

2020 – 2021

IRAQI AND AMERICAN RECONCILIATION PROJECT  
**ANNUAL REPORT**



# FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

Dear friends,

The past two years have been challenging and unpredictable. The hardships of the COVID-19 pandemic and a global reckoning with racism have instilled a new sense of urgency in the fight against injustice around the world.

IARP is proud to play a role in this fight. But in the face of these challenges, it is only with the generous support of our community that we have been able to adapt and move forward as an organization. In this impact report, we share with you some of IARP's work from 2020 and 2021. Here are just a few highlights:

- We worked hard to keep our community connected through the up's and down's of the pandemic. Through our virtual and in-person events over the last two years, hundreds of people have engaged with Iraqi culture, art, poetry, music, and more.
- The impact of COVID-19 has been particularly devastating in Iraq, deteriorating an already-bleak humanitarian situation. Responding to rising food insecurity, we provided families in Baghdad with baskets of food during the holy month of Ramadan. With the support of individual donors, community partners, and volunteers, we were also able to spread the spirit of Ramadan generosity to families in the Twin Cities area.
- Through the touring photography exhibition Home of Memories, we introduced thousands of Minnesotans to their Iraqi neighbors, whose stories are often overlooked. These portraits and quotations in this exhibition break down stereotypes about Iraqis, showing we are not just numbers or stories on the news but real people with families, memories, and aspirations.

I hope you'll take a look at the successes compiled here, that you'll share in this moment of pride, and that you'll join us for what's to come.

Our sons and daughters who came to the US when they were kids are now facing new worlds and navigating how to relate to Iraq. When I think of this next generation, I'm reminded of our mission of reconciliation, of promoting peace everywhere on this planet, peace with ourselves and also with each other. It makes this world a better place to live in for us and our children.

Thank you again for your partnership in this shared pursuit of reconciliation. My best wishes to you in the year ahead.

Sincerely,



**Dr. Azar Maluki**  
*IARP Board Chair*

## IARP BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020 - 2021



**Dr. Azar Maluki**  
*Board Chair*



**Shaymaa Hassan**  
*Vice-Chair*



**Kathy Adam**  
*Secretary*



**Hiba Qader Al Hasnawi**



**Sally Othman**



**Rev. David W. Smith**



**Ahmed Al-Sheikhli**



**Adil Al-Najji**

**Kathy McKay**  
*Board Member Emeritus*

**Steve Clemens**  
*Board Member Emeritus*

**Luke Wilcox**  
*Board Member Emeritus*

**Salam Murtada**  
*Board Member Emeritus*

## 2020 - 2021 IARP STAFF:



**Jamal Ali**  
*Iraqi Voices Community Engagement Facilitator*



**Rasol Al-Bayati**  
*Development and Communications Coordinator*



**Hannah Staats**  
*Communications and Development Assistant*

## NEW BOARD & STAFF MEMBERS

In 2020, we welcomed several new board members and staff to the IARP team.



### HIBA QADER AL HASNAWI

Hiba has been actively involved in IARP since 2009, and was a part of the team that welcomed the Minneapolis delegation to Najaf in 2012. In addition to her contributions as a board member, Hiba conducted the interviews of eight Iraqi Minnesotans as part of the Iraqi Voices lab that produced *Home of Memories*. She has also coordinated cultural exchanges in the Twin Cities community, including an event celebrating Iraqi and German cultures in St Paul last summer.



### SALLY OTHMAN

Sally is a physician from Baghdad who works to ensure that health is not merely physical and mental wellbeing but also social wellbeing. You may recognize Sally from a panel at the Guthrie Theater's production of *Noura* or from her role as coordinator of a women's friendship group.



### SHAYMAA HASSAN

Shaymaa joined the board after actively volunteering on several IARP event committees. If you experienced *Noura* at the Guthrie, then you engaged with Shaymaa's critical behind-the-scenes work as cultural consultant for the production. She is passionate about sharing her culture and learning about the cultures of others, and has introduced countless Minnesotans to Arabic calligraphy at several cultural events.



### RASOL AL-BAYATI

Rasol Al-Bayati, born in Diyala, has a BA in Law from Yarmouk University and a Master's degree in Commercial Law from the University of Babylon. He joined IARP to give back to others, contribute to building friendships between our communities, and to learn new skills.



### HANNAH STAATS

Hannah recently graduated with a BA from Macalester College. Her passions for language, education and refugee empowerment led her to volunteer as an English tutor at a number of organizations serving immigrants and refugees. She has also advised Iraqi and Syrian high school students applying to colleges in the US and abroad through the Syrian Youth Empowerment Initiative.



# 2020 - 2021 IMPACT

## BUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH THE ARTS

### IRAQI STORIES ONSTAGE AT THE GUTHRIE: NOURA



In January 2020, we partnered with the Guthrie Theater to bring you *Noura*, a new play exploring motherhood, marriage and identity by Heather Raffo.

**255** audience members attended discussions organized in partnership with IARP

*"The first day, when I saw the set, I cried. And when they talked about my culture, I cried....It's so hard to talk about your memories and your country. But I like this play... I'm telling every Iraqi I know that they have to come see it."*

Shaymaa Hassan, IARP board member & cultural consultant on *Noura*

### REMEMBERING AL-MUTANABBI STREET 2020-2021

Each year on March 5, readings are held around the world in moments of solidarity with Iraqi artists and writers, reminding us of what they face. The readings also celebrate the values that Al-Mutanabbi Street represents: free speech, the exchange of ideas, and the equality that poetry, writing, and art inherently promise.



In 2020, over 30 people gathered at DayBreak Bookshop in Minneapolis on March 5 for an evening of poetry and remembrance.

In 2021, 28 Iraqis and Americans joined IARP for a virtual bilingual reading of Iraqi poet Dunya Mikhail's ["A half-burned page on Al-Mutanabbi Street."](#)

### MUSIC, ART, AND MEMORY IN THE AFTERMATH OF WAR

In October 2021, we gathered on [Zoom with maestro Karim Wasfi](#), an internationally renowned cellist and conductor from Iraq, and Aaron Hughes, an American artist, poet, and Iraq War veteran.



# HOME OF MEMORIES: PORTRAITS AND STORIES OF IRAQI MINNESOTANS

**3** locations toured

**9** community events brought the exhibition to life

**OVER 18,000** people engaged with the stories of Iraqi Minnesotans



Exploring homemaking and memories in the portraits of Iraqi Minnesotans, the in-person and virtual Home of Memories exhibition features photographs by Ahmed Alshaikhli and Jaafar Alnabi and was curated by CarryOn Homes. The stories of Lafta Abduljabbar Jassim, Rasol Albayati, Eynas Alnabi, Zena Khalil, Ronak Ahmed Ali, Dhafer Abdulla, Abir Majid, and Hazha Las come together to compose a beautiful and intricate tapestry of home. So far, the photography exhibition has travelled to the Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts, the Rochester Art Center, and the Hennepin History Museum, and will continue to tour Minnesota in 2022 and beyond.



**As seen in:**

[Sahan Journal](#)

[The Star Tribune](#)

[The Pioneer Press](#)

**WHAT IS HOME TO YOU?** Visitors to Home of Memories reflected on this question. Here are some of their answers:

*"Home is where I feel my Arabic culture shine through."*

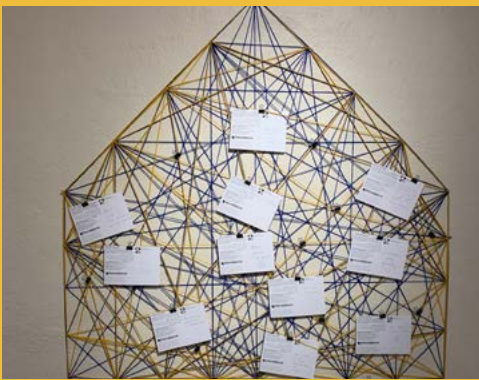
*"A place of childhood memories."*

*"Home is my roots, faces, thoughts, traditions, warm and stable feelings."*

*"Home is where I end my day - where there is security and comfort, love and kindness."*

## HOME OF MEMORIES: PORTRAITS AND STORIES OF IRAQI MINNESOTANS

*"It was a heartfelt exposition of the lives of people, each in their own way, making a new life for themselves in the US. It showed their resilience, tenacity and most deeply felt faith and beliefs. It was humbling to read their stories as one who was born in the US."*



*"...We here, in the US, have so much more work to do, to know how to make this new home as close to home for those who must leave theirs."*

*"Poignant, lovely, hopeful, heartbreaking; they touched me deeply."*





# HUMANITARIAN PROJECTS FOR PEACE

## SPREADING RAMADAN GENEROSITY: THE FOOD BASKET DRIVE

**100** families served in Iraq

**100** families served in Minnesota

**33** generous individual donors



With the generosity of our community, and the hard work of many volunteers, we gifted food baskets to 200 families during Ramadan in 2021. In Baghdad, 100 families received baskets containing Ramadan staples such as chicken, dates, cheese, tea, flour, rice, beans, lentils, sugar, salt, vermicelli, tomato paste, juice, and vegetable oil. Thanks to the generosity of Target, our partner Sun Market, and a private donor, 100 families in the Twin Cities also received Ramadan food baskets.



### Volunteer spotlight: Janson Kinsley

Donations of groceries from Target allowed us to serve even more families celebrating Ramadan in Minnesota than we initially hoped. Janson Kinsley, former Target store manager, Iraq War veteran, and long-time IARP volunteer, played an essential role in this partnership.



*"I've looked for creative ways to make an impact through my role at Target, but also outside that role... [After] being deployed, being thrown into a different culture, and seeing how Iraq's been impacted through policy decisions and turmoil, for me it was important to try and make an impact at an individual level."*

Janson Kinsley

# CONNECTING COMMUNITIES: PEOPLE TO PEOPLE

## A SUMMER OF CELEBRATION

July 2021 was a joyous time for our community — a chance to both gather with old friends after many months apart and make new connections.

**OVER 500** community members experienced Iraqi culture

**1000** sweets baked by a team of Iraqi women

**4** Iraqi artists showcased their work

**5** Iraqi musicians brought folk traditions to life

### Kleiche meets Kuchen: coming together for an Iraqi & German café

In partnership with the Germanic American Institute, IARP presented a beautiful celebration of Iraqi and German cultures through the exchange of music, dance, and baked goods. The summer gathering was particularly special due to the visit and exchange of gifts with the German Consulate General in Chicago, Consul General Herr Mossinger.



### Ishraqat Sumeria: bringing folk traditions to life through music

IARP was honored to present the Ishraqat Sumeria Art Group, whose talented members Hisham Al Shallal, Ahmed AbdulJabbar, Hakim Alsalihi, Esmael Alawadi, Mustafa Alawadi brought audiences to their feet and transported listeners to Iraq through performances of traditional music.



### Iraq at the museum: a cultural celebration

Over 250 guests joined us at the Rochester Art Center for a midsummer celebration of Home of Memories and Iraqi-American culture. Iraqi artists Maha Aljadooa, Rawan Alshaikhli, Nabaa Alobaidi, and Lina Alsharefee displayed and sold their homemade soaps, resin works, wood carvings, and paintings. Shaymaa Hassan introduced visitors to Arabic calligraphy, while teaching artist Mohamed Yabdri led guests in bilingual theater activities. Of course, the festivities would not have been complete without delicious sandwiches and sweets from Rochester's own Almadina Restaurant.





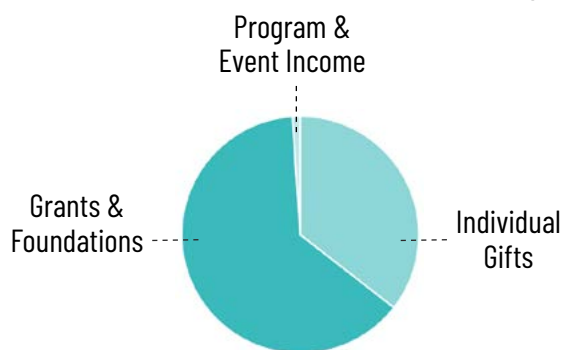
# FINANCIALS

## 2020

### INCOME

Individual Gifts	\$21,602.40
Grants & Foundations	\$38,564.00
Program & Event Income	\$650.00

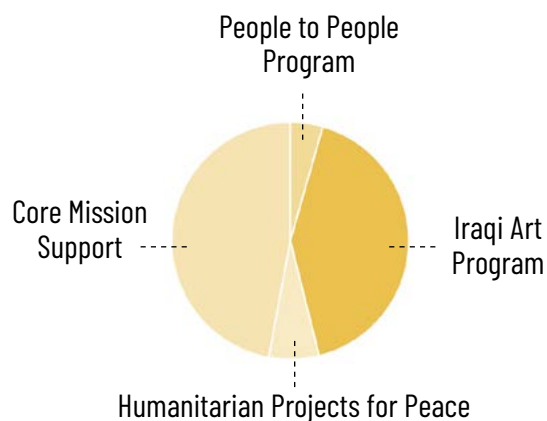
**TOTAL** **\$60,816.40**



### EXPENSES

People to People Program	\$1,741.54
Iraqi Art Program	\$16,372.56
Humanitarian Projects for Peace	\$2,690.46
Core Mission Support	\$18,505.42

**TOTAL** **\$39,309.98**

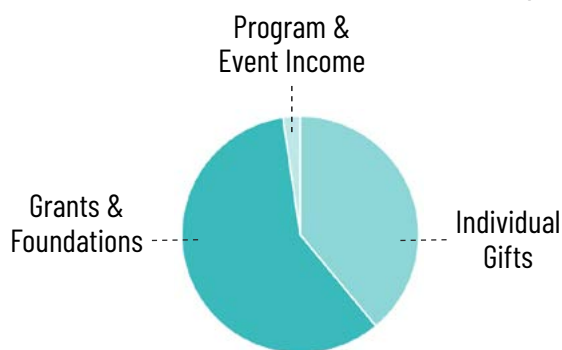


## 2021

### INCOME

Individual Gifts	\$23,297.67
Grants & Foundations	\$35,050.00
Program & Event Income	\$1,398.96

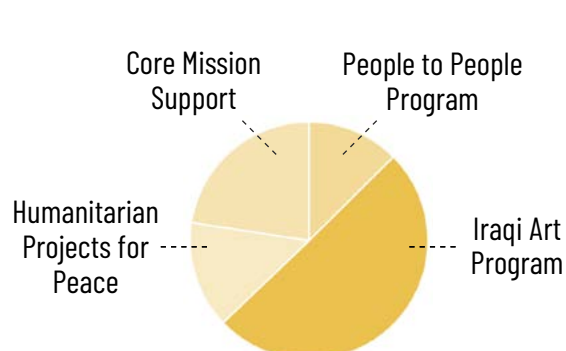
**TOTAL** **\$59,746.63**



### EXPENSES

People to People Program	\$9,453.53
Iraqi Art Program	\$33,549.61
Humanitarian Projects for Peace	\$8,165.36
Core Mission Support	\$13,941.86

**TOTAL** **\$65,110.36**



# THANK YOU! SHUKRAN! شُكْرًا

As a small, grassroots organization, we are grateful for the generosity of each and every member of our community. You give in so many ways, and we are humbled by your support.

## THANK YOU

to our **Partners for Peace**,  
whose monthly donations  
sustained our work in 2020  
and 2021:

Steve and Christine Clemens  
Kimberly Koroma-Tommy  
Daniel Leisen and Andi Kuenning  
Lotti Matkovits  
Kathy McKay  
Susan Schirber  
Lawrence Valley  
Dolores Voorhees  
Luke Wilcox

to **the foundations** that saw  
the importance of our work  
and made these programs  
possible:

Arts Midwest  
Duluth Superior Area Community  
Foundation  
Metropolitan Regional Arts Council  
Minnesota Humanities Center  
Minnesota State Arts Board  
Rochester Area Foundation  
The St. Joan of Arc Justice Fund  
Target Foundation  
TisBest Philanthropy

to our **community partners!**  
We couldn't be more proud  
of what we've accomplished  
together.

CAPI USA  
Chaldean Cultural Center  
DayBreak Bookshop  
Fridley Community Center  
Germanic American Institute  
Guthrie Theater  
Hennepin History Museum  
Her Story Is  
Maple Grove Target  
North Suburban Center for the Arts  
(Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts)  
Rochester Art Center  
Rogers Target  
Sun Market  
The AINuaemee family

## TO ALL OUR INDIVIDUAL DONORS - THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT!

### SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SUSTAINING VOLUNTEERS:

Kathy McKay  
Narmin Rolston





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