



ITALIAN AGENCY
FOR DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION
AMMAN Office



WE WOMEN

together in tackling
gender-based
disparities





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The **16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children** is a worldwide campaign to raise awareness of the negative impact that violence and abuse have on women and children.

The campaign is held every year from **25 November** (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) to **10 December** (Human Rights Day), to encourage individual and collective actions to end Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

On the occasion of the Campaign 2018, the **Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS)** advocates for the promotion of gender equality through the voices of women and girls from the most disadvantaged groups in Iraq.



Foreword

Women. Happy. Sad. Crying. Laughing. Young. Old. Tears. Mother. Sister. Sun. Moon. Peace. War. Hands. Feet. Mouth. Eyes. Brain. Heart. Beat fast, heart: women are afraid. Beat fast, heart: women are abused. Beat fast, heart: women are weak. Beat faster, heart: women are strong. Beat faster and faster, heart: women can make it. Beat as fast as possible, heart: women can save the world.

Poem written in 2017 by Jinda, 19, a Syrian Refugee girl living in a camp in Iraqi-Kurdistan since 2012.

When I was asked to write a foreword for the volume “16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children” the poem that Jinda, 19, a Syrian Refugee girl living in a camp in Iraqi-Kurdistan gave me has immediately come to my mind. Jinda’s words are the synthesis of a crucial social, political, economic and cultural issue that is still affecting our societies: gender inequality, violence and abuses.

No rhetoric is acceptable when talking about the discrimination of women based on gender, because the consequences of such attitude are privations of all sorts as well as harmful practices such as child marriage, female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation and abuse, honour killing and domestic violence.

Women’s condition becomes even more complex in conflict areas where the protection of vulnerable groups, in particular women, is difficult. Even more so when gender violence is part of a wider ethnic and/or religious persecution, as it has happened in the case of the Yazidi community persecuted by Daesh.

No rhetoric is acceptable when talking about the need to tackle gender inequalities in crisis-affected areas and to restore women’s dignity and independence, while reinforcing their self-reliance and ability to engage in livelihoods and economic activities. As thousands of Syrian Refugees are now living in Iraqi camps, where also the number of internally displaced people is now reaching nearly two million, gender-sensitive programming in humanitarian and development response is pivotal to ensure equal opportunity interventions, and to enhance the socio-economic status of women and young girls in the fragile context of Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan region.

Italy is on the frontline in promoting a vision of an inclusive society in which gender inequality and economic exclusion would be eradicated. Italy is engaged in providing opportunities that benefit women and promote their participation. Education is fundamental: Italy partners with international organizations and local institutions to provide training to women and girls. Livelihood opportunities are also offered to promote women’s resilience, as well as health services, counselling, protection and advocacy in the areas of displacement and settlement through the Italian Cooperation programmes.

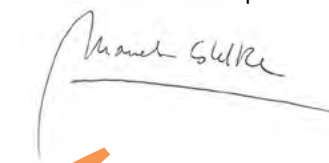
Every time I write about women’s rights I am also obliged to write about women’s suffering. One of the issue that I consider most crucial is the fact that women are often condemned to be silent or invisible, even in the international arena. A book like “16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children” is a way of raising the voice of women, who are fundamental in every social, political and economic process, and even more in the peace process as recognized by the UN.

Resolution 1325. We need all human resources –women as well as men - to be able to play their role in the construction of the future of the world, at local as well as at global level.

All those who are involved in activities of international cooperation are building a future of gender equality day by day, recognizing the role of women in the stability and advancement of their communities, engaging in ensuring improvement in the quality of lives of women through programmatic interventions. Sharing ideas, experiences, stories and best practices is a way of also acknowledging the role of the institutions in implementing key actions for all the women in need. Italians are committed to deliver accountable results towards valuable change.

Dear Jinda, we are all motivated by the will to make your heart beat fast with joy and self-confidence in the future.

H. E. Emanuela Del Re
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
and International Cooperation, Italy



The projects the Government of Italy is implementing in Iraq through its Agency for Development Cooperation are aimed at giving a response to the humanitarian crisis while fostering the human and economic development of the country. This policy is rooted in the conviction that women are key actors for positive change, peace and development for the society as a whole.

In response to the ongoing crisis in the region, Italy has confirmed its commitments to address the needs of marginalized and displaced women, in order to promote their social and economic empowerment in crisis and conflict-affected areas. To this end, Italian Cooperation's strategy has been based on the integration of education, vocational training, livelihood activities with protection, emergency and reproductive health interventions, psycho-social support, physical rehabilitation, mental health and social reintegration.

On the occasion of the Global Campaign to end violence towards women and girls, whose theme for 2018 is #HearMeToo, this publication aims at telling the stories of women who have been beneficiaries of Italian Cooperation projects in the Kurdistan Region and the Governorates of Niniwa and Salahaddin: stories of resilience, hope and new beginnings. I am grateful for the opportunity to present "We Women" at the end of the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence. These 16 days have been for us at the Consulate of Italy in Erbil an amazing opportunity to listen to the voices of women throughout Kurdistan, especially the most vulnerable ones, in a series of activities with victims of violence and conflict, Yazidi survivors, female inmates, refugees and displaced women. From Zakho to Halabja, we have been humbled and inspired by the strength and resilience of these brave, extraordinary women.

We have also engaged in a series of debates with female activists, women's rights defenders, media representatives, NGOs and civil society associations to raise awareness, share experiences and start a conversation that we hope to carry beyond the 16 days of the campaign, in line with Italy's commitment to protecting and promoting women's rights and ending every form of discrimination and gender-based violence.

Serena Muroi
Consul of Italy in Erbil



The "We Women" publication coincides with the global celebrations of a landmark campaign marking the continuous efforts being made worldwide towards women's equality: the *16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children*.

There is a long history of violation of women's human rights and women suffering deprivations merely on the basis of gender: practices and abuses that have received global attention due to their severe, negative impact on women's life. Communities in conflict areas face even more critical protection issues, as exposure to human rights abuses is coupled with outrageous persecution of ethnic or religious minorities women belong to. Addressing gender disparities in these areas hence presents the opportunity to work towards the empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of their social, economic and health status. Violence against women and girls is an extreme manifestation of gender inequality and systemic gender-based discrimination. The right of women and children to live free of violence depends on the protection of their human rights and a strong chain of justice.

In Iraq, where thousands have fled their homes, the Italian Cooperation is working through effective gender responsive interventions towards a society in which opportunities that enhance women's participation flourish. With a view to aligning to the global debate on development that promotes gender equality in all development cooperation projects, Italy and its partners work to improve women's access to secure livelihood and economic opportunities that benefit women and their communities.

We stand here in recognition of the importance to include women's empowerment as a cross-cutting priority in our interventions, and to demand considerable progress in improving the quality of lives of women. With this publication, we want to stimulate awareness on barriers that prevent women from playing an equal role in the social and economic sphere, and to present various perspectives on the gender dimension in recovery and peacebuilding processes, as well as to applaud the outstanding women's contribution to creating opportunities for social change.

Michele Morana
Director, AICS Amman



Women and Health

WHAT
WE DO

WHERE

IRAQI KURDISTAN
(SULAYMANIYAH, ERBIL,
DOHUK), NINIVE

The Italian Cooperation interventions in the **Health** sector sustain local authorities to increase accessibility, quality and inclusiveness of basic health services with a specific focus on child health, maternal health, nutrition services, as well as integration between reproductive, psycho-social and mental health services and emergency ambulance services. Main beneficiaries of these actions are the most vulnerable population between refugees, IDPs, returnees and host community, and particularly women and girls among them.



ACTIVITY

MA'AN NA'UD - LET'S GO BACK TOGETHER. EMERGENCY INITIATIVE IN SUPPORT OF RETURNEES IN THE LIBERATED AREAS OF NINIVE THROUGH REHABILITATION OF SAFE SPACES, PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES

NINIVE

PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES TO MINORITIES RETURNED TO THE BASHIQA DISTRICT AND AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS FOCUSING ON WOMEN AND ADOLESCENTS.

- Rehabilitation and equipping of safe spaces of a multifunctional centre in Bashiqa: a) reproductive health clinic b) counseling for individual and group psycho-social support sessions.
- Training of school teachers and social workers.
- Activation of reproductive health services and psycho-social support, implementation of awareness campaigns on reproductive health and Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV).



STORIES FROM THE FIELD

BREASTFEEDING AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Ma'an Na'ud Centre distributed leaflets in Arabic and English on Breastfeeding, Breast Cancer, Family Planning, Menstrual Cycle, Personal Hygiene, Post Natal, Pregnancy Back Pain, and Urinary Tract Infection.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the method that God has provided a woman with in order to nourish the newborn child. It has many long-lasting benefits.

It is a way to extend the bridges of love and strengthen the very special relationship that already stands between a mother and her newborn, making breastfeeding one of the most unique experiences in a mother's life.

Breastfeeding is an important stage for the newborn. It builds the basis for the growth of the child's personality due to the exchange of emotions between the infant and the mother, which leads to the growth of the emotional, linguistic, social and psychological aspects of his/her personality.

On the top of that, mother's natural breastfeeding has other important and additional features:

- It increases the secretion of hormones necessary for uterine contraction and its return to normal size.
- It protects a mother from breast and ovarian cancer.
- It reduces risks of post-partum depression



How do you breastfeed your child?

- The first dose should occur as soon as possible depending on the mother and child situation.
- During breastfeeding get comfortable. Place your baby on the breast itself to allow him to suck milk dropped on the breast.





ACTIVITY

ACCESS TO REHABILITATION SERVICES IN FAVOUR OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES INJURED DURING THE DAESH CONFLICT

NINIVE,
SULAYMANIYAH

INCREASE ACCESS TO REHABILITATION SERVICES AND PROSTHETICS FOR PEOPLE WHO SUFFERED DISABILITIES AS A RESULT OF THE CONFLICT IN MOSUL.

- Support to the Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration Centre in Sulaymaniyah specialized in physiotherapy and production of upper and lower limbs, and orthopedic devices.
- Creation of a referral system sending patients from the Mosul Rehabilitation Centre to Sulaymaniyah.
- Provision of physiotherapy and creation of a workshop for the maintenance of the prosthesis at the Mosul rehabilitation centre.



VOICES
FROM
THE FIELD

FATIMA

The night her house was shelled, Fatima Khider Thanoon was asleep in her bed. “I woke up to the sound of shelling. I wanted to get up, but I couldn’t. I felt that I was paralyzed.” She smelled gunpowder and all around her injured people were screaming, including her. Their voices couldn’t be heard above thudding shells. “My parents at the beginning didn’t know that we were hurt. They went out to check who was injured and who needed help, but at the same time they didn’t know that we were injured,” Fatima says.

When they found her, Fatima’s parents initially thought her paralysis was due to fear. Then a neighbour, a doctor, examined her and saw she needed immediate treatment, so her father and brothers carried her out of the house in a blanket and drove her to a hospital. “The streets were empty but at the same time there was so much fear; the sound of hovering aircraft. Militants were blocking the roads asking where we were going.” Fatima had been studying to become a teacher, but her plans were placed on hold that night, and, she feared, forever. After being treated at the hospital she returned home and lay immobile and depressed for seven months, convinced she would never walk again.

“When I became handicapped, my life turned upside down. I wasn’t conscious of life around me. When somebody would talk to me I would talk to them, but without focus or concentration,” she says. But Fatima’s family, especially her four brothers, refused to give up hope. They encouraged her to stand, again and again, physically holding her up. Each time she would collapse.

“They were telling me that through your will you will be healed, but I didn’t believe any of them. I didn’t believe my family. I didn’t believe my doctor. I didn’t feel that I would ever improve.” But her brothers’ persistence paid off. One day, for a few fleeting seconds, Fatima stood. “I was relieved and happy,” she said. After that breakthrough, it was recommended that she undergo rehabilitation therapy, and she figured she had nothing to lose.

Now, she continues to take tentative steps towards recovery. Every other day her mother brings her to the WHO-supported Ninewah Rehabilitation Hospital in East Mosul. Even reaching the hospital is a physical ordeal. She walks slowly with the aid of a walker through the hospital compound to the rehabilitation ward. There, a therapist works with her to build up her strength. She rides a stationary bicycle and does sit-ups.

Years of conflict destroyed most of the medical facilities in Mosul, and the hospital is under immense pressure – the rehabilitation unit sees up to 100 patients every day. Fatima’s doctors, pleased with her progress, predict that she will make a full recovery and that the life she dreams of will become a reality. As her mobility increases, so does her hope for the future. “I will carry on coming here in the hope that I become better and that I heal,” she says. “I feel an improvement. I feel I can go back to walking. I am in state of happiness.”



ACTIVITY

BASIC HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE REFUGEE GROUPS AND DISPLACED POPULATION IN THE PROVINCE OF DOHUK

DUHOK

IMPROVEMENT OF THE HEALTH OF VULNERABLE GROUPS IN THE REFUGEE CAMPS OF DOMIZ AND IN THE DISPLACED CAMP OF KHANKHE.

- Community reproductive, maternal and child health services activated in the refugee camps of Domiz and in the IDP camp of Khankhe.
- Purchase and equipment of two containers, installed in the area of health services in both camps, and purchase of reproductive health-related supplies.
- Screening and mapping of women of childbearing age, pregnant women and children under 5 years of age.
- Prenatal, perinatal and postnatal consultation services, prevention and deterrence from practices harmful to the health of women and children; early diagnosis and reference to second and third level health facilities.



DATA FROM THE FIELD

412

WOMEN
IN THE 2 CAMPS
WERE PREGNANT

majority between 21 and 25 years

92% of the pregnant women screened by community-based health workers had access to regular follow-up.

38%

GIRL AND WOMEN
WERE PERSONS WITH
DISABILITIES AND CHRONIC
DISEASES

referral system and transportation costs to the main services were supported by the project.





ACTIVITY

ZHYAN –EMERGENCY INITIATIVE FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES, DISPLACED IRAQIS AND HOST COMMUNITIES IN IRAQI KURDISTAN WITH A FOCUSING ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN

ERBIL

IMPROVED INTEGRATED REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND EDUCATION SERVICES FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES, DISPLACED IRAQIS AND VULNERABLE GROUPS IN HOST COMMUNITIES.

- Activation of three clinics and a Mobile Unit to ensure inclusive quality reproductive health services, equipped with an equipped visit room (medical equipment, diagnostic tools, furniture and IT equipment) of drugs and consumables necessary for the provision of reproductive health services.
- Production and dissemination of information material for awareness/prevention campaigns carried out by mobile units in densely populated urban areas and Syrian refugee camps.
- Healthcare workers and social workers take part in a training course aimed at perfecting quality SR services harmonized with legal and psychosocial protection services.



STORIES FROM THE FIELD

WOMEN FROM NINIVE {1}

Huda fixes her skirt on her hips, she looks in the mirror and she fixes her hijab. It is early in the morning and the telephone is already ringing. It's Miro, the nurse. They set up a bunch of appointments and the counseling center is crowded. "Doctor, how long will it take?". Huda runs to the car and her mobile is ringing again, it's her mother. She reassures her, everybody is fine, it really looks like they are going to meet in a few days. It's been two years since they last met. It was the day the neighborhood where she lived in Mosul, in the plain of Nineveh, ended up under Daesh's control and they haven't seen each other since.

"Al-Hamdolillah you are all ok. Mum, now you can leave your house. I can't pick you up from the city, it's still too dangerous. I will be waiting for you here, together with Ayad and the kids. Hurry up, I can't wait to see you". While she's pushing down on the gas pedal, she thinks about the miles connecting Erbil with Mosul and how many times she had been on that road on a broken down bus, when she was a student at the Faculty of Medicine. Thinking back to the never-ending lessons, the classrooms, the efforts to study and her dreams to become a gynaecologist.

It feels like a lifetime has passed since those days but it is less than 20 years. The university where she studied does not exist anymore, it has been destroyed, she saw the pictures on a newspaper yesterday. They have to build it again and they need to do it fast because her daughter is about to turn 18 and she wants to study Pharmacy at the same university.

Women are lining up waiting for their turn, Miro is preparing the modules to fill out. Huda calls the first patient, Dana, a girl from Syria, one of the young refugee women that found a shelter in Iraqi Kurdistan. Here, women learn how to live in wartime before they are even born. You have to deal with it, as a woman, mother, daughter, wife and widow. In a country affected by conflict, women pay the highest price. This is why Huda, together with other doctors, nurses and psychologists, choose to work alongside humanitarian organizations such as ours that is engaged in projects on health and women rights.

"Zhyan", which means life in Kurdish, is a project that works closely with Syrian refugee women and Iraqi displaced persons offering reproductive health services, psycho-social support and awareness-raising activities on gender-based violence. Dana is only 18, she's pregnant with her first child. It's her third visit since she got pregnant and the scan confirmed the baby is a boy. Dana can't refrain from tearing up.



ACTIVITY

ZHYAN PHASE II –EMERGENCY INITIATIVE FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES, DISPLACED IRAQIS AND HOST COMMUNITIES FOCUSING ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN THROUGH REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND PSYCSOCIAL SUPPORT

ERBIL

IMPROVED ACCESSIBILITY, INCLUSIVENESS AND QUALITY OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT FOR DISPLACED IRAQIS AND HOST COMMUNITIES.

- Strengthened services offered by three existing clinics (Ashty - Erbil Center, Kasnazan and Shaqlawa) and a Mobile Unit, and through the activation and equipment of a new stable clinic in Khabat.
- Strengthened services at the existing Centres (Shaqlawa, Ashty - Erbil Center Kasnazan and Khabat) through the creation of an integrated programme for victims of rape or physical, sexual or psychological violence.
- Information material for awareness/prevention campaigns carried out by mobile units in urban areas and displaced Iraqi camps.
- Inclusive services of quality reproductive health as a supplement to women's defense services are accessible to displaced Iraqi and members of host communities.



STORIES FROM THE FIELD

WOMEN FROM NINIVE {2}

At “Zhyan” clinics people cry and laugh every day. Huda, Thuka, Aya, Iman, Miro, Faiza, Rawnaq, Raghdah, Danyal e Karama, the doctors and the nurses of the project, know this well. Up to 30 women visit the 4 counselling centre every day.

Huda knows she is not just a gynaecologist but also a focal point, and patients are never alone. They become friends, sisters, confidants. “Zhyan” is also about intertwining stories. Stories of pain, violence and harassment. At war, at home, at university, at the workplace.

Hana gets beaten up every day by her husband who lost his job and does not know how to bring money home; Shayan won a scholarship in Turkey but won't leave because her father does not allow her to travel alone; Nur, who married Hisham at 16 because her family believed marriage was the best way to protect her; Alya, whose brother died right in front of her in Falluja; Rima, who is fighting against depression after losing her newborn baby while escaping from Mosul and now lives in a cold tent in a refugee camp. Stories of war, occupation, cultural barriers.

Intertwined stories like those of Amal, Samar and Balqis. Amal won her battle against her alcoholic partner, thanks to the legal support of the Centre for Protection of Women. Samar, after attending community sewing classes, found a job as a tailor. Balqis stopped taking her medication that made her sleep for hours: she found a psychological support group and she smiles at life again. This is the beauty of working with women and for women, in Iraq and anywhere else. Tireless hands, always looking for something. Bare hands, sometimes soft and smooth as a peach skin, sometimes rough, sometimes exhausted and weakened by fatigue.

There are big dreams. Huda's dreams, a displaced doctor from Iraq, displaced amongst the displaced. Maysoun's dreams, a young Syrian refugee mother who keeps on picturing in her mind the day she will be able to go back home. And these are also the dreams of people working with these women, who are trying everyday to build a dialogue linking experiences, needs, ambitions. And the common battles.



ACTIVITY

ZHYAN PHASE III – EMERGENCY INITIATIVE FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES, DISPLACED IRAQIS AND HOST COMMUNITIES FOCUSING ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN THROUGH REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT

ERBIL,
NINIVE

INCREASE THE ACCESSIBILITY AND QUALITY OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES, INTEGRATING THEM INTO PROTECTION AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES FOR WOMEN AND ADOLESCENTS.

- Activation of integrated reproductive health services are accessible for women and adolescents in camps, urban areas and remote areas.
- Purchase, equipment and activation of a new mobile medical unit for reproductive health services supplied with medicines.
- Psycho-social support and protection services (SGBV) for women and adolescents in camps, urban areas and remote areas.



DATA FROM THE FIELD

2015-2017

3

CLINICS IN KASNAZAN,
ASHTY, Khabat

1

MOBILE MEDICAL UNIT
SET UP. THE UNIT REACHED
5 IDP CAMPS WITH
THE ONLY AVAILABLE
ULTRASOUND DEVICE

6147

WOMEN REACHED BY
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH
SERVICES

487

PROTECTION CASES
OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

3631

WOMEN REACHED BY
MEDICAL HOME VISITS

5150

WOMEN REACHED BY
AWARENESS SERVICES ON
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

30

STAFF MEMBERS TRAINED
ON REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH &
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



Women and Protection

WHAT
WE DO

WHERE

NINIVE, DOHUK,
ERBIL, KIRKUK,
AND SALAH DIN
GOVERNORATES

The Italian Cooperation supports interventions in the **Protection** sector in synergy with its Education and Health programmes, aimed to create an enabling environment for internally displaced persons coming from the crisis-affected areas. Through psycho-social support, hygiene promotion and natality awareness projects, women and children are enabled to overcome the trauma of the recent conflict and improve their living conditions, as well as to benefit from employment opportunities.



ACTIVITY

COORDINATED CHILD PROTECTION AND LIFESAVING NUTRITION INTERVENTIONS TO PROTECT THE FIRST 1,000 DAYS FOR CHILDREN IMPACTED BY MOSUL MILITARY OPERATIONS IN NORTHERN IRAQ AND LIBERATED AREAS

ERBIL,
NINIVE

CONTRIBUTE TO THE REDUCTION OF MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY OF CHILDREN UNDER FIVE AND OF PREGNANT OR NURSING WOMEN, RECENTLY DISPLACED BY MILITARY OPERATIONS FOR THE RECONQUEST OF MOSUL.

- Development of awareness campaigns and advocacy on key issues for the protection of minors.
- Creation of Baby-Friendly spaces, peer counseling, management of complications for breastfeeding and support to re-breastfeeding.
- Increased community knowledge and skills on infant and child nutrition in emergency situations through behavior change campaigns and support groups among mothers.
- Home visits to new mothers within 48 hours from delivery to conduct postpartum health examination to the newborn and the mother, providing counseling and encouragement on breastfeeding.
- Provision of structured, sustained psycho-social support.



VOICES FROM THE FIELD

NURTURING THE FUTURE

“When I first went to the nutrition centre, I was hopeless. I said, ‘No one can help my son. He’s going to die.’ But after two visits, he improved.” Afrah and her youngest son Ali are sitting in their tent in Khazir camp for displaced people. Nine months ago, Ali was diagnosed with severe acute malnutrition. Today he’s a healthy and thriving fourteen-month-old child. Camilla, Afrah’s case worker, cannot speak highly enough about this mother and son. “Afrah is one of the best moms in the program. She always comes on feeding day, and that regularity has really helped Ali improve.” The specter of malnutrition is ever-present inside the camps. Despite the fight for Mosul concluding in the summer of 2017, there is still movement between Mosul and the camps. Some people have attempted to return to their homes but found that they are still uninhabitable — basic services are not universal in Mosul. Some areas of the city are still prone to instability, making the camps a safer place for families.

Around 130 children in the Khazir camp are being treated for Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) or Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM). It can take up to two months of regular nutritional assistance to bring a child like Ali back from the brink of starvation. UNICEF and partner Samaritan’s Purse run diverse portfolio of programs in the Khazir and Hasansham camps, which lie between the cities of Mosul and Erbil. Activities for mothers begin the moment new or expecting mothers arrive in the camp.

In the breastfeeding area, small-group counseling is ongoing. One woman is pregnant and due to have a c-section today. “I’m kind of scared. Yeah, I’m nervous,” she admits. All of the women in the caravan, staff and camp residents alike offer comforting words. Samaritan’s Purse staff is with her every step of the way to help her breastfeed her newborn once she wakes from surgery.

Another activity that women have access to are cooking demonstrations that show how to make their World Food Program rations into healthy, nutritious meals for the family, with some supplementary fresh produce that is available in the camps. Food rations largely include enriched starches like flour, rice and beans that form the basic components of the Iraqi diet. Entrepreneurs inside the camp have set up stands selling everything from fresh produce to household goods, giving camp residents access to much needed nutrients.

Young mothers may not know how to maximize the nutritional value of the foods they have access to, especially if they have children of different ages who have varying nutritional requirements. Work in and around the camps is hard, thus limiting the amount of cash families have to buy supplemental food, making it important to make the most of what fresh foods they can afford.

Nutrition services for displaced people are saving lives while building strong bodies and healthy minds.



ACTIVITY

PROVISION OF LIFE-SAVING WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH) ASSISTANCE TO CIVILIANS AND EMERGENCY GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) SERVICES TO WOMEN AND GIRLS

SALAHADDIN,
ERBIL, DUHOK,
KIRKUK

SUPPORT TO WATER AND SANITARY SECTOR AND PSYCHO-SOCIAL ASSISTANCE TO WOMEN AND GIRLS VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE IMPACTED BY MILITARY OPERATIONS TO RE-TAKE THE MOSUL CORRIDOR.

- Provision of safe spaces in Kirkuk, 13,783 individuals have been reached with critical GBV services and assistance of which 6,869 were women and 2,415 were girls.
- Specialized services such as GBV case management and structured psychosocial (PSS) activities, conducted in a safe, woman- and girl-friendly environment, reached 3,610 women and girls.
- Awareness-raising and risk mitigation activities on GBV prevention and support to survivors.



STORIES
FROM
THE FIELD

MARWA

Marwa is one of **over 300,000 children still displaced from their homes in Mosul and living in a camp**. Now, she and her younger sister Raghad are volunteering at one of UNICEF's youth-friendly spaces in Akre, a town in the high mountains of northern Iraq. Displaced from their home in Mosul in 2014, the sisters have done all they can to continue their education, and get involved in their new community.

"I work here because I want girls to be allowed to come to this centre and learn music, tailoring, or sports. I come to this center so families see me and encourage their daughters to come and participate in this center."



PROTECTION

Women and Education

WHAT
WE DO

WHERE

NINIVE,
ERBIL, KIRKUK,
SULEYMANIYAH

The Italian Cooperation interventions in the **Education** sector support local authorities to increase accessibility, quality and inclusiveness of basic education services both in the Kurdish Region affected by the influx of refugees and IDPs and in the liberated areas of Ninive governorate where IDPs return.

Through rehabilitation of infrastructures damaged by the conflict, installation of temporary learning schools, supplies of educational, recreational and school equipment, training for teachers and support to PTAs and involvement of the communities, children are enabled to overcome the trauma of the recent conflict and improve their living conditions, as well as to benefit from quality education opportunities.



ACTIVITY

TALEIL LILJAMEEH - EMERGENCY INITIATIVE ON TRAINING AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES TO SYRIAN REFUGEES AND THE HOST COMMUNITIES IN KR-I WITH A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

SULAYMANIYAH

IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY AND QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR YOUNG SYRIAN REFUGEES IN SULAYMANIA GOVERNORATE.

- Training of Trainers at Kobane elementary school in Sulaymaniyah, on Resilience Groups (RG) and non-specialized Psychological First Aid (PFA) to Syrian and local students.
- Free school transportation for at least 100 Syrian children from the peripheral area of Sulaymaniyah.
- Set up of a youth educational centre (CEG) in the refugee camp of Arbat.



VOICES FROM THE FIELD

BARIKA

Shanhaz used to be a teacher in Qamishlo, Syria, and was very well known in her community for her activism in the civil society.

After the outbreak of the civil war, she was obliged to leave her country being from a family who was involved in the political life of the city, and was therefore particularly exposed to high security risks. She sought refuge in Iraqi Kurdistan, in Suleymania Governorate.

Being an energetic and active woman, she couldn't bear being inactive and jobless and she managed to find a job in one of the schools for Syrian Refugees, as a primary school teacher. She soon became a focal point for the whole Syrian community there, being charismatic and strongly attached to her culture and roots. She also started volunteering to support the school manager in his daily tasks, driven by the mission of improving the quality of the education in such a complicated context as that of being displaced in a camp in a foreign country.

Being well known and active in the Syrian displaced community, she started supporting a series of vulnerable cases, advocating for NGOs to support those families who were most in need and more neglected.

During the needs assessments to design the project "Taalim LilJamya", funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, several focus groups discussions were conducted in schools for Syrian Refugees in Suleymania, where she participated giving precious insights on how the intervention could benefit her community and create concrete results for children and the youth.

After the project took form and came to life, she was driven by the energy of the newly created centre for youth in Barika Refugee camp and left her work as a teacher to become the centre coordinator. She has been running the centre since then, enriching every activity with her passion and experience in the education sector, as well as helping designing programs that are really useful and context-sensitive for the youth of the Syrian community in Suleymania, working hard to address youth problems she was seeing around her, such as self-harm, school drop outs, bullying, and psychological distress.

Women and Livelihoods



WHAT
WE DO

WHERE

ERBIL,
DOHUK, NINIVE

The Italian Cooperation supports interventions in the **Livelihood** sector aimed to strengthen the socio-economic resilience and social stability of Syrian refugees, internally displaced Iraqi and host communities in the Kurdistan region. Since the liberation of the country from Deash occupation, the Italian Cooperation has sustained the IDPs in returning to their areas of origin in order to help counteract the negative economic and social consequences of the conflict and economic crisis in the country. Livelihood interventions seek to provide the most vulnerable population, in particular women and youth, with access to job opportunities, means and relevant skills to increase economic self-reliance in a sustainable way.



ACTIVITY

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN THE ERBIL GOVERNORATE, IRAQI KURDISTAN REGION, VICTIMS OF CONFLICTS IN THE COUNTRY AND IN THE REGION

ERBIL

PROFESSIONAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING TO VULNERABLE YOUNG REFUGEES AND ACCESS TO NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR DISPLACED CHILDREN.

- Selection of tutors and twelve weeks professional training on aesthetics and tailoring for girls in the camps of Qushtapa and Basirma.
- Improvement of production capacity and structural conditions of shops belonging to the local community in Shaqlawa and Erbil.



VOICES FROM THE FIELD

WE, YOUNG PEOPLE OF ERBIL

Can you dream in Erbil? The capital city of Iraqi Kurdistan, located less than hundred kilometers from Mosul, has been under attack by ISIS for months. The number of Syrian refugees that arrived here has increased significantly since August 2013, and it now adds up to the one million internally displaced people coming from different areas of Iraq.

A sea of men, women, children, teenagers who want to continue living, despite the war and death from which they are surrounded. The offensive launched to retake the city of Mosul in October 2016 led to new waves of displaced persons, and further weakened the ability of the Government of the Autonomous Kurdish Region of Iraq to cope with the daily needs of its inhabitants.

Kawa, Amina, Shreen, Sara, Samira and many other young ones among those people who are striving to build a future, despite the extreme scarcity of educational opportunities and the fragile economic conditions of the families. Many of them have abandoned their studies in Syria as well as family work activities, and have been forced to start all over again to learn new professions.

"I would like to go back to school. But there are no secondary schools in Arabic language here, and I have to work to help my family." This is Sara, who has fled Syria, has six brothers, and one of them is 5 years old and disabled. Their father left for Morocco in search of work, and manages to send the family no more than one thousand dollars every month. "I like sewing, it allows me to be creative, and to shape what is in my imagination". Sara, thanks to a project funded by AICS and implemented by Intersos, is doing a three months internship at the Maryam laboratory, one of the most well-known seamstresses in their community. This experience will allow her to get in touch with potential clients and hopefully start working as a seamstress.

It is very difficult for Syrian refugees to attend school in Iraqi Kurdistan, especially for intermediate and secondary levels. There are very few schools offering the curriculum taught in Arabic and the school costs are often unsustainable for refugees. "I would like to go back to school," says Aya, 17, a Syrian adolescent from Aleppo and who has been in Iraq since 2014. "Coming here reminded me how much I liked it. In Syria there were excellent schools, and now I would like to complete my journey".



ACTIVITY

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN INCLUSION OF IDPS AND HOST COMMUNITIES IN DOHUK GOVERNORATE THROUGH PROVISION OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT

DOHUK,
NINEVE

PROMOTING PSYCHOSOCIAL WELLBEING AND INCOME OPPORTUNITIES FOR VULNERABLE AND DISPLACED WOMEN IN DOHUK AND NINEWA

- Local organizations have strengthened capacity to provide support to vulnerable and displaced women through training on project designing, managing and implementing of programmes addressing wellbeing, protection and integration of Yazidi women.
- Wellbeing of vulnerable and displaced women is improved through access to income generating activities, through Business Development Training, Business Support Packages and three months support in their businesses initiatives.
- Vulnerable and displaced women have increased access to protection, legal psychiatric and health care.



STORIES FROM THE FIELD

A WOMEN MAGAZINE CALLED “AFRADIN”, A LEARNING CENTRE, AND A BAKERY CLASS

“Afrandin means creation. We believe that women have a key role in building resilient communities,” said Suzan, Director of DAK NGO, a women-based Yazidi organization that with LOTUS flower developed a project to foster social cohesion and peace building through social media. “We’re working to ensure that women are enjoying all their rights even if in our community they’re often considered as weak. We want to support them in building a brighter future and increase their confidence even if they’re coming from difficult situations”.

Another Yazidi organization from Sinjar, Youth Bridge, established a learning centre for women. “In Sinjar, families are returning home after years of displacement and suffering. Everything in this city have been destroyed: houses, services and emotional connection. This centre is the first one in Sinjar offering a safe space for women and their kids and giving them the possibility to learn and make connection with other women. In less than 3 months, more than 150 women have attended our literacy, handcraft and English courses and we promised them that we’ll continue” explained Farhan, director of Youth Bridge.

In addition to the initiatives developed by the CSOs, IOM provided direct support to 30 women through provision of equipment and livelihoods training to set up small businesses in five camps and one informal settlement. Furthermore, six community focal points attended the training as well in order to support and coach these women on the field level during the business implementation.

The training focused on life skills, business planning and management. In Qadia camp, Duhok governorate, two groups of women are in process of setting up their business, one for bakery and one for sewing.

One participant, Malka, 32 years old, shared her story: “I participated and also instructed the bakery course, which took place over 4 days in a row. I learned to make cakes and baklava. My family really liked them. All of my family members don’t have jobs, so it will be great if we can open a bakery. It would improve our livelihood opportunities. I continue to practice baking; my husband is helping me. I participated in the class alongside 10 other Yazidi and Muslim displaced women. We shared our experience. We became friends through the course. I used to make cakes for weddings in Shingal. We can’t go back to Shingal because we have nothing left there. It was ruined. I have not seen it but that is what people from the town told us. I hope to go back someday. I would like to open a bakery there. I am making a birthday cake for my 3-year-old daughter using my enhanced baking skills.”



ACTIVITY

CONTRIBUTION TO UNICEF'S PROGRAMME ON HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT TO MINOR GIRLS VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

DOHUK

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT TO MINOR GIRLS FROM THE YAZIDI RELIGIOUS MINORITY VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE BY DAESH.

- Establishment of the 'JINDA' centre for minority IDP women, to provide appropriate protection and psycho-social support services.
- Provision of care services, individual and community counselling on domestic violence law, women and child rights and healthcare.
- Vocational training on hairdressing, beauty therapy, needlework and embroidery, to build a sense of community, improve attendees' economic independence, and job opportunities and/or self-employment.



STORIES FROM THE FIELD

EMPOWERING YAZIDI WOMEN THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY

It's late afternoon in a camp for displaced Iraqis, near Dohuk in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Bright sunlight reflects off every surface — beige tents are all in even rows, the steady flow of white 4x4s, the sliver of a lake in the distance. Children with bulging backpacks walk home from school while older men sitting in the shade play dominoes.

A group of young women, compact cameras in hand, walk past the domino players. Suddenly, one of the young women sees the scene and stops. Bushra, 16, strides confidently toward the game and asks to take a portrait of one of the players — a dignified Yazidi man whose blue-grey eyes are framed by elegant black eyeglasses. Bushra crouches down next to him and starts taking photos. Bushra and other young women are enthusiastic participants in a UNICEF-supported photography workshop. With funding from the Government of Italy, and facilitation by partners RDO, the aim of the workshop is to empower young Yazidi women through photography. "Bushra is an entirely different person," says Nuha Serrac, coordinator for the workshop. "At first, if we asked her a question, her face would go red as a tomato. She wouldn't even lift her head to give a response. Now look at her. She's walking up to people on her own and taking their picture!"

Bushra says she joined the workshop simply because she "wanted to become something." In the month since starting the workshop, she has. "I've learned so much," she says. "I learned to communicate with people. I've built up much more confidence. Now I want to become a photojournalist." She also says the workshop helped her forget the sadness of her recent past. Last August, acute violence forced Bushra and her family to flee their village in Sinjar in the middle of the night. They spent nine days stranded on Mount Sinjar with little food or water. "I witnessed so much tragedy [on Sinjar]," she says. "But now I feel like things are changing. This workshop feels like a breath of fresh air — to be a part of something again."

Workshops like these also provide an important opportunity for UNICEF and partners to spot and address other issues. When Safiya, 14, told her photography instructor that she wasn't going to school, the instructor replied that Safiya couldn't participate in the workshop if she wasn't in school. It was the motivation the young girl needed to convince her father to let her attend the UNICEF-supported tented school in the camp.

Nuha says that when the workshop began, girls' photographs were often melancholy. Now, a month later, the same girls seek inspiration. One participant, Nasrin, 17, photographed a woman whose husband died just before their baby was born. Though devastated, the illiterate single mother was determined to overcome her hardships. She taught herself to read and write and then opened her own business in the camp — a successful salon. Nasrin titled the photo story 'Never Give Up'.



ACTIVITY

EDUCATION BASIC AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES TARGETING DISPLACED PEOPLE AND HOST COMMUNITIES IN ERBIL

ERBIL,
NINIVE

IMPROVEMENT OF EDUCATION SERVICES, TECHNICAL-PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND START-UP OF INCOME-GENERATING ACTIVITIES.

- Tailoring, aesthetics and hairdressing courses held in the classrooms of the Training Centre at Ankawa camp.
- Cooking and pastry courses and work-kits for small female entrepreneurial activities.
- Creation of the "Qaraqosh Women House" in Qaraqosh with a view to sustainability and to favouring female cooperative work.



VOICES FROM THE FIELD

WOMEN HOUSE IN QARAQOSH

"What should I do at home all day? I am coming every day to Beit al-Nisa and improving my skills in sewing." Nimrud is one of the women attending training sessions to become a professional tailor. Her second home, after she was displaced in Iraqi Kurdistan during the Islamic State's (IS) three-year occupation, has become Beit al-Nisa, the Women's House, in the Assyrian-Christian city of Qaraqosh, 25 miles south of Mosul in the Ninevah Plains.

Every morning, each room at Beit al-Nisa is full of women working — as cooks, tailors, hairdressers, professional trainers and students. In addition, women can enroll in language and computer classes. "Before [IS'] occupation, in our town we didn't have a house for women," Vivine Elias, the tailor and trainer, told Al-Monitor. "Now that the city is still half empty, at least we have our own place to work and learn. To be together!"

The idea of a house for women was conceived spontaneously during our displaced life and in the displaced camps. In the camps, people could not spend the whole day in the tents, especially during the summer where the temperature reached 45 C° [113 F]. Women felt the need to reunite, to do social activities and organize themselves to work together. Each training course lasts one month, 20 days a month, three hours per day. But this is not just a place for training, it's a safe place to meet; for example, in the night women come and sit in the small court to speak.

Women aged 18-45 can register at Women's House and choose their training or activity. "At the end of each course, we offer the women a tool to continue to practice their skills at home, such as a sewing machine or kitchen's tools to cook," Nabil said. "Furthermore, we would like to invest some money to found a sort of cooperative where women manage their own shops."

"Before the women's centre was born and before 2014, I used to work at home as a hairdresser," Ruweida Atem said. "Now that I am teaching here, our dream is to open a salon in the town, which is still partly destroyed but in need of commercial activities."

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