

HEARTLAND **ALLIANCE** INTERNATIONAL

Standing strong, **together.**

2025 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

Dedicated to HAI's staff, volunteers, and alumnae
working to create a world of human rights for all.

HAI's community-led women's circles in action in Antioquia, Colombia.

A Message from our Leadership Team



CAROLINA VAN MOORSEL
Co-Executive Director

As we reflect on the seismic shifts of 2025, we are inspired by the strength and resilience of our participants, staff, and partners. U.S. government funding cuts in 2025 affected HAI deeply, requiring us to close or scale back high-impact programs from Iraq to Colombia, despite growing needs and demand for our programming. **While political priorities shift, our commitment to those we serve does not.**



ESTEBAN MORENO
Co-Executive Director

In 2025, we reached more than 15,000 survivors and their families with trauma-informed services—in community clinics, detention centers, and schools, from the Marjorie Kovler Center in Chicago to Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Iraq, Syria, and Ukraine. We are deeply grateful for the generosity of supporters like you and the unwavering commitment and courage of our teams around the world for making this impact possible.

Amid record levels of forced migration, deepening humanitarian crises, unchecked climate change, and rising discrimination and authoritarianism, our work is more urgent than ever.



MARY KAY HAZEL
Co-Executive Director

With a new co-leadership structure that reflects HAI as a truly global organization, we are reimagining our future to meet this moment. Over the next few months, we will share our bold new vision with you—including a completely new name and brand.

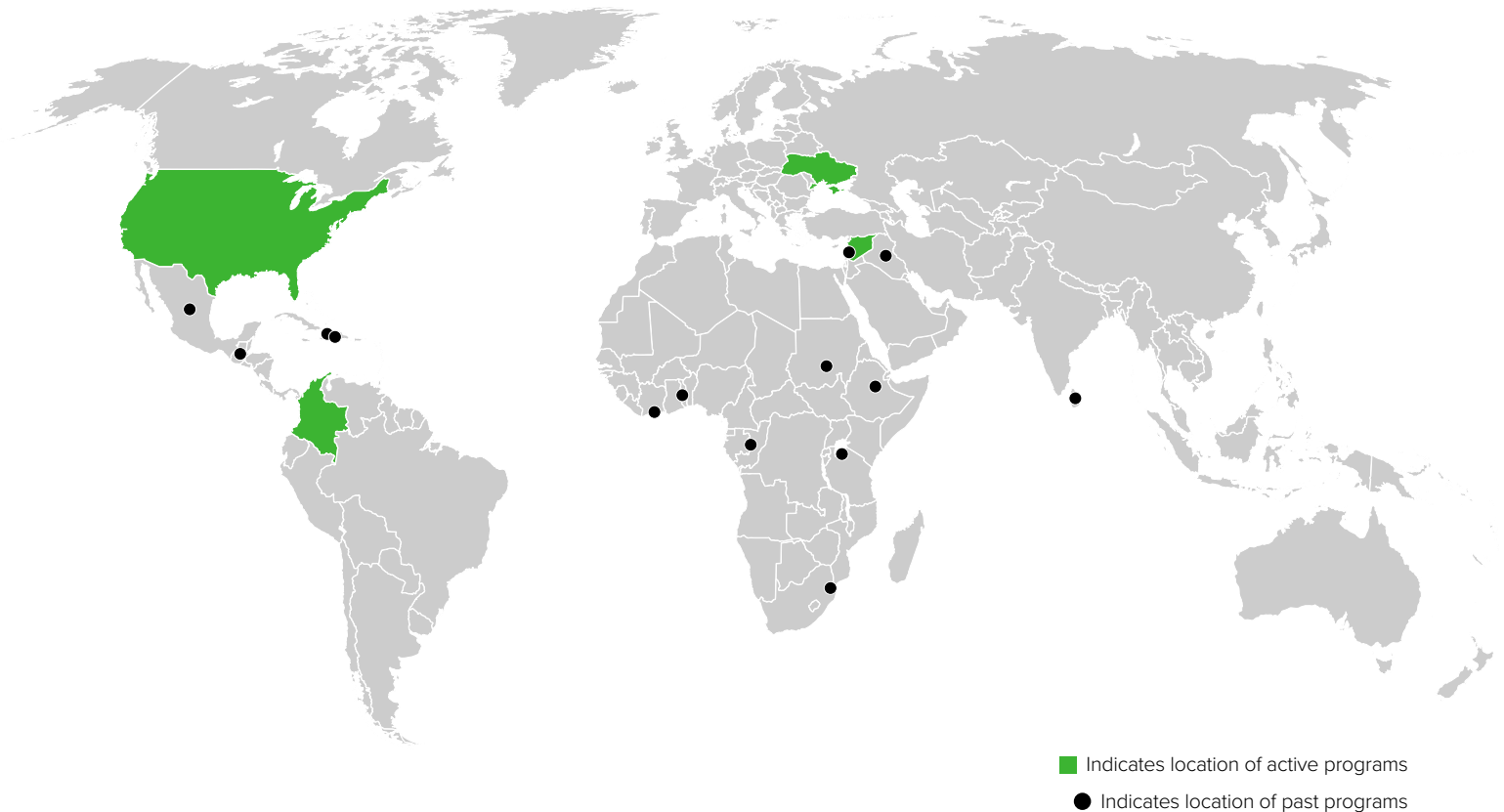
We think you'll be excited about where we're headed and we look forward to your continued partnership in this new era of possibility.

With gratitude,

Carolina, Esteban, Mary Kay

Where We've Made a Difference

From countries impacted by conflict and crisis to communities here at home in the United States, we have operated in some of the most challenging and dynamic regions of the world, including Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Dominican Republic, Iraq, Lebanon, Nigeria, Sudan, Syria, and Ukraine. Wherever we work, we partner with local communities and survivors to deliver lasting impact.



About Heartland Alliance International

Since 1889, we have stood alongside individuals and communities facing some of the world's most difficult challenges. What began as a humanitarian initiative in Chicago—launched by Jane Addams—has grown into a global organization committed to protecting human rights and advancing dignity for all.

Today, we are Heartland Alliance International.

At the core of what we do is a simple but powerful belief: by working in solidarity with survivors, we can advance healing and justice worldwide. Every day we act, adapt, and stand with survivors and marginalized communities through uncertainty and change. From our roots at the Marjorie Kovler Center in Chicago to serving communities facing forced migration, displacement, torture, and conflict around the world, this commitment drives how we show up for our participants every day.

Our Impact in 2025: Program Snapshots



Above: Rebuilding livelihoods in Valle del Cauca, Colombia. Below: Members of the Kovler community gather during cooking group—one of the many healing, connection-building activities available to participants.

Kovler Center

Since 1987, the Marjorie Kovler Center in Chicago has been a beacon of hope and a partner to survivors of torture and trauma, providing holistic mental health, medical, legal, and social services to support survivors' individual and collective healing processes. As refugees and immigrants in Chicago navigate fear, instability, and punitive barriers to safety, our commitment to care is unwavering. Our team works with survivors to protect their rights, dignity, and safety amid rapidly evolving risks. Every day, Kovler staff and participants carve out essential spaces for healing, connection, solidarity, and joy. Our cooking groups are filled with laughter and the familiar aromas of home. Music and movement activities offer grounding and relief. Therapeutic groups and youth programs create moments of connection that bring the community into the healing process.

In 2025, Kovler Center served over 800 participants across three initiatives: our signature Survivors of Torture program; *Healing Journeys*, which supports child survivors of trauma; and a specialized program for Afghan survivors of conflict resettled in the U.S. Kovler Center volunteers provided over 10,000 hours of pro bono services to clients from interpretation to therapy to primary care.



HEALING JOURNEYS

HAI's *Healing Journeys* project brings comprehensive care directly to children who have experienced trauma, including in their migration journeys. HAI teams work with Chicago public schools and other organizations serving children to provide wraparound services so that families can recover and begin to thrive.



“I think about what I was, how I transformed my life, and how I am today. I had lost my dignity as a human being, but now it has been restored. I [get] to walk peacefully on the street, to fend for my children, and to be with them. That is enough for me. It’s all that really matters.”

— Kovler Center Survivor

WHAT'S NEXT

At a moment of profound crisis for immigrant families and their children, the Marjorie Kovler Center is stepping up with a major multi-year initiative to advance healing and justice for immigrant survivors of torture and trauma. This vision is built on three pillars: expanded programming, enhanced space, and systems leadership.

On the programming front, we have launched a full legal program integrated into the Kovler wraparound model and are expanding our services to reach other survivors in need. We are also stepping up to ensure the Bellevue Program for Survivors of Torture in New York City does not close—to maintain care for families who need it most.

We are enhancing our offices in both Chicago and at the new location in New York City to strengthen security and provide survivor families with beautiful, accessible program spaces. On a systems level, we are continuing to build trauma-informed care capacity inside the communities we serve through new collaborations and training programs. Finally, we are partnering with survivors to expand our global human rights advocacy—our vision is a world where no one experiences torture and trauma in the first place.

Right: Kovler center clients visit a local farm together.





MAKING RIGHTS REAL

For over 15 years, HAI has pioneered community-driven responses to displacement and conflict in Colombia. Central to our work is our belief in the power of community resilience and transformation amid humanitarian crises.

In 2025, HAI worked directly with community leaders and civil society organizations from the regions most affected by armed conflict and migration—where others were unable or unwilling to go—to provide mental health and psychosocial support services, access to justice and information about legal rights, and early recovery from food insecurity or loss of livelihoods. Core programs funded by the U.S. State Department (*PASOS*, focused on the socioeconomic integration of Venezuelan migrants and refugees), and USAID (*MAS Resiliencia*, early recovery and food security for victims of the armed conflict) scaled back or closed by the end of 2025 following U.S. funding cuts. Nevertheless, lasting impact remains. Participants are aware of and demand their rights and have tangible new assets—and government and civil society actors are deploying new skills, capacity, and stronger networks.



Top: Community-led healing in Quibdo, Colombia. Above: HAI's Know Your Rights campaigns and service fairs help refugees and migrants start new lives in Colombia.



Through HAI's innovative models, “community agents” from vulnerable communities lead non-specialized mental health support and outreach with peers about their rights, and advocate for their inclusion in peacebuilding and recovery.

“The legal support I received was crucial in helping me stand my ground and defend my rights. Thanks to that support, I’m still here today, hopeful about building a stable future in Colombia.”

— Participant in HAI's program in Colombia



HAI pioneered innovative livelihood partnerships that expanded access for Venezuelan migrants to jobs and fostered successful entrepreneurship, including through the VenEmprende model.

Left: VenEmprende fair in Medellín, Colombia

PREVENTING VIOLENCE, SECURING FUTURES

HAI teams lead women's support circles as part of a comprehensive response to gender-based violence (GBV). This peer-support model offers culturally rooted spaces for healing and connection.

In 2025, HAI continued as the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)'s core partner for GBV prevention and response across Colombia.



After migrating from Venezuela to Colombia in 2017, María Elena Fernández faced the challenge of starting over in Medellín. **At 56, she taught herself artisan jewelry-making and founded Constantina, a brand named in honor of her mother.** Through Heartland Alliance International's Entrepreneurship Pathway, she received business training, mentoring, seed capital, and psychosocial support that helped her strengthen both her business and personal resilience.

Today, María Elena creates handcrafted jewelry inspired by nature, family, and cultural heritage. Her business supports her family and creates opportunities for other migrants and local artisans, demonstrating how entrepreneurship can foster healing, empowerment, and positive community impact.

“When I had to migrate, I thought something really bad was happening to me. But what I’ve built is a gift. I will always remember the pitch I made with HAI. It helped me grow so much—not just as an entrepreneur, but as a person.”

— María Elena Fernández



Visit María Elena's enterprise by scanning the QR code.





EVEN IN EXTREME ENVIRONMENTS, HAI'S MODEL OPENS THE DOOR FOR HEALING

In Northeast Syria, thousands of children are growing up in the shadow of years of conflict, displacement, and detention. Whether forcibly recruited as child soldiers for ISIS or trafficked into the region by family members, many have spent years in detention facilities never designed to meet children's developmental, emotional, or psychological needs. These environments leave deep marks not only on children, but also on the local staff who care for them—many of whom carry their own unaddressed trauma.

Through HAI's *Children of Two Rivers* project, HAI helped create safer, more supportive environments for these forgotten children and the staff who care for them. In partnership with a Syrian women's rights organization, the program introduced child safeguarding standards, developed trauma-informed care practices, and implemented group psychosocial support for detained minors in two detention centers. We reached 146 children with direct services and impacted over 140 more through training frontline staff.

The effects of this work have been profound:

- Children showed better emotional regulation, greater consistency in their routines, and more engagement in activities, with group sessions helping them feel more connected and hopeful.
- Staff gained skills in trauma recognition, de-escalation, and safe interaction, with teams reporting increased confidence in their work with minors.

Thanks to the support of private donors, our work in NE Syria continued to operate in 2025, even when U.S. government funding ended.



Above: HAI team members in Qamishli after conducting site assessments for detained children in NE Syria. Right: HAI staff and Ukrainian partners in November 2024.



SUSTAINED SUPPORT FOR FRONTLINE ORGANIZATIONS

In 2025, HAI provided tangible support and funding to local Ukrainian organizations working on the front lines to support survivors of torture, captivity, and trauma—an enormous need in a war where Russian torture is systematic and widespread. Ensuring that survivors of torture and their families can access the services and support they need is both urgent and a long-term priority for Ukraine’s recovery.

To address both short- and long-term needs, HAI has been working with Ukrainian partners since 2023 as part of our multi-phase project, *Strengthening the Torture Treatment Network in Ukraine*, led by our technical team from the Marjorie Kovler Center.

In November 2024, HAI convened an extraordinary group of Ukrainian and international partners from nearly a dozen organizations, including Ukrainian government offices, for an intensive three-day retreat.

Our group included survivors who shared their experiences of captivity and made sure the discussions stayed practical and grounded in their lived experiences. Thanks to this convening, many leaders had the chance to meet in person for the first time and spend meaningful time away from their urgent day-to-day work to connect, support each other, rest, and share strategies on staff wellbeing and preventing burnout. As one participant shared with us, “Secondary trauma is a mode of life for Ukrainians now.” For many service providers, the trauma is more immediate—family members who are missing or were killed in the conflict. We are ready to support their critical work in the months ahead, inspired by our Ukrainian colleague who shared, **“Even in the darkest of times, there is light. We are that light.”**



In 2025, HAI launched another phase of the project in partnership with HealthRight International. We are directly funding local organizations to implement the key priorities identified at the 2024 convening. These projects will improve access to quality mental health services and other comprehensive care for those released from captivity and strengthen the local support system for survivors within Ukraine. Since 2022, over 6,500 Ukrainians have been released from Russian captivity. The majority of these survivors and their families have received treatment from HealthRight and their local partners supported by HAI.



A Legacy of Impact from the Dominican Republic to Iraq to Nigeria

In the **Dominican Republic**, HAI advocated for over a decade for the rights of stateless individuals, helping people of Haitian descent secure their citizenship and fight racial discrimination. HAI also partnered with the government and local civil society groups to combat human trafficking and support survivors' recovery. In 2025, we completed an innovative food security program empowering women and families in marginalized *bateyes* to combat climate-related food shocks and foster greater resilience.

In **Iraq**, HAI's legacy spanned over 20 years, including successful advocacy and community mobilization campaigns, partnerships with over a dozen local

organizations and government agencies, and expanded access to justice and healing for those who needed it most. Our teams worked across Iraq with thousands of survivors of conflict, refugees and internally displaced people, ethnic and religious minorities, and women and girls at risk of violence, helping all of them to access critically needed services to recover and thrive.

Meanwhile, HAI's former country offices in **Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire**—now fully independent organizations—continue to provide lifesaving HIV prevention, care, and treatment despite major funding disruptions in 2025. Learn more at heartlandallianceniigeria.org and haciv.org.



HAI's Adnerys Ramirez with participants in Semillas de Esperanza program in the Dominican Republic, which improved food security for over 1,600 participants.

What's Next on the International Front

HAI is transforming how it delivers international impact. Our new model reimagines HAI's international programming through a flexible, pre-funded approach that enables efficient and tailored crisis response without dependence on traditional donor grant cycles. This allows us to identify and respond proactively to known and emerging gaps in care and justice systems—convening partnerships and initiating targeted interventions in fragile or underserved contexts.

Central to this approach is our commitment to locally led impact: partnering with local subject matter experts, civil society organizations, and community groups while also strengthening long-term institutional capacity, coordination, and sustainability. This represents both a continuation and an evolution of HAI's mission, positioning us to respond more effectively to emerging crises while remaining grounded in our core commitment to dignity, healing, and justice. We envision pairing rapid response with rigorous long-term impact measurement, using diagnostic selection criteria, longitudinal data collection, and storytelling to capture not only systems-level outcomes, but the lived experiences and resilience of our partner communities.

As these initiatives take shape, we are eager to bring you along—sharing the stories, partnerships, and breakthroughs that emerge as this vision moves from insight to impact.



“When I lost my partner, I felt like my whole world was falling apart and that I had no strength or direction. Joining the project and receiving mental health support was the first step toward rebuilding my inner strength.”

— Lizmar I., participant in HAI's program in Colombia, 2025

A New Brand for our Next Chapter

Later this year, HAI will launch a new name and brand identity to better reflect who we are today and the bold future we are building. The Marjorie Kovler Center name will remain under the new brand, honoring the legacy and reputation that our Chicago community has built over decades.

Our new global identity will reflect our evolution as an organization and our commitment to meeting this moment with clarity, confidence, and renewed hope.

We can't wait to share it with you.



Above: HAI team members responding to a humanitarian emergency in Valle del Cauca, Colombia.

YOUR ACTION TODAY HELPS US BUILD A BETTER WORLD FOR TOMORROW. JOIN US!

We simply could not do our critical work without the generosity of our supporters—including everyone who answered the call in 2025 after unprecedented federal funding disruptions. Whether you gave, shared our message, or championed our work, please know that our impact now and in the future belongs to you.

With your partnership today, we can reach even more communities tomorrow. Please join us as we embark on a new era of change. Donate here: heartlandallianceinternational.org/donate/

DONATE HERE



OUR FINANCES

We are committed to transparency and responsible stewardship of every dollar entrusted to us. Since its independence in May 2024, HAI completed two successful and clean audits with an independent firm (Capin Crouse, LLC). We continue to strengthen our financial, operational, and accounting practices. You can find our 2025 audited financials here:

heartlandallianceinternational.org/audit-reports/

AUDIT REPORTS



A NOTE OF THANKS

With gratitude to Liz Drew, whose dedication and leadership brought this report to life and whose service to HAI has made a profound, lasting impact for those we serve.

**HEARTLAND
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