

2023 Annual Report





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MAHBOBA'S PROMISE

MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER

Mahboba Rawi OAM

This year continues to be one of great achievements, and one of the most joyous years of my life.

This financial year brought into reality one of the greatest achievements in our history. By October 2022, the last of the 101 at risk children, staff and families were evacuated from Afghanistan to Australia. Nearly 50 of these were unaccompanied children, one of the largest cohorts of unaccompanied children evacuated in Australia's history. I cannot express the joy and gratitude I felt as I welcomed the children I had raised in Afghanistan into my arms after a year of fearing for their lives.

I am so grateful to the countless people who made this happen. My son, Sourosh (also known as Nawid) worked tirelessly, day and night, in leading this evacuation effort, and making my aspirations into reality. He made history with this achievement, and I cannot be prouder.

Thank you to Sarah Dale from the Refugee Advice & Casework Service (RACS). Without her, I do not know how this work would have been

To our many supporters and donors – thank you for the love you continue to show the people of Afghanistan. Your care and support mean that some of the most destitute people in the world are not forgotten.

done. By what we have shared in the process, she has become one of the most cherished people in my life.

I want to provide my heartfelt gratitude to the Australian Government, both Labor and Liberal Ministers for making this a reality. This was an achievement that crossed political lines and spoke to a shared humanity. It was the former Minister for Immigration, Alex Hawke, who granted us the emergency visas and the current Minister for Immigration, Andrew Giles, who facilitated the evacuations afterwards. I also want to thank the many public servants who assisted us, but especially those from the Department of Home Affairs who worked around the clock for these children to arrive to Australia.

I was so proud to jointly receive the Australian Human Rights Medal of 2022 with my son for our evacuation efforts and the humanitarian work we have been doing in Afghanistan amidst the recent crisis. To receive this award alongside my son, who became the youngest recipient of the award, was truly a dream come true.



This year was one of hope in a time where it was very easy to be overwhelmed by the poverty and loss in Afghanistan. It reaffirmed to me that my promise to serve the women and children remains strong and true even after 26 years. Our commitment to education, health services, training opportunities, employment and social enterprises continues stronger than ever. Of course, all this work only continues and grows because of the bravery, sincerity and drive of our Afghanistan team.

To our many supporters and donors, thank you for the love you continue to show the people of Afghanistan. Your care and support mean that some of the most destitute people in the world are not forgotten. The vast majority of our support comes from everyday Australians like yourselves. You make this work real and possible. Our impact is your impact.

The final expression of gratitude is of course to our lovely and amazing volunteers, staff and management committee members. We are what we are because of all those that give their time, energy and expertise to our work. Thank you for being part of this incredible journey, for lifting the impact of this charity even higher, and for setting us up for even greater success in the years to come.

As we move ahead into the next year, I look forward to working with you all to continue to uphold the promise I made 26 years ago. Your invaluable support will continue to help us create a brighter future for those in need. Together we can make 2024 even more impactful. Thank you for your unwavering dedication and commitment to our cause.

Mahboba Rawi OAM

FOUNDER OF
MAHBOBA'S PROMISE

MESSAGE FROM OUR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

During the 2023 financial year, Mahboba's Promise reaffirmed its commitment to sustainable development programs and humanitarian aid in Afghanistan while expanding its focus to include supporting vulnerable women and children from refugee and culturally diverse backgrounds in Australia.

The pivotal event of the year was the completion of the organisation's evacuation efforts, which commenced in August 2021 following a change in government. Over 100 at-risk individuals, including families and unaccompanied children were successfully evacuated by October 2022 through collaborative efforts with the Australian Government and various advocacy groups. This marked a significant achievement, as the nearly 50 unaccompanied children represent the largest single group of unaccompanied children evacuated in Australia's history. The evacuations, led by the Vice President Sourosh Cina, required meticulous planning and cross-sector collaboration, highlighting the organisation's adaptability and resilience in the face of high-risk situations.

The success of the evacuations propelled our organisation into a new phase of its mission, earning founder, Mahboba Rawi, and Vice President, Sourosh Cina,

the prestigious Australian Human Rights Medal. Coverage of the efforts were also featured on Australian Story, further raising awareness of our humanitarian work, mission and commitment to the women and children of Afghanistan.

To support the needs of incoming evacuees, especially the children, we have collaborated with government agencies and settlement bodies to negotiate a highly tailored Resettlement Program focusing on the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of the evacuees.

We continue to provide supplementary support services to the children to ensure they have a smooth transition into Australian society. These efforts have been inclusive of creating programs aimed at addressing food security, accommodation support, employment and upskilling support, and a range of recreational



activities aimed at mental and physical wellbeing, all whilst preserving critical cultural connections.

Our organisation also continued its essential work in Afghanistan, including projects supporting widows, orphans, and street children. The organisation launched initiatives like the Strings of Hope program empowering women through skill-building in carpet weaving and tailoring. Aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), our organisation secured grants to support our sustainable development projects, furthering our long-lasting impact

on the ground. We have also begun to form stronger relationships with UN bodies on the ground, and we hope this will eventuate into fruitful and ongoing partnerships. Our organisation remains dedicated to meeting the evolving needs of vulnerable populations in Afghanistan while navigating its expanded scope of work in both Australia and Afghanistan.

ABOUT US

Mahboba's Promise is an Australian non-profit organisation dedicated to improving the lives of underprivileged women and children in Afghanistan, and in recent years Australia.

Mahboba's Promise was founded by Mahboba Rawi, recipient of the Order of Australia Medal, whose intimate knowledge of the effects of conflict and unrest in Afghanistan has equipped her with the tools to respond to the needs of the country's women and children quickly and effectively.

Mahboba's Promise has established and continues to operate essential community-based projects in Afghanistan addressing the most pressing needs of the marginalised women and children. Additionally, the organisation also focuses its efforts on the provision of emergency relief, developmental aid and support for recently arrived refugees from Afghanistan to Australia.

Mission

Our mission and PROMISE is to provide purposeful and impactful development aid and targeted assistance to vulnerable and underserved Afghan women, widows, children, orphans and families in Afghanistan, surrounding regions and Australia.

Vision

Our vision of HOPE is of a world where the basic rights of every Afghan woman, widows, children and orphans are met – to survive and thrive, to learn and grow, to make their voices heard and to reach their full potential.

Values

We are:



Hopeful for the future of Afghanistan;



Equitable and non-discriminative; and



Transparent and effective in our communication

Principles

We endeavour to:



Enhance the quality of life of Afghan women and children;



Encourage self-sufficiency;



Follow best practices;



Secure basic human rights for communities;



Ensure the safety of children; and



Promote good governance.



OUR WORK IN AFGHANISTAN

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HOPE HOUSES

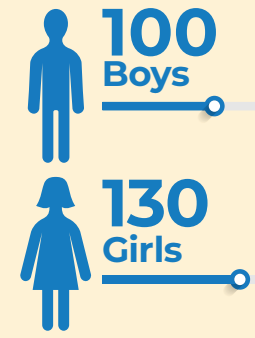
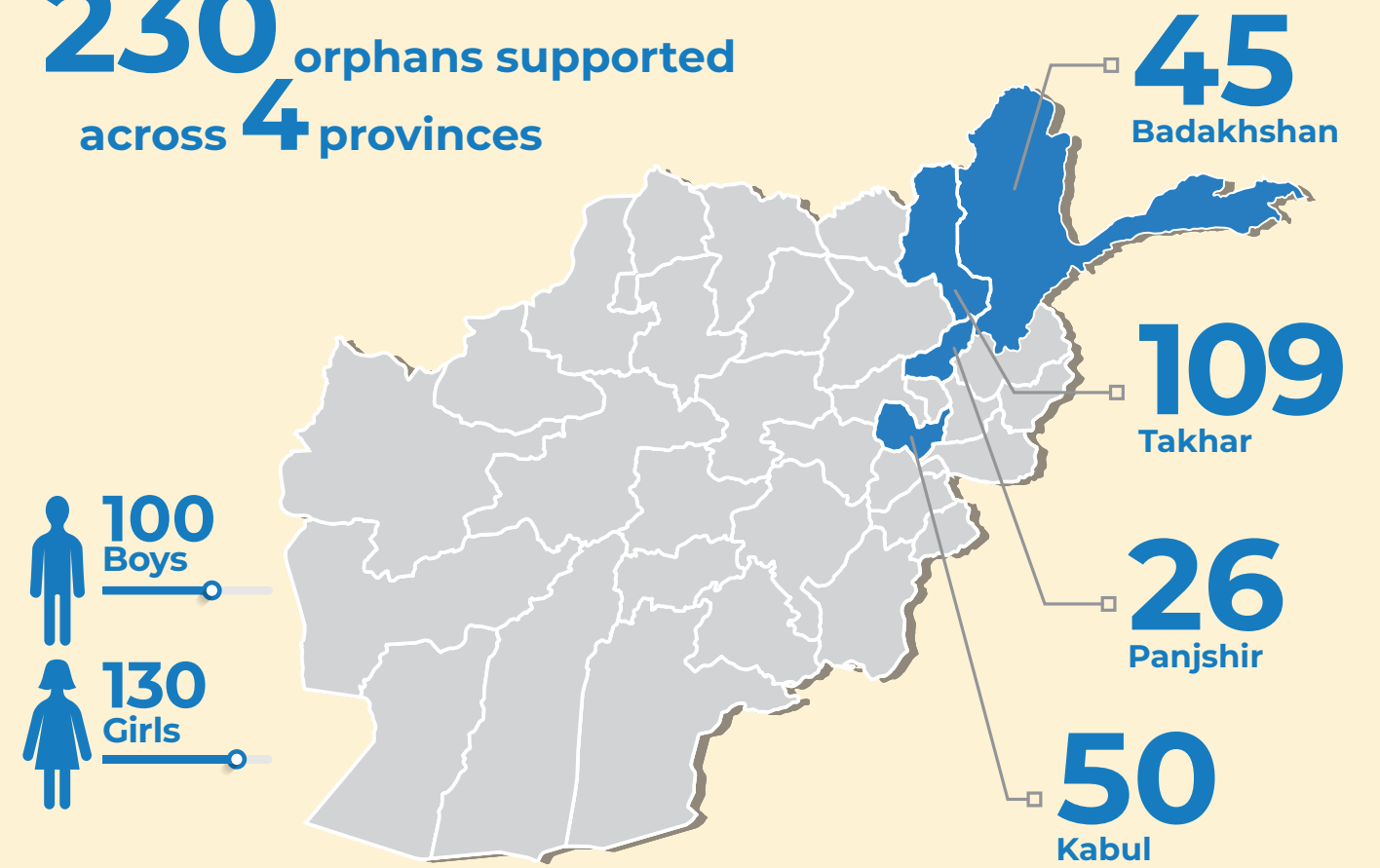
Our Hope Houses have been the cornerstone of our sustainable development efforts in Afghanistan since our organisation's inception, sheltering, feeding and educating orphans in need across the country for over 20 years. Our orphanages have been a safe haven for thousands of Afghan children in need to survive, thrive and grow towards becoming productive members of society.

Operating across the Kabul, Takhar, Panjshir, and Badakhashan provinces, our four houses are a beacon of hope for vulnerable children, embodying our organisation's commitment to making a tangible difference in the lives of children affected by hardship. Fostering strong ties between our Hope Houses and the community they serve has been, and continues to be, vital to the success of our program.

In 2023, our Hope Houses supported 230 children, out of which 130 were girls. Our program's holistic approach centred on three primary outcomes; psychological support, education and leadership development, and the provision of a safe and comfortable living environment. Our program has been successful in achieving positive behavioural change in the children we house. A big improvement was seen in more than half the children's behaviours after moving into our Hope Houses, with many of them expressing feeling happier and safer after joining the program.



230 orphans supported across **4** provinces



OUTCOMES

SHELTER:

78%

of children were provided with regular accommodation through our Hope Houses.



EDUCATION:

78%

of children achieved excellent results in the examinations.



FOOD:

62%

of children improved their nutrition.



PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING:

64%

of children improved their behaviour.



KABUL HOPE HOUSE

Established in 2004

Our Kabul Hope House was established in the country's capital in 2004 and is our oldest and largest Hope House. In 2023, 50 children aged 6 to 18 were housed and supported in our Hope House.

Our staff's unwavering commitment to the safety and well-being of the children was a primary focal for the team this year and was further bolstered through a Safeguarding and Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment training program administered to the Head Office team which provided information and practical tools about preventing, identifying, and responding to situations involving abuse, exploitation, harassment, and other forms of harm.

In addition to the shelter, education, clothing and food these children received, our staff organised various recreational activities for the children to grow their interests and talents including sports days, music events and excursions. These activities helped create a safe and enjoyable environment for the children to grow and thrive and excel in life beyond the hope house. For instance, to ensure that the young men affiliated with Hope House could sustain themselves after leaving the orphanage, our staff arranged ongoing vocational training opportunities at the Mahboba's Promise Confectionery Store in Kabul. The opportunity taught these young men confectionery-making skills which they can further use and apply to secure employment opportunities facilitating their integration into society.



PANJSHIR HOPE HOUSE

Established in 2013

Our Panjshir Hope House was built in 2013 through a collaboration between Mahboba, who is a Panjshir native, and Australian philanthropist Dick Smith. This year, 26 children between the ages of 3 to 15 were supported through our house. Despite challenging external circumstances, our Hope House remained operational and continued to support our orphans by providing them with housing, food and schooling. Our staff also tried to keep the children engaged through activities such as outdoor games like soccer and cricket, and practical educational workshops, and the children proved their desire to learn by achieving excellent schooling results across all age cohorts.

In 2023, our staff also prioritised improving the physical facilities of our Hope House and surrounding areas to create a safer and more nurturing environment for the children. The building's library, rooms, dormitories and playground were all renovated, and solar panels and a new generator were also installed to ensure the building had a sufficient supply of electricity.

In addition to this, our staff in collaboration, with the Head Office and local farmers, successfully built a water well in Abdara village, where the orphanage resides. This water well continues to provide fresh running water for the children within the Hope House and the local farmers who were experiencing challenges sourcing water for their crops, particularly in the hotter months, and as a result were incurring significant financial losses.

Building the water well was a tremendous achievement for our organisation and a fantastic example of the collaborative effort of our staff to create stronger linkages with the communities these Hope Houses exist in.





BADAKHSHAN HOPE HOUSE

Established in 2017

Our Badakhshan Hope House was established in 2017 when Mahboba's Promise took over the administration of an abandoned orphanage. In 2023, our Hope House supported 45 children under the age of 18.

Much like our Kabul Hope House, in Badakhshan, our Hope House staff worked diligently to create a safe environment for the orphans to develop emotionally and connect with one another through regular excursions. One of the most memorable excursions of all was the celebration of Eid-ul-Fitr in April 2023. Our staff organised an excursion where the children summited a local mountain in the vicinity to celebrate the end of the holy month of Ramadan.





TAKHAR HOPE HOUSE

Established in 2010

Our Takhar Hope House was built in 2010 in response to the prolonged devastation resulting from the 1998 Takhar earthquake and the Jalozai refugee camp in Peshawar, Pakistan.

In 2023, our Hope House provided support to 109 children under the age of 18. This operation, the largest among all our Hope Houses, necessitated significant collaboration between our local staff and the Head Office to uphold the integrity of its mission in improving the lives of local orphans within the region. Although situated in a remote location in the Takhar province, our staff members worked tirelessly to give the children the freedom to enjoy activities and frequently reported back stories of large soccer games in the fields, storytelling nights, and workshops where they learned how to make handicraft items. Our Takhar Hope House is a great example of how our organisation has successfully scaled up its operations to meet the needs of the growing vulnerable population in Afghanistan.





OUTREACH PROGRAM

Established in 2004

Our Outreach Program, established in 2004, is another foundational program which aids vulnerable widows and their families who have been subjected to decades of hardship. The program, which continues indefinitely, aims to support families who have lost their main breadwinners with basic essentials.

In 2023, the program supported on average 130 families a month with packages of food and other necessities as needed such as clothing, shelter, and household appliances across Kabul. The program continues to be integrated with our Permaculture Farm Program which produces seasonal fruit, vegetables and other agricultural products throughout the year. Through the creation of a circular economy between the two programs in 2023, the program successfully

reduced costs associated with sourcing and transporting food. This has enabled us to increase the number of families supported and given us the chance to provide a more balanced diet to them to improve their overall nutritional intake.

For instance, in August 2022, 121 families, were provided organic fruits and vegetables from the Permaculture Farm program in addition to receiving their standard essential supplies of flour, oil, sugar, and tea. This variety in diet allowed them to consume important dietary vitamins and minerals which they were unable to access themselves.

Monthly Distribution Breakdown

455

kilos of Sugar distributed monthly.



6,500

kilos of Flour distributed monthly.



455

kilos of Beans distributed monthly.



130

bags of Tea distributed monthly.



1,500

kilos of Rice distributed monthly.



620

litres of Oil distributed monthly.





STRINGS OF HOPE PROGRAM

Established in 2023

Our Strings of Hope Program was launched in 2023 in collaboration with the GIM Foundation, as a capacity building initiative. Our program aims to empower women across Kabul and Panjshir Provinces through seamstress and tapestry training. The program teaches traditional carpet weaving methods and advanced tailoring techniques to vulnerable women enabling them to become more self-sufficient than before and in turn secure their economic stability in the process.

Our program was first launched in Panjshir in early 2023 when a group of 30 women received tailoring skills training from local experienced instructors. In addition to the training, the 30 women were provided with equipment and materials such as sewing machines, fabrics, and needles to apply the skills they learned. Over a

period of three months, the women produced over 50 pieces of clothing for the girls at Abdara Girls School, the children at our Panjshir Hope House children, and for a local market stall which they sold for a profit. Building on the success of the first iteration of our program, the second round trained an additional 48 women who were also equipped with the means to capitalise on their skills. Our program enabled 78 women to aid in their own economic stability for themselves and their family by teaching them one skill. Utilising our existing network in Australia, 500 traditional Afghan bags produced by these women were sold in Australia, in collaboration with a local Australian business with hopes of expanding these collaborations in 2024.

In mid 2023, our program was geographically expanded and further diversified in Kabul. Our

130
Women Supported.



240
hours of training provided to women.



595
unique pieces produced.



program continued to focus on sewing as the essential skill taught but specialised the skill to traditional carpet weaving, a growing market in Afghanistan. The 40 women who were participating were split into two groups, with 20 women participating in lessons in the morning and the other 20 participating in the evening. The women were very adept at picking up these new skills, with some of them reportedly creating carpets that stretched as long as four metres in length. A total of 40 unique Afghan carpets have already been weaved. The program has been an amazing success and a symbol of progress towards building bridges for women in Afghanistan to walk towards a future where they can thrive. Its quick and successful expansion to two provinces in a year highlights potential for the program to be example for other organisations to replicate and expand within and to other provinces of the country.



ZAINAB POPAL STREET KIDS PROGRAM

Established in 2019



Funded generously by Hamid Popal, our Zainab Street Kids Program began in 2019 as an initiative focusing on the development and education of children on the streets of Kabul.

On a monthly or bi-monthly basis, children who work on the streets receive an aid package that fulfils their basic needs, including food, stationery items, and a cash stipend. Our program operates under the belief that education is a transformative power in breaking the cycle of poverty.

In 2023, our program supported 163 street children. The food packages provided enabled these children and their families to have regular meals, contributing to their overall wellbeing and ability to pursue informal means of skill development and education. Equipped with the necessary stationery supplies to facilitate their learning in addition to the food, many children have been able to refocus on participating in formal education and progress academically.

Our program also supported these children through a monthly cash stipend which relieved the burden put on the children to help provide for their families. Instead, they were able to use the freed up time for their education to break out from the cycle of poverty they are trapped in. 2023 saw five of the supported children graduate from High School and seven children supported to pursue studies at university.



163

Street Children Supported



1,956

Food Packages Distributed to street Children.



5

Beneficiaries Graduated High School.



7

Beneficiaries were supported through University.



PERMACULTURE FARM PROGRAM

Established in 2010

The Permaculture Farm Program is a collaborative project initiated by our organisation and Muslim Aid Australia in the Kabul Province.

Beginning in 2010, the Permaculture Farm Program continues to be a sustainable food system for the local communities in Kabul promoting environmentally friendly farming practices including advanced crop rotation techniques to maintain healthy and sustainable soil mineral levels.

The site also houses a greenhouse and dairy farm, consisting of a barn, well, and livestock. In 2023, the farm celebrated a successful harvest of peaches, plums, cherries, apples, grapes, and potatoes. The project also successfully cultivated hing seeds, an important medicinal plant in Afghanistan. Its production is a testament to the farm's adaptability, innovation, and continued development of agricultural practices.

These products improved diet and nutrition for many local communities across Kabul, including the widows supported through the Outreach Program.





CONFECTIONARY STORE PROGRAM

Established in 2014

With the support from the Australian Embassy's Direct Aid Program, our Confectionery Store Program was launched in 2014 as a means of empowering vulnerable young people to earn an income through confectionery production skills such as baking and pastry making, along with business management practices.

Participants gain hands-on experience by working in the store, producing and selling confectionery items. This social enterprise initiative generates income for participants and their families, and in turn gives them a means of independence and self-reliance in the process. Our program is a testament to our commitment to the economic development of vulnerable young people in Afghanistan.

In 2023, sales reached record highs thanks to our staff's diligent commitment to producing quality confectionaries and in cultivating a loyal customer base. Our team used social media platforms to increase our brand visibility and sales despite the economic downturn. Many young people from our Kabul Hope House were also employed in the program, allowing them to find stability after leaving the orphanage.

Throughout the past year, our staff also upgraded our store's equipment and made amendments to our store's structural integrity so that staff could work safely. The confectionary store continues to be a tremendous success and a powerful example of the sustainable work carried out by our team in Afghanistan.



RAMADAN

Every year during the holy month of Ramadan our organisation distributes essential food packages to vulnerable individuals and families across Kabul.

Our initiative's success lies in its ability to provide nutritionally suitable food to vulnerable women, widows, orphans, and people with disabilities. Our initiative respects the dignity of those that it serves, always considering religious customs, dietary requirements, and other sensitivities.

In 2023, 200 vulnerable families were provided with food packages that included essentials tailored for the month of Ramadan, such as flour, sugar, oil, rice, dates, and tea. The efforts of our team successfully supported those in need among the marginalized groups. It also promoted social cohesion and community spirit by sharing distribution responsibilities with the locals, encouraging community members to join forces to uplift those in need.



200

Families fed during Ramadan.



1,600

Estimated individuals supported during Ramadan.



[According to a 2017 UN Report (see UN Economic & Social Affairs - Household Size and Composition Around the World 2017) the average family size in Afghanistan is 8].

QURBAN

For many years, our organisation has been distributing Qurban meat during Eid al-Adha to widows and their families across the Kabul, Panjshir and other provinces.

This meat is provided to impoverished communities, providing sustenance and support to those facing hardship. Through these efforts, we ensure that the spirit of giving and compassion inherent in Qurban is extended to the most vulnerable members of society. This initiative addresses immediate hunger and embodies our principle of enhancing the quality of life for Afghan women and children.

During Qurban 2022, our organisation supported 1,720 families across Kabul, Badakhshan, and Panjshir by sacrificially offering 20 cows and 90 sheep. The cow meat sourced was cut into 2.5 kilogram portions and distributed to 1,200 families across the three regions, while 40 sheep were directly distributed to vulnerable widows and their families in Kabul. The remaining 50 sheep were divided among 480 struggling families. The distribution brought joy and sustenance to many, exemplifying our organisation's commitment to positive change to those in need.



1,720

Families fed with meat during Qurban.



13,760

Estimated individuals supported during Qurban.



[According to a 2017 UN Report (see UN Economic & Social Affairs - Household Size and Composition Around the World 2017) the average family size in Afghanistan is 8].

OUR WORK IN AUSTRALIA

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Photo credit Australian Human Rights Commission



Photo crédit ABC

THE EVACUATION

When the Government of Afghanistan fell on the 15th of August 2021, and a new regime rose to power, Mahboba's Promise had to respond urgently and effectively to the crisis.

Our primary focus during the initial moments of these events was to evacuate our staff before the 31 August deadline provided to western organisations. However, as the context unravelled rapidly, we quickly came to understand that the orphans in our Hope Houses were also at risk. As a result, over 100 individuals including unaccompanied children, staff, and vulnerable families were included in our evacuation efforts.

The evacuation was led by our founder Mahboba and her son Sourosh (Nawid) Cina, whose round-the-clock efforts successfully evacuated 17 individuals, including 10 unaccompanied children,



to Australia in September 2021. This became national news, and appeared on the front page of The Daily Telegraph, The Project, and other news platforms. We mobilised in Sydney to supplement settlement services for these new arrivals.

As our efforts continued, we harnessed support from the Australian public, civil society groups and high-profile individuals towards evacuating the remaining at-risk children and individuals in Afghanistan still. In March 2022, Sourosh led a humanitarian mission into Afghanistan. During the mission, critical information provided to the Australian Government enabled them to issue a further 84 emergency visas for the remaining at risk individuals. Months of meticulous planning for the evacuations were met by constant hurdles. Mahboba's Promise was guided in those moments by numerous individuals, including Sarah Dale

from RACS, and Michael Morgan from Northstar Public Affairs. Michael was instrumental in guiding us through government complexities and assisted us greatly in communications to various bodies as we tried to evacuate the cohort safely.

By October 2022, after six months of intense and high-risk planning, our organisation and our many friends and supporters achieved the impossible, successfully evacuating the group of 84 to Australia. This achievement was captured on the front page of the ABC, and on an Australian Story episode which covered key parts of the evacuation.



Human Rights Awards 2022

HUMAN RIGHTS MEDAL

In December 2022, Mahboba and Sourash were awarded the prestigious Australian Human Rights Medal of 2022 by the Australian Human Rights Commission. The award recognised the unprecedented nature of the evacuations, and honoured the decades long work of our organisation that did not falter after the fall of the government in 2021.

The evacuation process, and the awards are a symbol that demonstrates what a highly adaptable grassroots NGO can achieve. Further, it shows what happens when institutions work with grassroots actors. In this case, history was achieved and over 100 lives saved. These lives have already begun to contribute to Australia in a beautiful and fantastic way. They will continue to do so, and we have no doubt that there are many leaders in their midst, who like their Mother Mahboba, have a passion to help others and make the world a better place. Importantly, Mahboba dedicated the award to all the women of Afghanistan.



Photo credit Australian Human Rights Commission

POST- EVACUATION

The success of the evacuation marked an important inflection point in the expansion of our organisation's mission in Australia, pushing us to provide supplementary resettlement services, and to support various foster care families. The new arrivals consisting of the evacuee children, former staff and their families, and other vulnerable individuals are settling into Sydney. They have the support of Mahboba's Promise, the Australian Government, and settlement bodies including Settlement Services International (SSI) and Marist 180.

Throughout this time, Sourosh, Sarah, and child rights experts consulted with The Department of Home Affairs, and Marist 180 to negotiate a highly tailored Resettlement Program for the children. Our priorities were that the children remained connected with one another and to Mahboba, who was and remains a mother figure for them all. We are grateful to the Government and all other bodies that this process and the connection of these kids to Mahboba was respected and continues to be facilitated. This cultural connection and kinship are key for their mental health, and we have been honoured and overjoyed to be able to support their settlement journey.

Our organisation has engaged in several supplementary settlement services for not only the cohort of individuals we have evacuated, but many more vulnerable families. These services included accommodation support, food security support, networking and upskilling, provision of job opportunities and more. Various activities have also been tailored to engage and strengthen the physical, mental and emotional health of the new arrivals ranging from art therapy sessions, counselling therapy, sports, swimming lessons, community gatherings, tutoring and other recreational events.

We have been most pleased to work with several incredible schools including the Kings School, Barker College, Monte School, Pymble Ladies College, Queenwood School, and Unity Grammar School who have supported the settlement process of the children evacuated. Throughout this year, these schools have provided opportunities for evacuees to connect with their own students through sports, arts, picnics and other activities. All these opportunities have allowed for evacuees to bond with Australian high school students and provide them various educational opportunities, and community support. Potential scholarships with schools such as Pymble Ladies College are on the horizon, and Barker College initiated a 'Refugee After School Programs' and 'Intensive Swim Programs' this year.



Initiatives such as weekly soccer with Melrose Park FC, coordinated by the wonderful and incredible Julie Crane have been a critical form of keeping evacuees connected to one another, and to Mahboba. All of this has been achieved through the universal language of sport. Weekly football matches continued to be an event the children looked forward to as a safe space for them to reconnect with their Mahboba's Promise family, often joined by their mother figure, Mahboba. This initial collaboration has led to the football club establishing its own Social Inclusion Soccer Clinics for Refugees in 2023 aiming to create a similar safe space for all newly arrived refugees under 18 to connect over the love of sports.

Generous in-kind donations from communities across Sydney, and collaborations with Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation, food relief organisation OzHarvest and others, have supported the new arrivals with the basics of clothes, appliances, food, literacy packs, house goods and more to help build their new life in Australia.

OUR TEAM

Our Management Committee 44

Our Staff & Volunteers 46



OUR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Mahboba Rawi OAM,
Founder and Director

After fleeing Afghanistan in 1984 and spending the next two years in a Pakistani refugee camp, Mahboba Rawi witnessed first-hand the devastating effects that decades of conflict and oppression have had upon the country, and on its people.

Despite suffering great personal hardship, Mahboba decided that she would dedicate her life to helping Afghanistan's most helpless and she founded Mahboba's Promise in 1998. She made a promise

“to never abandon the widows and orphans of Afghanistan, who had no-one else to turn to.”

This is the promise that drives Mahboba's work today. Awarded the Order of Australia Medal in 2010 for her humanitarian work, Mahboba Rawi continues to work tirelessly to implement aid and development work within Afghanistan. Mahboba is also involved in promoting cross-cultural dialogue within the Australian community, currently serving as a member of the Multicultural NSW Regional Advisory Council (RAC) for the North Sydney region.

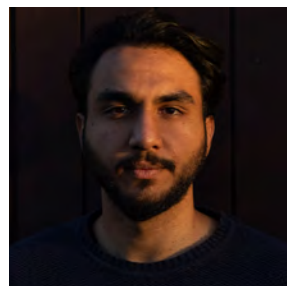
As President of Mahboba's Promise Incorporated, Mahboba is instrumental in ensuring the organisation fulfils its vision and mission of helping the people of Afghanistan.



Khurshida Ajam,
President

Khurshida has over 20 years of experience in commercial and consulting roles in sales, marketing and medical education, working with several blue-chip companies.

Khurshida holds a Bachelor of Psychology and a Master of Commerce from the University of New South Wales (UNSW), is member of American Society of Training and Development and has a passion for women in leadership.



Nawid (Sourosh) Cina,
Vice President

Nawid Cina is a human rights lawyer with a demonstrated capacity to affect grassroots and institutional change on humanitarian issues. Nawid completed his Bachelor of Laws & International Studies from the University of Technology Sydney and undertook his legal training at RACS.

Nawid has worked as a Program Associate at the Champions of Change Coalition, where he contributed towards institutional gender equality reform in the private sector. Prior to this, Nawid was the General Manager of Mahboba's Promise, where he was responsible for operational leadership & the design of major humanitarian relief programs.

Following the Afghanistan crisis, Nawid returned to Mahboba's Promise to lead an unprecedented evacuation of at-risk orphans, widows and staff. Nawid was awarded the Australian Human Right Medal in 2022 for his work. Nawid is currently working as a Senior Policy Officer at the Australian Human Rights Commission.



Ash Nazim,
Treasurer

Ash Nazim is a purpose-driven individual with a diverse career spanning multinational engineering and technology companies, management consultancy firms, and the financial sector.

Since joining Mahboba's Promise in May 2023 he's used his experience in strategic planning, digital transformations, and operational productivity, he works to drive transformative change through innovative digital solutions.

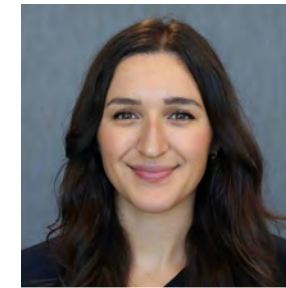


Mohammad Housaini,
General Member

Mo is a dynamic and results-oriented IT professional, with extensive experience implementing a diverse range of platforms, including Salesforce, Microsoft, and Atlassian solutions. With a proven track record in leading end-to-end technical projects, Mo has consistently delivered exceptional results.

Aside from his professional achievements, Mo has been dedicated to serving as a volunteer for Mahboba's Promise since 2015, demonstrating his commitment to making a positive impact beyond the workplace. His expertise spans various areas, from creating and presenting comprehensive multi-cloud roadmaps to drive strategic business initiatives, to crafting innovative solution designs and architectures.

Mo excels in developing governance frameworks and guidelines that ensure compliance and streamline processes, thereby optimising efficiency. Passionate about leveraging technology to drive innovation, Mo is deeply committed to delivering tangible business value through his expertise in implementing cutting-edge technological solutions.



Cara Boljevac,
Secretary

Cara brings a strong legal background to the Committee, including experience working in commercial law and the human rights and pro-bono space. She has volunteered with Mahboba's Promise since 2020 and joined the Management Committee in January 2023.

In 2022 she graduated from a Bachelor of Laws (Honours) and Bachelor of Arts (International Relations) and is currently completing her Practical Legal Training. Cara is passionate about equal access to education and grassroots female empowerment.



Heather Pym,
General Member

Heather is an environment and planning lawyer at a national law firm, working on both advisory and litigious matters. She started volunteering with Mahboba's Promise in 2020, subsequently assisting with evacuation efforts in 2021 before joining the management committee in 2022.

She is passionate about improving the lives of all people in conflict-affected areas, particularly women and children. Heather has extensive experience working on humanitarian projects, including the United Nations Association of Australia (NSW) and the Australian Red Cross, and in her current role as the company secretary of the John Mac Foundation.

OUR STAFF



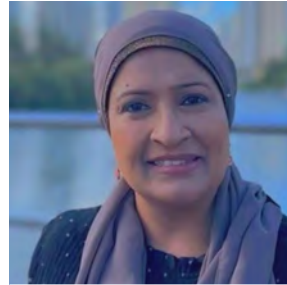
Penny Gerstle
Executive Officer
(former)

Penny joined Mahboba's Promise as an Executive Officer in 2022 bringing with her 30 years' experience working in the human rights sector, with particular interest in refugee and asylum seeker advocacy, disability advocacy, maternal health projects and human rights policy.

With a diverse portfolio including founding roles in organisations like the Aminata Maternal Foundation and contributions to bodies like Human Rights Watch Australia and the Public Interest Advocacy Centre, Penny's expertise spans global health, migration law, and community engagement.

She holds a Master's degree in International Law, Master's degree in Development and Global Health Studies and a Master's degree in Japanese Studies, as well as studies in Migration law from UNSW.

She has dedicated her career to advocating for vulnerable populations and spearheading impactful initiatives worldwide.

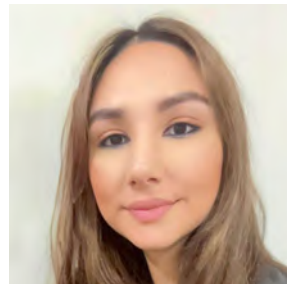


Shabina Ajam
Finance Assistant

Shabina has been part of the Mahboba's Promise team for three and a half years, demonstrating her commitment and passion to helping widows and orphans.

She has been a supporter of Mahboba's Promise for 20 years as a sponsor and invaluable team member. Shabina's role is to help with daily financial activities, carry out administrative tasks, and support teams.

Her enthusiasm for connecting with volunteers from diverse backgrounds is highly commendable, and she exhibits excellence in helping newly arrived refugees settle into their lives here in Australia.



Tamana Cina
Resettlement Officer &
Executive Assistant

Tamana has been an integral part of Mahboba's Promise for many years, initially joining as a dedicated volunteer. In 2023, she assumed the role of Resettlement Officer and Executive Assistant to the Founder Mahboba Rawi.

Tamana has a Bachelor's degree in Social Work and her background in social work brings experience in mental health and domestic violence issues, with a particular focus on serving culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Her deep-rooted commitment to humanitarian causes, coupled with her expertise in community engagement and support, makes her an invaluable asset to the organisation. Tamana's passion for empowering individuals and facilitating their integration into society aligns perfectly with the mission and vision of Mahboba's Promise.

OUR VOLUNTEERS



Shravani Sandbhor
Supporter Care
Coordinator

Shravani Sandbhor's dedication to serving with Mahboba's Promise since August 2022 has been exceptional. Within the Sponsorship team, she has played a pivotal role in facilitating sponsorships for numerous recipients. Her responsibilities extend to maintaining communication with our sponsors and providing regular updates to the recipients.

As a Bachelor of Archaeology student, Shravani's commitment to volunteerism has been evident since her early years, starting at the age of 10. Her passion for aiding others in any capacity propels her to excel within the framework of Mahboba's Promise.



Bayyinah Mah
Projects & Grants
Coordinator

Bayyinah has volunteered with Mahboba's Promise since early 2023. She works in the projects team, helping to facilitate projects and find and manage grants to run new ones. She also helps to recruit new volunteers.

Some of the projects she is involved in are the get around program, the catering social enterprise and the young women's leadership program. She has a background in nursing and enjoys learning new skills. She is currently undergoing training as a chaplain.



Sarina Chadha
Human Resources
Coordinator

Sarina Chadha has been a part of the Mahboba's Promise team since March 2023.

An all-rounder, she has worked to recruit, train, and interview volunteers, manage the database, and occasionally worked alongside sponsorships while managing day-to-day tasks that need doing.

Sarina is currently studying a Bachelor of Accounting and HRM at UNSW. Passionate about women's and children's rights, she hopes to continue working in this field in the future.

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In 2022-2023, hundreds of people across Australia and from around the world generously supported our work in Afghanistan, and now more recently in Australia. Given the changing and turbulent conditions which faced Afghanistan during this period, we would like to thank all the people who have worked above and beyond to bring about the best possible outcomes for our staff and the vulnerable children and widows we support.

OUR DONORS

Without the support of our loyal donors, we would not be able to do the work we do. 2022-2023 saw the start of new stewardships and new addition to our Mahboba's Promise family for which we are so grateful for. Individual donations from the Australian public continues to remain a vital component to our functionality through which we are able to help tens of thousands of women, children and their families. We are forever thankful to you all for joining our family and helping us make change happen.



OUR STAFF IN AFGHANISTAN

No amount of thanks can express our gratitude for our staff in Afghanistan, who have shown exceptional courage in carrying out our humanitarian mission amidst challenging circumstances.

Each day, you embody our values as you work tirelessly to uplift and empower vulnerable women, children and communities across Afghanistan. Your efforts are a beacon of hope and inspiration to all of us while your compassion and dedication are the driving forces behind our mission's success.



It is impossible to speak of the achievement of the evacuations without speaking of RACS and the leadership of Sarah Dale. The partnership, and the friendship that developed because of the Evacuations is one of the most valuable things that our whole team holds close to heart.

Words are not sufficient to describe the extent of their impact nor our gratitude. We extend to Sarah Dale, Emily Taylor, and the whole team at RACS another (and many more will come) formal thank you, for your relentless spirit and your work not only for our evacuees but the thousands of others you support. RACS continues to support many of our evacuees in their pathway to permanent residency. We look forward to continuing this friendship in the years to come.



In September 2021 Surosh was connected to Michael Morgan and Damon Jalili from Northstar Public Affairs. Both were deeply moved by our evacuation efforts and provided pro-bono support to our work.

Michael provided critical support throughout the evacuation process, becoming an advocate for the cause, and guiding us on the complexities of the Australian Government. He consulted Surosh throughout the year, and to list every way he supported would mean pages of detail. We could not be more grateful for the support, for the answered phone calls at all hours of the day, and the unceasing belief in the possibility of the evacuations, even at the worst of times. Thank you for everything you have done, and we are most of all grateful to have developed a true friendship throughout such a difficult and rewarding evacuation process.



Pymble Ladies' College



We are extremely appreciative of the support Pymble Ladies College has provided us in helping the evacuated children to settle into their new lives in Australia.

Through their support, the girls who are in the process of adjusting to the new cultural context of the country have had the opportunity to engage and build a connection with their fellow peers, slowly building their own community here in Australia. The College's focus on training the girls on how to swim, a vital life skill, highlights their desire to support the girls to grow and learn different skills they did not have access to back in Afghanistan. We cannot thank them enough for all the support they have already provided and their openness to expand the support even further in 2024 with discussions ongoing on possible scholarship opportunities for some of the girls.

We cherish and are grateful to our long-time partner, Asquith Girls High School, in their continuous support to our flagship programme, School's Promise.

Their support has allowed the Abdara Girl's School in Panjshir, Afghanistan, to expand its curriculum and activities over the years, filling the gaps beyond the basic essentials of the education system in the country. The support has also allowed for the girls from that school to enrol in Anaba Vocational Training Center in the midst of the challenging context of the country focusing on obtaining some skills development while the situation improves. Their support was not just limited to Afghanistan, Asquith Girls High School has gone above and beyond to support the evacuated children, helping them build their identity and their sense of community in Australia as well. Asquith Girls High School adaptability, solidarity and support throughout 2022-2023 is something we will continue to be thankful for.



and King's Women's Network

Mahboba and her family have been so delighted by the support of The King's School community and King's Women's Network, together with Chartwells this year.

Recognising the difficulties that people newly arrived from Afghanistan face, members of The King's School community led by Jen George hosted a wonderful Welcome Party, with several of King's Year 11 students organising a very exciting and competitive game of cricket. King's Women's Network have worked tirelessly providing practical support and social activities to our new families and children, and most importantly building wonderful friendships. Together with Chartwells Catering, The King's School and King's Women's Network have kindly been supplying many of our newly arrived friends with culturally appropriate catering. One thousand thank you's to The King's School community, King's Women's Network and Chartwells.



Over the past year, KPMG has been instrumental in supporting Mahboba's Promise by providing expert guidance on key compliance and legal matters.

Their invaluable assistance has ensured that our organization remains aligned with regulatory requirements and best practices. Currently, KPMG is actively involved in the revision of our Constitution to ensure that this foundational document accurately reflects our strategic direction and organisational focus. We deeply appreciate KPMG's ongoing commitment and expertise in helping us navigate complex legal and compliance issues as we strive to fulfill our mission effectively.



COMPLIANCE

Mahboba's Promise Inc is registered with the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC), and ensures it remains compliant with the ACNC Act 2012. Financial records are kept of our transactions and financial position to ensure transparency and compliance with any audit if required. Mahboba's Promise submits reports to the ACNC every year, and ensures it complies with the ACNC's governance standards.

Mahboba's Promise holds a license to fundraise under section 13A of the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 in all Australian states and the organisation ensures it remains compliant with all its reporting requirements under the act.

Mahboba's Promise currently holds Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status issued by the Australian Tax Office and complies with the required financial reporting as dictated by the department.

Mahboba's Promise is a member of The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and adheres to

the ACFID Code of Conduct. Mahboba's Promise has established controls designed to safeguard its assets and to ensure the integrity of its activities and reports. The organisation is committed to ensuring that all its activities are conducted legally, ethically, and to a high standard as required by ACFID Code of Conduct. Complaints relating to a breach of the Code can be made to ACFID and information about how to make a complaint can be found at www.acfid.asn.au.

Mahboba's Promise remains dedicated working to the highest standard and takes all complaints relating to our staff, donations, development work or stakeholders very seriously. In addition to our commitments under the ACFID Code, Mahboba's Promise is also equipped to handle complaints internally. Mahboba's Promise complaints policy can be found on our website at

<https://mahbobaspromise.org/afghanistan/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/POL0027-Complaint-Resolution-Policy-1.pdf>

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An Australian Aid Organisation