2024 Annual Report

MAHBOBA'S PROMISE

An Australian Aid Organisation

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Message from our Founder

Mahboba Rawi OAM

This year has been a journey of both challenges and triumphs. I have embraced the heartfelt responsibility of becoming the "mother" to over 50 Afghan children evacuated to Australia. Each child represents a story of resilience and hope, and children have found new beginnings within Afghan families, supported by our ongoing programs in community engagement, language development, and cultural connections.

Our primary focus locally has been the health, well-being, and education of these children. Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of schools such as Pymble Ladies College, Asquith Girls High School, The King's School, Queenwood School, and Unity Grammar School, many of these children have been granted scholarships, paving the way for a promising future. Beyond academics, we've fostered their spirits through soccer clinics, swimming lessons, art classes, and cultural celebrations, fostering joy and connection within a nurturing community.

For the adults, we have introduced integrative programs, which include English language classes, driving lessons, and job readiness initiatives, empowering them to rebuild their lives with dignity and independence. One unforgettable highlight was witnessing the joy of our young Afghan girls attending the Women's World Cup in Sydney 2023—a moment of pure inspiration and a glimpse into a world of endless possibilities.

Afghanistan remains at the heart of our mission. Despite the overwhelming poverty and devastation caused by ongoing crises and natural disasters, our commitment to the Promise I made 24 years ago remains steadfast. Education, health services, training, employment opportunities, and disaster relief continue to be the lifelines we provide families, and this work is only possible

because of the unwavering dedication of our remarkable team on the ground in Afghanistan. Their courage and resilience are the driving forces behind our shared vision.

To our incredible supporters and donors—your compassion and generosity illuminate this path of hope. Every contribution, large or small, reflects a belief in the power of hope and ensures that the world's most vulnerable are not forgotten. The impact of this work is your impact, and for that, I am eternally grateful.

To our volunteers, staff, and management committee, thank you for your tireless dedication and for embodying the heart of this mission. Together, you have elevated Mahboba's Promise to new heights, paving the way for even greater achievements in the years ahead.

As we prepare for 2025, I am filled with hope and determination. With your continued support, we will forge even stronger pathways to transformation and empowerment for those who need it most. Together, we can turn hope into action and make the year ahead our most impactful yet. Thank you for being the foundation of this incredible journey.

Mahboba Rawi OAM
Founder of Mahbobas Promise

Message from Our Management Committee

This financial year has seen us strengthen our foundations, through refining our policies, processes and overall governance. All the while strengthening our expertise in the Australian settlement sector, and scaling of our humanitarian work in Afghanistan. Fundamentally at the heart of all our efforts is to build communities, transform the lives of those in need, and empower them to lead the most fruitful lives possible. We are better positioned now to expand our work both in Afghanistan and Australia.

Key Priorities

1. Overseas Development and Disaster Response: Expanding the provision of sustainable development programs for and continuing aid for vulnerable communities in Afghanistan and surrounding regions, with a responsive approach to natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, and landslides.
2. Operational Excellence: Refining internal processes, policies, and project evaluation methods to strengthen financial health and organizational impact.
3. Resettlement Support for Afghan Evacuees: Assist in advancing the integration and well-being of evacuees, including unaccompanied children.

Achievements

Partnerships and Programmes

GOVERNMENT

We have closely collaborated with various refugee service and program providers to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of the cohort and children in our care. These include Mental Health Counselling with STARRTS (NSW Service for Treatment & Rehabilitation of Torture & Trauma Survivors); Wellbeing workshops with SSI (Settlement Services International); NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DJI) Programmes and ongoing support from Local Government Area of Ryde.

EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

Collaboration with schools has resulted in academic pathways for students, with several earning scholarships at institutions such as Pymble Ladies' College, and Unity Grammar School. With further programmatic and extra-curricular support from Asquith Girls High School, The King's School, Queenwood School. The Refugee After School Programme (RASP) provides academic tutoring for children at school. Adults are accessing vocational training and driving classes, enhancing employment prospects and independence.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Partnerships established with organizations: Oz Harvest, Melrose Football Club, Monte School, and Bright Sparqe provide food, well-being programs and extracurricular activities such as soccer, swimming, and art classes to foster confidence and emotional well-being.

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE PROGRAMMES

The Employment Support Programme empowered participants, particularly women, with vocational skills such as driving, through Multicultural NSW-supported training. A Social Enterprise Project, funded by the James Kirby Foundation, equipped a young Afghan refugee to launch a catering business, setting a foundation for sustainable entrepreneurship.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Cultural and social events strengthened inclusion and belonging. Highlights included our annual Eid and Ramadhan Iftahar dinners, the Yahoo BBQ and the Sunday Soccer Programme, which engaged Afghan and broader Australian communities. A standout moment was young Afghan girls attending the Women's World Cup in Sydney 2023, inspiring a vision of global opportunities.

Sustainable Development Programs

Mahboba's Promise Kabul Office has responded swiftly to crises such as the Herat earthquake (October 2023) and the Baghlan flood (May 2024), delivering essential food and shelter to affected communities. Through seasonal and disaster relief campaigns, the organization has provided critical aid, including winter essentials and culturally significant supplies, offering relief and hope to vulnerable populations..

EXPANSION OF LONG STANDING PROJECTS IN AFGHANISTAN.

The Strings of Hope and the Confectonery Store ensure a multifacted approach to building community and supporting economic empowerment.

We have also begun planning for a new Hope House in Northern Afghanistan, as well as a Girls Hope House in Badakshan province.

Our permaculture farm is thriving. New fruits and vegetableshave been harvested and sales from the farm continue to foster self relience for vulnerable communities

Vision ahead

Our future is bright as we continue to strengthen and expand our work and impact.

Looking ahead, our inspiring vision is to create an Australian Hope Village—a place that truly embodies the belief that *"it takes a village to settle a family."* This vibrant, inclusive community hub will serve as a bridge between the past and future for Afghan, Middle Eastern, and Central Asian refugees. Our Hope Village will foster cultural connections, strengthen social cohesion, and empower refugee families with the education and employment resources they need to thrive and become future leaders.

To achieve this vision, we will continue to

- Strengthen our governance and leadership in Afghan refugee settlement
- Diversify funding streams and partners
- Evaluate program outcomes and impact to ensure accountability and progress.
- Re-establish strategic partnerships with larger aid and development agencies.
- Scale the work within Afghanistan to address emerging needs with greater resilience and capacity.

APPRECIATION

The Management Commitee would like to express their gratitude for the loyalty and commitment from the dedicated office staff, the numerous and passionate volunteers, our unwavering supporters.

A special recognition goes to Shabina Ajam, who has been an invaluable part of our organization for the past six years. As our Finance and Administrative Officer, Shabina has played a pivotal role in ensuring the seamless operation of our office, and her efforts have been crucial to our continued success.

We are optimistic about the future as we deepen our impact on Afghan families, vulnerable women and children, both in Afghanistan and Australia.

About Us

Mahboba's Promise is an Australian, female-led, non-government organisation dedicated to providing life-changing support to vulnerable women and children in Afghanistan, surrounding regions, and Australia. Founded by Mahboba Rawi OAM in 2021, our organisation has focused on improving access to education, healthcare, and employment for orphaned children and widowed women, ensuring they have the opportunity to build a better future to foster self-sufficiency to break the cycle of poverty.

Throughout the years we have operated various programs including our Hope Houses, where orphans receive shelter, education, and emotional support, and widows are empowered through skills training and employment opportunities. We also play a critical role in responding to emergencies in Afghanistan, offering humanitarian assistance during crises such as natural disasters or conflict. Through partnerships with local teams and our office in Kabul, our organisation ensures timely support is provided to affected communities this has made us a trusted and vital source of hope for many communities across the country.

In Australia, our organisation has recently extended services to Afghan new arrivals, offering unique and tailored resettlement support. These services include pre-employment assistance, language training, job readiness programs, and entrepreneurship support. Our organisation's unique understanding of the Afghan community allows us to address the specific challenges faced by refugees as they transition into Australian society, called the "Mahboba Model of Care".

Promise

Our Promise is to deliver purposeful and impactful development aid and assistance to vulnerable women and children in Afghanistan, surrounding regions, and Australia.

Vision

Our Vision of HOPE is a world where every Afghan woman, widow, child and orphan has their fundamental rights fulfilled - to learn and thrive, to have their voices heard and to realise their full potential.

Our work in Afghanistan

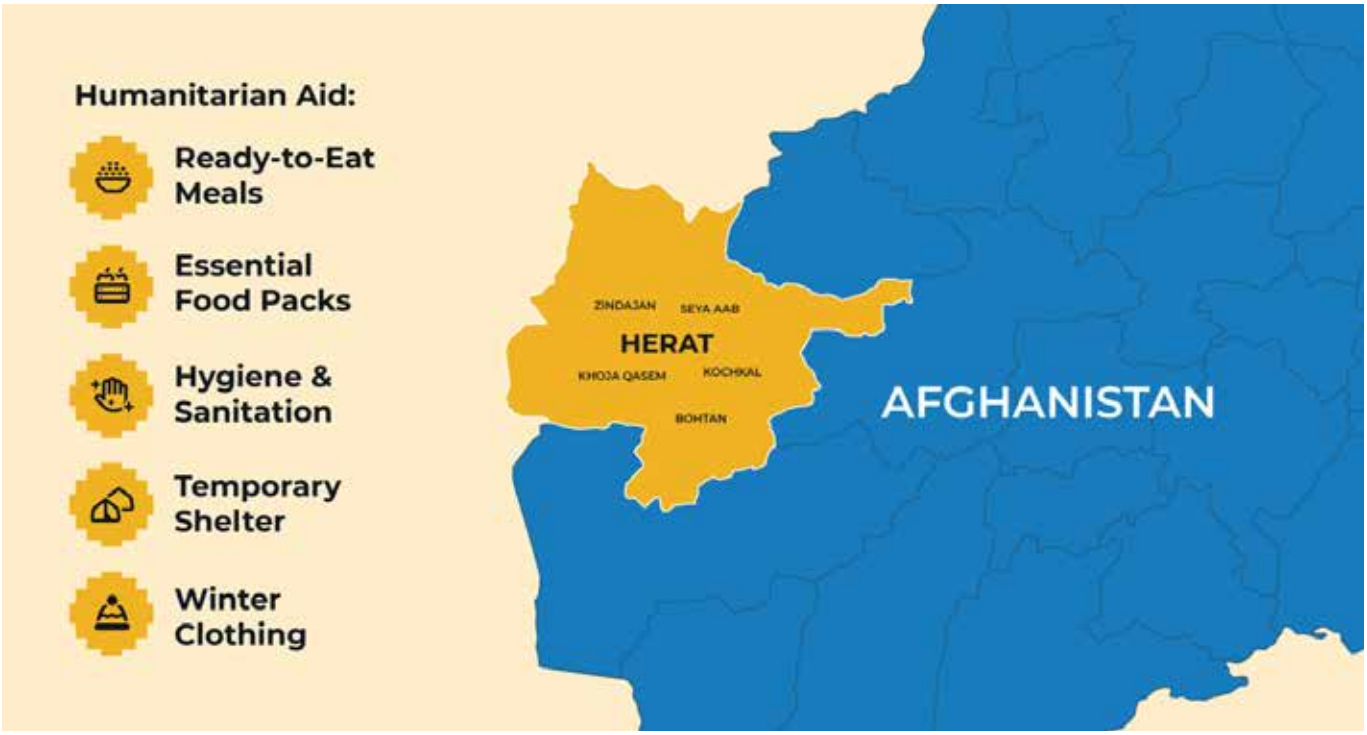
HUMANITARIAN AID 14
CHILD DEVELOPMENT 18
WOMEN's EMPOWERMENT 24
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT 28

HUMANITARIAN AID

2520
Direct Beneficiaries

1335
Herat Earthquake Beneficiaries

440
Baghlan Flood Beneficiaries



Herat Earthquake

Between October 7th and 15th 2023, a series of devastating 6.3 magnitude earthquakes struck Herat Province, affecting 1.6 million people and leaving over 114,000 in urgent need of humanitarian aid. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)'s report[1] with thousands of homes destroyed, alongside schools, health facilities, and infrastructure. Children were particularly vulnerable, with more than 23% of the affected population being under the age of five[1].

Mahboba's Promise Afghanistan mobilised a rapid response team to deliver critical aid to families and children in the remote, heavily impacted areas of Herat Province. Initial relief efforts began in the Zindajan district, where 200 individuals received ready-to-eat meal packages containing rice, mutton, peas, bread, and water, providing immediate nutritional support. On the subsequent days, the response expanded to support an additional 500 individuals with essential staples such as rice, cooking oil, and wheat, addressing urgent food security needs for disaster-affected households. The focus shifted to improving sanitation in temporary shelters, distributing hygiene supplies to 285 people to help prevent disease outbreaks often seen in post-disaster conditions.

Our field teams conducted on-the-ground assessments in the severely impacted villages of Seya Aab, Khoja Qasem, Kochkal, and Bohtan. Based on these assessments, we distributed food packages to 300 additional families, each containing essential provisions such as rice, wheat flour, cooking oil, sugar, kidney beans, and green tea, ensuring these households could meet their immediate nutritional needs. In Seya Aab village, our team identified several orphans among the affected population. Winter clothing, including jackets, pullovers, trousers, and shoes, along with items such as footballs to support these vulnerable children. This targeted assistance aimed to offer both warmth and a sense of comfort to children facing the devastating impacts of the disaster.

1 https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-herat-earthquake-response-plan-october-2023-march-2024

Baghlan Flood

On May 10 and 11, 2023, north-eastern Afghanistan experienced severe rainfall and flash floods, causing widespread devastation, with Baghlan Province bearing the brunt of the disaster. According to Save the Children, over 12,000 homes were destroyed, affecting approximately 80,000 people—half of whom are children—leaving them in urgent need of humanitarian assistance[1]. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that Baghlan accounted for 80% of the fatalities, with significant destruction to essential civilian infrastructure and agricultural resources[2]. The disaster resulted in the loss of six public schools, 10,200 acres of orchards, 2,260 livestock, and damage to 50 bridges and 30 electricity dams, highlighting the extensive impact on the region's communities and livelihoods.

Recognising the severity of the crisis and the urgent need for support, our organisation mobilised resources to deliver targeted assistance to those most in need. In the initial phase of aid distribution, we prioritised addressing immediate hunger and nutritional needs by providing 300 hot meals to affected families. To combat the harsh night-time temperatures, we distributed 70 warming packages, offering children comfort and protection from the cold. Additionally, 70 toy packages were provided to support the psychological well-being of the youngest survivors to restore a sense of normalcy and hope amidst the turmoil.

1 https://www.savethechildren.org.au/media/media-releases/afghanistan-about-40000-children-lose-homes-after

2 https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-floods-flash-update-1-floods-hit-northeastern-afghanistan-12-may-2024

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

2800
Indirect Beneficiaries
including widows and their children

431
Direct Beneficiaries

283
Hope House Children

48
Kabul Hope House Children

30
Panjshir Hope House Children

49
Badakhshan Hope House Children

156
Takhar Hope House Children

148
Street Kids Program Children

Child Development

There are over 12 million Afghan children in need of humanitarian assistance. These children face severe challenges, including lack of access to adequate food, clean water, healthcare, education, and safe shelter. Many have been displaced due to ongoing conflict and instability, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation, malnutrition, and disease[1].

Our Hope House Programme has been instrumental in supporting the development and well-being of Afghan children, providing a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment for over 20 years. Operating across four provinces, Kabul, Panjshir, Badakhshan, and Takhar, the program currently supports 283 children, including 146 girls and 137 boys.

Through these Hope Houses and our networks of support, we ensure that each child receives access to quality education, nutritious meals, and a secure home environment. Our program's holistic approach centres on three primary outcomes; psychological support, education and leadership development. This program is the cornerstone of our child development efforts, allowing vulnerable children to grow and thrive in a setting designed to meet their needs and become productive members of society

1 https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/humanitarian-action-children-2024-afghanistan

Hope House Success Stories

KABUL HOPE HOUSE

Kabul Hope House is home to many success stories, but we are proud to highlight two in particular.

The first is about Feroz, a top-performing student whose academic excellence is matched by his creativity and ingenuity. His talent shone through when he designed and built a model airplane, which was later showcased at an educational exhibition, earning him recognition and commendation from educational authorities.

The second is Basilia, a 15-year-old student who has consistently achieved the highest marks in her class. In addition to her academic success, Basilia is a gifted public speaker and excels in poetry recitation and presentations. Her dedication to supporting her peers in their studies has made her a role model and a cornerstone of the Hope House community.

PANJSHIR HOPE HOUSE

The Panjshir Valley has long stood as a symbol of resilience and strength, a spirit beautifully reflected by the staff and children at Panjshir Hope House. Despite significant challenges, they continue to demonstrate remarkable dedication and determination.

One of the most inspiring transformations is that of Hizbullah. When he first arrived at the Hope House a few years ago, Hizbullah was a reserved child who avoided social interactions and kept to himself. Over time, the nurturing environment and unwavering support from the staff helped him build confidence and find his voice. Today, Hizbullah has blossomed into an articulate speaker, regularly delivering speeches to his peers both at school and during house events. His journey of courage and growth is not only a testament to his resilience but also an inspiration to those around him. This is the hope and transformation that Panjshir Hope House strives to cultivate every day.

BADAKHSHAN HOPE HOUSE

At Badakhshan Hope House, fostering the mental and emotional well-being of children is at the core of their work. Many of the children have endured difficult pasts, and the dedicated staff provide a nurturing environment to support their healing and personal growth. Through group outings to parks and cultural sites, combined with regular counselling and mentorship, the Hope House ensures that children develop the confidence and coping skills needed to face the future with strength.

This supportive environment has profoundly shaped the lives of many, including Hayatuddin. After losing his father to medical complications in 2018, Hayatuddin faced immense hardship at a young age, grappling with the emotional void left by his father's absence. Since joining the Hope House two years ago, he has flourished both emotionally and academically. Now a sixth-grade student, Hayatuddin has developed a passion for learning, consistently excelling in his studies and earning a place at the top of his class. With the care and mentorship he receives, he has regained his confidence and nurtured an ambitious dream of becoming a doctor. His resilience and determination are a powerful testament to the transformative impact of the Hope House's unwavering dedication.

TAKHAR HOPE HOUSE

Takhar is home to our largest Hope House, which this year provided a safe and nurturing environment for 156 children.

Among them is Khatira, one of our brightest and most driven students, whose story exemplifies the transformative impact of this support. Excelling academically, Khatira has a special passion for mathematics and continues to make remarkable strides in mastering Dari. Her dedication and kind-hearted nature inspire her classmates, motivating them to pursue their own success. Khatira's achievements and her positive influence on her peers highlights the invaluable role that the Hope Houses play in shaping bright and promising futures for children.

Street Kids Programme

This year, the Zainab Street Kids Programme entered its fifth year of operations, supporting 148 street children across Kabul. The program ensures these children, and their families have access to nutritious food, essential stationery, and a monthly cash stipend. For children living on the streets, these essentials are often out of reach, as their daily struggle to survive takes priority over education.

By providing them with these essentials, we are able to alleviate some of their immediate pressures enabling them to attend school, engage with their studies, and providing a fertile ground to break free from the cycle of poverty. Many children who once had little hope of formal education have acquired valuable skills, opening opportunities for employment and a brighter future.

APPRECIATION

Mahoboas Promise would like to acknowledge and appreciate the support from the Zainub Foundation for their continued and heartfelt contribution since 2019, to make project this possible.

GRASSROOTS EMPOWERMENT

326
Direct Beneficiaries

155
Widow Outreach Beneficiaries

58
Strings of Hope Beneficiaries

110
Women's STEM Program Beneficiaries

Widow's Empowerment

Since the August 2021, women and girls in Afghanistan face severe restrictions on their rights, including limited access to education, employment, and freedom of movement. These challenges have significantly affected their well-being and opportunities to live and participate in a functioning society. The result has been widespread poverty, reduced access to essential services, and diminished community and economic engagement.

Outreach Programme

Since 2004, our Outreach Programme has supported thousands of Afghan widows and their families, who have been deeply affected by years of conflict and war. The program provides essential aid packages, financial assistance, and emotional support to help women, and their children overcome significant hardships and regain stability.

The program specifically targets families without a breadwinner, such as widows who have lost their spouses to conflict and families without males over the age of 18, ensuring that the most vulnerable receive critical assistance. This year, Mahboba's Promise supported 155 widows each month. The aid packages they received included staple items like flour, tea, oil, and sugar to meet basic dietary needs.

Additionally, transportation costs were provided for families to access the medical aid without facing extra financial burdens. The program remains committed to addressing food insecurity in Kabul, providing widows and their families with the stability they need to rebuild their lives with dignity and hope for a brighter future.

Strings of Hope Programme

The Strings of Hope Programme remains a vital initiative for securing the livelihoods of vulnerable women across Kabul and Panjshir. By providing vocational training in carpet weaving, traditional hand sewing, and tailoring, participants gain valuable skills that enable them to generate income and support their families. These crafts, deeply rooted in Afghan culture, also offer participants a sense of cultural preservation and pride.

In September 2023, the program successfully relaunched in Panjshir, with 48 women participating in workshops equipping them with the skills, resources, and supportive environment to hone their craft. Many women reported a newfound sense of pride in their work and the ability to financially contribute to their households, fostering confidence and hope for the future. In Kabul, an additional 10 women were supported through funding from global education services platform the Ambassador Programme demonstrating the program's reach and impact in diverse regions.

The Strings of Hope program has not only improved individual livelihoods but also strengthened community resilience by equipping vulnerable women with marketable skills and fostering economic independence.

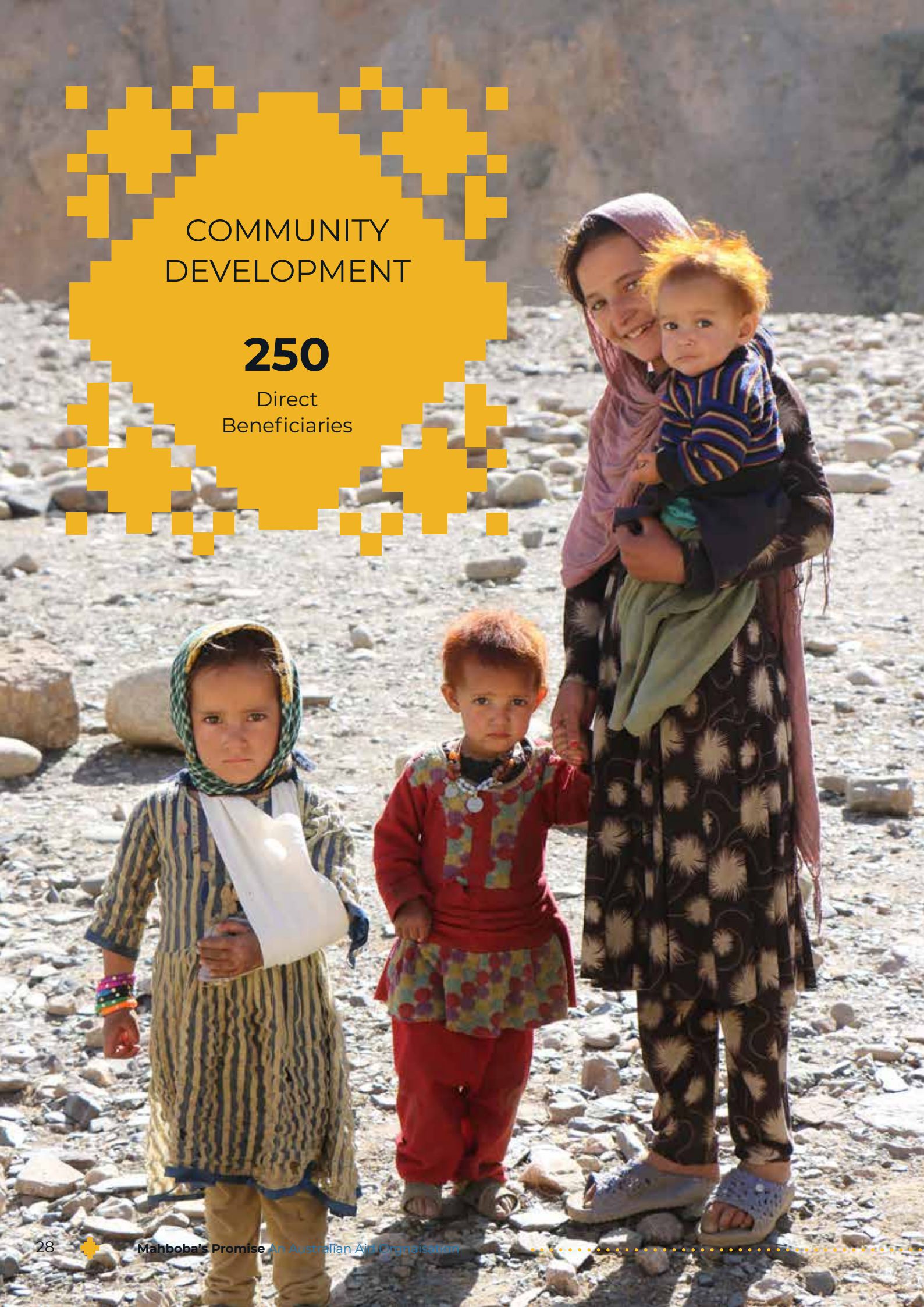
Ongoing partnerships and outreach initiatives are crucial to expanding the program's impact and offering sustainable livelihood opportunities to more women across Afghanistan.

Women's STEM Programme

This year, we launched an exciting new STEM program in partnership with UNDP in conjunction with Kardan institute in Kabul, empowering 110 girls through STEM, English and digital skills educational course. The program's curriculum was specifically designed to equip students with valuable skills in computer programming, English Language Proficiency (CEL), mathematics, algebra, physics, and chemistry, paving the way for a promising future.

Throughout the program, participants completed 12 units of the CEL curriculum, gained proficiency in essential software tools like Microsoft Windows, Word, PowerPoint, and Excel, and developed a strong foundation in key STEM subjects. In addition to academic learning, the training sessions focused on building confidence and resilience, with many students pursuing formal education for the first time in years.

The program culminated in a celebratory graduation ceremony in July 2024, marking the students' remarkable progress. This initiative highlights our commitment to empowering Afghan girls by providing them with the resources and opportunities needed to thrive, even in the face of significant challenges.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

250

Direct Beneficiaries

Health

Afghanistan's health system is critically underfunded, leaving millions without access to essential care amid a prolonged humanitarian crisis exacerbated by conflict, drought, and natural disasters.

According to the WHO in 2023, 28.8 million people required urgent aid, including 14 million needing health assistance. Funding shortages threaten access to trauma care, mental health services, and lifesaving interventions for 8 million people. These shortages have disproportionately affected women and children[1].

KABUL MEDICAL CENTRE

This year, we successfully relaunched the Kabul Hope House Medical Centre, providing essential healthcare services to vulnerable communities in Kabul and supporting 250 families throughout the year. The centre focuses on three key critical areas:

1. It offers family planning and maternal health services, providing free consultations to economically disadvantaged women, with a particular focus on pregnancy care, postpartum support, and reproductive health.
2. Children residing at Kabul Hope House receive routine medical care, and referrals to specialised hospitals are arranged for more serious conditions requiring advanced treatment.
3. Additionally, the centre supplies essential medications to women and children in need improving health outcomes where they can least afford it.

Mahboba's Promise's has an ongoing commitment to enhancing health and well-being in underserved communities.

1 https://www.who.int/news/item/18-08-2023-afghanistan-s-health-system-suffers-critical-underfunding--calls-for-donor-support

Agriculture

250
Direct Beneficiaries

PERMACULTURE FARM PROGRAMME

The Permaculture Farm is dedicated to enhancing food security and sustainability in Shakar-Dara, Kabul, by utilising organic and regenerative agricultural practices to produce food and promote sustainable farming techniques within the community, while providing valuable training and upskilling opportunities to locals. By sharing these practices, the farm empowers vulnerable women and families to produce and access to nutritious food, contributing to the overall sustainability of the region.

This year, the farm expanded its operations to 4,000 square meters and added six new greenhouses, creating an ideal environment for growing crops like tomatoes, eggplants, peppers, and other vegetables. A significant milestone was the construction of an 80-meter-deep water well, which addressed ongoing water shortages that had previously hindered crop production. Over the course of the year, the farm harvested and distributed nutritious food packages to 250 families, including 200 kg of cherries, 1,000 kg of beans, 2,100 kg of tomatoes, 175 kg of leafy greens, and 2,100 kg of grapes.

This fresh produce was distributed to vulnerable families, widows, and residents of the Hope Houses. Through these efforts, the farm plays a key role in strengthening local food security, supporting community resilience, and empowering individuals to build a more sustainable and self-sufficient future.

Religious Events

1960
Direct Beneficiaries

240
Ramadan Beneficiaries

1720
Qurban Beneficiaries

RAMADAN

During the sacred month of Ramadan, Mahboba's Promise provides critical aid to vulnerable individuals and families.

Over the course of 30 days of fasting, food packages are distributed to 40 needy families, ensuring they had enough to break their fasts and feed their loved ones. Additionally, 200 meals were provided to street children, addressing immediate hunger within the community. To further support those facing financial difficulties, cash assistance was provided to help see them through this holy month embodying the values of compassion and generosity that Ramadan represents.

QURBAN

On June 15, 2024, Mahboba's Promise successfully carried out the Eid Al-Adha Qurban distribution across four Afghan provinces: Kabul, Panjshir, Badakhshan, and Takhar, thanks to generous donations from global supporters.

A total of 103 sheep and 20 cows were slaughtered, and the meat was distributed to families in need. Meat packages of 3.5 kg each were provided to 620 families, including widows and vulnerable households, with 470 families in Kabul, 80 in Panjshir, 30 in Takhar, and 40 in Badakhshan benefiting. Additionally, 1.5 kg meat packages were distributed to 1,100 families in Kabul.

The three-day Eid celebrations reflected the spirit of sacrifice, sharing, and community, with our ensuring that as many families as possible received this support, fostering compassion and solidarity during the festive season.

Lessons learned in Afghanistan

This year, we have made important strides towards improving our programs and services in Afghanistan.

By reviewing formal evaluations of our programs and the ongoing feedback from participant and stakeholder experiences we have taken the time to reflect on what initiatives went well and which did not go as planned. This process has helped us identify key areas for growth and development, and several important lessons have emerged:

1. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

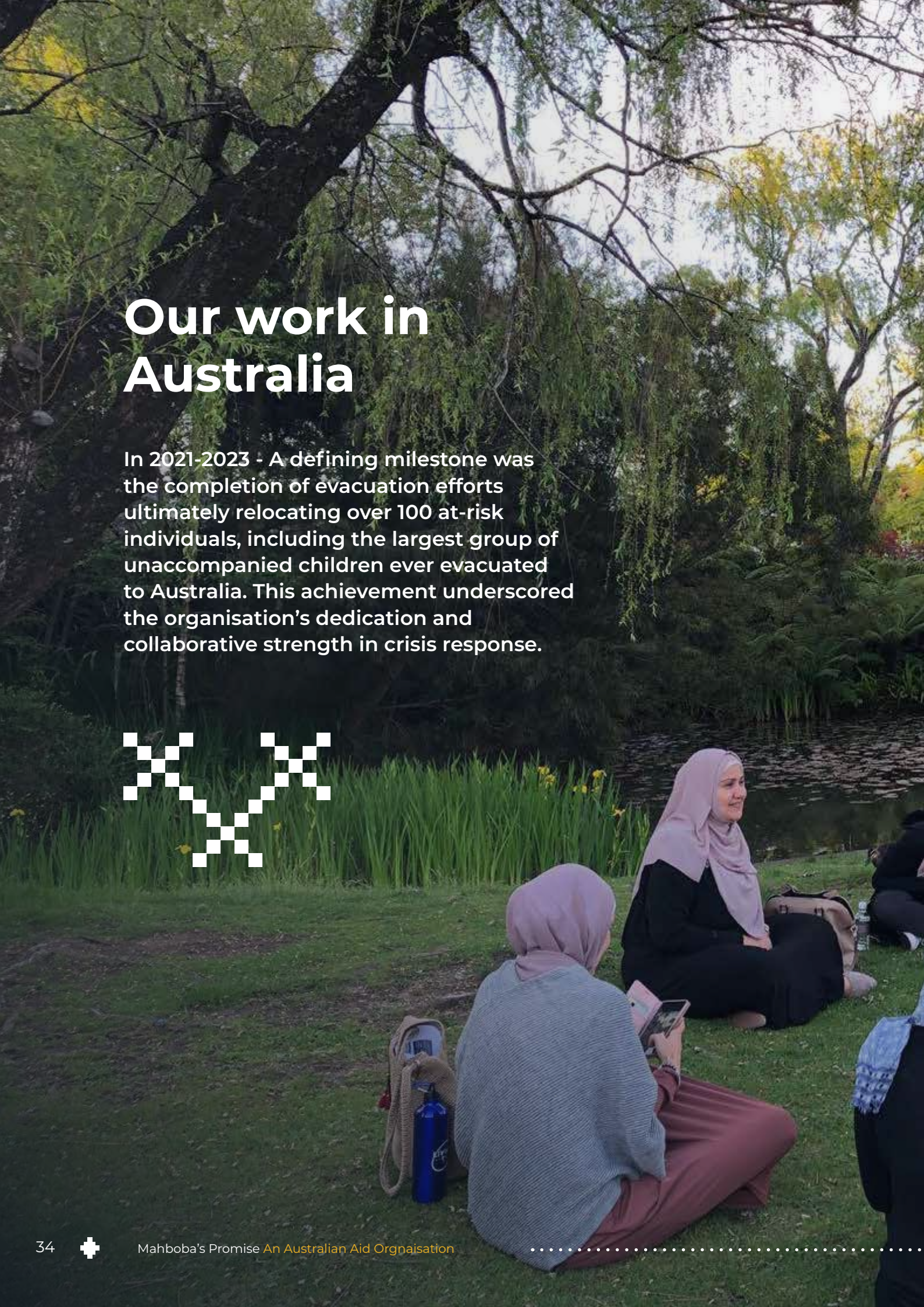
One of the key lessons learned this year is the importance of gathering more longer-term M&E data. While we have seen positive outcomes in several areas, including improved child welfare and educational outcomes in our Hope Houses and other initiatives, we lack a sufficient system to fully measure the long-term impact of our programs. A more systematised approach to M&E will enable us to assess the effectiveness of specific interventions and adjust our strategies to ensure better outcomes for program participants. This would involve collecting more detailed data at regular intervals including qualitative data through interviews, focus groups, and feedback from participants, local communities, and stakeholders. With a stronger M&E system in place, we will be able to track how we are affecting the lives of the women and children we support over a longer period.

2. Staff training and capacity building:

Our team on the ground has consistently demonstrated deep commitment to our mission, showing remarkable dedication to the communities we serve. However, we've identified areas where technical gaps exist, particularly in grant tendering, and monitoring and evaluation techniques. These gaps have highlighted the need for ongoing investment in training and professional development. By providing regular training, we can equip our local team with the skills they need to manage programs more efficiently. Additionally, as we continue to build new partnerships with UN agencies and other large international institutions, it is critical that our staff have the expertise to manage these relationships independently. Strengthening their capacity in areas such as strategic partnerships, project management, and financial reporting will ensure that our team is well-equipped to engage with global organisations, leverage funding opportunities, and enhance the visibility of our work.

Our work in Australia

In 2021-2023 - A defining milestone was the completion of evacuation efforts ultimately relocating over 100 at-risk individuals, including the largest group of unaccompanied children ever evacuated to Australia. This achievement underscored the organisation's dedication and collaborative strength in crisis response.



Building on these efforts, Mahboba's Promise focus in 2024 has been on the settlement of the evacuees making significant strides through impactful programs and partnerships.

In the past year, we are proud to report that 100% of school-aged children in our programs were successfully enrolled in local schools, receiving both academic and cultural support. Primary and high school students benefited from after-school tutoring and homework programs, helping to enhance their educational experience. Our Education Support initiative has strengthened academic pathways for Afghan students with ongoing collaboration with their schools, with several students awarded scholarships at prestigious schools, recognising their academic and extracurricular achievements.

Successful collaborations with schools like PLC and Queenwood resulted in scholarships and tailored educational support to ensure the children thrive academically. Bilingual mentoring programs helped increase self-confidence and academic engagement among Afghan children in the Ryde LGA, while Refugee Language Programmes and informal conversational practice at community events improved communication and social interaction for new arrivals, fostering a stronger sense of belonging and integration.

Our Health and Wellbeing initiatives have played a vital role in supporting the evacuees, fostering increased awareness of health and wellness through culturally sensitive workshops and strong partnerships with healthcare providers. Through collaborations with organisations like OzHarvest, we've ensured that 25 families have access to nutritious food via our Food Support Programme. Additionally, evacuees have had regular access to medical, dental, and counselling services, while actively engaging in extracurricular activities. Mental health support has been significantly enhanced, with 80% of identified cases receiving regular counselling

and referrals to STARTTS. Our commitment to physical well-being was also demonstrated through the swimming program, which equipped 40 children with essential water safety and fitness skills. These initiatives have helped ensure holistic support, improving the overall health and resilience of the evacuee community.

Community Engagement activities have included a series of events designed to foster a sense of inclusion and belonging. Highlights such as, the Yahoo BBQ, a community gathering that strengthened social bonds, and the Sunday Soccer Programme, where participants showcased their talents, with some advancing to higher competitive levels.

Furthermore, a group of young Afghan girls attended the Women's World Cup in Sydney, 2023, providing an inspirational experience in the heart of global sportsmanship. Each of these initiatives underscores our commitment to fostering empowerment, independence, and community integration among Afghan refugees, and we look forward to building on this progress in the coming year.

Funded by the James Kirby Foundation, the Social Enterprise Project provided specialised training in catering and business administration to a young Afghan refugee, empowering her with the skills needed to launch a social catering business. Through continued mentorship from our team, this aspiring entrepreneur is now well on her way to a sustainable livelihood.

Additionally, our Mobility Programme, supported by Multicultural NSW, offered driving training to young Afghan arrivals, helping them gain provisional licenses. This program has fostered independence and instilled valuable new skills among participants, receiving overwhelmingly positive feedback.

Acknowledgement

A huge thank you also to all our Individual and in-kind supporters and donors.

Hamidoula Popal - Zainab Street Kids Education towards Afghan Street Children

Natalie Cole - The Ambassador Platform towards Strings of Hope

Dr Patrick Campisi

Dr Nicole Wong Doo

Jo Kirk - Red Rocketship Foundation

Partners and Supporters in Afghanistan

UN Women
Australian Government Aid Program
Yalda Hakim Foundation
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Dubai Cares
Islamic Relief
Counterpart International
GIM Foundation
Australian Communities Foundation
Muslim Aid Australia
Make a Mark Australia
Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief

Partners and Supporters in Australia

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Department of Home Affairs, Multicultural NSW
NSW Department of Communities & Justice
City of Ryde

SETTLEMENT & COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Refugee Advice & Casework Service
Northstar Public Affairs
Oz HarvestMuslim Aid Australia
Afghan Women Support Association

FOUNDATIONS

Australian Communities Foundation
Mercy Foundation
James Kirby Foundation

CORPORATE & EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

KPMG
Pymble Ladies College
Asquith Girls High School
The Kings School

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 - is a long standing member with Mahbobas Promise, her experience and tenure allows for continuity and consistency within the Organisation.

Working in Commercial consulting roles Khurshida holds a Bachelor of Psychology and a Master of Commerce from the University of New South Wales (UNSW and t and is passionate about empowering women for Leadership in their own right.

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 the Refugee Advice & Casework Service (RACS). Nawid has worked as a Programme Associate at the Champions of Change Coalition, where he contributed towards institutional gender equality reform in the private sector. Nawid was nominated for Young Australian of the Year , 2024 and receieved UTS Young Alumni of the Year Award 2023. 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.

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 the importance of a holistic approach to, as well as 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.

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.

Aria Vodjani

Treasurer

Driven by a commitment to contribute to the betterment of the world, both professionally and personally, I currently manage a growing private construction and development business specializing in services for schools and educational institutions.

ARIA VODJANI CONTINUED >

Alongside this role, I am pleased to serve as the Treasurer of Charity dedicated to supporting underprivileged women, children, and other vulnerable groups in Afghanistan, surrounding regions, and Australia.

I commenced my Chartered Accountants qualification whilst working as a Senior Consultant in PwC's Financial Services division, servicing some of Australia's largest asset managers and real estate companies.

In an increasingly interconnected world, more light is being cast on the social conditions of all people, and whilst there are developments that give hope, there is much that should weigh heavy on the human conscience.

We must ask ourselves, how are we contributing to the betterment of the world through our careers? This hopeful young entrepreneur's approach is to strive to develop an enterprise that is in coherence with the aim to contribute to the spiritual and material advancement of society.

Compliance

Mahboba's Promise Inc is registered with the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC), and ensures it remains compliant with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (Cth). 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/

Contact us:

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MAHBOBA'S PROMISE

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