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PRESS RELEASE: Iraqi children's charity wins international award for outstanding work

Local Iraqi charity National Institute of Human Rights (NIHR), which works to address the needs of internally displaced communities in Iraq that come to Kirkuk in the northern province, is to receive a 2015 Stars Impact Award.

The oil-rich Kirkuk province in northern Iraq lies at the centre of the political, social, cultural and economic conflict between Arabs, Kurds and Turkmen. Its residents are no strangers to migration. Forced to move out of the province under Saddam Hussein, many were pushed to move back following the US invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Today, there are over 120,000 registered displaced families in the province and many have had to start their life over from scratch in a region that is far from stable.

Aid agencies are struggling to cope with the number of internally displaced people and as in most conflict situations; the children are the most affected and the most vulnerable.

NIHR was established in 2005 to address the needs of displaced communities and to promote human rights awareness, particularly among women and children.

It works for the protection of children who face the threat of violence and exploitation through awareness campaigns, capacity building workshops and the provision of safe spaces for children.

Through its Children Friendly Space programme, the NIHR runs centres that each accommodate 500 children offering games, toys, painting, drawing, knitting, sports and reading workshops.

NIHR offers psychological support at a camp for displaced people to the east of Kirkuk city and has offered legal aid to 125 people through its Legal Clinic programme that was launched in January 2015.

Muna Wehbe, CEO of Stars Foundation – “Once again this year's Impact Award winners have demonstrated exceptional work in responding to the needs of children, and in the strength of their institutional and management practices.

Flexible funding allows these well-managed locally-led organisations to determine where their award funding can be best spent in order to bolster the important work that they do. We are delighted to be awarding in such a broad range of countries this year, with awardees drawn from as many as 12 countries.”

As part of the prize package, NIHR will receive US\$50,000 of flexible funding and capacity building support.

This year, Stars is awarding 24 organisations from countries ranging from Colombia to Iraq for their work with disadvantaged children.

Representatives from each local charity will take the stage at the Philanthropreneurship Forum, entitled “The New Frontiers of Philanthropy” which will be held at the Palais des Congrès de Versailles, Paris, on 12 December. **ENDS**

Notes to Editors:

Photography, interviews and case studies available on request. For further information, please contact:

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- Stars Foundation recognises and rewards outstanding local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working to improve the wellbeing and life chances of children in the countries with the highest rates of under-five mortality.
- Founded by Al-Dabbagh Group in 2001 and registered as an independent charity in England & Wales, Stars Foundation is a philanthropic foundation that invests in organisations and ideas to help transform the lives of disadvantaged children and their communities globally
- To date, across all programmes, Stars Foundation has awarded 127 organisations in 53 countries, reaching over 4,928,000 people.
- Winners of the flagship Impact Awards receive US\$50,000 in flexible funding in addition to capacity building support.
- Impact Awards will be given out across three geographic regions – Africa-Middle East, Asia-Pacific and Latin America-Caribbean.
- In total Stars Foundation received Expressions of Interest from 115 organisations.
- Twenty-four Award winners were chosen across three regions.
- Between them, the 2015 Stars Impact Award recipients reached more than 674,000 people last year.
- The Philanthropreneurship Forum is a global initiative that connects, empowers and inspires leaders from philanthropy, civil society, academia, business and governments to foster innovation and encourage collaboration.
- The Stars Impact Awards are underpinned by a rigorous selection process developed with PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP.

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