

# Going Where the Need is Greatest

**ANNUAL REPORT 2018**



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**RIGHT:** Iman Al Saddik, a Syrian refugee and volunteer with Relief International, walks through the informal settlement where she lives in Arsal, Lebanon. *Photo: RII/Elie Gardner*

**COVER:** Nafisa (center) holds her 12-hour-old baby girl in the maternity ward of Gentil Hospital in northeastern South Sudan. She is accompanied by her mother, Sukar (right). Nafisa lives in nearby Batil refugee camp. *Photo: RII/Elie Gardner*



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# GOING WHERE THE NEED IS GREATEST

Dear Friends,

“Going where the need is greatest” is more than just the theme of this report. It is a statement that defines Relief International as an organization.

This year, we deepened our commitment to serving families in those settings that are the most fragile.

In 2018, this meant expanding our lifesaving work in Syria, Yemen, and Bangladesh. It meant strengthening the resilience and agility of the organization so we can better respond to disruption. It meant continuing to develop innovative ways to couple humanitarian relief with enterprise development so that communities can prosper despite adversity.

As members of the Board, we are deeply invested in ensuring the highest standards of governance—in prudent financial management, effective programs, and protecting our partners and staff—and we take our duty to heart. That is why in 2018 the Board traveled in small groups to South Sudan, Uganda, Sudan, and Lebanon to visit our field sites and meet staff and partners, before all convening in Kenya.

I was inspired by the unforgettable experience of visiting internally displaced persons camps in Darfur, Sudan, where Relief International has

provided health and sanitation for 14 years. Seeing mothers’ relief at their infants receiving nutritional support at our clinics, boys pumping clean water for boreholes dug by Relief International, and families learning to plant kitchen gardens—these are some of the images that drive my motivation to continue the work that we do. It is how I know we are making a meaningful difference.



On behalf of the entire Board and Relief International family, we are deeply grateful for everyone who supported our work in 2018. You make it possible for us to carry on with this critically important mission—tapping into the strength, innovation, and civic-mindedness of the people and communities we serve in fragile settings.

With warmest regards,



Chip Levingood  
Chairperson, Relief International  
Board of Directors


**FROM LEFT:** Fatima Abdallah Babiker, Relief International’s Agriculture Field Monitor, teaches displaced women Hiba, Sahar, and Bakhita how to grow their own kitchen gardens at a demonstration plot in North Darfur, Sudan.  
*Photo: RI/ Elie Gardner*



# Now more than ever, what defines our work is adaptability to near-constant change.

Humanitarian crises do not look the same as five years ago, and five years from now we can expect them to look different than today.

As of 2018, a record 70 million people had been forced from their homes due to war, natural disasters, climate change, and political upheaval. Those who have been displaced are rebuilding their lives in camps, settlements, and host communities where they may live for decades—and where, above all else, they want opportunities to learn new skills, earn a living, and create a better life for their families.



This changing landscape demands more from Relief International as a global organization that specializes in working in some of the world's most fragile settings. In places where the need is greatest and sustained access is exceptionally challenging, we must be swift in responding to disruptions to basic goods and services, environmental stresses such as flooding or droughts, and security concerns.

At the same time, we are in this for the long haul. Where the situation is the most tenuous, Relief International digs in even deeper—meeting short-term needs, but also building on long-established relationships to foster local participation, build

integrated programs, nurture community and government partnerships, and strengthen civil society. This is the RI Way.

Amid constant change, we are more committed than ever to collaboration that furthers these core principles. To this end, in late 2018 we were pleased to welcome a French nongovernmental organization, Medical Refresher Courses for Afghans (MRCA), into the Relief International alliance network under its new name MRCA/Relief International-France, and added new board members Stéphane Crescitz and Philippe Oberlin.

This important addition to our global alliance strengthens our work in Afghanistan, broadens our health programming capacity, adds French voices to our governing bodies, and bolsters Relief International's capacity to meet the growing needs of this area of the world.

We could not do this work without you. Your continued partnership and support enables us to focus our programs where the need is greatest and to keep harnessing the strength and ingenuity of the communities where we work.



Nancy E. Wilson  
Chief Executive Officer

## THE RI WAY

### SETS OUT THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES WE USE TO DESIGN EVERY PROJECT.

1

#### LOCAL PARTICIPATION

**At Relief International, beneficiaries are not recipients of aid.** They are participants in their own solutions. We engage local communities at the program design stage, because programs designed, built and judged by the community they serve are more likely to succeed. And to last.

2

#### INTEGRATED PROGRAMS

**Relief International designs projects to cover more than just one slice of life.** Because lives are complicated. Education boosts health. Better health improves livelihoods. Stronger livelihoods let families invest in education. Integrated solutions serve people living in the real world.

3

#### PARTNERSHIPS

**We partner with communities, governments and leading international organizations.**

These relationships let us harness complementary expertise and networks to ensure that each community gets the best solutions available.

4

#### CIVIC SKILLS

**People are powerful when they are heard.** By engaging communities in project design and execution, Relief International fosters skills such as transparency, accountability and open public debate—the cornerstones of effective civil society. And a strong civil society supports good governance, the critical force behind long-term development and stability.

# About Relief International

Relief International specializes in humanitarian and development programs that benefit people in severe distress. As a registered nonprofit in the US, UK, Belgium, and now France, our work targets fragile settings that suffer from recurrent manmade or natural crises that impede human development.

In 60 years of doing this work, we've learned that there's only one constant in fragile settings: they don't follow a pattern.

Today, we'll work to deliver life-saving aid to millions of people living on the edge of survival. Tomorrow, when the crisis subsides, we'll work alongside community members to restore job opportunities, build critical infrastructure, and develop education programs. And the day after that ... we'll be ready for the next chapter. In fragile settings, every day brings new opportunities and fresh challenges.





**7,200**

STAFF AND AUXILIARY  
WORKERS DEPLOYED

**\$124.9M**

SPENT TO SERVE  
VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

**4.2M**

VITAL SERVICES PROVIDED TO  
START PEOPLE ON THE ROAD  
TO INDEPENDENCE AND DIGNITY

Relief International has the agility and experience to meet the ever-changing needs of vulnerable populations. We partner with them to plan for the future, devise lasting solutions, and create pathways to stability.

Bottom line: Our team of nearly 7,200 staff and auxiliary workers will continue to go where the need is greatest. Ninety-seven percent are local nationals.

Our investments are focused on four program sectors: Economic Opportunity; Education; Health; and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene.

We support solutions that reinforce and improve upon existing in-country systems. Where such systems do not exist or are chronically underperforming, our emergency response lays the foundation for long-term, sustainable change.

We spend 92% of every donation on our programs. We invested nearly \$125 million in 2018 in programs that are designed to be both responsive and flexible to serve the immediate and long-term needs of people in difficult circumstances.

**AZIDA, 15, AND HER MOTHER** visit one of Relief International's Women & Girls Friendly Spaces for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh's Kutupalong camp in Cox's Bazar. *Photo: RII Rachel Elkind*

**SYRIA**

# Heal a Child, Transform a Life

**Five-year-old Miriam\* and her family were picking up a breakfast of hummus, fava beans, and pita with za'atar when gunfire rang out near the bakery. Miriam was struck in the back by a stray bullet, which fractured her spine and temporarily paralyzed her from the waist down. She was immediately transported to the closest hospital, which is supported by Relief International, and rushed into emergency surgery.**





## THESE SERVICES OFFER A LIFELINE AMID A WAR THAT THREATENS TO SHUT DOWN THE COUNTRY'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM.

The family had fled to Syria's Idlib province to escape decades of conflict in their home country of Iraq. While they hoped to find safety and a better life, the violence in Syria offered no reprieve.

Today, Miriam is recovering from her surgeries and continues to visit the healthcare center operated by Relief International regularly for additional follow-up care. She receives weekly physical therapy sessions, which have helped her to regain the use of both of her legs, as well as counseling from professional psychologists to overcome this traumatic experience. We provide these services free of charge to Miriam—along with 67,000 patients like her each month.

For the nearly 7 million people who have been forced to flee their homes, either as refugees across borders or internally to more remote areas within Syria, these services offer a lifeline amid a war that threatens to shut down the country's healthcare system.

Despite the immense challenges of working in this environment, Relief International has maintained a constant presence in Syria. Throughout the war, our services have included distributing emergency supplies to families affected by the conflict, creating child-friendly spaces, providing case management and protection at our health facilities, rehabilitating water and sanitation systems at hospitals, trucking water to besieged communities, and more. The range of our work exhibits our deep commitment to ensuring civilians affected by the conflict receive the resources and care they need to not only survive, but also heal their emotional wounds and thrive.

In 2018, millions of lives in Idlib continued to hang in a precarious balance—and will remain that way until a sustainable solution is reached. Relief International's teams on the ground continue to work tirelessly to ensure that high-quality services remain available to all Syrians who need them.

**RELIEF INTERNATIONAL** provides weekly physical therapy sessions to Miriam, a five-year-old refugee from Iraq, which have helped her to regain the use of both of her legs.  
*Photo: RI Staff*

*\*Name has been changed for protection reasons.*



# 7M

PEOPLE HAVE BEEN FORCED  
TO FLEE THEIR HOMES IN SYRIA

# 67,000

PEOPLE RECEIVE HEALTHCARE SERVICES  
FREE OF CHARGE IN CENTERS THAT  
RELIEF INTERNATIONAL OPERATES



**SOMALIA**

# **Educate Girls, End Poverty**





RELIEF INTERNATIONAL AND PARTNERS HAVE REACHED NEARLY

**66,000**

GIRLS THROUGH THE EDUCATE GIRLS, END POVERTY PROGRAM.

## Like many young girls, Ifrah faced significant barriers to pursuing an education in the city of Garowe, in Puntland state in northeastern Somalia. Currently, just 40% of all girls in Somalia attend primary school.

After Ifrah's father passed away, her mother, Suways, struggled financially. Despite owning a small shop in their village, Suways could not afford to pay school fees for seven children and put food on the table.

During those times, Ifrah feared that her education—and future dreams—were vanishing. Now she is among thousands of students who receive assistance from Relief International's Educate Girls, End Poverty program. She passed the 2017–18 National Grade 8 Exams with high grades and is attending secondary school with the support of a school fee waiver.

Throughout Somalia, violence and extreme poverty have left deep scars, forcing many families to choose to keep their girls at home instead of in school. Additionally, many families hold deeply-rooted beliefs about gender roles in the household that determine whether or not girls attend school.

In response, Relief International has implemented the Educate Girls, End Poverty program since 2013 with support from U.K. Department for International Development (DFID) and in partnership with two other development NGOs. The aim is to overcome political, economic, and cultural norms by providing Somali girls with the opportunity to receive an education and break the cycle of chronic poverty. We build safe and inclusive learning environments at primary and secondary schools by training more qualified female teachers and working with boys to help them recognize the value of girls and women in their society.

Today, Ifrah's dreams are reignited—she hopes to become a doctor and help her community. In the meantime, Ifrah advocates for educational opportunities for girls by sharing her experience whenever she can, including appearing on a local radio show alongside other students who have stayed in school through support from Relief International.

**INSET (ABOVE):**  
Ifrah in her secondary school classroom in Garowe, Puntland state, northeastern Somalia.  
*Photo: RI staff*

**OPPOSITE PAGE:**  
Students enrolled in Relief International's Educate Girls, End Poverty program attend a back-to-school event.  
*Photo: RI staff*

**“EDUCATION IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR US. WE ARE THE CHANGEMAKERS FOR THE FUTURE GENERATIONS TO COME.”**

— IFRAH, A YOUNG GIRL IN NORTHEASTERN SOMALIA

## YEMEN

# Support Safe Access to Cash, Offer Families a Lifeline

**To understand what the world's worst hunger crisis looks like, one must understand what is happening in Yemen.**

Millions of people in Yemen are grappling with the effects of life-threatening famine amidst the country's unrelenting civil war. Out of Yemen's population of 27 million, 22.7 million are dependent on humanitarian aid. Of those, 400,000 children under the age of five are suffering from acute malnutrition.

And there is no relief in sight. Conflict and the remoteness of certain areas exacerbate the suffering, and humanitarian agencies are struggling to reach the populations most in need.

As conditions on the ground deteriorate, Relief International's presence in Yemen is adapting to shifting needs of the most vulnerable populations.

"While ensuring that people have enough to eat remains the immediate goal, the traditional aid model of distributing food is evolving. We are moving toward a longer-term approach to empowering families, fostering dignity, and supporting community prosperity," says Relief International Yemen Country Director Mutasim Hamdan.

Currently, one of Relief International's largest programs in Yemen involves distributing cash or cash vouchers to families who are feeling the brunt of the food shortage—particularly those in urban areas where the markets tend to be more functional.

We work closely with private banks and other financial institutions to deliver cash directly to those who need it most. To ensure support benefits the most vulnerable families, we employ a number of safeguards, including biometric identification technology or vouchers.

The infusion of cash or cash vouchers empowers families to contribute to and sustain local markets—especially the small businesses in Yemen that are in dire need of support to keep operating.

"With cash or vouchers in hand, these families are able to access the aid they so critically need, with the dignity and the opportunity to purchase what they would like," says Hamdan.

**A CHILD SITS NEAR A HUT** in an improvised camp for internally displaced people in Hajja, Yemen.  
*Photo: Reuters/Khaled Abdullah*

# 22.7M

PEOPLE IN YEMEN  
ARE DEPENDENT  
ON HUMANITARIAN AID



RELIEF INTERNATIONAL  
TEAMS respond to  
devastating drought  
conditions in Nimroz  
Province, Afghanistan.  
Photo: RI Staff



## AFGHANISTAN

# Restore Access to Water, Secure a Community's Future

**Azin\* and her family are among the nearly two million Afghans struggling to meet their basic needs as a catastrophic drought grips the country.**

With the well not working, water has become unsafe to drink, and her two young children have become prone to illness.

Remarkably, more people in Afghanistan were displaced by drought in 2018 than by the country's ongoing conflict. Southwestern Nimroz Province, where Azin's family lives, received 70 percent less rainfall than the previous year. The rivers are dry and water points are exhausted.

The drought has also all but decimated the country's farming and livestock industries, severely affecting families' livelihoods and forcing them to flee their homes at alarming rates. Despite these hardships, an overwhelming number of Afghans say they would choose to stay if they had access to water.

In response to this crisis, Relief International, which has been working in Afghanistan for more than a decade to implement governance, shelter, food

security, and livelihoods programs, has scaled up our infrastructure work and emergency relief to meet community needs.

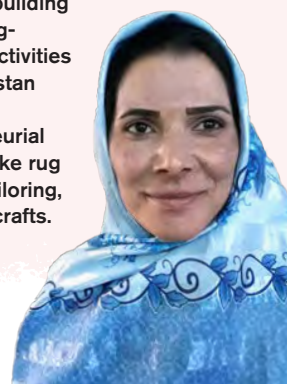
Funding from UNICEF has made it possible to build new wells and rehabilitate those that have run dry across Chakhansoor, Kang, and Charburjak districts. Our staff members work seven days a week to deliver safe drinking water to nearly 22,000 people residing in the hardest-to-reach areas. Relief International teams are also working with local communities to teach them how to properly manage and store their water.

By helping restore drinking water and reduce the incidence of water-related diseases, our response offers families the option to stay in their homes and remain in their communities—rather than embarking on dangerous migrations into Iran or to one of Afghanistan's already overcrowded and overburdened cities.

### LOCAL, WOMEN-OWNED SOLUTIONS TO AFGHANISTAN'S DROUGHT CRISIS

Local participation, particularly by women, may be the key to revitalizing drought-prone areas of Afghanistan. Adelah Muhamandi works as a community mobilizer for Relief International's water trucking project and delivers life-saving water to her friends, neighbors, and other members of her community. As the country's drought and conflict grind on, Adelah notes, "Afghan women like me must come forward and help in the development of the country."

Relief International has been working to boost alternative livelihoods—that do not depend on water—for Adelah and other women who have not migrated, including building on our long-standing activities in Afghanistan to bolster entrepreneurial activities like rug making, tailoring, and handicrafts.



\*Name has been changed for protection reasons.

## BANGLADESH

# Meet Refugees' Needs, Build Resilience for Tomorrow

**Driven from their homes by violence, more than 750,000 Rohingya refugees have crossed the Myanmar border into neighboring Bangladesh since 2017.**

**Makeshift shelters, constructed from bamboo and tarpaulin, cover every inch of the Kutupalong camp's steep, sandy hillsides.**

The need to construct housing for hundreds of thousands of refugees in a matter of weeks stripped the camp of all vegetation. Natural disasters are a persistent looming threat. Refugees and host communities are clustered around Bangladesh's coastline, rendering them extremely vulnerable to cyclones, monsoons, and mudslides. To mitigate the risk, Relief International trains local first responders in emergency preparedness, helping these communities prepare for monsoon season each March.



The latest arrivals join hundreds of thousands more Rohingya in Cox's Bazar who fled previous violent eruptions in the 1990s. Combined with the existing refugee population, nearly one million Rohingya refugees live in Bangladesh today.

Bangladesh hosts the world's largest refugee camp, the Kutupalong camp in Cox's Bazar. Spanning more than 3,000 acres, the sprawling camp is home to multiple generations of Rohingya.

While the refugee population has exploded in recent years, Relief International has been working in Bangladesh since 2004 on projects ranging from anti-human trafficking to ecotourism development. With the latest Rohingya crisis, we dramatically scaled up efforts to provide critical services for those in the Kutupalong camp, including education, healthcare, and mental health support.

Our photos offer insight into these refugees' daily lives and the essential services Relief International connects them to in the camp.



More than half of all newly arrived Rohingya refugees are children who, without access to education, risk becoming a "lost generation." Relief International operates 17 Child Friendly Spaces, which provide one of the only structured programs for children inside the camp. Here, Rohingya children have opportunities to learn and play, and to forget the realities of the camp—if only for an afternoon.

Diseases inside the camp often present in early stages or with a wide range of symptoms, making it difficult to pinpoint an exact diagnosis. To complicate matters, patients often contract rare diseases as a result of overcrowding, poor sanitation, violence, or other hardships of living in a refugee camp. Relief International staff treat patients suffering from respiratory tract infections, sudden onset fevers, and gastrointestinal issues. We've also extended our clinics' hours to 24/7 to ensure refugees can access health services during an emergency.



Poor water and sanitation systems inside the camp pose one of the greatest threats to Rohingya refugees.

In the rush to erect this functioning micro-city, some built latrines above wells and ponds used for washing and bathing, allowing waste to trickle down into the camp's water supply. Relief International's rehabilitation of key water points, in conjunction with other efforts throughout the camp, has helped to prevent and contain disease outbreaks.



SCENES FROM BANGLADESH'S Kutupalong refugee camp, home to nearly one million Rohingya refugees. Photos: RII Rachel Elkind



During humanitarian emergencies, women and girls are among the most vulnerable. Relief International provides safe spaces for women and girls inside the camp where they can gather, learn new skills, and receive psychosocial support if they are among the thousands of women who have tragically experienced gender-based violence.





## 2018 FINANCIALS

### United Kingdom

<b>SUPPORT AND REVENUE</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
Grants and contributions	\$71,392,745	\$58,772,227
Contributed goods and services	\$18,419,368	\$12,843,980
Other revenue	–	–
<b>Total support and revenue</b>	<b>\$89,812,113</b>	<b>\$71,616,207</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
Programs and services	\$83,514,262	\$66,922,496
General and administrative	\$5,688,097	\$4,297,672
Fundraising	–	–
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$89,202,359</b>	<b>\$71,220,168</b>
Increase (decrease) in net assets	\$609,754	\$396,039
Net assets beginning of the year	\$1,401,597	\$1,005,558
<b>Net assets end of the year</b>	<b>\$2,011,351</b>	<b>\$1,401,597</b>

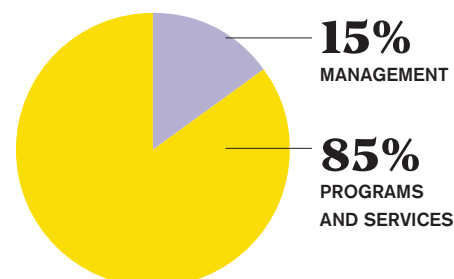
### United States

<b>SUPPORT AND REVENUE</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
Grants and contributions	\$46,740,592	\$41,197,448
Contributed goods and services	\$155,951	\$345,202
Other revenue	\$1,844,501	\$1,589,964
<b>Total support and revenue</b>	<b>\$48,741,044</b>	<b>\$43,132,614</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
Programs and services	\$40,504,463	\$36,300,758
General and administrative	\$7,195,428	\$6,795,937
Fundraising	–	–
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$47,699,891</b>	<b>\$43,096,695</b>
Increase (decrease) in net assets	\$1,041,153	\$35,919
Net assets beginning of the year	\$2,199,179	\$2,163,260
<b>Net assets end of the year</b>	<b>\$3,240,332</b>	<b>\$2,199,179</b>

### Combined U.K and U.S.

	<b>2018</b>	<b>INCREASE</b>	<b>2017</b>
Total combined revenue	\$138,553,157	21%	\$114,748,821
Total combined expenditure	\$136,902,250	20%	\$114,316,863
Total expenditure on programs and services	\$124,018,725	20%	\$103,223,254

### EXPENDITURE



### 2018 FUNDING SOURCES

**\$138,553,157**  
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE



**94%**  
GOVERNMENTS



**4%**  
INCOME-EARNING  
PROJECTS



**2%**  
INDIVIDUALS, FOUNDATIONS,  
AND CORPORATIONS

# Thank you

Relief International gratefully acknowledges the following individual and corporate supporters who have enriched our work through their investment and participation in the past year.

## PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL

*A distinguished group of individual and corporate donors providing essential support to Relief International.*

Bader Philanthropies  
F. Francis Najafi  
Google.org and Google employees  
Irene and Alan Wurtzel  
Latter-day Saint Charities  
Nadia's Initiative

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*Corporate and individual supporters who play a key role in Relief International's efforts to deliver relief and development programs to people in fragile settings.*

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Dave Hardman  
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The Persian Cultural Center of Atlanta  
James Small  
Mountain Valley Water Corporation of Los Angeles

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*Dedicated supporters who enable us to respond to some of the greatest humanitarian and development challenges of our time.*

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3MDG Fund (The Three Millennium Development Goal Fund)  
Center for Disaster Philanthropy  
Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)  
Department of Rural Development (DRD), a division of the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development in Myanmar  
European Commission – DEVCO-EuropeAid  
European Development Fund (EDF) (EC)  
European Instrument for Democracy & Human Rights (EIDHR) (EC)

German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO)  
Global Affairs Canada |Affaires mondiales Canada (DFATD)  
Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission (ECHO)  
Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Programme Facility (HARP-F)  
IMA World Health  
Samsung  
Sonja Hope Foundation Ltd.  
START Network  
Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (SDC)  
The Livelihoods and Food Security Fund (LIFT)

The World Bank  
U.K. Department for International Development (DfID)  
U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF)  
U.N. Development Program (UNDP)  
U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)  
U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)  
U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)  
U.N. Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA)  
U.N. World Food Program (WFP)  
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)  
USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA)  
U.S. Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM)  
U.S. Department of State Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP)  
World Food Programme  
World Health Organization (WHO)

## FEATURED DONOR



**I support Relief International because it is a critical lifeline for countless people who are trying to make a life for themselves and their families in incredibly precarious circumstances.** I have been extremely fortunate to have always had clean water to drink, have food to eat and have never been persecuted for who I am. But I am the son of refugees who were not as fortunate to have the life they have given me and, as a result, I know how important and urgent Relief International's work is for people who have been displaced by war, drought, or famine. That is why I donate to this organization, which makes it possible for people to not only survive, but to thrive under the most adverse conditions."

—JEROME SCHWARTZMAN, PATRON SUPPORTER

**A ROHINGYA CHILD**  
poses for a photo at one  
of Relief International's  
Child Friendly Spaces in  
Bangladesh's Kutupalong  
camp in Cox's Bazar.  
*Photo: RII Rachel Elkind*





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**BELOW** Relief International staff walk through Bangladesh's crowded Kutupalong refugee camp. Photo: RI/ Rachel Elkind.

DESIGN: SPRINGTIDE STUDIO

