

# HEARTLAND ALLIANCE

## INTERNATIONAL



# A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

Dear friends,

I was first introduced to Heartland Alliance International eight years ago through a trip to Sri Lanka. It was there that I saw firsthand the challenges of Heartland's work on a global level. It was there that I learned about child soldiers and the lasting effects of a devastating civil war. The next trip I took with Heartland was to Haiti, where we hiked to a mountaintop to meet with a small group of local women who were sharing the earnings from their recent harvest with each other. With the help of Heartland's team, these women had learned to sign their names and do basic math in order to record their earnings in a small notebook.

Over the past few years, the need for human rights organizations has felt more urgent than ever, as the number of people being forced from their homes due to conflict has soared. Today, more than 22 million people are refugees, 40 million more are displaced within their own countries, and at least 10 million individuals are considered stateless. These people are often denied basic human rights, and many are struggling to grapple with the trauma they have endured.

HAI is rising to meet these global challenges. We are growing, innovating, and serving better than ever. In just the last year, HAI served more than 245,000 survivors of human rights abuses. We responded to the Mosul crisis, providing emergency child protection services to children in internally displaced camps. In Colombia, we continued to provide robust community-based mental health services for survivors of the country's protracted conflict and pioneered a suicide prevention program in indigenous communities. In Nigeria, we nearly doubled in size to deliver HIV services to key populations through our innovative "one-stop shop" model, which provides the entire spectrum of care, including prevention and education services, treatment, psychosocial support, and case management.

I am really committed to the work of Heartland Alliance International and am proud to serve as Board Chair. Our activities across the globe are innovative, dedicated to those who need it most, and a model for best practice. We understand the importance of access to justice and trauma-informed mental health and psychosocial support. We know that when individuals have the chance to heal from the trauma of violence and human rights abuses, they become a part of the positive change we need to see in the world.

Now, more than ever, we must work for justice at home and abroad. I hope you'll join me in celebrating the success and growth of this powerful organization.

Martha Casazza  
Chair, Board of Directors  
Heartland Alliance International

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## ABOUT US

Heartland Alliance International (HAI) is the global arm of Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights, a family of organizations that has been leading anti-poverty and social justice work in Chicago for more than 125 years.

Across the world, when human rights are threatened, HAI works to restore them. We implement programs on a range of global human rights issues in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and in Chicago at Heartland Alliance Marjorie Kovler Center. Our mission is to secure the rights and well-being of marginalized people and communities.

HAI achieves this mission by focusing on specialized mental health and psychosocial support and access to legal services for people who have been victims of violence and human rights abuses. We ensure the safety of these individuals and empower them to actively engage in their communities and drive social change.

**AT HEARTLAND ALLIANCE INTERNATIONAL,  
WE BELIEVE THERE CAN BE NO HEALING  
WITHOUT JUSTICE, AND NO JUSTICE  
WITHOUT HEALING.**

# OUR HISTORY

1888

Travelers Aid opens in Chicago to assist immigrants arriving in the United States

1908

Jane Addams establishes Immigrants Protective League



1980

Travelers Aid and Immigrant Protective League merge to become Travelers & Immigrants Aid

1987

Marjorie Kovler Center for the Treatment of Survivors of Torture is established by a group of physicians, psychologists, lawyers, torture survivors – and is made possible by the foresight and commitment of a philanthropist

1995

Travelers & Immigrants Aid changes its name to Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights



1999

Heartland Alliance starts its first program outside of the United States, a community torture treatment program in Guatemala

2004

Heartland Alliance opens its first international office in Iraq, training 200 community mental health workers to heal and rehabilitate survivors of torture and trauma



2011

Heartland Alliance has offices in Latin America & the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa

2012

Heartland Alliance International (HAI) is formally established as a separate structure with its own governing board

2017

Marjorie Kovler Center celebrates 30 years of providing comprehensive services for survivors of torture from more than 60 countries

2018

Heartland Alliance International operates on four continents, serving more than 245,000 individuals around the world.





# WHAT WE DO

## THEORY OF CHANGE

Heartland Alliance International recognizes that trauma, experienced at either the individual or collective level, often exacerbates the barriers that prevent people from seeking and obtaining justice. Many people who have been heavily traumatized cannot contemplate seeking justice until they begin to heal from the trauma they have endured; at the same time, there cannot be complete healing without access to justice.

When people who have been victims of violence and human rights abuses have the opportunity to heal from trauma and access justice, **they are able to move toward active engagement in society and create positive and lasting change.**

## OUR CORE AREAS OF WORK



TRAUMA-INFORMED MENTAL  
HEALTH & PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT



ACCESS TO JUSTICE



RIGHTS-BASED HIV PREVENTION,  
CARE & TREATMENT



HUMAN RIGHTS &  
GENDER EQUALITY



## LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Organized crime, drug and gang-related violence, government corruption, and legacies of armed conflict contribute to pervasive violence and instability throughout Latin America and the Caribbean; over one third of global homicides occur in this region. Heartland Alliance's National Immigrant Justice Center has provided legal services to asylum seekers fleeing wars in Central and South America for decades. In 1987, Marjorie Kovler Center began providing comprehensive medical, mental health, and social services to torture survivors from this region.

Heartland Alliance International (HAI) began its first direct service projects in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2010, focusing on migrant rights and community health initiatives.

HAI's current programming in Mexico, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic prioritizes populations most vulnerable to the current realities of crime and violence, including women and children; addresses survivors of extreme violence in a decades-long conflict; and ensures stateless populations have access to legal services to assert their rights. We form strong local partnerships, use evidence-based methods, and perform regular evaluations to ensure our programs reach the people who need them most – and change their lives for the better. We're continuing to expand into Central America, focusing on the Northern Triangle countries — El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras — to bring opportunities for healing to those impacted by violence.



## MARÍA'S STORY, COLOMBIA

### THEY GAVE ME LIFE AGAIN, FRESH AIR TO BREATHE.

María Antonia Mosquera Román is a 53-year-old woman who calls herself a survivor. She grew up in López de Micay, a town in the pacific coast of Colombia, which is one of the most geographically isolated regions of the country and is most vulnerable to attacks by armed groups.

María Antonia had a quiet life with her husband and four children in their community by a river until the conflict arrived at her home one morning in 2001, when a group of men — members of a guerilla armed group — barged into her house and threatened her family, forcing them to leave the community immediately.

The armed men wouldn't let María Antonia pick up her two older children from school, so her family was split up. "This separation was what hurt my soul the most," she says.

She, her husband, and her two younger children sought refuge with other displaced families in a neighborhood in Buenaventura, a port city in the southwest of the country, where many displaced Colombians from the pacific coast end up.

It took two years for María Antonia to reunite with her other two children, and shortly before their reunion, her husband passed away. María Antonia was left to care for her four children alone. "I felt like I was in a cage, and I couldn't live," she remembers.

In 2016, Heartland Alliance International (HAI) staff visited María Antonia's neighborhood, looking for victims of the armed conflict to invite them to participate in a mental health and psychosocial support program called ACOUPLE (short for *Alianza Con las Organizaciones Por Lo Emocional*).

HAI has pioneered this program over the past seven years, using it as a model for providing psychosocial support to survivors of displacement and torture in the pacific coast of Colombia. Since 2011, HAI has served 1,070 conflict survivors in Buenaventura, most of whom are displaced women. The program is carried out with civil society organizations that support Afro-Colombian survivors of the conflict, like AFRODES (*Asociación Afrocolombiana de Desplazados*). Under the supervision of HAI's professionals, these organizations provide community-based therapy to support vulnerable individuals, reaching participants directly in the neighborhoods where they live.

"ACOPLE was what I needed," says María Antonia. Although at first she felt scared and stayed quiet during group sessions, she began to feel changes in her daily life. She gained confidence, conquered her shyness, and learned to express her feelings. "Every day she would come home telling us about what she had learned during the sessions," says Rosa, her youngest daughter.

Through therapy, she became less irritable, overcame her emotional exhaustion, and began to focus on the hope that her children represented. "They are a blessing, because in spite of the past, they keep moving forward," she says.



## MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Political instability and ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa have led to mass displacement, a surge in refugees, and severe widespread abuses against vulnerable populations. As civilians face continuing, systemic challenges to human rights protections — exacerbated by the protracted wars in Iraq and Syria and the rapid expansion of extremist groups — Heartland Alliance International (HAI) has provided services to help protect those in need.

Heartland Alliance first began working in the Middle East in 2004, providing specialized trauma-informed mental health and psychosocial support and torture treatment services in Iraq. Our impact expanded in response to the Iraqi refugee crisis in 2010-2011, when HAI opened an office in Lebanon to respond with emergency services, such as legal counseling and trauma-informed care for the most vulnerable communities, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) refugees. Today, we respond to urgent needs in Lebanon, where we assist Syrian and Lebanese women and girls affected by the crisis, and in Iraq, where we assist persons displaced by war, including survivors of ethnic cleansing, organized sexual violence, and children coerced into participating in armed conflict.

In the Middle East and North Africa, HAI continues to prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable. HAI serves women, children, religious and ethnic minorities, internally displaced persons and refugees, and survivors of torture, human trafficking, and gender-based violence. To support these groups, we partner with local organizations on the ground and provide direct legal, case management, and trauma-informed mental health and psychosocial support services. We also specialize in building the capacity of primary and mental health professionals, legal service providers and judicial officials, and local governmental organizations.



## AVIN'S STORY, IRAQ

### I TOLD MY SISTER I WOULD TAKE MY OWN LIFE BEFORE GOING TO SYRIA.

Avin\* grew up in Sinjar, a Yazidi community in northern Iraq at the foot of Mount Sinjar. In August 2014, when Avin was 17, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) fighters attacked her hometown. The Yazidi community had become a target to ISIL, which considered the group's ancient religion to be heretical, and sought to capture, convert, or execute the sect's followers.

Avin and her family fled their home in the middle of the night and headed towards Mount Sinjar, where they hoped the difficult terrain would provide them some protection from the fighters. On the way, their car broke down, and they were forced to continue to flee on foot as ISIL fighters encroached upon them.

When ISIL reached them, the fighters threatened her father and forced Avin and her family into a car, where they were taken back to Sinjar and imprisoned for days. Eventually, ISIL fighters separated the women from the men. Later, Avin heard that ISIL had killed the adult men – including her father and uncles. The women were taken to a prison outside of Mosul.

In prison, the women's captors pressured them to convert to Islam, forcing them to attend classes and perform Islamic prayers. The women refused, and as a result, they were abused, raped, and tortured. Many Yazidi women committed suicide.

Avin was held captive for months before being sold to a Syrian ISIL fighter. She decided she would take her own life before being forced to join him in Syria, but on a cold and rainy night, Avin and her sister managed to escape the prison. They walked barefoot through the night until they reached Mount Sinjar, where they found Iraqi Peshmerga soldiers, who took them to Duhok in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, where they were protected from ISIL.

Although she was physically safe, it took Avin months to recover from the severe mental and psychological trauma of the abuse that she had endured. Heartland Alliance International (HAI) and its local partners helped her recover, sheltering her in a rehabilitation center that provided basic support, including medical checkups, food, and clothing. With the help of HAI's legal team, Avin was able to obtain civil documents and an ID card, which helped her access government benefits and services.

While Avin was resistant to psychological support at first, social workers and counselors continued to follow up with Avin. Eventually, she agreed to begin therapeutic sessions, which helped her begin to recover emotionally.

Now, Avin volunteers in HAI's peer support group, sharing her story with other survivors who have escaped ISIL captivity. She listens, supports them in their healing process, and encourages them to seek the support they need. Avin's story has inspired other survivors to open up, and she's proud to help her community heal.

\*Names have been changed to protect confidentiality of the participants in this story.



## SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Heartland Alliance International (HAI) has been active in sub-Saharan Africa for a decade, and is currently implementing health and human rights-based programming in Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) while providing technical assistance in countries throughout the continent, including Sudan, Swaziland, and Cameroon.

Africa has the highest rates of HIV in the world, with an estimated 25.6 million people living with HIV in 2016, according to the World Health Organization. Key populations — which include men who have sex with men, sex workers and their partners, people who inject drugs, and transgender individuals — are at increased risk of infection, but often face legal and social barriers to accessing prevention, testing, and treatment services. HAI works with these highly marginalized groups to identify and address the structural and legal barriers that negatively impact their health outcomes; reduce incidence and mitigate the effects of stigma, discrimination, and violence; and expand the demand for, and enhance the quality of, comprehensive HIV/AIDS services.

HAI also supports survivors of violent conflict and trafficking, including women and girls who have been kidnapped and sexually exploited by armed groups such as Boko Haram in Nigeria, adults who have been forced to work in mines in the DRC, and children who have been recruited as child combatants for armed conflicts. We work with local authorities to improve victim identification and provide comprehensive mental health and psychosocial support services to help survivors of trafficking heal from trauma, access legal protections, and rebuild their lives. In the DRC, HAI has also been working closely with the government to train mental health professionals and ensure quality mental health and psychosocial support for individuals and communities affected by the consequences of the complex emergency in the eastern part of the country.



## MARIAM'S STORY, CÔTE D'IVOIRE

### MY FIRST NIGHT [AS A SEX WORKER], I MADE 7,000 FCFA.

That's approximately \$11 USD, but to Mariam, who was living on the streets of Man, a city in western Côte d'Ivoire with her young daughter, it was a small fortune.

Mariam had been forced to grow up fast. When she was four years old, her father died suddenly, and when her mother refused to follow local tradition and re-marry her late husband's brother, she was ostracized and driven from the community. Mariam was determined to ensure her six siblings ate at least one meal each day and began working at a young age, selling sachets of water after school to provide for her brothers and sisters.

When Mariam got pregnant, her uncles – considering the pregnancy a humiliation – forced her to leave her family's home. Alone and scared, Mariam turned to a friend for help, who introduced her to sex work.

"Every day, I made more money, despite the risks," Mariam recalls. Mariam feared contracting HIV – she knew the risk was high for sex workers – but she was proud to be able to provide for her family. With her earnings, Mariam built a new house, supported her brother and sisters, and sent her young daughter to school.

Mariam had reason to be concerned about the risk of HIV: sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rates of HIV in the world, and individuals from key populations – including sex workers, men

who have sex with men, and people who inject drugs – are more likely to contract HIV than other groups. In Côte d'Ivoire, 11% of female sex workers are living with HIV according to UNAIDS.

When a friend of Mariam's suggested she join Heartland Alliance International (HAI) as a peer educator – helping other sex workers learn about HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) – Mariam was skeptical: "Who could accept 50,000 CFA [approximately \$80 USD] per month when [as a sex worker] one could make hundreds of thousands [of CFA] per month?" But a friend who worked as a peer educator with HAI encouraged her to consider it, telling her, "You can change your life if you really want to."

After Mariam completed the training, she began working as a peer educator, visiting sites where sex workers meet clients and sharing information about the services HAI provides. In Mariam's role as a peer educator, she helps sex workers learn about the risks of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS, provides testing for HIV and STIs, and counsels those who test positive to ensure they understand their options for treatment. Since 2013, Mariam estimates she's counseled at least fifteen individuals who tested positive for HIV.

Last year, Mariam got married and had a second child. She continues to work as a peer educator, helping ensure sex workers have access to quality health care services and know how to protect themselves from HIV and STIs.

"[Heartland Alliance International] transformed me," Mariam says. "I went from one life to another."



## HEARTLAND ALLIANCE MARJORIE KOVLER CENTER

In 1987, a concerned group of physicians, psychologists, lawyers, torture survivors, together with a forward-thinking philanthropist, joined the burgeoning worldwide torture rehabilitation movement to establish services in Chicago for survivors of politically-sanctioned torture. They created Heartland Alliance Marjorie Kovler Center, which is today a leader in torture treatment services.

Kovler Center helps transform the lives of individuals recovering from the complex consequences of politically-sanctioned torture. Kovler Center provides medical, mental health, and social services; trains and educates locally and globally; and advocates for the end of torture worldwide.

Kovler Center's comprehensive services include primary care, psychiatric treatment, psychotherapy, forensic exams, and a suite of holistic social services. Through its network of volunteers, Kovler Center is able to offer vision and dental care services to participants as well as complementary care such as massage therapy and acupuncture. Kovler Center supports a bi-monthly cooking group for survivors, maintains plots in a community garden, offers computer and English classes, and organizes outings for survivors and their families in Chicago. Kovler Center serves between 350-400 survivors of torture each year.



## MARIO'S STORY, MARJORIE KOVLER CENTER

**TORTURE WAS NEVER FAR FROM MY LIFE WHEN I WAS GROWING UP. I KNEW MANY FRIENDS AND FAMILIES WHO WERE TORTURED, DISAPPEARED, KILLED.**

Growing up in Guatemala during the country's decades-long civil war, Mario Gonzalez was used to people vanishing. He noticed that those who returned often came back changed.

At university, Mario studied psychology. He wanted to learn how the brain worked; how anxiety, trauma, and depression all seemed to manipulate the mind. Two years into his studies, people began to come to him for help.

"I didn't know what to do, really. I was no expert, but I did see that these people needed help. These people trusted me in a country where the walls had ears, and I had to do the best I could. So I listened."

After graduating from college in 1987, Mario traveled to Chicago to visit his sister, who was building a life in the city as a human rights advocate amidst the steady stream of Guatemalans coming to the U.S. in an attempt to escape the violence. Through his sister, people once again started approaching Mario for help. He soon realized that they were suffering in the same familiar way as his friends back home while also facing the challenges of adapting to life in a new country.

"All of a sudden, I had 20 people who needed help. They were suffering through nightmares, insomnia, substance abuse – they were all suffering from PTSD."

Mario partnered with a group of concerned physicians, psychologists, lawyers, and torture survivors, and with the generous support of a philanthropist, the group opened Heartland Alliance Marjorie Kovler Center in Chicago, one of the nation's first torture rehabilitation centers. When Kovler Center first opened, three employees – including Mario – served more than one hundred survivors of torture.

Mario and his colleagues soon began reaching out to the community for additional support. Today, Kovler Center has an extensive network of volunteers who serve as translators, provide medical care, legal services, and healing arts, and who help coordinate cooking nights and outings around Chicago.

Today, Kovler Center serves 350-400 survivors from 60 different countries each year. But many participants still begin their path to healing with Mario: for 30 years, he has been Kovler Center's Clinical Supervisor, conducting intake evaluations and referring survivors for additional services.

"It takes a lot of work to build trust with someone, to heal." It's an effort Mario has always been willing to make. "Honestly, I can't tell you by who or what, but I was selected for this work."

# OUR IMPACT

In FY17, HAI redoubled its efforts to serve survivors of violence and human rights abuses through specialized healing and justice services. HAI reached more than 245,000 individuals, including:



**142,000+** individuals from marginalized communities received rights-based HIV prevention, care, and treatment services.



**100,000+** individuals received information about their rights or the rights of marginalized populations.



**14,000+** individuals received trauma-informed mental health or psychosocial support (MHPSS) services.



**11,000+** individuals received access to justice services (including legal representation, assistance obtaining legal identification, and traditional mediation).



**400+** survivors of torture were served at Marjorie Kovler Center.

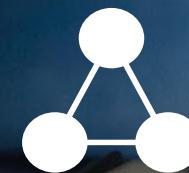
## \$18 MILLION IN FUNDING SUPPORTED PARTICIPANTS IN HAI'S PROGRAMS IN FY17



- 73% U.S. Government
- 16% Private Donors
- 10% United Nations
- 1% Foreign Governments



**40+ GRANTS** were awarded from the U.S. government, foreign governments, the United Nations, corporate foundations, and private foundation donors



**47 LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS** were strengthened through partnerships with Heartland Alliance International

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**We thank the following institutions, corporations, and foundations for their generous support of Heartland Alliance International:**

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Kate Feinstein  
Holly Ferris

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David Goldstein	Anthony Ibeagha	Mary Ellen Madden	Melissa Mizel
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# GET INVOLVED



## LEARN

- Check out our website at [HEARTLANDALLIANCE.ORG/INTERNATIONAL](https://www.heartlandalliance.org/international) and sign up to receive emails from Heartland Alliance International to learn more about our work
- Like the Heartland Alliance International Facebook page at [FACEBOOK.COM/HAINTEINTERNATIONAL](https://www.facebook.com/Hainternational)



## ACT

- Host an event with Heartland Alliance International's leaders to learn more about ongoing human rights issues around the world, or host a tour of Marjorie Kovler Center in Rogers Park.
- Volunteer at Marjorie Kovler Center with survivors of torture. Opportunities are available to help families and participate in special events, help with administrative tasks, and in leadership. Kovler Center also needs volunteers with foreign language skills to serve as translators and medical, mental health, and rehabilitative care professionals.



## SUPPORT

- Donate to Heartland Alliance International.
- Tell your member of Congress to support the international affairs budget.

For more information, visit [HEARTLANDALLIANCE.ORG/INTERNATIONAL](https://www.heartlandalliance.org/international)

To contact Heartland Alliance International, email [Hainternational@heartlandalliance.org](mailto:Hainternational@heartlandalliance.org) or call 312-660-1300

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Heartland Alliance International | 208 South LaSalle Street | Suite 1300 | Chicago, IL | 60604  
312.660.1300 | [hainternational@heartlandalliance.org](mailto:hainternational@heartlandalliance.org) | [HEARTLANDALLIANCE.ORG/INTERNATIONAL](https://heartlandalliance.org/international)

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