

SEED ANNUAL REPORT 2024



MISSION | VISION | VALUES



MISSION:

To protect, empower, and support the recovery of survivors of violence and others at risk.



VISION:

A prosperous Kurdistan with equal opportunity and protection of rights for all.



VALUES:

- Integrity - Committed to doing the right thing and being accountable.
- People-Focused - Belief in equality and invested in people.
- Commitment - Striving for sustainable change. We're here for the long run.
- Impact - Delivering quality, by combining international expertise and local know-how to achieve results.
- Teamwork - Collaboration, because together we can achieve more.

OBJECTIVES



Service Delivery:

SEED promotes the empowerment and recovery of survivors of violence and at-risk individuals, through transformational, comprehensive care; including case management, mental health services, psychosocial support, legal services, cash assistance, anti-human trafficking services and shelter.



Policy and Advocacy:

SEED works to achieve sustainable structural and social change by engaging diverse stakeholders through research and analysis, advocacy, awareness-raising, technical assistance, and practical tools and recommendations, that aim to strengthen policies and laws that will protect and serve survivors of violence and those at-risk.



Training and Education:

SEED strengthens the capacity of first responders and service providers working on GBV, Trafficking in Persons (TIP), Protection, and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) through our unique blended learning approach, which fosters classroom learning, with a key component of hands-on capacity building through on-the-job coaching.



Operational Excellence:

SEED ensures operational excellence by working to consistently strengthen SEED's organizational capacity, management, and approaches, and by fostering a collaborative and supportive working environment.

WHERE WE WORKED

SERVICE DELIVERY CENTERS



NEW CENTER IN KAWERGOSK REFUGEE CAMP

In January 2024, SEED established a new service delivery center in Kawergosk Refugee Camp. The camp is home to around 8,000 refugees primarily from northeast Syria. Across the center's first year of operation, SEED provided holistic individual and community-based services to more than 800 clients and beneficiaries.

SERVICE DELIVERY

SEED delivered survivor-centered, trauma-informed support to clients, including case management, mental health services, psychosocial support, legal services, cash assistance, anti-human trafficking services, and shelter. SEED's services addressed the urgent protection needs of survivors of violence and those at risk while making long term investments in communities' abilities to prevent violence, protect and uphold rights, and build inclusive and cohesive societies.



3000+

Internally displaced people, refugees, and survivors of conflict and violence served



1,206

Individuals provided
CASE MANAGEMENT



119

Individuals provided
SHELTER



487

Individuals provided
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Case Management & Mental Health Highlight

ZHEEN'S RECOVERY



...before meeting you [SEED psychologist], I had seen many psychologists and psychiatrists, but I often felt judged and misunderstood. You made me feel seen and supported, not just as a patient, but as a person who needed compassion.

Zheen, SEED client

For Zheen*, a young university student, childhood trauma led to extreme mental and emotional distress and patterns of self-harm. Despite these challenges, Zheen continued to pursue her education, a decision that went against her family's wishes, further deepening her sadness.

Facing additional challenges at school, Zheen began experiencing suicidal ideation. That's when she contacted SEED.

SEED's team immediately intervened and arranged for her admission to hospital and provided cash assistance to cover the medical bills. Her case manager and psychologist also collaborated with university staff to ensure she would still be eligible for her exams.

While Zheen's condition stabilized, she still required support to address her long-term mental health needs. Through coordinated services and mental health interventions across 11 months, Zheen experienced a profound transformation.

Zheen demonstrated a reduction in symptoms of depression, PTSD, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. She developed a better understanding of her symptoms and learned effective coping strategies to utilize if distressed or symptomatic in the future.

**Names and minor details have been changed to protect the client's confidentiality*



750+ (\$400 USD average per person)

Individuals provided
EMERGENCY CASH ASSISTANCE



413

Individuals provided
LEGAL SERVICES

Obtaining civil documentation is a top protection issue faced by refugees, IDPs and host community members alike. In 2024, SEED enabled **192 clients** to secure civil documentation including ID cards, passports, birth certificates.

Legal Services Highlight

SANDRA'S FIGHT AGAINST CRIMINALIZATION: SURVIVING HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND RETURNING HOME



I am grateful for SEED's support and services, which allowed me to return home safely.

Sandra, SEED client

Sandra*, a young woman from India, applied to work in the KRI with the hope of gaining a modest income to support her family. She secured a job with a local restaurant and was initially satisfied with her work conditions.

However, the recruitment agency responsible for Sandra's job placement later transferred her on to work in a household, a role which Sandra had not agreed to work in.

Soon Sandra faced mistreatment and abuse by the family, particularly the children. She contacted the police, who identified her as a survivor of human trafficking, and referred her to SEED.

While Sandra's case manager worked with her to develop a care plan, SEED's lawyers immediately engaged on the criminal case that had been filed against her for running away from her abusers' household. SEED's lawyers provided the investigative judge with evidence of the recruitment agency's deception. As a result, the judge dropped her arrest warrant, and forced the recruitment agency to pay for her plane ticket home.

With the charges against her dropped and a flight ticket secured, SEED provided Sandra with cash assistance to cover the additional travel expenses for her journey home.

**Names and minor details have been changed to protect the client's confidentiality*



2234 People who participated in psychosocial support activities

169 Healthy Families, Strong Communities and Together for Peace Graduates

39 Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting, and Parenting Without Violence Graduates

217 Stronger Together Graduates

155 SEED Girls Graduates

20 Women Rise Graduates



SEED Girls empowers adolescent girls and young women as they navigate social barriers, risks, and the challenges they face during adolescence, while fostering a sense of belonging and connection with peers.

“ I know how to stay informed about my rights, speak up when necessary, seek support from SEED and other NGOs to advocate for myself and others... and educate others about their rights. SEED Girls Graduate



Healthy Families, Strong Communities supports men and boys to develop their skills to build healthier relationships with the women and girls in their lives, and improve family communications.

“ My approach to parenting has improved. By listening to my children and using the techniques we learned, I’ve been able to encourage them to be more open with me and to listen more effectively. Healthy Families, Strong Communities Graduate

“ How to connect with our children, raise them, and protect them has always been at the center of my family, but a decade of conflict eroded that relationship, and only through this program was I reminded of these values. Healthy Families, Strong Communities Graduate, Kawergosk Refugee Camp



Together for Peace helps mitigate the destructive consequences of war by supporting men in finding non-violent ways of dealing with their past and current situations, improving their health, psychosocial well-being, and economic well-being.

“ I now really believe that women can take on roles that are usually performed by men, and they are not just responsible for cleaning the house. Together for Peace Graduate

FLASH FLOODS IN DUHOK

In early spring 2024, Duhok witnessed torrential rainfall, resulting in flash flooding which destroyed 10 residential neighborhoods, affecting an estimated 300-400 households, and causing 1,000 people to be evacuated from damaged and at-risk areas. In coordination with government actors, SEED supported the disaster response, conducting a rapid needs assessment and delivering psychological first aid, mental health, and psychosocial support to displaced survivors, as well as cash assistance to 55 severely affected families.

FIRES IN MAM RASHAN IDP CAMP

At the start of summer, the Directorate of Migration and Crisis Response reached out to SEED, requesting emergency support for two families whose caravans and all material possessions were destroyed by a fire in Mam Rashan IDP Camp, Duhok Governorate. SEED sent a mobile team, who assessed the survivors’ needs, and provided psychological first aid, including for two adults with disabilities. SEED complemented this mental health care with cash assistance, supporting these families in rebuilding their lives despite remaining in protracted displacement.

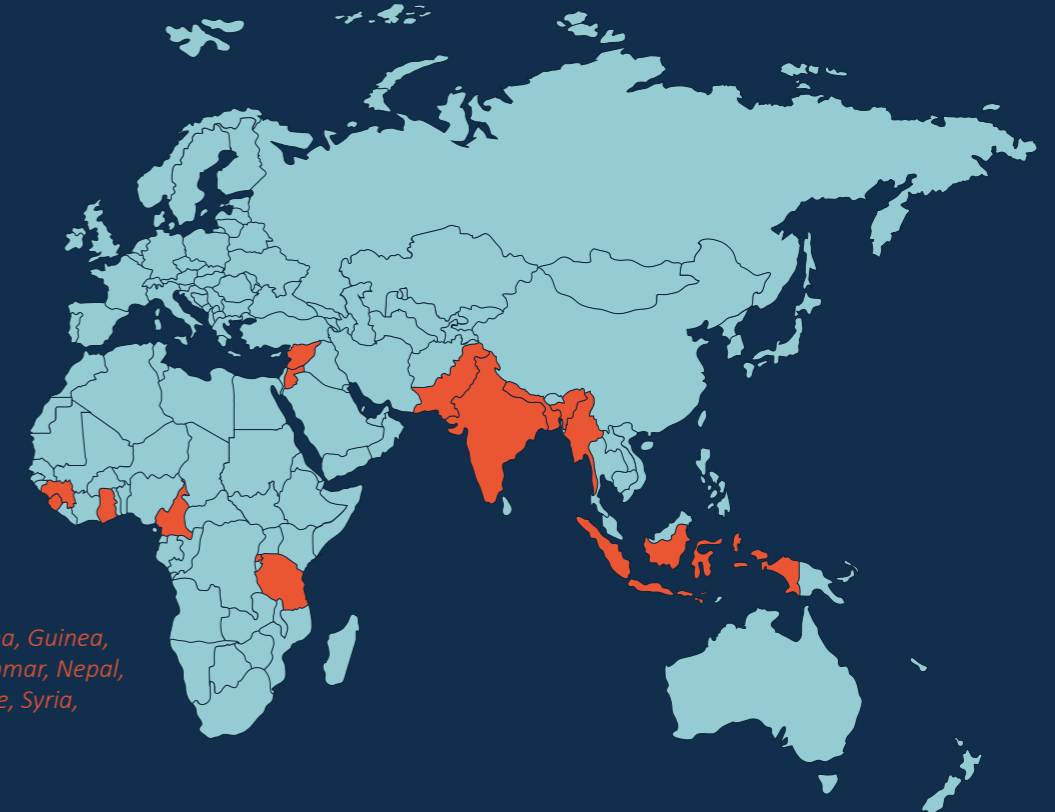
SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS OF TRAFFICKING

189 Survivors of trafficking served in 2024

94 Survivors of trafficking repatriated

14 Countries from which survivors originated

(Bangladesh, Cameroon, Ghana, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Syria, Tanzania)



5 YEARS OF THE STEPS CENTER: SHELTER FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS

In November 2024, SEED celebrated the five-year anniversary of the STEPS Center’s operation, the only private-public shelter for survivors of human trafficking and those at risk in the KRI. Beyond providing safe shelter using a trauma-informed, rights-based and survivor-centered model, residents receive support for their complex needs, including case management, cash assistance, primary medical care, legal assistance, and mental health and PSS services.

Since opening in 2019, the STEPS Center has supported 224 people in need of SEED’s specialized protective services.

A STORY OF RESILIENCE:

OVERCOMING EXPLOITATION WITH SEED'S SUPPORT

Saif*, a young husband and father from Syria, left his growing young family to seek job opportunities that would help him cover necessary medical bills and provide them with a better life. Saif arrived in the KRI in late-2022, but almost immediately, his journey took a harrowing turn.

Saif was deceived by a false promise of employment. Hastily, Saif paid his visa fees, residency, and flight ticket. However, after only one week of work, the his new place of employment closed. With his passport confiscated, salary unpaid, and no accommodation, he was now homeless and at high risk of trafficking. "I found SEED on Facebook and reached out; within a week, I was referred to a case manager and began receiving support," he explained.

SEED's lawyers worked to facilitate the return of Saif's passport and advocated to have his residency penalties waived, allowing him to move forward without fear of deportation. "I was thinking I would be deported ... but SEED made sure that didn't happen."

Saif was also provided cash assistance to cover medical costs, as well as rent to ensure he had a safe place to stay while awaiting repatriation.

Over the one year Saif remained in the KRI awaiting his repatriation, he was able to find safe work and began honing his chef skills. He started being recognized as a talented chef - and someone who turned his struggle into opportunity and growth.

As Saif prepared to return to Syria and reunite with his family, his hopes were high. "I've never seen my son, and I can't wait to hold him in my arms," he said.



I found SEED on Facebook and reached out; within a week, I was referred to a case manager and began receiving support.

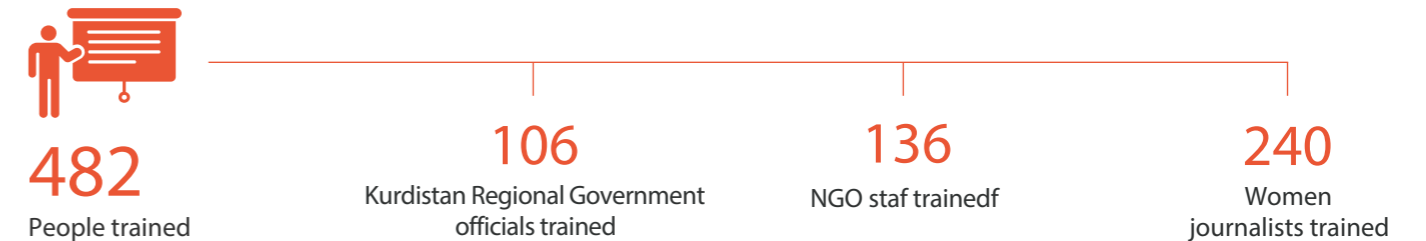
Saif

*Names and minor details have been changed to protect the client's confidentiality



TRAINING & EDUCATION

SEED strengthened the capacities of NGO service providers, government actors, and other key stakeholders supporting and protecting survivors of violence and those at-risk, through education, training, and capacity building programs. SEED utilizes a contextually tailored, interactive, highly practical, and hands-on learning approach to foster sustainable outcomes.



TRAINING FOR NGOS

SEED invests in local NGO staff capacity to ensure that survivors of violence and those at risk have sustainable access to high quality services delivered in line with local values and international best practices.



All around us, there are many cases of violence taking place inside refugees and IDP camps, as well as cities and villages. I want to protect women, empower them, and support them in realizing their rights. The people working in this field are still in need of a lot more experience [to respond to these issues].

Case Management Training Participant, Duhok



I realized that I did certain things without knowing that they were harmful. After we participated in role-play as a survivor and then as the case manager, I understood the feelings of a survivor better. Now that I see their perspective, I will try not to make the same mistakes.

GBV Foundations Training Participant

TRAINING FOR KURDISTAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

SEED works to build the capacity of government officials and frontline responders through structured training and coaching, enabling them to more effectively implement the law and respond to local challenges.



I have been sharing all the techniques I learned with my staff in the office-how to know when to seek help, when to step back and take a breath, or when to close your eyes for a moment and relax your mind. All these techniques were learned during the training. It has really helped improve the overall productivity and well-being of our team.

Well-Being Training Participant, DCVAW Official, Erbil



We are experts in court affairs, but our knowledge in interacting with the plaintiffs is limited. When we participate in such workshops, we get acquainted with professionals who frequently interact with the victims outside the court. Now I have the required skills to show sympathy toward the victims and understand the agony they have experienced.

Member of the Judiciary and participant in SEED's 'Strengthening Human Rights by Promoting Effective Legal Protections' training, conducted in collaboration with Synergy for Justice

TRAINING FOR WOMEN JOURNALISTS

SEED, UNFPA and Rudaw Media worked together to increase journalists' understanding of – and commitment to – ethical reporting on women and GBV through training, ensuring that women and survivors of GBV across Iraq receive safe, dignified, and knowledgeable treatment and representation when sharing their stories with the media.

“As the trainer delved into the ethics of communicating on these sensitive topics, I was saddened to realize how far reality has strayed from these practices, *Aya**, a recent university graduate and journalist from Baghdad shared. “Journalists simply take the news and publish it without questioning its veracity or feeling accountable for their actions. During the workshop, we learned about different aspects of not only community violence but also how to approach these stories ethically. How to interview, how to get photos, and most importantly, how to prioritize consent forms and the comfort and safety of the interviewees.”

“The session introduced us to many aspects of the law that support women and protect them. Knowledge of laws is significant for a journalist. Through it, we can support survivors of violence, *Samar**, an aspiring young journalist from Anbar, explained. “By promoting these laws and raising awareness, we can not only protect survivors but also prevent brutal acts occurring in the first place,” she exclaimed. “Knowing these laws gives us the tools to challenge injustices and advocate for women’s rights more effectively.”



The project was honored with the Stevie® Award for the Best Social Program of the Year in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, 2024.

POLICY & ADVOCACY

SEED works to achieve sustainable institutional change and social development by engaging diverse stakeholders through advocacy, technical assistance, and awareness-raising to strengthen rights and protections for all. By combining bottom-up and top-down strategies for a “whole systems” approach, strengthening progress through interconnected, evolving initiatives, and nurturing strong, reciprocal partnerships with government and civil society actors alike, SEED advances impactful reforms in legislation, regulation, policy, and practice.

SEED’S APPROACH:



Advocacy:

To persuade stakeholders toward action



Technical Assistance:

To equip and resource government and other stakeholders to enact reforms



Awareness raising:

To inform, educate, and shape public opinion

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Changes achieved in law, policy, regulatory, process and practice

SUPPORTING THE PASSAGE OF MOLSA REGULATION NO. 7 OF 2024

SEED’s long-term advocacy and technical assistance to support the KRG Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA) with critical reforms to the shelter system yielded a major success in 2024 with the passage of MOLSA Regulation No. 7 of 2024, “Shelter for Women Without Housing.” This framework is designed to ensure the provision of safe and supportive transitional housing for women in need, and facilitate their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. The new regulation integrates key content, recommendations, and articles from the shelter mechanism previously developed by SEED.

BLOCKING HARMFUL AMENDMENTS TO THE IRAQI PERSONAL STATUS LAW

SEED engaged at multiple levels to block proposed amendments to the Iraqi Personal Status Law, preventing the legalization of marriage for children as young as nine and retaining child custody rights of women. SEED’s recommendations on the draft amendments, alongside intensive advocacy, and support for grassroots opposition resulted in this critical legislative change when the Iraqi Council of Representatives Legal Committee integrated these critical concessions. SEED is sustaining work to protect and enshrine women and children’s rights in 2025.

IRAQ-WIDE ADOPTION OF SEED’S TIP SCREENING AND IDENTIFICATION TOOL

SEED’s TIP Screening and Identification Tool was incorporated into UNODC standard operating procedures for the Investigation of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants. SEED’s product is now supporting anti-trafficking actors across Iraq, strengthening a safe, timely, accurate, and standardized approach to the identification of survivors of human trafficking. SEED’s tool, originally developed for and adopted by the KRG, lays out a victim-centered screening and identification process to help officers assess if an individual has been trafficked based on principles consistent with local law and international standards.



28

Advocacy and technical assistance initiatives





10 Demands, 10 Years After the Genocide by ISIL

MARKING 10 YEARS SINCE THE GENOCIDE BY ISIS

To commemorate the 10th anniversary of the genocide waged by ISIS against Iraq's diverse communities, SEED, Jiyān Foundation for Human Rights, and Yazda, in collaboration with the Coalition for Just Reparations (C4JR), partnered to develop and release a new report, [10 Demands, 10 Years After the Genocide by ISIL](#). The report features ten priority demands of survivors that remain unmet a decade after the genocide, with findings informed by a series of consultations with survivors from the Yazidi, Turkmen, Christian, and Shabak communities. The report draws renewed attention to the plight of survivors, amplifies their perspectives and insights, and advocates for robust solutions to alleviate their suffering.

FIRST CYBERCRIME SYMPOSIUM IN THE KRI

As the co-chair of Iraq's Online Violence Task Force, SEED partnered with the University of Sulaimani, to co-host the first Cybercrime Symposium in the KRI, capitalizing on growing interest in preventing and responding to online violence in the region. The symposium united multi-sector stakeholders to combat cybercrime, identify gaps and opportunities for an improved response, and demonstrate their commitment to creating safer online spaces for all.

ONLINE VIOLENCE AND ELECTION CYCLES: TRAINING FOR WOMEN CANDIDATES

In response to increased violence against women candidates, SEED collaborated with UNFPA and Rudaw Media Network to support them to navigate the threat of technology-facilitated GBV in the run-up to KRG elections. These sessions empowered 33 candidates with knowledge and skills to successfully address key online challenges and barriers which impede their full participation in public life.



Online = 16,000,000+ | In-Person = 1,700+
People reached through SEED's awareness efforts

FIRST ANTI-TRAFFICKING HACKATHON IN KURDISTAN

In an effort to engage youth on the critical issue of human trafficking, SEED convened over 30 university students from across the region to explore and develop innovative solutions for the first ever Anti-Trafficking Hackathon in the KRI. During the two day program, co-hosted by the University of Kurdistan-Hewlêr, teams worked with mentors to prepare their ideas and solutions before presenting them for a panel of expert judges. A group of young women from Koya University were awarded the winning prize for their proposal to launch an online human trafficking resource portal, and continue to work in collaboration with SEED to bring their concept to life.

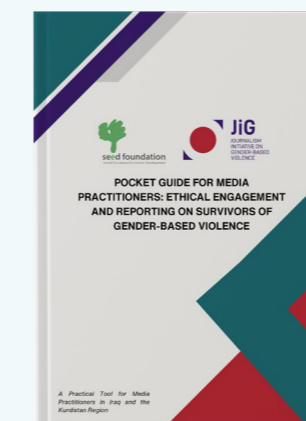


YOU AND YOUR CONSCIENCE

Throughout 2024, SEED partnered with MAGENTA on a joint campaign - [You and Your Conscience](#) - to raise awareness of TFGBV across Iraq, reaching a potential audience of over 100 million.

As a part of the campaign, SEED delivered in-person awareness sessions on TFGBV – presenting definitions, risk mitigation advice, and tools that students could use to protect themselves online, reaching over 800 students in nine universities across the KRI.

The campaign was awarded GOLD at the 2025 Global Good Awards for Behaviour Change Campaign of the Year.



POCKET GUIDE FOR ETHICAL REPORTING ON SURVIVORS OF GBV

Building on SEED's efforts to strengthen media capacity to ethically and accountability report on women and GBV under, SEED took the opportunity, in partnership with Journalism Initiative on GBV, to launch a [Pocket Guide For Media Practitioners On Ethical Engagement And Reporting On Survivors Of GBV](#) on World News Day.



INVESTING IN ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

SEED is committed to responsive innovation and excellence by fostering a culture of accountability and transparency, ensuring regulatory compliance, exhibiting strategic financial management, and enhancing strategic investments in recruitment and program development.

SEED ACADEMY

SEED invests in its staff by offering internal training and facilitating external opportunities to build their capacities, and strengthen our impact.

714 staff attendances across all trainings

100 training sessions, including subjects such as:

- Technology-Facilitated GBV 101
- Prevention Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
- Stress Management
- Trauma-focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Children in collaboration with UNITAD

Sessions were delivered in **four languages** - Kurdish Sorani, Kurdish Badini, Arabic, and English – reflecting our multicultural organization and commitment to fostering shared understanding

GREEN TEAM

As part of SEED’s commitment to improving upon its environmental footprint, the Green Team- a voluntary staff council- conducted a legislative analysis to ensure compliance with KRG laws, and identify areas for growth.

SEED also eliminated single use plastic in its offices by installing water filtration systems, reducing SEED’s carbon footprint by 850kg.

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

As part of our commitment to operational excellence, we undertook a comprehensive update of our Finance Manual to ensure that our financial management practices remain current, compliant, and aligned with international standards. The revised manual strengthens our internal controls, streamlines financial systems, and reinforces accountability across all levels. This update reflects our ongoing dedication to transparency, efficiency, and adherence to best practices in financial operations.

STAFF WELL-BEING

SEED strengthened its commitment to staff well-being throughout 2024, conducting 45 well-being initiatives with staff from all offices and centers.

Key activities included:

- 30+ staff yoga sessions
- Creative and recreational team-building events, including SEED’s first-ever Office Olympics
- Celebrating international and local holidays days such as Ramadan, World Suicide Prevention Day, National Clothes Day, Kurdish Flag Day, and more
- Introducing a quarterly well-being newsletter
- Holding an annual two-day staff retreat building team relationships across offices and fostering a stronger shared vision of our future

ACCOUNTABILITY AND SAFEGUARDING

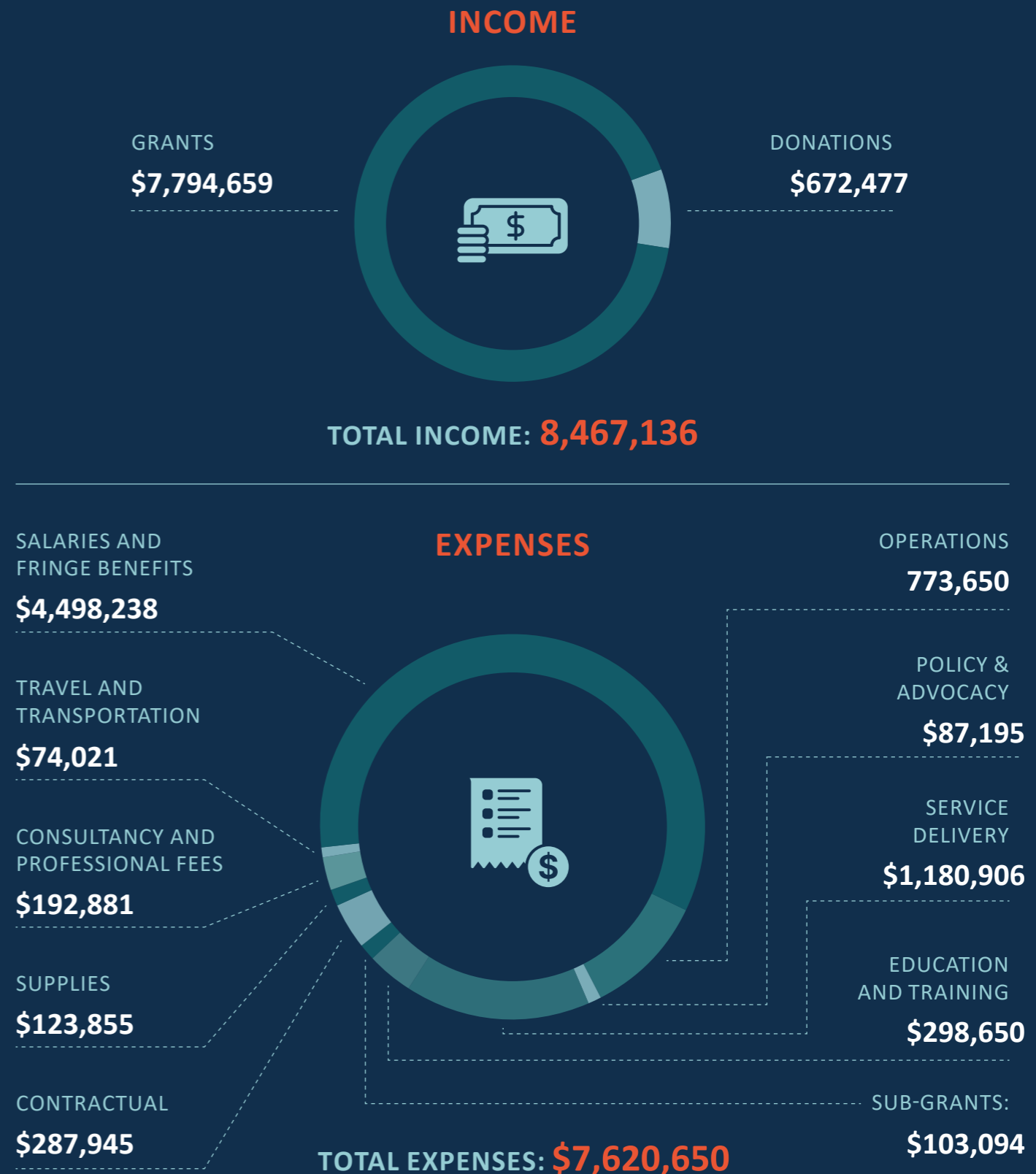
SEED upheld its commitment to accountability and safeguarding throughout 2024, continuing regular training with staff and revising and renewing the Accountability Framework to include a robust Anti-Fraud Policy.

SEED’s Accountability Framework:

- Child Safeguarding
- Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Sexual Harassment (PSEA/SH) Policy
- Complaints and Response Mechanism
- Anti-Fraud Policy
- Code of Conduct

FINANCES

SEED’s impacts in 2024 were funded by generous institutional donors, private foundations, corporate supporters, and individual in-kind and cash donations. This generosity enabled SEED to build and expand its programming to provide urgent and life-saving support to survivors of violence and those at risk.



PARTNERS: TOGETHER, WE CAN ACHIEVE MORE

Our valued partnerships with governments, international and national NGOs, and other actors, are essential to enable us to best serve survivors of violence and those at-risk and to create positive change. We would like to thank SEED's 2024 partners listed below for their continued support and commitment:

Corporate Sponsors and Private Donors

- Energy Transition
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MOU Partners

- Wchan Organization for Human Rights Violations
- Kurdistan Regional Government – Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
- Kurdistan Regional Government - Directorate of Combating Violence Against Women and Families
- MAGENTA
- UNFPA
- Embassy of Ghana in Kuwait

Other Implementing Partners

- Coalition for Just Reparations (C4JR)
- Committee on the Woman, Family and Childhood, Iraqi Council of Representatives
- Heartland Alliance International
- Harikar Organization
- Institute for International Law and Human Rights
- IOM
- iQ Group
- Iraqi Child Rights Network
- Journalism Initiative on GBV (JiG)
- Judicial Council of the Kurdistan Region
- Khanzad Cultural and Social Organization
- Kurdistan Regional Government
- UN Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on Grave Violations Against Children in Situations of Armed Conflict: Country Task Force Technical Working Group
- Mrovcentery Organization for Human Rights Issues
- Parliamentary Development Institute - Iraq
- Public Aid Organization
- Salahaddin University-Erbil Social Work Department of the College of Arts
- Synergy for Justice
- UNHCR
- University of Kurdistan Hewlêr
- University of Sulaimani Social Work Department of the College of Human Sciences

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