

THE PROBLEM

68.5 MILLION FORCIBLY DISPLACED WORLDWIDE

As a result of persecution, conflict, violence or human rights violations

- 25.4 million refugees
- 19.9 million refugees under UNHCR's mandate
- 5.4 million Palestine refugees under UNRWA's mandate
- 40.0 million internally displaced people
- 3.1 million asylum-seekers
- **More than 50% are children**

*Source: UNCHR Global Trends Report 2017

**..... and we
are watching
this, LIVE !**

ROOT OF THE PROBLEM

Inertia of apathy towards grave humanitarian crises.
Most people are disinterested, unaware or indifferent
towards the reality of those affected by conflict.

This takes shape in classrooms



Redundant school curriculum
that doesn't bring attention to
ongoing humanitarian crises



Lack of action oriented
approach to problem
solving



In-effective teaching
methodology

Leading to lack of empathy



SOLUTION

A handwritten 'Letter of Love'



*"The opposite of war is not peace;
it's creation! "*

Letters of Love intends to create a wave of kindness with people from around the world extending a hand in friendship while expressing solidarity in the form of a heartfelt letter to a refugee child.

While we instil hope in refugee children in this simple yet powerful way, we take a sustainable approach towards addressing the growing apathy by empowering children in classrooms with empathy.





CREDENCE

“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”

WHO WE ARE

Letters of Love is a youth led international non-profit [501(c)(3)] organization based out of Delaware, USA, that makes a difference to global refugee crises using handwritten letters.

TEAM

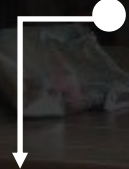
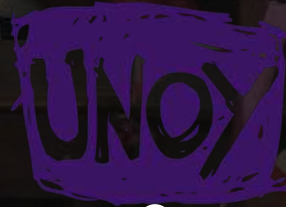


25
peace builders



11
countries

MEMBER OF



United Network of Young Peace Builders



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

#WithRefugees



UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Bobbie Gottschalk is passionate about community leadership and guidance, and is a deep believer in the youth's ability to shift the future. She co-founded Seeds of Peace, an organization that works with youth in the field of conflict transformation. She is also a serving board member at Imagination Stage, Earlham College, Camp Bearnstow and Mosaic Theater Company. She received the Peacemaker Award, granted by Earlham College, the Medal of Honor, presented by King Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.



Lijo Chacko is the Executive Director at Government to Citizen Changemakers Foundation and Executive Trustee at Synergy Educational and Charitable Trust. He is an ex-Indian Naval Commander where he headed the Submarines Division in the Naval Dockyard, Mumbai. Lijo tries to be of use to organisations/initiatives in the social space viz. as Trustee at Gurupuraskar Foundation, Head of CSR of Synergy Marine Group. He is also an alumnus of Yale University.



Sarah Erwin graduated from Harvard College with a bachelor's in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. After college, she spent a year living in Jordan serving as a program coordinator for an arts-based education organization that held music and theatre classes for Syrian, Iraqi, Sudanese, Egyptian, and Palestinian refugee children. Sarah has been involved with Seeds of Peace, a non-profit leadership and conflict resolution program, since 2006 as a counsellor, and dialogue facilitator.

OUR FOUNDER



Pooja Pradeep is a 26 year old Mechanical Engineer turned Educator from India who works extensively in the field of peace-building, conflict transformation and empathy-centric education.

She is the Founder and Executive Director of Letters of Love and has nurtured the idea ever since its inception in 2015 as a Facebook page to the newly incorporated international non-profit organisation and youth-led change movement it is today.

Pooja is a 2018 GATHER fellow, a Tedx Speaker and a certified Trainer to combat hate speech, chosen by the Countering Violent Extremism Unit of the Commonwealth of Nations.

After beginning her career with a brief stint as a Physics & Math high-school teacher, she worked as the Chapter Director of India for the Cambridge Social Venture, The History Project, that inspires critical thinking and empathy through an accelerated learning program for students from India and Pakistan and is now continuing as their India Representative. She's a Counselor at Seeds of Peace International Camp in Maine, USA, where she creates transformative experiences for teenagers from India, Pakistan, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, UK and the USA.

A group of young children, likely refugees, are seated in red plastic chairs in a classroom. A girl in the foreground is smiling and making a heart shape with her hands. A boy next to her is looking towards the camera. The background is slightly blurred, showing other children and classroom furniture.

VISION

To create a kind world for refugee children.

MISSION

To provide psychosocial support to refugee children through handwritten letters and to create a globally aware, empathic citizenry of young changemakers.

OUR WORK EMPOWERS



STUDENTS & COMMUNITIES



REFUGEE CHILDREN



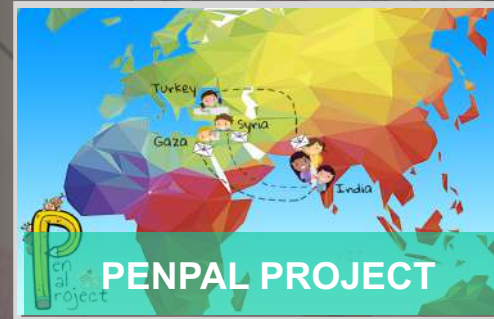
THROUGH THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS

EDUCATION--LED



SENSITIZATION WORKSHOPS

Empathy is critical in driving positive social change. We believe this starts in the classrooms.



PENPAL PROJECT

Cross-cultural immersions helps create a more globally aware and responsible citizenry.



STUDENT AMBASSADORS

Students are natural leaders and change agents. Our job is to inspire. They do the rest.

COMMUNITY--LED



MEET, GREET & SCRIBBLE

Youth engagement is critical towards building a responsible society.



POP-UP

Use any space to make a difference in the world.



SENSITIZATION WORKSHOPS

The 90 minute module is devised by our Curriculum Team comprising of eminent educators and has 3 learning objectives:

1. To raise awareness
2. To cultivate empathy
3. To highlight the potential of each student as a change agent

We believe in assisting teachers with tools and techniques required to hone our future generations and also give the students an opportunity to write letters to refugee children as a tangible outcome of the workshop.

"I think this initiative was the need of the hour! Looking around us, we see more people complaining about what's happening around them and lesser people who are actually doing something about it. As a teacher, I feel it is very important to inculcate empathy in our children which unfortunately the current education system does not focus on in the syllabus."

Stuffin Machado (Teacher), Gopi Birla Memorial School, Mumbai



STUDENT AMBASSADORS

While one part of what our Student Ambassadors do is run sensitisation programs in their schools and communities, raising awareness about global refugee crises, the other part is to perorate their change movement to more local domains. Actualising that mission, we have our Student Ambassadors empathise their schools towards marginalised and vulnerable communities and others in their localities , for example - the homeless, prisoners, LGBTQ, war veterans et al.

We provide each of them with mentorship, skills and platforms required to do 'what they want to do.'

"Things don't have to be the way they are. We can change the world with whatever we have. I'm 12 and I started a Letters of Love club in my school and we've collected and sent handwritten letters to refugees, war veterans and also prisoners. It makes everybody happy and hopeful. We also raise awareness and actively talk about different social issues. Letters of Love for me is a school where I learn how to directly make a difference to social causes."

Gabby Weiss, Student Ambassador Lead, Letters of Love

PEN-PAL PROJECT

The Pen Pal Project for children and youth aims at fostering friendships across lines of conflict. We connect school students with internally displaced children in Syria, those besieged in Gaza and Syrian refugee children in Turkey. It gives them the opportunity to perceive people of other countries beyond their plain nationalities and develop a sense of global awareness. It facilitates an exchange of perspectives and paves way for dialogue. Most importantly, it humanises the so called 'other' and helps youngsters perceive disadvantaged cohorts of children, be it refugees or war victims, not as mere numbers but as individuals, just like them.

“The letters release beautiful vibrations from it. It is a priceless feeling. When we tell the children that children in other countries have sent letters for them, they feel a sense of belonging. They know that people outside Syria do care for them and that paints a new picture of hope in their heads. They shared their hobbies, languages and favourite food and were eager to learn about their new friends.”

Rasha Falhoot, Operations Manager (Syria), Letters of Love



MEET, GREET & SCRIBBLE

To mobilise youth and to encourage their participation in peacebuilding, we hold Meet, Greet & Scribble Events which are campaigned public events where anybody can join and write messages on the postcards, doodle or colour, paste stickers, etc and have a social time. The space allows networking and provides an opportunity to meet and interact with like-minded people from across sectors in the city where it is held.

“The Letters and Love meet and greet event was the perfect platform to help bring the Hopkins community together for a greater good! Seeing 100+ people smile for pictures, write heart warming messages and show an interest in Lols mission statement really motivated my team to go the extra mile and span the event over two days. The biggest advantage of the event was the ease of operations. There were no major requirements to set up our stall; the Facebook video was enough to get people hooked and the simple idea of taking a picture while smiling was contagious in the best way possible.”

Puneet Chadha, Co-founder, Board Member, Carey Volunteer Corps, Johns Hopkins University

POP-UP

A Letters of Love Pop-Up is an interactive space set up in schools/ universities/ office spaces/ conferences etc where those who visit or those interested can drop by and write a letter to a refugee child.

It is a way of mobilizing resources across colleges, schools and universities across the globe.

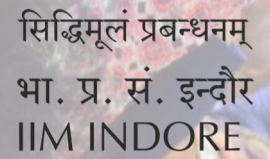
"This was a wonderful opportunity to practise empathy to our members. All of them are Syrian-Armenians who moved to Armenia due to the ongoing war. Most of them share the same feelings with any Syrian citizen that left the country, and had to go through the hardship of moving and integration. The letters they wrote were very emotional and heartwarming. I could see the spark in every kids eye and the happy faces they had. We hope our letter will draw a smile on every single kids face and we hope to see them happy."

Houry Pilibbossian , Executive Director, YMCA Syrian Armenians

IMPLEMENTED BY OUR COLLABORATORS



MANIPAL
UNIVERSITY



DELIVERED THROUGH OUR CREDIBLE PARTNERS



supporttolife



HAYATSÜR
DERNEĞİ



مشروع الشجاعة المجتمعية – غزة
Shijaeya Community Project – Gaza City



project
amal ou salam
empowering
the future of syria



OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

35,000+
**Letters
Delivered**

8000+
**Students
Sensitized**

200+
**Teachers
Empowered**

350
**Penpal
Pairs**

20,000+
**Youth
Engaged**

22
**Student
Ambassadors**

40+
Collaborators

19
Countries

OUR IMPACT IN SMILES



A group of diverse children and adults are gathered around a world map. The map is overlaid on a dark background featuring a photograph of several children and an adult. The map is marked with numerous orange heart icons, indicating global reach. The hearts are distributed across all major continents, with a higher density in Europe and Asia. The children in the background are looking at the map with interest and excitement. One child in the foreground is wearing a grey hoodie and a grey beanie, looking up at the map. Another child is wearing a blue shirt with the word 'YES' on it. The adult is wearing a dark jacket and a backpack, looking down at the map. The overall mood is one of global unity and outreach.

OUR REACH

OUR STORY RETOLD

DECCAN
Chronicle

TEDx




THE HINDU

GULF NEWS 

THE
**BETTER
INDIA**

GATHER

 *The Indian* **EXPRESS**




**asianet
news**

 **SEE**
change

**SEEDS
OFPEACE**



THE  NEW
INDIAN EXPRESS



HELP US SPREAD SMILES

**We love Letters.
Write to us –**

pooja@lettersoflove.in
Pooja Pradeep

“Unless someone like **you cares a whole awful lot,
nothing is going to get better.
It’s not.”**

