

HIAS
Annual
Report **2019**





Dear Friends,

As we reflect on 2019 during a period of great challenge and change, we are struck by the resilience of the HIAS community. With nearly 80 million forcibly displaced people around the world, a global pandemic threatening lives and livelihoods, growing xenophobia, and the erosion of asylum and refugee resettlement systems, HIAS' work remains vital and our commitment unwavering.

Even as circumstances made our work harder, HIAS' extended family of supporters gave us strength as the American Jewish community's global agency for forcibly displaced persons. HIAS' network of allies stood with us in 2019, giving generously of time and resources. With the energy of our volunteers and our network of local refugee resettlement partners, we empowered clients to rebuild their lives in the United States. Our 450 Welcome Campaign congregations and networks of advocates amplified our impact in Washington and local communities. We responded forcefully to the ongoing asylum crisis, placing HIAS Border Fellows in new locations to offer legal aid. We further developed our global operations, providing critical protective services in 16 countries, including the opening of operations in Belgium, Colombia, Mexico, Guyana and Peru.

Writing this during a pandemic with enforced social distancing, we are particularly thankful that, on November 14, 2019, a standing-room-only crowd gathered in New York City for "A Night for Hope and Welcome," the first HIAS Awards dinner in decades, celebrating three leaders exemplifying HIAS' values. Speaking of gathering for a celebratory meal, in 2019 HIAS published its first full Haggadah, underscoring the relevance of the Passover experience to our obligation to assist the refugees of today.

In this report, you'll read more about HIAS' impact in 2019. Whether connecting clients with legal aid, mental health services, protection from gender-based violence, or tools for financial security, we helped people fleeing persecution rebuild their lives in safety and freedom. We reached the year's end with renewed appreciation for the capacity of refugees and asylum seekers to persevere.

This success against steep odds was only made possible by allies like you. Through the support of partners and thousands of generous donors at all levels, we closed the year in a position of strength. Though we could not have foreseen the impact of COVID-19 on our clients, staff, and supporters in 2020, HIAS was equipped to face this worldwide crisis because of the foundation built in 2019. We honor your contribution as a member of the HIAS community and look forward to growing from strength to strength in 2020 and beyond.

L'shalom (in peace),




Robert D. Aronson
CHAIR OF THE BOARD




Mark Hetfield
PRESIDENT & CEO



WELCOMING THE STRANGER. PROTECTING THE REFUGEE.

In 2019, HIAS continued to grow as we opened offices in several more countries, provided more services along the U.S.-Mexico border, built out our primary program areas, and helped even more members of the Jewish community advocate on behalf of refugees.

This past year, HIAS launched programs in Colombia, Mexico, Guyana and Peru, countries experiencing an unprecedented influx of migrants and asylum seekers. Additionally, the new HIAS Europe office began engaging the European Jewish community in education and action to support refugees in Europe and around the world. With this expansion, HIAS now operates in 16 countries across Eurasia, Africa, and the Americas.

HIAS actively responded to the humanitarian crisis at the U.S.-Mexico border this year. We organized volunteer legal delegations to aid asylum seekers, and we led human rights delegations of Jewish leaders, clergy, interfaith allies, and funders. The HIAS Border Fellows program, which sends asylum lawyers to legal aid organizations in Texas and California, added two new partner organizations.

The American Jewish community continued to respond to the global refugee crisis in 2019 with more synagogues joining the ranks of HIAS' Welcome Campaign. By the end of the year, there were nearly 450 congregations across the country signed on to advocate for refugee protection around the world and to support and welcome refugees in the U.S.

HIAS applies a **Refugee Rights Framework** across all of our programming, helping refugees attain their rights and realize their full human potential as contributors to society through four primary areas of impact:

- legal protection;
- mental health and psychosocial support;
- economic inclusion;
- and gender-based violence prevention and protection.

As the numbers of refugees and other displaced people and the need for services increased dramatically in 2019, HIAS continued to innovate and lead in each of these areas, developing model expert practices that can be replicated and scaled to provide support to thousands more refugees around the world.

*HIAS' **legal protection programs** ensure that refugees know their rights, can access critical services, and navigate complicated legal systems to achieve permanent legal status and security.*

*HIAS' **community-based psychosocial services** provide tools and build on refugees' existing strengths and resources, and provide guidance and space for individuals, families, peer groups, and communities, to care for themselves and each other.*

*HIAS' **economic inclusion programs** provide refugees with opportunities to earn a sustainable income to support their families and achieve economic self-sufficiency.*

*HIAS works with communities around the world to reduce the risk of **sexual and gender-based violence**, increase support for survivors, and build partnerships with women-led organizations to promote and protect the rights of survivors, women, girls, and LGBTQ refugees.*

VISION

HIAS stands for a world in which refugees find welcome, safety, and freedom.

MISSION

HIAS rescues people whose lives are in danger for being who they are.

- We protect the most vulnerable refugees, helping them build new lives and reuniting them with their families in safety and freedom.
- We advocate for the protection of refugees and assure that displaced people are treated with dignity they deserve.
- Guided by our Jewish values and history, we bring nearly 140 years of expertise to our work with refugees.

HIAS' IMPACT AROUND THE WORLD

In the **US**, HIAS provided legal protection services to **8,342** people

New York
Silver Spring (HQ)
Washington, DC

In **Venezuela**, HIAS met the food, water and sanitation needs of **99,000** displaced people

In **Panama**, HIAS provided over **5,300** people with mental health and psychosocial support

Mexico
Ciudad Juárez
Monterrey
Mexicali
Tijuana

In **Costa Rica**, HIAS is the leading legal protection services provider, serving **over 10,000** people

In **Ecuador**, HIAS' economic inclusion programs helped an estimated **27,837** people

Panama
Panama City

Aruba
Oranjestad

Venezuela
Apure
Barninas
Caracas
Machiques
Maracaibo
Puerto Ayacucho
Puerto Ordaz
San Antonio
San Cristobal
Santa Elena de Uairen

Costa Rica
San José
La Cruz
Los Chiles

Ecuador
Cuenca
Esmeraldas
Guayaquil
Huaquillas
Ibarra
Lago Agrio
Machala
Quito
San Lorenzo
Santo Domingo
Tulcan

Colombia
Barranquilla
Bogota

Guyana
Georgetown

Peru
Lima

Belgium
Brussels

Austria
Vienna

Ukraine

R2P (Right to Protection) is a HIAS partner serving internally displaced people and asylum seekers in Ukraine.

Greece
Athens
Lesvos

In **Greece**, HIAS provided **17,908 people** with legal protection services

HIAS served **over 297,000 children**

Israel
Tel Aviv

In **Israel**, HIAS provided legal protection services to **3,282 people**

HIAS served **363,000 women and girls**

In **Chad**, HIAS met the basic needs of **over 336,000 Sudanese refugees**

Chad

N'Djamena
12 refugee camps along the eastern border with Sudan:
Djabal, Goz Amir, Treguine, Bredjing, Farchana, Gaga, Touloum, Mile, Kounoungou, Iridimi, Amnabak, Oure Cassoni, Kerfi Site

In **Kenya**, HIAS served **13,320 people** with mental health psychosocial support

HIAS gender-based violence prevention programs reached **173,000 people**

Kenya

Nairobi:
Eastleigh
Kayole
Kawangware
Mimosa

HIAS served **over 764,000 forcibly displaced people**

HIAS ADOPTS HOLISTIC APPROACH TO RESETTLEMENT

Despite a record high of nearly 26 million refugees worldwide, the number of refugees allowed to resettle in the U.S. was capped at 30,000 in FY2019, marking a new historic low for the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program since the Refugee Act of 1980 became law. With fewer new arrivals, HIAS intensified our work across the U.S. to enhance the economic and social integration of refugees as they adjust to American life. Through our **national resettlement network of 17 affiliates**, HIAS provided clients with new programming and resources to support their full economic and social inclusion in the United States.

HIAS' **economic inclusion programs** take a holistic approach by supporting and empowering clients through early employment or entrepreneurship, while simultaneously enhancing their financial capability to achieve long-term economic independence. HIAS works with clients not only to gain new skills for optimal employment and a changing workforce, but also to build their financial knowledge, savings, and assets—such as purchasing a vehicle or home, starting a business, or saving for higher education. Across a range of industries,

HIAS provided mental health and psychosocial assistance to **1,035** individuals in the U.S.

affiliates works with community partners to help refugees launch or expand small businesses, access continuing education, and develop English language proficiency.

HIAS partners with local and national employers to integrate refugees into the workforce and provide training for career development and upward mobility. Our network of

In 2019, HIAS and our resettlement affiliate US Together launched a **new digital literacy program** in Cleveland to help clients develop fundamental skills and build their confidence with technology to stay competitive in the digital economy. HIAS' **partnership with Rosetta Stone**, which provides free access to language learning for resettled refugees and HIAS volunteers across the U.S., furthered our work in integrating refugees into the community.

HIAS' economic integration programs supported **3,283** families in the U.S.

HIAS' **social inclusion programs** help refugees access critical services and successfully integrate into their new communities while maintaining their culture and identity. HIAS works with clients to improve mental health and psychosocial well-being, build social support networks, and adjust to daily life in a new country as they begin to heal from the trauma of displacement.

HIAS resettled **2,319** people in the U.S. in 2019; **40%** (924) were children

In 2019, HIAS supported affiliate agencies to implement new **affinity-based group programs** for clients at higher risk of social isolation. Whether based on cultural affinity or interest area, group programs provide refugees and newcomers an opportunity to learn and build community connections in a supportive, welcoming environment. Our innovative program design has helped to build social cohesion and networks, foster peer-learning opportunities, and provide access to community resources.

HIAS affiliates have the flexibility to develop group programming that best fit their clients' and community's needs. HIAS PA in Philadelphia has coordinated a series of educational workshops for refugee adults and families in partnership with community-based institutions on topics such as understanding and building credit,

back-to-school nights, applying for college, and how to obtain a Commercial Driver's license. Jewish Family Service in San Diego has formed groups with similar cultural or linguistic identities, including an Afghan women's group, which comes together to share Afghan food, learn new dances, and discuss nutrition and self-care.

Women Refugees Become Entrepreneurs in Cleveland

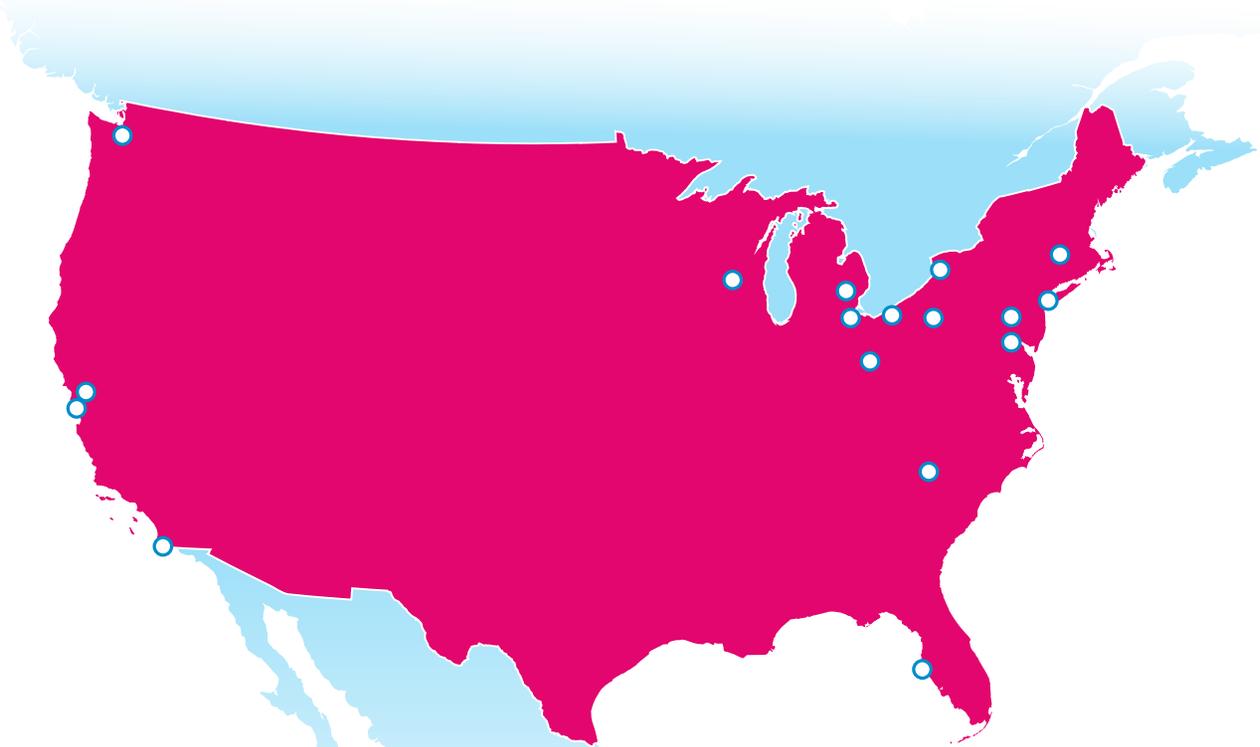
Nar arrived in Cleveland six years ago with her husband and three children. She was unable to work a traditional day job and was searching for a way to earn additional income to support her family. She joined a HIAS skills-based training class run

by HIAS affiliate US Together during the first cohort of HIAS' **Microenterprise Development (MED)** program three years ago, and subsequently established her Nepali handmade jewelry business. Nar became a staple at farmers' markets throughout Cleveland displaying her unique and vibrant necklaces and bracelets. She was able to get a jump start into the local economy by showing at the market space organized by HIAS' **Market Opportunities for Refugee Entrepreneurs (MORE)** program.



Tigist and Hiriyti, refugees who arrived from Ethiopia and Eritrea, participated in the MED MORE program to do market research in preparation for opening their new business—an Ethiopian and Eritrean restaurant called *Habesha*. Thanks to their successful experience in MED MORE and the momentum that they gained when the restaurant was highlighted at Cleveland's largest flea market, Tigist and Hiriyti ran a one-night restaurant pop-up where families could come experience their flavorful Ethiopian and Eritrean dishes and hand-roasted Ethiopian espresso.





HIAS RESETTLEMENT NETWORK ACROSS THE U.S.

CALIFORNIA

Jewish Family Service of San Diego
Jewish Family & Community Services East Bay, Walnut Creek
Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley, Los Gatos

DELAWARE

Jewish Family Services of Delaware, Wilmington

FLORIDA

Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services, Clearwater

MASSACHUSETTS

Jewish Family Service of Western Massachusetts

MICHIGAN

Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County

NEW YORK

Jewish Family Service of Buffalo and Erie County
HIAS New York, New York City and Westchester County

NORTH CAROLINA

Carolina Refugee Resettlement Agency, Charlotte

OHIO

US Together, Inc. (Cleveland, Columbus, Toledo)

PENNSYLVANIA

HIAS Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
Jewish Family and Community Services of Pittsburgh

WASHINGTON

Jewish Family Services of Greater Seattle

WISCONSIN

Jewish Social Services of Madison





HIAS LEGAL SERVICES IN THE U.S. DEEPEN IMPACT

2019 was a year of significant growth in HIAS' legal service arena, with both our New York and Silver Spring offices more than doubling in size. This growth allowed HIAS to take on more clients, serve a broader population, expand our pro bono network, enhance asylee outreach (services to those who have been legally granted asylum in the U.S.), and more broadly share our expertise with other organizations. This **growing team reaped significant legal victories** with 115 immigration wins, including grants of asylum, work authorization, and approvals of special immigrant juvenile visas. These victories included several that benefited survivors of domestic violence seeking asylum, a particularly difficult status for which to pursue an asylum claim.

HIAS' legal clients were from **51** different countries

HIAS maintains an active network of pro bono attorneys in order to offer as much support as possible to asylees seeking legal

services. In 2019, HIAS matched 96 cases with pro bono attorneys in the U.S. The addition to our staff in 2019 of a new National Pro Bono Technical Legal Advisor allowed us to extend our assistance to asylum seekers beyond New York and Silver Spring. In 2019, HIAS organized regular pro bono attorney delegations to travel to the U.S.-Mexico border to help asylum seekers. Groups of attorneys worked with HIAS partner organizations in California and Texas in offering direct client support. Some attorneys joined the HIAS office in Juarez, Mexico to assist in limited legal representation. *(See Border discussion on pages 12-15 for further details.)*

HIAS' **Wraparound Program** connects legal clients and their families with the broad support that they need as they navigate life in

HIAS Case Stories: Two Young Women Win Safety and Security in the U.S.

A HIAS attorney represented Andrea,* a young single mother from Guatemala, and her thirteen-year-old son in winning asylum at the Baltimore Immigration Court. An older man took Andrea as a child bride at the age of 14, and she endured years of physical and sexual abuse, resulting in the birth of two children. Her husband's family took her older child away from her on multiple occasions; they also physically and verbally abused her for years. Andrea fled to the U.S. in 2016 with only her son, fearful that her young daughter would not survive the journey. HIAS helped her apply for asylum immediately, which she was granted in June 2019. Andrea's HIAS attorney helped her obtain full custody of her son and petitioned for legal status for her daughter, so the family could be reunited. Next, HIAS will represent them in applying for legal permanent residence. HIAS' wraparound services connected Andrea with an English tutor and necessary social services, and she and her son are thriving in Baltimore.

A HIAS attorney represented Maribel,* an eighteen-year-old Honduran woman, who came to the U.S. in 2016 when she was 14, fleeing from an MS-13 gang member who kidnapped her on two separate occasions and sexually abused her. When the gang member decided that Maribel would be his girlfriend, her family went to the authorities, but they did nothing to help her. The gang member threatened Maribel, telling her that her mother had to pay him a large sum of money or he would take her and kill her family. With HIAS' help, the U.S. government approved her application for special immigrant juvenile status, and we are now helping her apply for legal permanent residence, with an asylum application pending. HIAS' wraparound services have connected Maribel to a social worker to help her heal from the trauma and build resilience. She looks forward to rebuilding her life in safety in the U.S.

**Andrea and Maribel are pseudonyms used to protect confidentiality.*

a new community. Beyond the asylum and immigration legal support that pro bono attorneys offer, **168 volunteers** in New York and Silver Spring helped our clients access other legal, medical, mental health, education, employment and language training services. These trained volunteers ensure that our clients and their families receive the economic and social support they need as their cases work their way through the legal system and they begin their path to self-sufficiency in the United States.

HIAS provided legal protection services to **8,342** people in the United States

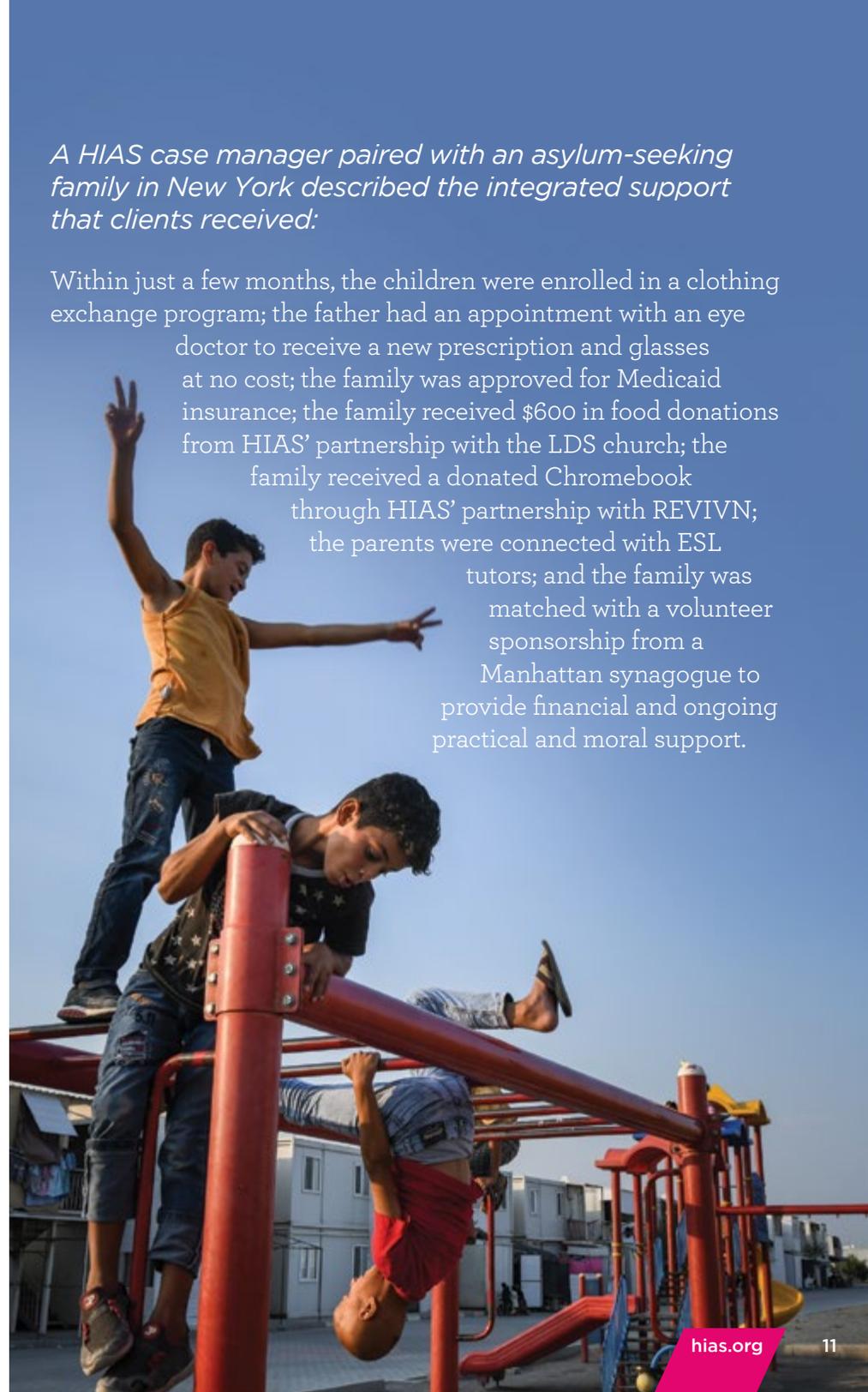
“I was grateful for the opportunity to volunteer alongside HIAS and JFS attorneys and staff in San Diego... We were able to serve numerous detained individuals as well as many who had recently been released. Our delegation was given the training and resources we needed to efficiently assist nearly everyone requesting help.”

—Pro Bono Attorney Varsha Kayi with Alight Legal

HIAS launched the **Asylee Outreach Project** to inform asylees about resettlement services in and around the community of our Silver Spring, Maryland headquarters. HIAS conducted intake and referrals to partner resettlement agencies and used our extensive networks to reach and support asylees who were not previously identified in the community. This work, supported by the Maryland Office of Refugees and Asylees, brought HIAS into the nationwide conversation on how to effectively reach and serve asylees. It exemplifies HIAS’ growing influence not only as a direct legal service provider but as a leader in ensuring access to a full range of asylum services and support systems.

A HIAS case manager paired with an asylum-seeking family in New York described the integrated support that clients received:

Within just a few months, the children were enrolled in a clothing exchange program; the father had an appointment with an eye doctor to receive a new prescription and glasses at no cost; the family was approved for Medicaid insurance; the family received \$600 in food donations from HIAS’ partnership with the LDS church; the family received a donated Chromebook through HIAS’ partnership with REVIVN; the parents were connected with ESL tutors; and the family was matched with a volunteer sponsorship from a Manhattan synagogue to provide financial and ongoing practical and moral support.



HELPING ASYLUM SEEKERS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER

HIAS established an early presence working on both sides of the southern U.S. border—becoming the first international organization to implement **cross-border collaboration** to assist Central Americans and others in Mexico in accessing the U.S. legal system to file for asylum. As a result, HIAS became a crucial advisor and role model to other organizations seeking to serve the growing population of refugees and asylum seekers at the border. HIAS' early position as one of the only international organizations operating on both sides of the border provided a unique vantage point that allowed us to channel facts on the ground into our advocacy work in the policy arena. The inappropriately named Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), a new U.S. policy requiring asylum seekers to wait in Mexico as their cases are processed in the United States, and other shifting policy directives from the Trump administration, made HIAS' cross-border engagement, expertise, and services essential to the thousands of migrants newly barred from the United States. In the face of increasing challenges, support from border communities and the wider community of HIAS supporters throughout the U.S. provided a firm foundation for our work as we opened new offices and expanded our reach in Mexico.

The opening of the **Juarez, Mexico office** in 2019 greatly advanced HIAS' cross-border collaborative work. The Juarez office is staffed by two attorneys and two paralegals who provide Know Your Rights presentations and individual consultations to asylum seekers, including making case referrals to HIAS Border Fellows in the U.S. The Juarez office also provides representation to individuals who apply for asylum in Mexico. Our successful cross-border collaboration laid the groundwork for HIAS to open offices in Tijuana, Mexicali, and Monterrey in early 2020.

LEGAL WORK AT THE BORDER

The HIAS Border Fellows Project, which embeds attorneys and authorized legal representatives in legal service organizations at the border, doubled in size in 2019 and achieved several notable victories. HIAS launched the border fellows initiative in response to the separation of families at the border. Fellows sought to release on bond as many individuals as possible to help them join their families while awaiting asylum claims. Operating within the shifting policies related to the MPP, including strict limitations on asylum seekers' travel, fellows obtained relief for several clients as they worked with the most vulnerable at the border, including pregnant women and LGBTQ asylum seekers. In 2019, HIAS sent new fellows to the American Bar Association's ProBar project in Brownsville, Texas, and to the immigration collective known as EPIC in El Paso. A second HIAS fellow joined Jewish Family Service of San Diego, growing our capacity to respond to the escalating need for legal aid.

HIAS organized several **pro bono attorney delegations** to travel to the border to help asylum seekers. Groups of attorneys volunteered with HIAS Border Fellows partner organizations (Jewish Family Service in San Diego; Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Services in El Paso; and Las Americas Immigrant Resource Center in El Paso), where they increased the organizations' capacities to serve in the area of greatest need. Pro bono attorney delegations joined the HIAS office in Juarez, Mexico, where they prepared applications for asylum to file in immigration court and helped asylum seekers representing themselves in their asylum claims. Without HIAS, the majority of these asylum seekers would have no assistance in navigating the complex asylum process.

Also in 2019, in partnership with the American Immigration Council's Immigration Justice Campaign, HIAS launched a program for pro bono attorneys to represent detained individuals in appealing the denials of their asylum claims. HIAS shared mentoring responsibilities

In 2019, **42** pro bono volunteers (33 attorneys and 9 law students) participated in **6** separate delegation trips to the border.

for the attorneys taking these cases, which are referred to the program from HIAS partners Las Americas and Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Services in El Paso.

In 2019, as information about the humanitarian crisis at the border reached more people across the country and interest in volunteering grew, HIAS provided opportunities for **non-attorney delegations of volunteers** to support legal work at the border. Under the supervision of the HIAS Field Coordinator in El Paso, volunteers of all professional backgrounds traveled each day from El Paso, Texas to Juarez, Mexico to conduct intake and screenings of people seeking an opportunity to apply for asylum in the United States. This HIAS-coordinated volunteer work resulted in more referrals to U.S.

attorneys and more asylum seekers with legal counsel. HIAS also developed a guide for congregations about volunteer opportunities—ranging from work in emergency shelters to delivering Know Your Rights trainings—with key partners along the border.

JEWISH LEADERS AT THE BORDER

HIAS is committed to bringing **delegations of Jewish leaders to bear witness** to the plight of asylum seekers at the border. In 2019, HIAS led four delegations to the border that included clergy, philanthropists, and non-profit leaders and advocates—all of whom committed to raising awareness of the situation at the border and activating support for a just and humane asylum system. These border delegations, done in partnership with T'ruah, Jewish Funders Network, National Council of Jewish Women, and the Rabbinical Assembly of the Conservative Movement, inspired sermons, op-eds, congregational engagement, philanthropic support, volunteers, and new collaborations and partnerships. By educating and informing the community about what they witnessed, these leaders deepened the conversations and strengthened the advocacy work around the critical needs of asylum seekers.

Thanks to the generosity of HIAS supporters, Border Fellows are funded by HIAS and provide direct legal representation to vulnerable asylum seekers. They conduct their work through the following partner organizations:

Jewish Family Service of San Diego in San Diego, California (2 fellows)

Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center in El Paso, Texas

Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Services in El Paso, Texas

El Paso Immigrant Collaborative in El Paso, Texas

South Texas Pro Bono Asylum Representation Project (ProBar) in Brownsville, Texas

HIAS BORDER FELLOWS WIN RELIEF FOR CLIENTS, SAVING LIVES

HIAS fellows successfully represented numerous individuals, including:

Daniela and Andrés,* a married couple from Venezuela who were physically assaulted by *colectivos* (armed bandits) because of their activity as organizers for the opposition *Primero Justicia* party. The *colectivos* ransacked their home, looted their personal property, and threatened their relatives with death. After fleeing on foot to Colombia, the couple traveled north and were extorted by federal agents in Mexico. When they were waiting for the U.S. to process their asylum claim, their apartment in Juarez was raided. After their harrowing journey, their HIAS fellow helped them win asylum in U.S. immigration court. The couple is working to bring their four minor children to the United States to begin a new life.

Luis and Ana,* a brother and sister in their 20s from El Salvador, who were separated from their sister Amelia* at the border. The older siblings were held separately at the West Texas Detention Facility for seven months, unable to contact each other due to the separation of genders at the facility. Their HIAS fellow was able to get Ana released on bond, but Luis was not released. The fellow asked the Judge for a special hearing and Luis was finally granted bond and released. All three siblings were reunited in the U.S. in time for the holidays.

Marcela and Jose,* two married doctors from Cuba, who refused to participate in a medical mission to Venezuela. Because of their refusal, the doctors were fired, their medical licenses were revoked, and they were barred from any employment in Cuba. After fleeing Cuba, they were held in a Mexican federal jail for several days. A HIAS fellow represented them in their hearing, and they were granted withholding of removal and allowed to stay in the U.S., where they intend to pursue their medical careers. This win is particularly noteworthy as the immigration judge who presided over this case has the second highest denial rate in the United States.

Carlos,* a Honduran man, who was separated from his pregnant wife and nine-year-old child at the border when he was put into detention at the West Texas Detention Facility. After five months in detention, the HIAS fellow was successful in getting the judge to grant bond. The father was able to reunite with his family in Minnesota in time for the birth of his second child, and the family of four is thriving together.

**The names of these clients are pseudonyms used to protect confidentiality.*



HIAS AMPLIFIES JEWISH VOICES FOR REFUGEES

On critical legislative and policy matters, HIAS is a leader in advocacy for refugee access to asylum and resettlement. Our efforts on Capitol Hill and with administration agencies are bolstered by the network of grassroots activists around the country that take action to support policies that assist and welcome people fleeing persecution.

More than **2,000** people participated in HIAS-led in-person advocacy campaigns

Major achievements in 2019 include the development of a multi-state Grassroots Advocacy Network; deepened engagement with the Jewish communities throughout the country; new start-up regional office activity; more volunteers helping asylum seekers at our southern border; and success in blocking the impact of the Executive Order that allowed governors and county executives to refuse resettlement.

Statewide coalitions and local partnerships fuel HIAS' work in the community at the grassroots level across the nation. Our staff in Washington, D.C., New York, and, as of 2019, Los Angeles engage with a broad range of organizations and leaders across the country to educate

communities about the issues facing refugees and asylum seekers and mobilize support to advance their rights.

With staff on both

coasts, HIAS was able to develop close relationships with leaders at the community level, including Jewish organizations, elected officials, and congregations. These relationships enabled us to deepen and broaden our work in advocating for the rights of refugees and asylum seekers.

24,704 people participated in online HIAS-led advocacy campaigns

This past year, HIAS achieved tremendous growth in our grassroots advocacy work. In February 2019, HIAS brought together over 50 of our grassroots leaders for **two days of intensive training and meetings with Congressional delegations** in Washington, D.C. Participants came from Jewish coalitions for refugees from all over the country: North Carolina, California, Wisconsin, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, Maryland, Utah, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. These dedicated activists met with members of Congress to share stories—their own and others'—that illustrate the benefits of refugee resettlement in their communities. The number of active **coalitions expanded** from seven to ten

in 2019 and have provided the foundation for coordinated messaging and advocacy work. To further bolster work

across the nation, HIAS established in 2019 a new **HIAS Grassroots Leaders Network** to provide activists throughout the country with a forum for exchanging ideas and strategies.

Original HIAS materials were downloaded **25,499** times

To challenge harmful administrative policies—including the lowering of refugee resettlement numbers to their lowest levels ever, implementing the Migrant Protection Protocols that blocked asylum seekers from the U.S. at the southern border, and prolonged detention—HIAS brought together constituents and coalitions for the **Asylum Advocacy Campaign**. This campaign was the largest grassroots, district-based advocacy project in HIAS' history: over the course of the summer, nearly 500 activists met with more than 50 members of Congress in 18 states.

During the campaign, participants personally delivered to members of Congress a **Jewish clergy letter**—drafted and circulated by HIAS and

HIAS Haggadah and Calendar Link Jewish Holidays to Refugee Crisis



To build connections between Jewish values and our commitment to refugees, HIAS created a Passover Haggadah, that meaningfully links the Jewish experience retold in the story of Passover with the story of modern-day and historical struggles of refugees and asylum seekers. Our Haggadah was downloaded nearly 23,000 times and featured as a “best-selling Haggadah” on Amazon.com.

HIAS also published

a Holiday Calendar for 2019/5780, created by HIAS’ rabbi-in-residence, that highlights facts and dates related to the history of refugees and asylum seekers. Nearly 1,500 calendars were distributed to synagogues and partners throughout the country.

Honoring HIAS History

Outside the Washington Beltway, 2019 was a year where HIAS was honored to be associated with the leadership of two past U.S. presidents in the area of refugees and human rights: In May, Luci Baines Johnson, daughter of the 36th President of the United States, presented HIAS with the Houston Holocaust Museum Lyndon Baines Johnson Moral Courage Award for our work. And in June, in Atlanta, HIAS and the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum organized an all-day celebration—memorialized on C-Span—celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the Refugee Act of 1980, reuniting for the first time the policy makers and advocates who were the forces behind the legislation which established our refugee resettlement and asylum systems in the United States. Also participating were prominent former refugees who were helped by the Refugee Act of 1980, and the Deputy UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Kelly Clements.



signed by over 1,500 rabbis and cantors from 48 states—that called for greater protection for the rights, safety, and dignity of asylum seekers. In the fall, HIAS organized constituents and coalitions to **respond to the president’s new Executive Order** barring the resettlement of refugees to any state or locality that had not “opted in” to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, a dramatic and dangerous shift in the policy of how refugees are resettled to this country. Due to the advocacy and grassroots work of HIAS and our allies, 43 out of 50 governors provided consent to allow resettlement in their states. HIAS was the named plaintiff in a lawsuit against the order, alleging that it violates both the Constitution as well as federal law. The fight against this Executive Order was a strong expression of the commitment to welcoming the stranger by HIAS, our Jewish community partners, and other faith-based allies.

Education is an integral element of HIAS’ advocacy and community engagement strategies, and our rabbi-in-residence and staff leaders elevated issues affecting refugees and asylum seekers in the Jewish community, delivering dozens of educational sessions at schools,

synagogues, professional organizations, community centers, and national conferences.

Briefing calls on topics ranging from “The Actual National Emergency: Threats to Asylum” to “The State of Refugee Resettlement in the U.S.” and “The Community Responds: On Border and Asylum” drew nearly 600 participants. Our **action alerts**—14 in 2019—helped people engage. Thousands of supporters encouraged Members of Congress to support the No Ban Act; oppose the Secure and Protect Act; and support higher refugee admissions. This past year, due to our enhanced partnerships with synagogues and coalitions around the country, facilitated by an expanded **Welcome Campaign network of 441 congregations**, HIAS strengthened our rapid response abilities as we were able to draw upon a well-organized and coordinated constituent base.

HIAS held **148** Jewish community programs, educational sessions, trainings, and briefings with a total of **3,432** participants



The following is the text of the letter from over 1,500 clergy to members of Congress:



We—Jewish clergy from across the country—call on our elected officials to protect the fundamental right to seek asylum in the United States.

The right to flee one's country and seek safety in another is protected under both U.S. and international law. For those requesting asylum in the U.S., to be denied a fair process could mean a return to situations most of us cannot imagine in some of the most violent countries in the world.

Our tradition teaches that each and every person deserves to be treated justly and with compassion. However, under current U.S. policy and practice, asylum seekers instead face an ever-lengthening list of injustices including family separation, long periods of detention in jail-like facilities, and denial of due process in their legal proceedings. Simply put, our country is treating these individuals as criminals, even though seeking asylum is a legal right. This must change.

The Jewish people know what it means to be turned away and to be denied protection. As Jews we understand the heart of the refugee, and the current actions of our government echo some of the darkest moments of our own history.

Our concern does not only apply to the Jewish past, but to our present. We are alarmed by the rising prominence of ideologies that dehumanize and vilify immigrants and refugees alongside Jews, Muslims, and so many others. We are committed to fighting hate and standing for our American and Jewish values of protecting the persecuted and welcoming the stranger, irrespective of nationality, race, or religion.

We call on our elected officials to act immediately to provide a just and humane asylum process for those seeking safety in our country, wherever they come from and however they arrive.

In Jewish tradition, there is no higher obligation than to save the life of another. As Jewish clergy, we will not stay silent as our country turns its back on individuals fleeing danger.

APPLYING EXPERTISE TO PROTECT REFUGEES AROUND THE WORLD

2019 marked the launch of HIAS' **Refugee Rights Framework** across all HIAS programs, to assist refugees in attaining their rights to realize their human potential and contribute to society. HIAS does this through four signature areas of support that we offer to refugees: **legal protection**; addressing **gender-based violence**; **mental health and resilience**; and **economic inclusion**. On an international level, this focus provides HIAS country offices and partners around the world with additional expertise and knowledge to respond to our clients' needs. It also allows HIAS to apply best practices across our varied regions, learn from successes and challenges in specific countries, and share our wisdom with other leading organizations serving forcibly displaced people.

HIAS opened **four new country offices in Latin America and the Caribbean** in 2019 in Colombia, Guyana, Mexico, and Peru—countries experiencing an unprecedented influx of refugees. This expansion brought HIAS' Latin American country programs from five to nine in the span of a year, allowing us to better respond to the region's increasing number of people on the move, most notably from Venezuela, Nicaragua, and northern Central America. As we continued to respond to the crisis on the U.S.-Mexico border, we added three Mexico offices in Monterrey, Mexicali, and Tijuana, in addition to the Juarez office, adding programming focused on mental health and preventing violence against women, as well as legal aid. Additional new field offices in Ecuador, Venezuela, Panama, and Costa Rica further serve the growing needs of the region.

In a **new HIAS Europe office in Belgium**, we are engaging the European Jewish community and developing ties to partners in the European Union. With this 2019 expansion, the organization's network now reaches 16 countries across Europe, Africa, the Middle East,

HIAS Establishes New Brussels Office to Engage Jewish Communities and Expand Base of Support

HIAS opened an office in the European Union capital in September 2019, established to raise awareness and support for HIAS' international humanitarian operations with European Jewish communities and partner agencies in Europe. The new office quickly joined influential networks, earned coverage in the local Jewish press, and built relationships with European institutions and supporters. With the goal of supporting the efforts of Jewish communities across Europe to protect refugees and to welcome and integrate newly arrived refugees in Europe, HIAS Europe launched a variety of engagement activities with local partners. Plans include refugee Shabbat services; refugee seders; a small grant program for Jewish initiatives on behalf of refugees in Europe; networking and capacity-building activities for Jewish activists; the adaptation of HIAS Jewish holiday resources to the European context; and deployment of European Jewish youth as volunteers in HIAS field offices.

Central and South America, North America, and the Caribbean. With a record 79.5 million displaced people in the world, HIAS' work to provide legal protection, respond to gender-based violence, offer psychosocial support, and promote economic inclusion is growing, even in the face of a shrinking global refugee protection space, diminishing access to asylum, and an international climate of growing hostility to displaced people.

HIAS' LEADERSHIP ON ECONOMIC INCLUSION SUPPORTS SELF-RELIANCE

HIAS is a recognized leader in **economic inclusion work** that lifts refugees out of poverty, by empowering them to exercise their social and economic rights. Our groundbreaking **Graduation Model**

Approach integrates social support, financial literacy training, business

HIAS' economic inclusion programs helped place **38,416** individuals on the path toward self-reliance.

planning, seed capital and family savings, and more to help clients achieve self-reliance. Families “graduate” from the

program when their income exceeds the poverty line, they can save five percent of their monthly income, they have a network of support, and they can sustain daily nutritious meals for their family.

“Refugees only need one opportunity. Thanks to HIAS, who gave me this chance, I own my business. I can cover my needs. And I have become an employer for refugees who arrive to my community.”

—Maria Eugenia, Colombian Refugee in Ibarra, Ecuador

This past year, HIAS' Graduation Model work in Ecuador progressed from a pilot to full government partnership. The approach is also in practice in Kenya and Chad through HIAS' work as part of a national cluster of NGOs. Plans are underway for expansion of the Graduation Model to Peru and Panama. HIAS also now **serves as a technical advisor with the global Poverty Alleviation Coalition**. We continue to advocate for economic inclusion programs around the world and work globally with the private sector to create mutually beneficial economic opportunities.

Osmar and Valeria Graduate from HIAS Ecuador Graduation Model Program

Osmar and Valeria fled Venezuela after squatters invaded their home. The couple arrived in Ecuador, which has absorbed 385,000 of the nearly 5 million Venezuelans living outside their country. The journey exhausted their savings and left them in dire poverty, so they turned to HIAS Ecuador for help. Valeria and Osmar were selected to participate in HIAS' Graduation Model program, where they received mentoring, business skills training, and seed money to relaunch their careers. The program helped Valeria pivot from owning a beauty parlor in Venezuela to working as an event planner and decorator in Ecuador. Osmar, who had been a mechanic, became a DJ. After 18 challenging months in the program, Osmar and Valeria are on the road to economic self-sufficiency, thrilled to be working in fields focused on celebration, and optimistic about their future.





As a growing leader in **economic inclusion**, HIAS shared our expertise at several international conferences in 2019, including the European Development Days in Brussels and AidEx in Nairobi and Brussels. Serving as a convener, HIAS co-organized the NGO Regional Consultations in Rio de Janeiro in advance of the Global Refugee Forum, highlighting **Talento Sin Fronteras (Talent Without Borders)**, a key partnership between HIAS and the Manpower Group to promote refugees' engagement in the labor market. During the Global Refugee Forum, HIAS participated on several influential panels to showcase best practices in economic inclusion, with a focus on our work with Venezuelans in Latin America and the Caribbean.



HIAS' **economic inclusion work intersects with the mental health support** needed by so many displaced people, so HIAS intentionally interweaves our programming to bolster financial and psychological resilience. In 2019, in six different refugee camps in Chad, women from many different backgrounds developed bread-making skills through community workshops. They were survivors of gender-based violence, widows, divorced or abandoned women, women with disabilities, and young women who had dropped out of school. The project, funded by UNHCR and the U.S. Department of State, enabled these at-risk women to diversify their diets and empowered them to better support their families by selling their homemade bread. With over 200 women participating, HIAS gave them the opportunity to learn a new skill, to heal by building relationships within their community, and to move forward confidently with their lives.



Hiring Guides, Market Studies, and Private Partnerships Advance Economic Inclusion

In **Colombia**, HIAS developed—along with the Tent Partnership for Refugees, UNHCR Colombia, and the Colombian Ministry of Labor—the first **hiring guide for employers** of Venezuelan refugees in Colombia. HIAS provided significant technical expertise and leadership in developing this resource for businesses interested in hiring refugees, giving them the knowledge and tools to successfully integrate their newest workers into the company culture.

In **Costa Rica**, using a **market study** developed by the University of Costa Rica with HIAS guidance, HIAS mapped opportunities for LGBTQ individuals and other vulnerable refugee groups lacking access to economic inclusion.

In **Panama**, HIAS' Talento Sin Fronteras (Talent Without Borders) program reached a milestone with the country's first agreement with a **private sector** institution to employ refugees. This tripartite partnership between HIAS, UNHCR, and Manpower Group—an international staffing and human resources firm—provided job training to more than 80 clients. The partnership hosted a job fair and led sessions that offered training on resume-writing, interview preparation, and other confidence-building measures for success. Ninety-eight percent of the participants reported that they felt more confident after the sessions, and we are tracking their success in the workplace as they continue to build their careers.

FOSTERING TAILORED, COMMUNITY-BASED PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

HIAS' mental health and psychosocial support work expanded in 2019 to four new countries—**Aruba, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru**—in response to the acute psychosocial needs of the populations we serve. To better target our services to demands, we also stepped up support for distressed individuals and families at border crossings, prompted by large influxes throughout the year into **Ecuador, Colombia, Panama, and Greece**. HIAS' focus is in mental health support responding to “people on the move,” whether within their own countries or across international borders, seeking to address the grief, fear, isolation, and distress that can result from forced migration, surviving or witnessing violence, loss or separation from family, and the daily stress of living on the margins of society or in refugee camps. Through community-based resilience services that built upon existing local strengths and resources, HIAS empowered communities, families, and individuals to care for themselves and each other.

HIAS offers **mental health and psychosocial services** that are tailored to each community and individual to help them establish new lives built on dignity and self-sufficiency. We are guided by the principle that the greatest experts on the needs of communities are community members themselves. We focus on **engaging communities** in all phases of our work so that services are useful to beneficiaries and appropriate to local understandings of mental health and well-being. This approach helps communities develop their own coping mechanisms. In turn, this focus on non-specialist interventions—**letting our clients take the lead**—helps restore a sense of autonomy, competence, and hope for the future.

In 2019, HIAS focused intensively on implementing **World Health Organization scalable psychological interventions**—services that

can be replicated across the globe in communities facing adversity—and increased our mental health programming across **10 countries**. Shifting displacement patterns around the world continue to present challenges, but HIAS' ability to tailor our mental health services to the local context allows us to deliver standardized effectiveness with the flexibility to adapt our work to the community's needs.

In addition to serving our clients, we train staff and partners to meet the needs of refugees. Our **psychological first aid and basic skills training** for psychosocial competence builds capacity and competence for stakeholders—civil society, government, NGOs, schools, health care workers—to understand how displaced children and adults respond to trauma and stress.

In **Ecuador and Peru**, HIAS **trains community leaders, groups, and public health officials** on psychological first aid, self-care techniques, interview techniques, and recognizing the varying needs of vulnerable groups, including survivors of gender-based violence and torture, LGBTQ individuals, unaccompanied minors, and at-risk youth. These trainings speed the identification of particularly vulnerable cases, improve case management for all clients, and strengthen community response to crises.

In **Venezuela**, HIAS builds on basic psychosocial training to develop **psychological first aid networks** with key community stakeholders. These networks act as a link to humanitarian partners and resources in local communities, so helpers beyond HIAS can help promote positive coping strategies and education on the stressors facing refugee families and communities.



In **Kenya** and **Colombia**, HIAS organizes **Community Well-Being Committees** that receive training on protection from abuse, stress management, and healthy coping skills. These groups are then able to respond to community priorities and to connect community members with the support they need.

In **Chad**, a country facing escalating needs for community-based support, HIAS **collaborates with faith leaders** to train them on protection from abuse; coping with loss, stress, and grief; conflict management; supporting survivors of gender-based violence, and protecting women and girls. Faith leaders meet monthly with HIAS staff for training on humanitarian principles, support techniques, and responding to vulnerable individuals.

Support Groups, based on language, gender, and age-specific groupings, are a powerful intervention designed to deliver community-based support. In convening these groups, HIAS implements the **World Health Organization's PM+** initiative designed to help people cope with adversity, reduce distress, and build resilience.

In **Chad**, HIAS implements PM+ with **lay facilitators** as HIAS staff works with psychologists and other professionals to provide supervision and consultation for the lay helpers. In **Ecuador**, social workers and psychologists facilitate general supervision and support to address mental health and psychosocial needs that respect **local healing practices**. These support groups provide a safe forum for mutual help and discussion. Group membership is based on common identities, including survivors of violence, LGBTQ people, or people with disabilities.

Referrals for individual or group-based support are another path to addressing mental health needs, and HIAS ensures access to care for all clients needing short-term mental health or psychosocial interventions individually or in a group. In **Ecuador**, HIAS provides

Migrant Children in Panama Face Life on the Move

As the global displacement crisis worsens, a new normal for many children is a life without a home base, living continually on the move. Panama is a through-route for thousands of refugees seeking safety, mostly on their way north. Many refugee children live in shelters for just a week or two, with HIAS able to offer only short-term mental health support before their families depart. Despite the limited time of our engagement, HIAS still works to provide nurturing and friendly safe spaces where our staff can respond to immediate psychosocial needs.

A HIAS staff member provided the following reflections after interviewing a Congolese 13-year girl who had entered Panama through the Darien Gap on the border of Columbia:

“So many children passing by made me think about their steps in life. Most of them have been walking forward every day, moving in short steps. It made me realize that they have missed some important steps in life, like having an established home or growing up with the same friends. Maybe that’s what their steps in life are about now, just trying to get somewhere to start a new life—to have their own home and make new friends.”

a combination of services to survivors of gender-based violence and torture, LGBTQ refugees, and unaccompanied and separated children who have not been able to access public services or whose needs have not been addressed through community assistance. Similarly, in **Kenya**, HIAS provides individual and group support, coordinated among social workers, psychologists, and community mobilizers, with the goal of helping individuals transition from individual support to community support groups.



INNOVATING IN THE VITAL STRUGGLE AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

HIAS grew our international impact as a leader in **gender-based violence** risk reduction and response in 2019. Our commitment to women and girls expanded with programming in five new countries—Aruba, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, and Peru—with a focus on prioritizing survivor voices and empowering women and girls. Giving voice to survivors of gender-based violence positions women and girls at the center of risk reduction and prevention. HIAS continually engages women and girls in feedback on services and in the development of new programs. In **Kenya**, HIAS initiated a three-year pilot program designed to include men in the discussion around non-violent behavior, with women survivors integral to the development of the program and advising us on how to safely involve men in such conversations. Engaging men as allies with women and girls is a pathbreaking new approach to risk reduction, with HIAS serving as a leader in this arena.

Risk reduction is a significant focus of HIAS' work around gender-based violence. We know that during times of economic instability, violence against women increases. To reduce the risk of violence during economic stress, HIAS developed a program to provide cash assistance to women to ensure their safety and security. HIAS also empowers women and adolescent girls by providing “dignity kits” that include feminine hygiene products that are often not prioritized in a family's expenses. Without HIAS' support, adolescent girls often go without these items or resort to transactional sex to buy them, so we are reducing their risk on several fronts through this simple intervention.

The stress of displacement often exacerbates the risk of gender-based violence, magnifying its intensity and scale, with adolescent girls particularly vulnerable. HIAS has created specific programming to create solidarity and peer networks among teen girls to help them cope with displacement and the risk of violence. In **Kenya, Venezuela, Ecuador** and soon **Chad**, HIAS is working to prevent the forced marriage of young girls to older men, which often leads to abusive relationships. HIAS has set up programs to **teach adolescent girls life skills** that build their confidence and self-esteem and help them understand the basis of healthy relationships. HIAS staff work directly with the girls and advise them on what to do if they experience violence, and we also prepare local facilitators within their communities to lead these training sessions.

HIAS gender-based violence prevention programs reached **173,000** individuals

Direct response services are crucial in all of the regions where HIAS serves, supporting survivors on their recovery journey through case management, access to health and social services, and direct counseling. In 2019, HIAS Aruba launched its first support group for Spanish-speaking gender-based violence survivors in the country. With our regional expansion throughout the year, HIAS has become the **largest gender-based violence service provider in Latin America.**

To advance the field of gender-based violence prevention and response and continue elevating this work as a humanitarian priority, HIAS conducted one of the first in-depth, **multistate assessments of violence against women and girls in Venezuela**. The 2019 report, which included devastating first-person narratives in our clients' voices, was used by multiple aid agencies working in the region and served as a crucial resource in addressing gender-based violence.

In December 2019, HIAS operations around the world marked the **16 Days of Activism to End GBV**, a worldwide campaign to raise awareness of gender-based violence. HIAS Kenya partnered with other stakeholders, with an opening event attended by 269 participants and a meeting organized by UNHCR and the Nairobi government. The **Kenya** office also conducted training for 40 refugee youth on comprehensive sexuality education. HIAS **Chad**

participated in many 16 Days activities, including workshops organized by the Ministry of Women and UNFPA on a national strategy. HIAS **Venezuela** conducted 10 workshops for more than 500 participants on gender-based violence, gender equality, and women's rights. In **Peru**, HIAS participated in a "Men for Equality" program that mobilized men as allies in combating gender-based violence.

As HIAS addresses gender-based violence with a survivor-centered focus, we are committed to providing direct services, reducing imminent risks, and preventing violence against women and girls. Because of our experience across multiple regions, HIAS is recognized as a leader in the field and will continue to meet urgent needs, mitigate risk, and address root causes of violence in order to provide long-term solutions and help our clients rebuild their lives in safety.



LEADING THE FIGHT FOR LEGAL PROTECTION

HIAS has built out **legal protection services** in every country where we work, reaching over 200,000 refugees in 2019. Our legal footprint expanded with the addition of new offices in **Mexico** focused on supporting asylum seekers who were turned away at the U.S. border and forced to wait in Mexico. The new Juarez, Mexico office immediately started to provide legal services, “Know Your Rights” workshops, and other assistance, while offices in Monterrey, Tijuana, and Mexicali met the needs of the growing number of asylum seekers in those regions. (See pages 12-15 for more information on HIAS’ cross-border work.)

Responding to the Venezuelan crisis—now the largest displacement crisis in the world with nearly 5 million citizens outside the country—fueled HIAS’ 2019 expansion in Latin America and the Caribbean. HIAS **Colombia** met regularly with HIAS Venezuela to discuss cross-border case referrals and management. In August 2019, HIAS **Ecuador** responded to a border emergency as the Ecuadorian government announced that all Venezuelan citizens would need a visa to enter the country. HIAS Ecuador sent a staff delegation to work alongside UNHCR and UNICEF, providing information, orientations, and cash-based intervention for those who qualified.

HIAS also expanded our legal support work into **Costa Rica** as Venezuelans pursued asylum applications there. Legal services ranged from one-on-one assistance from a staff attorney serving a single family to wraparound case support, with HIAS Costa Rica providing social services, job placement, and access to health care. A newly established Operations Center in Los Chiles allowed staff to better identify and care for asylum seekers from Nicaragua, while the team in San Jose continued to advocate for and represent asylum seekers from Central and South America and other continents.

Legal work in Greece continued to assume greater urgency as displaced people faced life in overpopulated detention camps, with the vast majority of nearly 21,000 refugees and asylum seekers on the island of Lesbos housed at the Moria camp, originally designed for only 3,000 people. Since HIAS Greece began operations in 2016 on Lesbos, and bolstered by the opening of an Athens office in 2017, HIAS Greece has provided services to 2,000 asylum seekers at all stages of the process, with the majority coming from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, but also from Uganda, Congo, and other African countries. In 2019, HIAS continued to provide free





“With the absence of legal status and the need to prove your persecution at home, you resign yourself to being a person without identity; a person just walking. When I received the contract from HIAS for legal representation, that was the first time I felt that I was believed. HIAS not only gave me legal advice, they suffered through the process with me, and that was powerful. They always had time to ask me about my emotions and saw me as whole.”

—Maria, refugee in Costa Rica

assistance in the asylum process, took on especially vulnerable clients at high risk for hate crimes, and ensured refugees had access to their legal, social, and economic rights in Greece. Surging xenophobia throughout Europe has led to the deterioration of political support for displaced people, but HIAS remains committed to our clients in Greece, a major entry point for refugees seeking safety in Europe.

As a leader in the rights of asylees in Greece, HIAS issued a **legal policy paper** against the administrative detention of asylum seekers on the island of Lesbos under the so-called “low profile detention scheme.” Under this system, single males from certain countries are automatically and unjustly detained. HIAS prepared a report that determined that the scheme constituted arbitrary detention under Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. NGOs including

In Greece, HIAS provided **17,908** people with legal protection services

Amnesty International and the UN cited the report, recognizing HIAS’ expertise on legal issues facing asylees. HIAS Greece also hosted conferences, including an important convening on Strategic Litigation in Asylum and Migration Issues that brought partners together to discuss how **justice for one client leads to justice for many**.

The HIAS Greece **legal team secured a significant victory** in 2019 when it won the acquittal of 108 refugees who had been arrested for protesting conditions in Lesbos, including the lack of medical services, poor sanitation, and limited access to food and water. More than 100 refugees, including 12 minors and two Greek nationals, faced criminal charges for peacefully protesting conditions at the Moria refugee camp. The protesters were attacked with wooden boards and metal pipes in Sappho Square, and the police broke up



the protest with physical force. HIAS represented 33 defendants in an important victory for the right of refugees to protest.

Israel is currently host to more than 33,000 asylum seekers, the majority of whom are from Sudan and Eritrea. **Legal work in Israel** focuses on both advocacy and direct legal support, bolstered by significant assistance from pro bono attorneys. **HIAS' Israel pro bono network is growing**, with the Israel legal aid network expanding to 197 fellows and nine law firms that provide support on legal matters including family law and asylum issues. Asylum cases in Israel are always challenging, but in 2019, pro bono counsel helped 81 Darfuris receive status that allows them to stay in the country. Through the **Rukin Fellows** program, HIAS has built a cadre of outstanding lawyers and law students dedicated to providing legal services to those most in need, and using litigation as an advocacy tool to help all asylum seekers in Israel. In 2019, 14 Rukin Fellows completed their training, marking the tenth class since the program's inception.

On the advocacy front, HIAS Israel successfully litigated to continue protection from deportation for asylum seekers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. HIAS Israel also began working on a pilot to secure humanitarian status for asylum seekers over age 65 to address unmet needs for social and health benefits, and fought for children of asylum seekers to have the same discounted bus pass access as other schoolchildren. Beyond legal support for refugees, HIAS has long been committed to advancing the lives of **young people who have made *aliyah* to Israel**. A longstanding HIAS program, the **HIAS Israel Scholarship Program for Student Olim**, is an initiative where Jews from across the globe who have chosen to make their home in Israel receive scholarship funds from HIAS to pursue their studies. In 2019, 45 students from 11 countries were selected from a pool of 600 applicants to receive scholarship funds, awarded by a panel of 23 judges.

Asylum Seekers Lacking Identity Documents Face Hurdles

Assi* arrived in Israel from the Ivory Coast in 2007, after losing his family in the civil war. He was detained for ten years because he lacked the required official documents, until a judge finally determined that he could not be held indefinitely. Like many other de facto stateless people in Israel, Assi was required to check in biweekly with the Ministry of Interior, and his permit to stay in the country did not allow him to work. He turned to HIAS for help, and our Tel Aviv legal team partnered with local pro bono attorneys to appeal for a work permit. Assi is hopeful that with HIAS' help, he will be able to earn a living and contribute to his new community.

**Assi is a pseudonym that is used to protect confidentiality.*

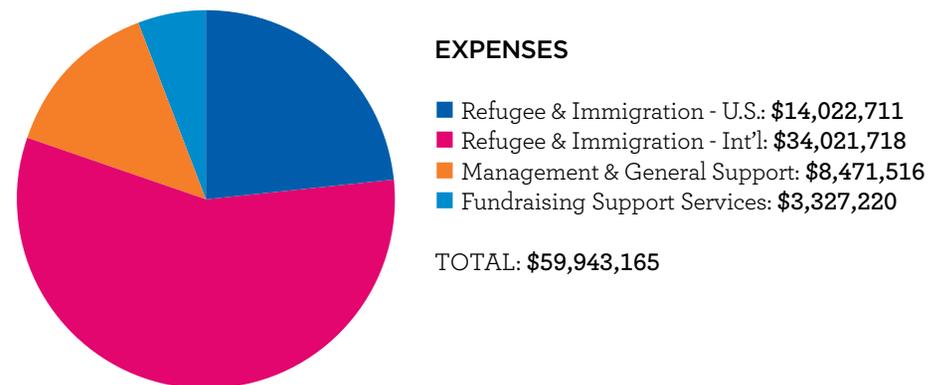
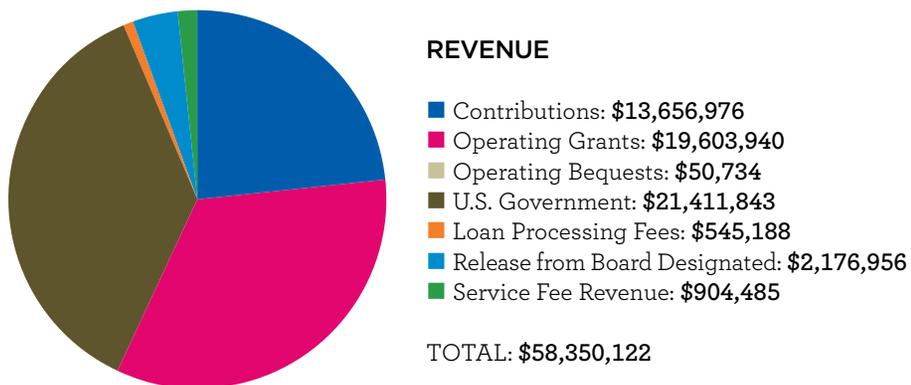




HIAS SUSTAINS SIGNIFICANT GROWTH IN REVENUE IN 2019

HIAS achieved significant growth in 2019, with an emphasis on International Programs. Our main sources of income were grants from the U.S. government, United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), and allied agencies; contributions from individuals and foundations; and funds released from board-designated endowments to support operations. HIAS remained on a strong trajectory of growth throughout the fiscal year, with a 16% increase in overall operating revenue. Operating grants increased by 91%, primarily in response to the Latin American refugee crisis, as HIAS invested in the region with new offices in Aruba, Guyana, Mexico, and Peru. With this expansion and the addition of an office in Belgium, Program expenses increased by 142% in 2019.

This pattern of growth was projected to continue in 2020, with a persistent focus on broadening our revenue base, retaining our valued supporters, and promoting operational efficiencies. Thanks to the generosity of stakeholders like you, HIAS was positioned to enter the new decade with a clear vision forward, the resources to succeed, and growing expertise in emergency response, which was quickly tested by the COVID-19 pandemic. We thank you for sustaining our strength and for standing with the displaced people we serve.



HIAS AWARDS DINNER 2019

In November, 300 guests gathered at Manhattan's Prince George Ballroom for the HIAS Awards: A Night for Hope and Welcome. This event, the first celebration dinner HIAS had hosted since 2001, was co-chaired by **Caryn Seidman-Becker and Marc Becker** of New York and **Ed and Barbara Shapiro** of Boston. That night, a sold-out room gathered to recognize allies who have stood with HIAS and honor three special guests dedicated to welcoming the stranger and protecting the refugee: international law firm **Jones Day**; singer, songwriter, and pianist **Regina Spektor**; and sex therapist, media trailblazer, and cultural icon **Dr. Ruth K. Westheimer**.

Jones Day was recognized for partnering with HIAS to protect refugee rights, including an innovative program to help asylum seekers access their legal rights in Greece. Their award was presented by **Anwar Kahn**, president of humanitarian organization Islamic Relief USA, and accepted by Jones Day Partner **Beth Heifetz**. Dr. Ruth, once a refugee from Nazi Germany, has built a pathbreaking career on an ethos of openness and exemplifies the boundless potential of refugees to enrich our society. Her award was presented by philanthropist **Elisha Wiesel**, son of the late activist, author, and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel. Regina Spektor, resettled by HIAS as a child, uses her powerful voice to call for inclusion and justice, so it was a special moment when she accepted the honor presented by actor and producer **Alysia Reiner** and then sang a stirring original arrangement of "Shalom Aleichem," a traditional Sabbath welcome song, to close the evening.

"Tonight we resume a longstanding HIAS tradition, begun in 1966 when President Harry S. Truman received our first annual 'Liberty Award,' honoring individuals who personify the HIAS mission of



welcoming the stranger and protecting the refugee," HIAS President and CEO **Mark Hetfield** noted in his welcome. "In the decades since, the global refugee crisis has dramatically worsened. What's remained the same is the commitment that HIAS supporters have for welcoming the stranger. We are so grateful to Ms. Spektor, Dr. Ruth, and our colleagues at Jones Day for their incredible partnership and their advocacy."



A NIGHT FOR HOPE & WELCOME



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Your support drives change in the struggle for justice and freedom for displaced persons around the world. Thank you for your partnership.

The following generous donors contributed to HIAS in the 2019 fiscal year. ♦

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**Due to space limitations, the Annual Report lists donors who gave \$1,800 or more in 2019. Gifts under \$1,800 represent our largest category of supporters. We are deeply thankful to all of our donors and know that every gift makes an important difference.*

Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy in this report. Should an error have occurred, please contact the Development Office at development@hias.org.



THE HIAS LEGACY SOCIETY

Where Values and Value Align to Support Refugees

The HIAS Legacy Society offers opportunities to advance your charitable and financial priorities through a variety of estate, investment, and philanthropic planning vehicles. If you are interested in exploring your options, the HIAS Planned Giving team stands ready to work with you and your professional advisors to find personalized solutions that can increase your income, reduce your tax liability, provide benefits to your family, and help refugees rebuild their lives. There are many ways to join the HIAS Legacy Society:

Bequest: State in your will that you plan to leave a specific amount or percentage of your estate to HIAS.

IRA: Name HIAS as a beneficiary of some or all of your IRA or 401k, minimizing the tax burden on your family.

Life Insurance: Name HIAS as the beneficiary of a new or existing life insurance policy for an immediate tax deduction.

Charitable Gift Annuity: Enjoy high fixed-rate lifetime payments for one or two individuals with significant tax savings.

Charitable Remainder Trust: Receive income from your highly-appreciated assets as well as income and estate tax benefits, with the remainder of the trust benefiting HIAS.

Charitable Lead Trust: Provide HIAS with immediate support while passing assets back to your family on a tax-favorable basis after the trust has ended.

The HIAS Legacy Society ensures that HIAS will be here from generation to generation, protecting refugees whose lives are in danger for being who they are. For more information, please contact **PlannedGiving@HIAS.org** or **212-613-1366**.



In fall of 1977, my parents and I left the Soviet Union with four suitcases, \$50 per person, and no idea what awaited us when we landed in Vienna. Four months later, we arrived in New York, and our new life in America began.

During those months between two worlds, HIAS representatives worked tirelessly to help us gain entry into the US as political refugees, providing us with a weekly stipend, temporary housing, and assistance with endless reams of paperwork.

My husband David and I chose to support HIAS with a Charitable Remainder Unitrust because it made financial sense for our family. More importantly, we wanted to honor the organization that brought me to America as a nine-year-old (and, indirectly, enabled us to meet) and to ensure that HIAS' mission—welcome the stranger, protect the refugee—could continue to assist vulnerable populations during a time of unprecedented division and xenophobia.”

—Irena & David Smith, Palo Alto, California

“Every Thanksgiving, our extended family gathers, and instead of giving gifts, we contribute to a charity determined by the younger generation. After the 2018 synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh, our nieces and nephews who grew up nearby decided that supporting HIAS was the right response.

Through this gift, we started learning more about HIAS and contributing on our own. We discovered that in 1919, when my Wertheimer grandmother and uncles made their way from Palestine to Switzerland to New York, HIAS made their entry into the US possible. At that point, we decided to be lifelong contributors—to pay it forward in our estate plans—and name HIAS as the beneficiary of our trust.”

—Michael Wertheimer & Christina Grot, Columbia, Maryland

“We are proud and eager to support HIAS with a Charitable Gift Annuity because of the excellent, effective, and compassionate work which it is accomplishing for displaced and hurting people of all races, ethnicities, identities, and faiths. It also has given us the opportunity to honor and memorialize the lives of two of our dearest Memphis friends, now deceased, who endured and survived the horrors of Nazi concentration camps during World War II. They were and are an inspiration to us.”

—Rita & William Bruce, St. Marys, Georgia

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Proteger al refugiado.**



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