPING REFUGEES JORDAN,
AND NACHMYAT EASTERN BADIA COOPERATIVE





ABOUT THE AZRAQ CENTER

Founded in 2014, The Azraq Center is an academic enhancement program providing remedial education and enrichment opportunities for Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians in South Azraq, Jordan.

The Azraq Center hosts 200 students from pre-K through Level 6. We offer daily instruction in Arabic, English, Math, Science, IT, Art, Music, and more for some of the most vulnerable children in Azraq.

Our program aims to benefit the wider community through regular outreach, awareness sessions, humanitarian aid distributions, and other activities.

The Azraq Center is a 100% donor-supported program run in collaboration with the US-based NGO The Syria Fund, the UK-based Helping Refugees Jordan, the locally-based organization Nachmyat Eastern Badia Cooperative, and many generous friends and supporters.



Tented community in Azraq, Jordan

SOUTH AZRAQ

In 2012, over 15,000 Syrians sought refuge from the war in Syria and settled in the small, rural town of Azraq, Jordan. Once a desert oasis and important crossroads between Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Syria, Azraq today is an impoverished town with high unemployment and low levels of education.

The influx of refugee families nearly doubled the population of the town, putting strain on all sectors of the economy.

While initially families found affordable housing and jobs in agriculture, Jordanian government sectors could not take on the sheer increase in population.

Access to quality education remains a high priority across Jordan and specifically in Azraq. The Azraq Center was established in 2014 to ensure that all Syrian children have a seat in a classroom. It has grown into a thriving enhancement center, allowing children to catch up to their appropriate grade level and succeed in the formal education system, while developing a deep love of learning that will stay with them as they grow.

EDUCATION IN JORDAN

When the refugee crisis first began in 2012, most Jordanian government schools did not have space to accommodate Syrian children. Many children missed 3 or more years of school - between leaving Syria and settling in Jordan - before they were offered a spot in public schools.

Today, many public schools across Jordan, and in the town of Azraq, operate on a double shift system - providing a morning session for Jordanian students and an afternoon session for Syrians. While this is an important step in guaranteeing students a spot in the classroom, it has weakened

the overall education system. The double shift provides a shorter day for all students, Jordanian and Syrian, and many teachers are often new and inexperienced.

Dropout rates are high and access to higher education is still extremely limited. Students face many barriers that keep them out of the classroom, including the need to work, early marriage, psychological burdens, and more. Many children have missed too many years of school and have fallen too far behind to integrate into the government schools.

The Azraq Center is committed to eliminating the barriers that keep children out of the classroom. Our program is designed to enhance and support students in the government system, and provide opportunities for any child - Syrian or Jordanian - still outside of formal education.



Students Hadeel and Angham



48%

of registered Syrian refugees in Jordan are between ages 0-17

85%

of refugees in Jordan live below the poverty line

THE AZRAQ CENTER CURRICULUM

The Azraq Center utilizes the curriculum developed by the Jordanian Ministry of Education and supplements it with activity-based learning and other techniques to ensure students are learning, growing, and succeeding.

Remedial Education

We focus on the core academic subjects of Arabic, Math, Science and English, aligning closely with the Jordanian Ministry of Education curriculum and the Public School pacing. We collaborate with the public school to identify academic and behavioral challenges and tailor efforts to improve them.

Enrichment Classes

In addition to the core subjects, The Azraq Center provides classes in Music, IT, Art, History, Physical Education and more to supplement learning. We collaborate with other organizations to host special programs and events throughout the year.

Trainings and Life Skills

We host trainings and workshops for our teachers, parents, and caretakers. We partner with other local charities or host volunteers who bring specific skills and activities to provide enrichment for the wider community.

After-School Programs and Community Learning

The Azraq Center is expanding its programming in the afternoons to reach underserved groups in the community. Qualified teachers and instructors will be recruited to host adult and teen literacy classes, High School exit exam prep, Boys and Girls Clubs, vocational trainings and other activities.



OUR STUDENTS: BY THE NUMBERS

205

Registered
students
ages 3- 15

56%

Girls

44%

Boys

90%

of students maintain
a grade point average
of 85% or higher at
the Government
School

60%

of students have
attended our
program for 3+ years

2019 PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

MONTESSORI-INSPIRED EARLY EDUCATION

Thanks to the support of the Blossom Hill Foundation, The Azraq Center launched a first-of-its kind program in Azraq: a Montessori Early Education Center!

This the only early education center in South Azraq and it incorporates the proven Montessori learning method into the classroom, something never before seen in this small, rural town. **Here's how we did it:**

Partner with an accredited Montessori School

We partnered with the Modern Montessori School in Amman, Jordan to conduct a 180-hour, government-recognized Montessori teacher training for 11 trainees.

Set up a classroom

Using a local carpenter and manufacturer, we sourced all of the required Montessori and classroom materials in Jordan.

Spread awareness of the concept

We conducted outreach and awareness sessions for parents to learn about Montessori methodology. 30 Syrian and Jordanian children were enrolled for the inaugural class.

Open the program

The program officially launched this Fall with huge support from the whole Azraq community!



2019 PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS



POETRY & ART WORKSHOP

In collaboration with the US-based non-profit Voices of the Children, students from The Azraq Center participated in a poetry and art workshop over a six-month period.

Students crafted poems centered around the theme "What Is Home?" The poems were exchanged with a student group in Geneva, Switzerland and both groups read each other's poetry and interpreted it into visual art.

Finally, the two school groups took their drawings and combined them into a large-scale mural that was shared at both centers and in multiple locations in the US, Jordan, and Switzerland!



2019 PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

PICK UP, DROP OFF, & SCHOOL LUNCH

The Azraq Center is committed to eliminating barriers that prevent children from accessing education. We provide daily pick up and drop off with our dedicated bus to make sure that children have access to transportation.



We also provide daily lunch to all of our students, prepared by a dedicated school cook. Making sure that every kid has a meal while at the Center ensures that their stomachs are full and they are ready for learning!

STUDENT COUNCIL

The Azraq Center held elections to nominate class representatives and student leaders! Student Council members help organize activities and come up with new ideas for the center!



2019 PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

BOOK CLUB

A generous donation of Arabic novels helped inspire our students to read more this year! We set aside special time during the week to allow students to read and discuss their books with their peers.



EID CELEBRATIONS

We spent the major holidays together with special activities and group dinners during Eid al Fitr and Eid al Adha! Celebrations included food distributions for all of our students' families.

MORNING LINE UP

We gather every morning together to share the news of the day, highlight stand-out students, do a little exercise, and dance!



2019 PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

HUMANITARIAN AID

The Azraq Center supports our students' families and the wider community through regular aid distributions throughout the year including food, hygiene, medical, winter prep, and more.



FOOD & HYGIENE

Food distributions include items like oil, rice, tea, beans, and more. Distributions are designed to provide two weeks of dried food for a family of six. Hygiene products include soap, shampoo, feminine hygiene products and diapers.

WINTER AID & MEDICAL

During winter months, we provide heaters, fuel, and other essential items. We are also able to respond to emergency or medical situations for individual families in need.





SUCCESS STORIES



HAJAR

WRITTEN BY ANOOD, IT TEACHER

On the first day of the school year, one of our new students, Hajar, was listening to my class introduction with particular focus. She told me she loves computers but had never used one in her life. She saw on television a lot of ways to use them but she herself had never had the opportunity. She asked with disbelief, “Will you really teach me how to use a computer?”

There are many beginner students like Hajar and they all now love IT class. They are happy and they love to go home and tell their parents about the things they learned on the laptops. As the semester continued, I noticed Hajar really trying to improve and learn more. Even during break times at school, Hajar would come to me and ask if she could get extra help. She is one of my most enthusiastic students.

However, despite Hajar’s enthusiasm to learn, she was actually really afraid and lacked confidence. She was always hesitant to use the laptops, so I worked with her to overcome her fear. I showed her how simple it was to use the laptop correctly and safely. Several of her peers also helped to show her the correct way to work and to not be afraid!

Soon, Hajar began to build her confidence and improve in class. Not only was she succeeding in the assignments, but now SHE was the one helping her peers, versus the other way around!

Now Hajar is at the top of her class. I am very happy to see her progress and look forward to her continuing to develop her love of learning and confidence on the laptops!

TAHA & KHALID

**WRITTEN BY YUSRA,
ARABIC TEACHER**

I started at The Azraq School in November 2018 as an Arabic teacher for levels 4-6. I noticed two students, Taha and Khaled, in my level 5 class that were really struggling behind the rest of the students in class.

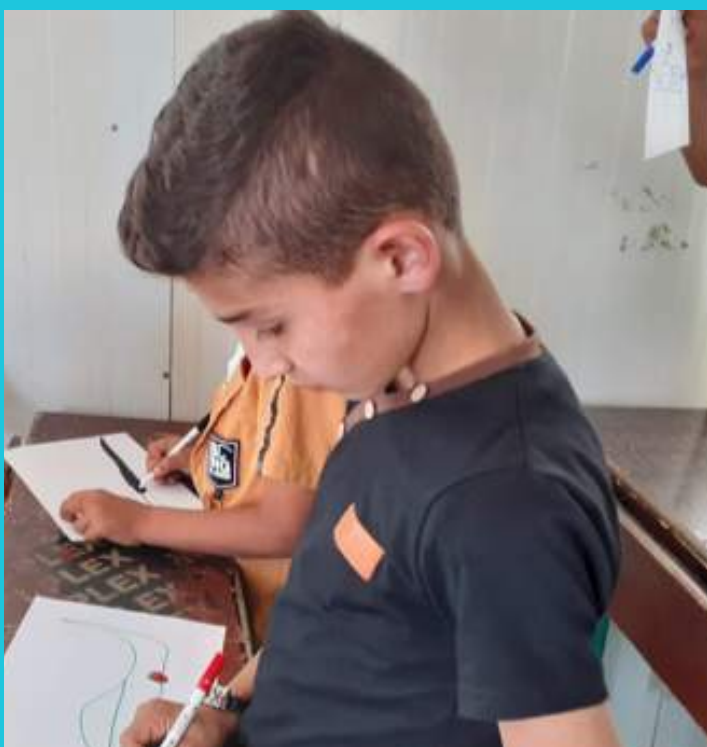
Both students knew the alphabet but were very weak in reading and writing. I gave each student a special notebook that we would use together for extra help. We focused on how to write the letters correctly and neatly and then on how to pronounce the words out loud and write sentences. Soon, they were both improving, working

together in our extra help sessions. I used special techniques with these two students with my goal of getting them up to the appropriate academic level for their age.

Once we mastered the basics, we moved on to grammar rules and other topics, utilizing special worksheets and working in their extra help notebooks.

Over time, I noticed real improvement in both boys. With help from other students in the class, I presented Taha and Khalid with gifts in front of their peers to recognize and celebrate their achievements!

As their teacher, I was particularly proud to see their improvements in the Government school and how they used their time at The Azraq Center to really focus on their academic weaknesses and overcome them!





FIYAD

**WRITTEN BY ALIA,
PROGRAM PRINCIPAL**

Fiyad was not attending any school when he was recruited into the Azraq Center program. His family lives in a tent in a very rural area of Azraq and he could not read or write when he started at the Center.

Despite the fact that he is a Jordanian citizen, Fiyad had never attended public school.

It required a specific education plan to help him.

We assigned Fiyad to one of our best teachers, Manar, to get him started. It took some time to get him comfortable in the classroom - to maintain good behavior and develop positive habits. But soon he was ready to learn!

By the end of the semester, Fiyad was reading, writing, and doing arithmetic. Now Fiyad is fully integrated into his class, he loves coming to the Center, and he loves learning!

SA'AD

WRITTEN BY ALIA, PROGRAM PRINCIPAL

Sa'ad is a 13 year old boy with significant hearing loss. Due to lack of opportunities, Sa'ad never learned to speak, read, or write. In 2018, The Azraq Center hired a one-on-one teacher for Sa'ad named Amira.

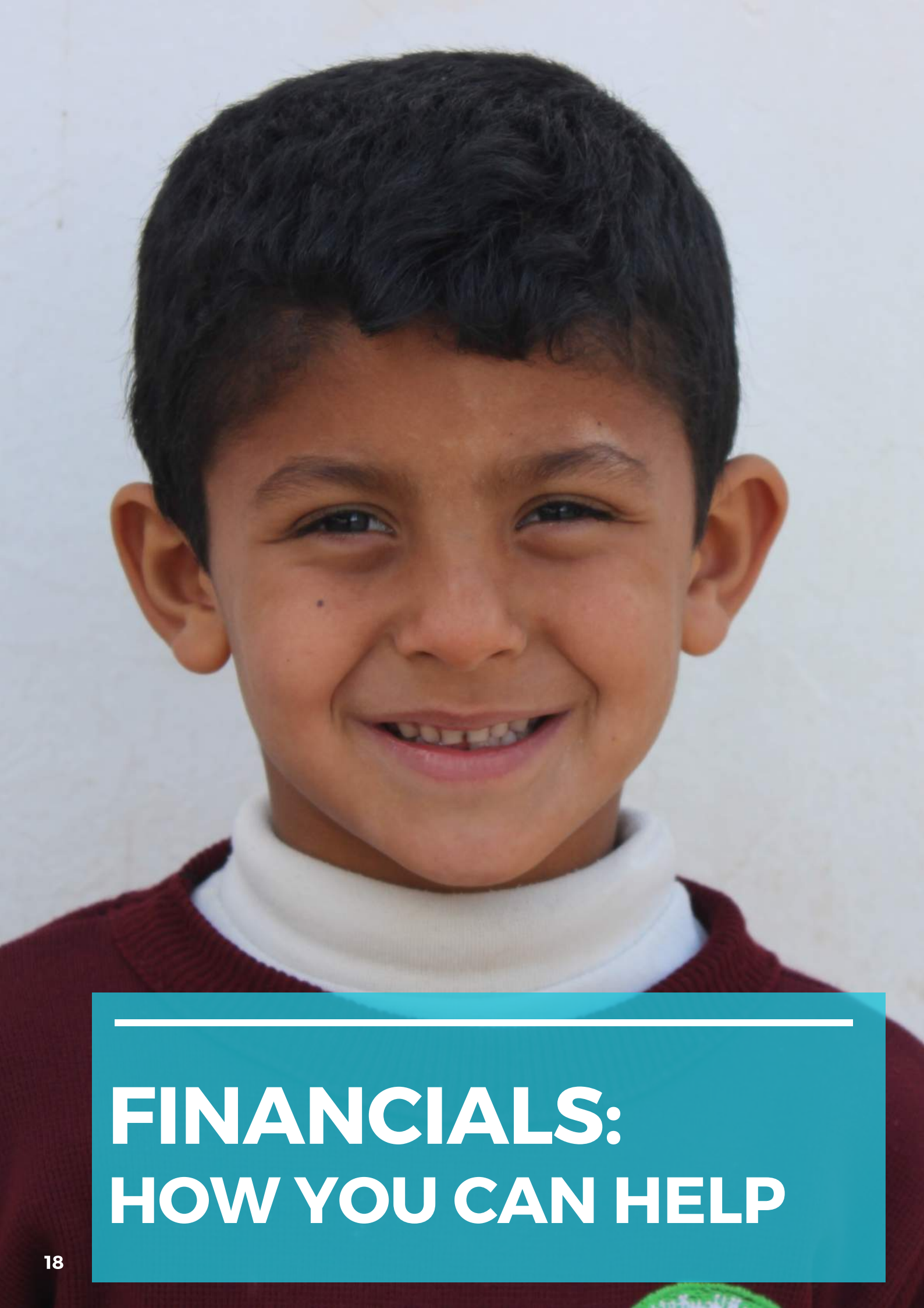
Amira started by teaching Sa'ad the alphabet and numbers, using pictures and objects to associate them with letters and numbers. They used a special white board to practice making sounds and connecting them with words. They developed a point system to encourage Sa'ad through games and competitions. While he is severely behind in his academics, Sa'ad is a very social boy and genuinely enjoys learning.

Learning is a slow process for Sa'ad, but he and Amira work together, mastering each concept completely before they move on to the next. We are thrilled to say that Sa'ad has successfully learned to write and identify the full Arabic alphabet and numbers!

Now, Sa'ad has moved on to completing worksheets around simple reading and writing of letters and numbers. Numbers come easily to him, while he still works steadily to master reading and writing.

The one-on-one classes have helped build Sa'ad's confidence. He is quick to help Amira or other teachers with tasks and his relationships with his peers has greatly improved. In the beginning of the classes, it took Sa'ad a lot of time and patience to master basic concepts but now he comes at problems with enthusiasm and confidence that he can learn and master whatever task is in front of him. He has a real desire to learn and this is made ever more apparent with each passing day!

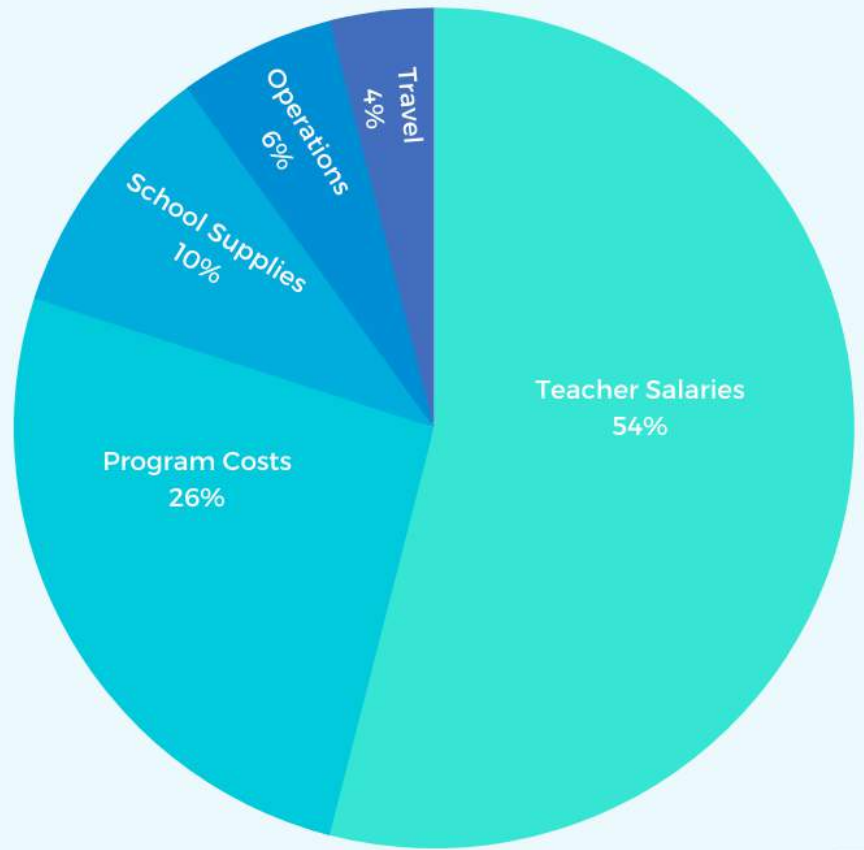




FINANCIALS: HOW YOU CAN HELP

2019 BUDGET BREAKDOWN

**\$250K
ANNUAL
BUDGET**



WHAT WE NEED

As a 100% donor supported program, we are always raising funds to cover the running costs of our program, including teacher salaries, school supplies, running costs for our lunch and bus programs, and other activities as they come up!

Reach out to our team to learn more about how we can put your specific contribution to work!

\$120

Monthly school lunches
per classrooms

\$200

Monthly school
supplies for the Center

\$350

Monthly School Bus
Running Costs

\$440

Monthly
Teacher Salary



WHO WE ARE

MEET OUR TEAM

Our female-led Jordan team is made up of members living in the South Azraq community. Our international team supports the program through fundraising and operational activities.

LEADERSHIP:



NOFA AL FAYZ
JORDAN PROJECT HEAD



ALIA AL SAAD
PROGRAM PRINCIPAL



LEXI SHERESHEFSKY
US PROJECT HEAD



MARTINE STILWELL
CANADA PROJECT HEAD



CATHERINE ASHCROFT
UK PROJECT HEAD



HEBA AZZAM
VICE PRINCIPAL

TEACHERS:



AREEJ
LEVEL 1



MANAR
LEVEL 2



ANWAR
LEVEL 3

MEET OUR TEAM

TEACHERS:



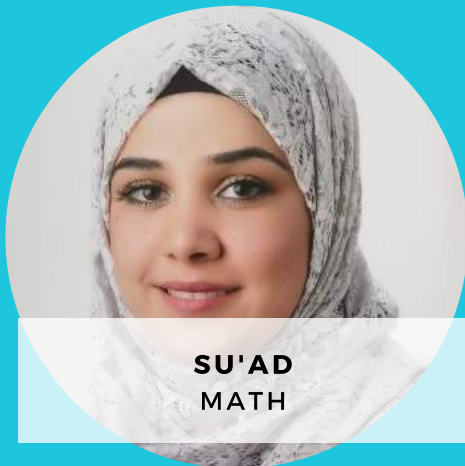
YUSRA
ARABIC



LAMEES
ENGLISH



ANOOD
IT



SU'AD
MATH



AMIRA
SPECIAL ED / PE



NOOR
PRE-K



HANEEN
PRE-K



HANEEN
PRE-K



ASIL
SPECIAL PROJECTS
& ART

MEET OUR TEAM

SCHOOL STAFF:



THE PARTNERS



THE SYRIA FUND (TSF)

The Syria Fund is a US-based 501(c)(3) organization providing education opportunities and humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees and other vulnerable families in Jordan. TSF makes direct, specific contributions that fill in the gaps and help provide a sense of normalcy for families who have lost so much.



NACHMYAT EASTERN BADIA COOPERATIVE

Nachmyat Eastern Badia Cooperative is a registered Jordanian local charity founded in South Azraq, Jordan in 1984. Led by Nofa Fayiz, Nachmyat's mission is to help alleviate poverty and support orphans, refugees, people with special needs and other vulnerable families in the community.



HELPING REFUGEES JORDAN (HRJ)

Led by Catherine Ashcroft, HRJ is a group of dedicated and experienced volunteers who are helping recognized Jordanian charities and NGOs deal with the large influx of refugees living in Jordan.

MAJOR FRIENDS & SUPPORTERS

- THE MOOSA FAMILY
- BLOSSOM HILL FOUNDATION
- LUFTHANSA HELP ALLIANCE
- DR. SCHOLL FOUNDATION
- GOOGLE
- AYNOUNA
- THE STILWELL FAMILY
- THE SUMPTON FAMILY
- THE SAKIRI FAMILY
- THE DUGGAN FAMILY
- VOICES OF THE CHILDREN
- CROSSROADS FOUNDATION
- BRIGHTWELL SUPPORTING REFUGEES
- RAMY ODE PACHA
- THE MANDALA TRUST
- WESTPORT SUNRISE ROTARY CLUB
- ELIZABETH LAIRD
- MILANA VAYNTRUB



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THANK YOU!

GET IN TOUCH:

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