



*nurturing healthy families*

# **2022 ANNUAL REPORT**

# MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Dear Supporters Assalamu alaykum (Peace Be upon you all),**

2022 was a year unlike any other for Sahaba Initiative. We grew and expanded our services more than any other year. We undertook one of our most ambitious projects purchasing a former drug house and transforming it into our Food and Wellness Center. Now a place that brought detriment, sorry, and negativity to the community is now a place of hope, light, and service. Our Food & Wellness Center is rebuilding lives by providing access to healthy food, nutritional counseling, health education, community engagement programs, and community restoration. This space not only focuses on providing direct services but changing the culture in the inner city and breaking cycles of poverty.

***"Strategically located in the heart of San Bernardino blocks always from downtown as well as a block away from San Bernardino High School which has one of the lowest poverty rates in the country. Sahaba Initiative ensured that we are in the heart of where our services are needed."***

We formed new partnerships with the Riverside University Health System to provide guidance and bring resources on how to better serve the mental health needs of the Muslim community, with Doordash enabling us to deliver hundreds of meals including to seniors and single mothers unable make it out at food pantry lines—to homebound clients who need them most and many more.

Sahaba Initiative and its team received numerous awards such as being highlighted by San Bernardino County Supervisor Joe Baca, Jr. for our service to the region, board secretary Mohammed Kuko was awarded the innovator of distinction in the field of technology for the development of our Food Pantry management software Pantri, and our executive team were chosen to and completed a 12 month long capacity building fellowship with the Inland Empire Community Collaborative out of hundreds of organizations.

**2022 has truly been an amazing year and we were only able to do it with your support.**

Looking forward, 2023 will be our biggest year yet! We plan to hire two new case managers and two new therapists to provide more support, workshops, and classes for the community. We are expanding the offerings of our food pantry to include nutrition and healthy cooking classes as well as add a client choice model enabling clients to enter the pantry and choose what they need to sustain their families. We are conducting a feasibility study to examine our organizational capacity to develop a sustainable housing program in San Bernardino county. Many of the community members we serve struggle to maintain their housing as a direct result of the severe lack of affordable and safe housing throughout the region. We hope to disrupt this system by providing safe, affordable housing options to individuals and families with direct access to our existing programs and services. This will be done in collaboration with private investors as well as governmental agencies. The feasibility study will allow us to better understand our capacity to take on such growth and find pathways to make this vision a reality. With your continued support we can truly make a lasting impact on individuals and families while creating a culture of change that has lasting and wide reaching effects.

**As you read the rest of this report, please consider joining us in our mission to serve our community.**

~ Malek Bendelhoun

# MISSION AND VISION

## **Our Mission:**

To transform lives by leading community programs that inspire future generations to break cycles of poverty.

## **Our Vision:**

To transform communities and support families in crisis through addressing core areas in housing, hunger, economic stability, and mental well-being.



*nurturing healthy families*

# OUR CORE SERVICES:

Our holistic approach addresses the five social determinants of health: safe housing, income, education, healthy food, and high-quality health care. We ask you to join us in helping support all of our services.



**Emergency  
Financial  
Assistance**



**Individual & Group  
Mental Health  
Services**



**Food Pantry**



**Case  
Management**



**Community  
Service Initiatives**



**Advocacy and  
Direct Action**



**Education**



**Social Impact**





**2022 : BY THE NUMBERS**

# FOOD AND WELLNESS CENTER

## As a growing community organization, our services outgrew our space!

Our first facility was too small to accommodate our services. To continue to effectively serve our community, we expanded into two locations: the Family and Resource center is dedicated to therapy and case management and our second building, the Food and Wellness Center serves exclusively as our food bank.

We transformed the second building from what was once a drug house to a beautiful prayer space and food bank. This repurposed space is a beacon of hope in an extremely impoverished area in San Bernardino.

New partnerships emerged with Doordash and Bishop's Storehouse which expanded our reach and community engagement. With Doordash, we have been able to deliver hundreds of meals including to seniors and single mothers unable make it out at food pantry line as well as homebound clients who need them most and many more. In 2022 alone, we were able to facilitate and host 57 community events with community and partner organizations! Although the average amount of grocery bags we distributed on a monthly basis decreased because of the transition, we are very likely to reach a record number in 2023.





# FOOD AND WELLNESS CENTER NUMBERS



450+

Grocery bags  
distributed monthly



Over  
432,000

Pounds of food  
distributed



Over  
360,000

Meals  
Provided

## HIGHLIGHTS: REFUGEE PROGRAM

In an effort to welcome Afghan asylum seekers to the Inland Empire area, Sahaba Initiative joined UC Riverside Middle Eastern Student Center and Glocally Connected on a joint program in March 2022. The program consisted of informational and interactive activities for the whole family. Attendees were welcomed by UCR's Chancellor, Kim A. Wilcox, and also received a tour of UCR's campus.



In 2022, over \$130,000 was distributed in funds to support refugees in the community.



# We provided day to day emergency assistance to fight poverty



## 70+

families helped  
with shelter

## 125+

families helped with  
transportation

## 40+

families helped  
with utilities

# Emergency Financial Assistance

Through our Emergency Financial Assistance program, our Case Managers are able to provide direct support to individuals and families experiencing crises. We understand that very often the challenges our clients face are beyond their current control to navigate and resolve. In 2022, our Case Managers encountered many families and individuals struggling to make ends meet. Not only are our clients faced with rising living expenses, unaffordable housing prices and low wages, but an unforeseen circumstance can lead to making an already difficult situation all the more challenging.

For some of our clients, an unexpected job loss led to not being able to pay their rent on time and receiving a three day pay or quit notice. The stress of job loss and the threat of eviction weigh heavy on our clients, making it that much more difficult to thrive. For others, a sudden life-altering diagnosis forced them to leave their jobs and receive crucial medical treatment. The client and their families are left worrying not only about their health, but also about the security of their living situation.

Thankfully, we have been blessed to be able to step in to provide a glimpse of hope, to alleviate some stress, and allow individuals and families the opportunity to recuperate at their own pace. Through the generosity of our donors, we provided over \$100,000 in emergency financial assistance to individuals and families in dire need of assistance.

# HIGHLIGHTS: INTERNAL EDUCATION



## Inland Empire Community Collaborative

Malek and Arbazz graduated from IECC's Capacity Building Academy (CBA).

The Capacity Building Academy (CBA) is a year-long training and education process that results in each member organization developing an Impact Plan that directly responds to the needs and priorities of their target audiences and local communities. These academies, graduating from seven to ten agencies per year, have strengthened county nonprofit organizations by focusing on sustainability planning to support the development of strong, adaptive, sustainable organizations that serve the Inland Empire.

# HIGHLIGHTS: MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

## Women's Mental Health

The Guillermo J. Valenzuela Foundation provided support for our mental health initiatives focused on increasing resources for women in low-income communities.



## Partnership with MSA West

Sahaba Initiative and MSA West are partnering to provide mental health counseling to Muslim students. The collaborative will focus on increasing access to culturally responsive mental health services for Muslim students and their families, with a particular emphasis on addressing the unique challenges faced by Muslim students in today's society. The program will provide counseling services, support groups, and workshops that focus on mental health and well-being. The program will also provide training and resources to educators, school staff, and community leaders to help them better support the mental health needs of Muslim students.



We held

# 360+

## Counseling Sessions

Our Counselors:



Nacera Bendelhoum,  
MS, LMFT



Samira Hazama,  
MS, LMFT



Amanee Bendelhoum,  
LCSW



# PARTNERS

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS:



Bishop's Storehouse



Malek was the main speaker at the National Innovative Communities Conference



Malek, Arbazz and Samira graduated from the Center for Civic Policy & Leadership with a focus on DEI (15 month cohort)



Mohammed Kuko was recognized by Center for Social Innovation, UCR as the innovation of distinction for creating Pantri, a software designed to manage food pantries with machine learning and artificial intelligence to fight hunger



Hosted Assembly Majority Leader Eloise Reyes for a day



Welcomed MLS star Christian Torre



Received Local Recognition and a Business Spotlight from Supervisor Joe Baca, Jr.

## RECOGNITIONS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

# MEET THE TEAM



**Malek Bendelhoum**  
Executive Director  
& Co-Founder



**Janette Court**  
Program Director,  
CCHW



**Rangeena Salim-Eissa**  
Program Director, ACSW,  
CCHW



**Nacera Bendelhoum,**  
MS, LMFT  
Marriage & Family  
Therapist/Advisor



**Samira Hazama, LMFT**  
Marriage & Family  
Therapist/Advisor



**Amanee Bendelhoum, LCSW**  
Licensed Clinical Social  
Worker/Advisor



**Muhammad Zubair**  
Pantry Support



**Ray Ford**  
Pantry Support



**CJ Court**  
Pantry Support

# MEET THE BOARD



**Arbazz Nizami**  
Founding President



**Mohammed Kuko, MS**  
Founding Secretary



**Faezah Fathizadeh, MSW**  
Board Member



**Adnan Syed, MBA**  
Chief Financial Officer





# THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

*With your donations,  
we are closer to our goals.*



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