

Annual Report 2021



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Cover illustration: Oct. 12, female genital mutilation awareness in the village of Shawazi, Maidan district, Garmyan

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1. INTRODUCTION

During the second year of the global COVID-19 pandemic, awareness on mask wearing and social distancing, as well as disseminating reliable information on the benefits and risks of vaccination played a vital role at any stage in WADI's work, even when dealing with other issues. The huge lack of knowledge and care is basically result of the continuing inaction of public institutions. Since there is hardly any awareness anywhere and politicians are usually met with mistrust anyway, people rely mainly on rumors and fake news. However, through our work we have been able to convince hundreds of people to get vaccinated, and we observed that, with infections and fatalities on the rise, people are increasingly ready and willing to get the jab. The vaccination campaign is picking up steam.

In the IDP camps of Duhok, our colleagues from Jinda Center applied a new innovative method to convince the people of the benefits of the vaccine. They trained groups of volunteers from the camps to raise awareness "from IDP to IDP". This allowed them not only to multiply their efforts and reach a lot more people, but, even more important, it empowered the people and offered them new ways to help themselves. The trained IDP teams from the camps organized themselves and worked completely independently which gave them considerable responsibility. And with the responsibility comes the dignity and pride and self-respect.

Moreover, awareness offered by fellow camp dwellers is not met with the same level of suspicion than the usual information people perceive as "coming from outside". So, this is an important trust building measure which increases the effectiveness of the intervention dramatically. Originally, Wadi had developed this very effective and beneficial method in cooperation with other NGOs and self-organized groups in Moria camp in Lesbos/Greece.

Awareness on FGM and Living with FGM also played an important role in WADI's 2021 agenda. Due to Corona, some activities had to be implemented in a reduced scale, however, the project went largely according to plan. The project is scientifically accompanied by Dr. Osman, a psychologist and family counselor. Dr. Osman provided a number of ToT trainings for the WADI teams. They learnt new techniques on how to assist victims of FGM, how to evaluate their mental state and how to detect and treat emotional and mental distress related to female genital mutilation. WADI, in cooperation with Dr. Osman, is developing a study guide book for Living with FGM teams, so that in future new team members or members of other organizations can benefit from the experiences and insights of this project. Many women ask if there are helpful

ways to deal with the consequences of FGM or if it is possible to cure their sexual issues caused by FGM. We are confident that this project will lay foundations for a better understanding of the needs and sufferings of FGM-affected women and how to address them best.

WADI'S ACTIVITIES IN NUMBERS

Citizen to Citizen Corona Campaign

Activities in **83** places in Erbil, Garman and Ranya regions

2,900 face masks distributed

1,140 posters, **12,000** brochures distributed, **600** floor stickers applied

337 awareness seminars with a total of **4280** participants

12 online counselings

Combating and Living with FGM

139 FGM awareness seminars with **815** participants

52 Living with FGM trainings with **549** participants

Support for Yazidi ISIS Survivors

106,633 beneficiaries

155 courses for Yazidi orphans, **3400** participants

52,685 masks, **183** sanitizers and **2,500** posters distributed

Environment Protection – Keep Kurdistan Green

235 seminars, **6323** students and **114** parents participated

13 media coverages: **5** articles in Kurdish online publications, **8** TV reports

2. WADI ACTIVITIES

2.1. CORONAVIRUS AWARENESS ACTIVITIES - NO TO VIOLENCE! CAMPAIGN

Wadi proceeded with the "4C" *Citizen for Citizen Corona Campaign* which had been set up in August 2020 as an expansion of the long-standing *No To Violence* campaign. *Citizen for Citizen Corona Campaign* - the name leaves no doubt, it is about self-organization as empowered citizens. This campaign is separate from our relationship with the state. It is a call for people to take responsibility as members of the community and stick to some simple behavior rules such as keeping distance, wearing masks and washing hands.

In 2021, the number of cases continued to be on the rise, and still there was very little awareness about the dangers of the virus and the easy-to-apply protection methods among the general population. People refused to wear face masks and did not listen to official advice.

Official numbers from the Ministry of Health in 2021:

البلد	إجمالي الحالات	إجمالي الوفيات	إجمالي التعافي
العراق	406,960	7,341	1,335
الأنبار	136,309	1,335	1,335
السليمانية	140,140	3,144	3,144
دهوك	142,878	1,814	1,814
الهاشمية	7,564	248	248

Official numbers from the Ministry of Health in 2021:

- Total of infected people in KRI 2021: 406,960.

Erbil 136,309, Sulaymaniyah 140,140, Duhok 142,878, Halabja 7,564

- Total of deaths caused by Coronavirus in KRI in 2021: 7,341

Erbil 1,335, Sulaymaniyah 3,144, Duhok 1,814, Halabja 248

Vaccination became officially available for the people from April 2021. Similar to places around the world, there were numerous rumors and fake news about the vaccine's alleged negative side effects. Moreover, the lack of awareness campaigns from the government had people not receiving the vaccines. As Wadi teams were visiting people in rural areas, most did not even know that vaccine was available or they did not know in which health centers they could get it. Additionally, most were not even believing in its protection effects. They thought it is more or less useless, and if you get infected and ill then it is just God's will.

Wadi engaged in a series of activities to break this cycle, strengthen a sense of belonging and mutual responsibility and increase knowledge. The teams conducted seminars in villages and schools, distributed facemasks and brochures and hang posters in many public locations, governmental departments and crowded areas like the markets and malls. Brochures and posters informed people about prevention measures and the benefits of getting the jab.



Nov 11: Mamkan village in Sangasar district

Generally, there are mixed opinions about Corona. Some believe it is real, some believe it is not. The same goes for the effectiveness of the vaccine. People mostly doubt them. However, for the awareness on prevention, many do support our campaign and think it is important and should continue.



Awareness in schools

These are some comments from the people:

- Chnar 26, says that when people wear facemasks, they are mocked and called cowards.
- Aso, director of Ranya computer institute, commented that he always watches the students. If they don't wear masks, he sends them home.
- Hallaw, a lady in her 50s did not believe in corona *"I never wear masks and I don't believe that anything will happen to me"*, she said.
- S.F. (36), teacher, she said she is sick of wearing facemasks and only does so because it is mandatory inside the school.

- Mohammed (45), said this work is too good to be done by government. *“Thank you for remembering the elders in the mosques and distributing masks and posters.”* he said.
- Sheren (48), felt afraid and unsure about getting vaccinated. *“I heard it is not safe and has bad side effects in the future. I want to see what happens to others who do get vaccinated first.”* she stated.
- In one of the schools in Erbil a teacher (Haweren, 33) told our teams that all the teachers were vaccinated, *“we care for the safety of our students and always monitor their health and prevention measures in the school.”*, she said.



Summary and total of activities in 2021

Face mask and poster distribution in Erbil, awareness seminars in Ranya and Garmyan:

Area	Total of activities per area	No. of participants
Erbil	36	2900 face masks, 1140 posters
Garmyan	22	155 seminars
Ranya	25	182 seminars

This project is supported by Roselo Foundation and Wadi private donations.

2.2. COMBATING AND LIVING WITH FGM

This 2-year project started in December 2020. It was set up to target 300 villages with continuing high rates of FGM (Erbil, Ranya, Garmiyan) through women led mobile teams. The teams work with local communities through dialogue, education, and engagement. The goal is to lower/end the practice of FGM.



Combating and Living with FGM was designed as a pilot project which combined the 'Living with FGM' project with continued awareness on FGM in areas where the practice is still very common, or used to be very common. Despite the pandemic situation, both parts were largely implemented according to the plan, albeit with certain adaptations such as online classes instead of in-class lectures.

As a Corona prevention measure, the FGM awareness sessions took place with a limited number of participants. They also had to be temporarily suspended during lockdowns and periods when group meetings were prohibited. Nevertheless, repeated face-to-face awareness remains an indispensable part of effective behaviour change when it comes to a culturally deeply rooted practice like FGM.

For the Living with FGM part, we consider these first two years a major step because knowledge and motivation among the staff have grown massively. The intense capacity building has led the team members to a new level of determination and self-confidence which will help us in future not only to counsel and assist the affected women in the field, but also to develop new tools and methods based on the experience gained which might later be useful to others, too.

FGM Prevention Programme

The FGM awareness teams staffed with women social workers visited villages in the areas of Erbil and Ranya, where FGM is taking place, and in Garmyan and Halabja where the practice has largely faded, but also still has some supporters.

Due to Corona, all seminars took place with no more than 10 participants. In August and September 2021, due to the increase in Corona cases in Kurdistan and especially Garmyan, all seminar activities had to come to a hold.

The plan was to hold 12 seminars per month, and rotate through the villages so they are all seen regularly over the course of the first year. After the initial Covid-19 shutdown that plan was revised to include 8 seminars per month, this was a more realistic goal given the current restrictions and was a way to allow proper implementation of Covid safety precautions.

The teams engaged at length with the communities by showing documentaries, providing information and most importantly talking with women (and men) about the effects that FGM has had on their lives.

The subjects that the teams talked about were: physical, psychological and social harms of FGM, the articles of the law no.8 of combating domestic violence and the personal status law (law no. 2) focusing on marriage contract, legal age for marriage, child custody, early marriage, arranged and forced marriage, exchange marriage, the negative effects of domestic violence, suicide attempts, strengthening family relation, peaceful conflict resolution, and ending gender discrimination. All of these gender-based violences are intricately related to the continued culture of violence against women, of which FGM is one symptom. Our approach continues to be a holistic one, in order to push for real fundamental societal change.

The knowledge the team members gained from the Living with FGM trainings (see below) was then occasionally applied in the seminars. The teams felt very much empowered by suddenly being able to answer some of the questions the women had.



Nov. 6, Khor Nawazani Elementary School, Kifri

Comments and stories from women:

Aftaw (66) was opposing FGM and mentioned that she heard of an older woman who cut a girl randomly in various areas of the genitals because of her poor eye sight. She also added *"in Saykhalil village, I heard about a girl who was mutilated and after 4 months she passed away. People said it was caused by the cutting."*

Jamila (67), who was an Arab IDP in Dwanza Emam village, mentioned that FGM is not part of their culture and they do not practice it, *“It is mainly among the Kurds”* she said.

Sheren Karim (32) mentioned that when she used to live in Zamawanga village, all the girls were gathered and cut collectively: *“They collected all the flesh that had been cut and threw it in the pond close by”* she added.



Awareness in the villages

Najiba Majid (62) said that her parents did not mutilate her, however when she was a teenager, she and four of her friends went to a midwife to get cut because many people told them that anything they hand over to others is *haram*. *“The pain was severe and I got bleeding”* she said. Najiba later married and is always suffering in her sex life *“I am constantly in bad mental state”* she added. *“I regret doing it and I hope you work on stopping women from getting mutilated”* she said lastly.

A woman mentioned that she was mutilated with a group of girls at the age of 13. When one of the girls was cut, the razor broke in half, cutting the clitoris in half too. *“The other women were looking for used razors in the trash bin. Finally they found one and cut the other half”*, she said.

In Tapakura village, Halabja, a woman mentioned that in the past, men had no choice but to endure their wives when they were cut and had no feelings in sex life. She said *“Now if a woman does not satisfy her husband, he will just marry an Arab woman”*.

Wadi team members met Na’ima Abdulkare (52) from Zarde Hama village in Garmyan. This is her story:

Na’ima was married at a young age to man 20 years older than her and she could not say no. *“The day I got married I was so young, I didn’t realize what was happening, I begged my sister to not leave me and take me back home to my mom”*, said Na’ima. *“My life was like hell”*, she added.

Not long after she gave birth to two daughters, her husband passed away, her in-laws threatened Naima and took the daughters from her. Afterwards, under pressure from her uncle, she was married off again to an old man, bed-ridden and 15 years older. *“I started working as a midwife and did child delivery, then I did FGM as a charity”* she added.

Na'ima believes she can still do FGM now, but because people mostly do not believe in FGM anymore, she is not doing it. Na'ima regrets doing FGM: *"I didn't know about its damages."* she said. She once mutilated 15 girls together *"after the death of my first husband and the loss of my children, I decided to repent"*, said Na'ima.

Na'ima also revealed that before her second marriage and coming to Zardehama village, *"a Mullah gave a speech to the people here to not cut their daughters because it is haram and is not mentioned in the Quran."* That's how people in this village stopped practicing FGM.



June 28, Milan village, Garmyan

About the 'Living with FGM' Programme:

The life-long effects of FGM are a complex issue, with many layers of negative effects that FGM has on an individual and societal level. As part of a holistic approach to tackling FGM in Iraqi Kurdistan, and in response to demand for information and support, Wadi has started working with both women and men living with the effects FGM, in areas where the practice of FGM has been rejected.

When Wadi piloted the 'Living with FGM' programme in 2019, it was done in response to prior experience with anti-FGM campaigning. So many of the women the Wadi teams work with to stop the practice shared their experiences both physical and emotional about the immense difficulties of living with FGM. They told of the problems they had physically with childbirth, enjoying sexual relations, the strain on their marriages, the pain and difficulty with menstruation, and of ongoing psychological trauma. Since these women have asked for help, the teams committed themselves to provide information and support these women in dealing with their realities as FGM survivors. Due to the sensitivity of this topic and the extreme taboo surrounding it, it is not something to deal with in regular awareness seminars. Anonymous small groups and individual case advice and treatment are much preferred by the women.

This pilot project was a learning journey for the teams. They were trained by psychologists on new methods and tools, and through guided trial and error they have been able to find a successful model. The project worked with multipliers in places where people have already abandoned FGM. They discussed and shared tools on how to live with the emotional and physical aftermath of FGM. The long-term negative physical effects of genital cutting cannot be understated, but there is more and more evidence that sexual fulfilment begins in the mind, and with training on proper techniques both mental and physical, and learning about the female body, many women are able to find pleasure in sex. They also need (and want) support and practical information on how to deal with other aspects of women's health such as menstruation and childbirth, while living with FGM.

The villages that have committed to abandoning the practice of FGM have spent a lot of time with our teams engaging in discussions about women's rights, women's health, social problems, domestic violence, and even more difficult and taboo topics such as women's sexuality and marriage. The women in these areas are aware of their rights as women, and don't want to inflict FGM on their daughters, they are in a different stage of awareness than women in areas where FGM is encouraged. They see not only the immediate negative effects that FGM has had on their own lives and bodies, but also the larger societal effects such as many men choosing to take on second wives –who are uncut- and the problems that polygamy brings to their communities. These women have been asking the teams for information and support in dealing with their realities as FGM survivors.

The negative effects of FGM also affect men, many complain of their wives being unable to enjoy sex and the strain this puts on a marriage. This is a complex issue with many layers of negative effects that FGM has on an individual and societal level, but there is research from African countries where FGM is prevalent that FGM does not have to be the end of woman's sexual life. As part of a holistic approach to tackling FGM in Iraqi Kurdistan, and in response to demand for information and support, Wadi worked with both women and men living with the effects FGM, in areas where the practice of FGM has been rejected. It is important to clearly state that this pilot project did not want to in any way appear to condone FGM, or send the message that 'it's not that bad if you do this to your daughters, because here are some coping strategies'. Therefore this project has and will only take place in villages that have rejected the practice of FGM as a 'second phase' of anti-FGM work.

'Living with FGM' Activities:

Wadi teams conducted a total of 52 trainings with 549 participants in the areas of Erbil and Ranya.

Living with FGM seminars – Summary Data 2021		
Month	No. of Trainings	No. Participants
January		
February	public places	49
March	4	49
April	8	28
May	8	56
June	8	63
July	8	117
September	8	93
October	8	94
Total	52	549

In May 2021, a meeting was arranged for Halabja team with Dr. Rozhagr Salem, a gynecologist and representative of the Directorate of Health for reproductive health in Sulaymaniyah. Throughout years of experience the Halabja team collected various medical questions asked by women in regards to FGM, Dr. Rozhgar provided her counseling and recommendations.

From here, based on the team's feedback, an anonymous group was created for eight women in Halabja, in which two face-to-face meetings were conducted and the rest were carried out online. The methods of work were adapted according to the women's needs and wishes. In this group, the team shared all the information they had collected to ask some of their questions.

Another purpose for creating this group was to have a safe, judgement-free space for women to truly share their mental, health and sexual issues. Effective and realistic methods can only be found in a protected environment (with the help of health experts). To keep the feeling of complete safety, no pictures were taken, no voices were recorded, only written reports were admitted. Even when it comes to material sharing, no print materials were shared.

Some testimonies from the women in the group in July, 2021:

"I've been married for 16 years and never experienced orgasm" said a woman. Another one shared that she knows about orgasm but her husband has no idea and believes only men can receive pleasure in sex.

Another woman believed that her husband does try to help her reach orgasm, but she herself can't do it, so much that she despises the act of sex and even the night time. *"I feel ashamed, I can't tell my husband that I don't reach orgasm."* Said another woman. Only one of the women is not married: *"this information is so important for me, because these experiences help me prepare myself for the future."* she said.

In these meetings, the recurring issues discussed were the lack of sexual awareness of men, and the metaphysical ability to reach orgasm.

Contacting Experts, Establishing a Network

One of the crucial aspects of our program was building a network and looking for people with expertise on Living with FGM. We found a number of activists who are advocating Living with FGM.

➤ Bayane Salih, women's rights activist in Sweden:

Bayan Nasih is a women's rights activist who did clitoris reconstruction surgery in 2013, in Barcelona. She told Wadi that around 300 women did this surgery and most of them saw improvement in their sexual life. She heavily stressed that working on the mental status of women is top priority, then managing their expectations when it comes to the surgery.

The clitoris reconstruction surgery was originally carried out by a doctor in France, then two doctors from Germany and Netherlands who received training from this doctor in France.

Since 2015, the same surgery has been done in Sweden and also in France and Spain. Bayan believes this surgery is beneficial for women who went through FGM mentally, because it helps

them retrieve back something that was taken from them, *"It helps them to move on from their trauma."*

Nevertheless, surgery is controversial. Many doctors do not think it is useful. Bayan believes it is for the affected women themselves to make that judgement.

Some of her suggestions for working on this matter in Kurdistan:

- Facilitating for a doctor to learn this surgery in one of the mentioned countries, so that women in Kurdistan would have the option of reconstruction.
- To slowly talk about sex with women and establish small groups to normalize talking about issues of FGM on the psychological and sexual aspects

➤ Dr. Nigen Ja'far, a gynecologist in Denmark:

Dr. Ja'far disagrees regarding the success of the surgery; she believes there is no real way to get a clitoris back to what it used to be. She thinks women develop a psychological illness. Seeing or touching their genitals will remind them of their lack of desire and their loss. *"I think your program is very important to work on. You need to cover all the psychological, health, social and cultural aspects. You will need a sexologist and a good psychologist for this job."*, said Dr. Nigen.

➤ Hozan Mahmood, activist and feminist writer in Germany:

She supports the idea of Living with FGM program for women in Kurdistan. She believed that reconstruction surgery was done in Africa, too, using a mobile clinic. She suggested to work with a governmental hospital for doing the surgery and having a female surgeon to do it. *"The nature of this act requires a female doctor doing it due to the social sensitivity around it."*, said Hozan.

➤ Aveen Azez, legal and intimacy and sexuality investigator/counselor in Sweden:

She believes women in Kurdistan do not have much knowledge when it comes to sexuality. *"We don't know how much is the damage for mutilated women, but at some level a husband can help to retrieve senses and pleasure."*, she said. *"I believe reaching orgasm is also possible for mutilated women because only the outer part of the clitoris is cut, not the internal organs."*, she added.

She suggests working on raising awareness on the psychological level along with awareness on sexuality.

Note: Wadi plans for next year to establish a network including these experts and connect them to the teams to train them and to establish FGM strategy plans for Living with FGM. The teams will be able to transfer this knowledge to women who are asking for counseling.

ToT Training

From June to December 2020, the teams received a total of 20 pre-recorded video classes prepared by Dr. Osman. Duration of each class was 2 hours. The video classes were the replacement for the training that was planned, but could not be done in person because of Covid-19. The teams learnt new techniques on how to deal with the victims of FGM, how to

evaluate their mental state and how to detect and treat emotional/mental distress related to FGM.

In 2021, Dr. Osman held a total of 11 online zoom workshops with the staff. Each workshop included three two-hour online sessions and took place over the course of three days. It had between 12 and 14 participants each.

Topics ranged from sexual health consequences of FGM to how to help the victims with their psychological issues, depression, anxiety and stress. It was discussed how to recognize the victims' psychological and physical issues - anxiety, phobia, PTSD - and how to build connection with the victims. Referring the victims to the right specialists was also a topic.

The most challenging aspects were (a) breaking the shame that surrounds the topic of sex, (b) the women's trauma and PTSD from the experience, and lastly (c) communication between couples.



Based on the outcomes of the trainings, Wadi in cooperation with Dr. Osman is about to develop a study guide book for Living with FGM teams.

The trainings have been intense and the participating social workers felt very empowered by the new knowledge they had gained. To determine the effectiveness of the workshops, Dr. Osman concurrently conducted a study titled "Living with FGM: Improving Knowledge and Skills of health care providers in Iraqi Kurdistan". The study concluded it found "positive results in improving knowledge among the master trainers in major three areas of curative, preventive, and referral services in care for girls and women living with FGM. The knowledge and skills gained by the social workers from Wadi will be transferred to other community-level workers at the grass-root level with girls and women living with FGM. That will enable the services reaching to the unreached population thereby supporting FGM victims to ensure and enhance their health."

Notes from the teams:

In general, the women in Erbil do ask if there are ways to deal with the consequences of FGM or a way to cure their sexual issues caused by FGM. Many of them comment that it has caused a lot of issues between couples. Even the mutilated girls who are not yet married request for awareness and information to help them prepare themselves for the process of marriage in the future.

Women now believe that men have changed. They don't allow their daughters to be mutilated. This was different in the past when they would not marry a girl who was not mutilated.

Comments and stories from women:

Gulizar Muhammed (45) said that she had not mutilated her 13-year-old daughter because of Wadi. *"I attended your seminar, you talked about the damages. I decided not to cut my daughter."*, she said.

"Since I heard from TV that it is banned, I haven't cut my daughters, and I told many that you can go to jail if you do it.", said T. S. (42).

R.K. age (24) supports the law no.8 which is legally banning FGM. *"My aunt and my mother are guilty for doing FGM on me. However, they are my relatives and no one will sue their own relatives. It is good that the law exists and will scare people from doing it."*, she said.

A woman aged 34 shared she wishes there was a cure for FGM. *"Most of Kurdish women have the issues of sex with their husband, if there was a cure, women would rush to get it."*, she said.

A woman in Asrilan village in Ranya said that she had her 7- and 5-year-old daughters mutilated. *"Many people still believe in it and want to do it."*, she said.

A woman from Sarsyian village in Ranya asked counseling from Wadi teams. She told them though she loves her husband, she cannot feel anything during intercourse because of mutilation. *"I wish there was a cure"*, she said. The team advised her on the psychological level and encouraged her to communicate well with her husband.

After one of the seminars in Maydan sub-district, Garmyan, a woman told her story to the team. Though she has been mutilated, she has been married for 13 years, and never told her husband about her mutilation. *"I never told him, because he would look at me as a handicapped, you know men don't like mutilated women."*, she said. She wishes men would understand mutilated women are not to be blamed if they don't response in sex. *"I hope one day our issues as mutilated can be solved, especially when it comes to sex, because most issues among couples arise because of sex."*, she said.

R.F. (30) expressed her wish to have a medical option to receive treatment for women who are mutilated. *"I am sure most of Kurdish women will come and do the treatment, because only women understand the pain that comes with FGM."*, she said.

K.Sh, a man aged 42, told the teams that he worked in pharmacies years ago and he saw many men coming and asking for treatments for their wives to increase the sexual drive. *"I believe there is no treatment for it to cure completely."*, he said.

The project is supported by the Netherlands' Consulate General in Erbil and Roselo Foundation.



2.3. ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION – KEEP KURDISTAN GREEN

Keep Kurdistan Green - a two-year Wadi project promotes environmental education in schools in Kurdish northern Iraq. Main focus of the project is to get children and young people involved so that they express themselves and become active.

Keep Kurdistan Green engages directly with school students and teachers in Halabja, Garmany, Ranya and Erbil through a combination of seminars and small projects that are student led. The different student groups are encouraged to network with one another, share ideas and work together. The student groups organise trash clean up, create green spaces at their schools and encourage entire communities to participate in more eco-friendly practices. Leaflets and other educational material are developed together. This project continues Wadi's vision of supporting people to work together creatively to solve their own problems, come together as citizens and take ownership of communal spaces, by providing both short term boosts and long term technical support on how to reach those goals.



Keep Kurdistan Green is taking place at 34 selected schools in the Kurdish region. Specially trained environmental teams visit these schools again and again in order to build up a relationship of trust with the students and the teachers and parents, to ensure a lasting commitment on the part of all those involved. Continuity and reliability have proven time and again to be key to the success and sustainability of Wadi projects.

The project has an impact beyond the immediate circle of participants through social media and press coverage. It is a message of individual responsibility and collective action that is being conveyed: Each individual bears responsibility.

Conscious behavior in everyday life helps to improve nature and our immediate environment. And if we organize ourselves, we can multiply our forces and achieve amazing things.

Outcomes after one year

The project was met with much enthusiasm. Children were eager to talk about environmental issues, express their worries and their wishes for a better future in a total of 235 seminars. Apart from talking, there was a great desire to contribute to environment protection and do something practical. So there have been activities at all participating schools, ranging from decorating the school with plants and flower pots to collective rubbish collection in nearby areas. Most schools also engaged in planting trees and bushes on the school grounds, since most schools have much concrete and very little green. A student environment group of 10- 20 committed students has been formed at each school. These groups took responsibility for watering and caretaking, together with the janitor and responsible teachers. Many actions have been covered by local media, including TV.



Dec. 8: Tazade school Garmyan



Oct. 9: Sarqala Hasira village

Background

The focus of the “Green City Halabja” campaign which started in 2018 was the improvement of the green spaces and public parks, planting of trees and flowers, the recycling of trash and the end of plastic bag use.

Activists in Halabja worked to make their city the first “plastic bag free” city in Iraq, single use plastic bags were replaced completely by reusable tote bags made of cotton. Cotton bags were sewed and labelled with the logo of the campaign, then activists visited the marketplace and local shops of Halabja to distribute the bags among the people there. The goal was to encourage the residents of the city to use reusable bags instead of single use plastic ones for their daily purchasing.

The action joined an initiative which started in February 2019 to end plastic use in Halabja. What made it special, however, was the connection between two different topics: protection of the environment and an improved possibility of income for low-income women from Halabja or women refugees; as the main protagonists of this project were not only local activist, but also women refugees and IDPs – seeking protection in Halabja. After their arrival refugees, especially women, normally have trouble finding regular income, this project works to change that, by

sewing, designing and selling the tote bags. This project is having a positive effect on the community; people in Halabja are seeing the benefits that come from working to protect the environment by planting trees and having green spaces. Replacing plastic bags with cotton ones has also been very positive for the city and for the women refugees who are starting to generate a steady income for themselves. Halabja would like to be a role model for other cities in the field of environment protection.

The project is supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and Roselo Foundation.

2.4. MOBILE PLAYGROUNDS

In 2021 the mobile playgrounds have only been active a few times in the summer months. They offered their services at remote schools and kindergartens in the Garmyan and Ranya regions.

The busses are equipped with toys, climbing frames, writing and coloring pencils and a children's library, music instruments, drawing tools, games, sports equipment and other materials.

The Mobile Playgrounds are sent to the poor and remote villages in the hot plains of Garmyan and the isolated places in the mountains of Ranya. Villages with high percentage of refugee/IDP populations are also visited often.

The project aims to support the children through playing and learning, and is assisted by a team of educational supervisors. None of these villages have any existing facilities for children – be it playgrounds or parks or anything similar. For almost all the children in these regions the Play Bus is the only pure entertainment and fun they have in their hard daily life. Moreover, most of these villages don't have any professionals who have any pedagogical or medical skills.

Activities of the Mobile Playground

Play Bus teams are offering a combination of activities. Some are focusing on play and fun entertainment for the children, while others emphasize education, health or the prevention of domestic violence.

The activities include a variety of lectures and awareness programmes for the children and their parents. Often parents are not aware of how to prepare healthy food for their children, therefore the teams are confronted with various forms of malnutrition. The teams developed a sustainable method to teach mothers how to prepare a proper diet including vitamins and minerals. In some cases parents lack the skill to see if their children suffer from diseases or sickness.

The teams are raising awareness about

- Healthy Diet
- Dental Hygiene
- Hygiene for body and clothes
- Food Hygiene
- Simple first aid assistance for minor injuries
- Non-violent child-raising

Many times the teams find themselves confronted with severe problems in the families and various forms of violence. Many parents have not yet been exposed to the idea that you can educate children in a positive and non-violent way. The teams offer advice to parents and make efforts to moderate in family conflicts. In 2020, the Mobile Playgrounds have visited 33 villages, some of them multiple times. Approximately 770 children benefited.

This project is supported by the German Consulate in Erbil, Roselo Foundation and Wadi private donations.

2.5. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION FOR REFUGEES AND IDPS

WADI, in partnership with the local organizations Jinda and Qubahan, continued implementing the last year of the 3-year project “Access to inclusive quality primary and secondary education for Syrian Refugees in KRI” under UNESCO supervision and EU funding.



Wadi as a lead organization, in partnership with Jinda organization for women and girls effected by war, and Qubahan Organization for Development (QoD) as associating partners, have implemented a part of the project “Access to Quality Inclusive Primary and Secondary Education for Refugees and IDPs in Conflict Affected Areas of Iraq” under UNESCO supervision and European Union fund. This part of the project was focusing on implementing the project’s plan in the area of KRI, targeting Syrian Refugees in eight camps, and students of 15 primary and secondary schools. Thus, during the last year of the project, Wadi in partnership with Jinda and QoD, and in coordination with UNESCO project team, has successfully overachieved all the project’s goals and milestones through implementing different activities in the targeted areas.

The project team started the implementation by coordinating with MoE-KRG, GDoEs, Sub-DoEs, camp managements, and other stakeholders who are working with the education sector in the region. This coordination was based on several meetings with all parties to discuss and identify the gaps, and the priority of the project activities. Methodologically, in order to reach high quality implementation, Wadi identified the gaps by conducting monthly assessments in the targeted location and analyzed the obtained information.

8254 students in total benefitted from the core support provided by the project. These students were supported and participated in activities implemented by Wadi in their schools, such as:

“Back to School” awareness campaign, re-enroll 916 out of school students, facilitate the registration process for the new academic year, printing and distributing textbooks and reach 2296 students, providing stationery kits by the beginning of each academic year during the project period for 2206

students, providing daily (and during examination period) transportation support for 752 students, providing PSS/ sessions for 8254, supporting students through providing case management for 2382 students, conducting summer catch-up classes for 1956 students, and hiring 106 teachers in eight Syrian refugees' secondary schools to deliver the curricula.

Regarding the teachers, Wadi through its activities reached 1059 teachers in all 15 targeted schools through implementing different activities such as hiring and providing incentives in coordination with MoE-KRG, providing teachers learning materials, conducting three teachers' trainings during the 4 years of the project, and providing transportation support for teachers in Sulaymaniyah in coordination with Khak company that volunteered to transfer nine teachers for free during the last three years. Thus, the fifteen targeted schools' administrations received continues support from the project, this included providing the necessary administration materials monthly, providing WASH supplies, sanitization and cleaning materials, renovate/ rehabilitate/ expand the targeted schools. In addition, fixing and developing the electricity system in the schools.

In general, Wadi and its partners, with UNESCO team support, have been able to build a strong relationship with the beneficiaries, the MoE-KRG, and different departments of education in the region. This supportive relationship developed in time based on the high quality implementation and performance. Wadi has also supported several other agencies who are working in the field. Among others they were filling the gaps that were caused by other agencies when they suddenly abandoned the Syrian refugee primary schools and stopped paying teachers incentives, which caused a temporary closure of more than 20 schools. UNESCO and Wadi agreed then to re-allocate the project fund to cover primary schools' teachers' incentives to ensure the continuity of the education for Syrian refugee children. In addition, Wadi through this project covered the Syrian refugee schools' needs from 2017 to 2021 when most of the agencies withdrew from Syrian refugee camps because they started focusing more on the liberated areas in the provinces of Mosul, Anbar, and Salah Al-Din.

By the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, Wadi in coordination with its local partner QoD designed a plan to continue the education process virtually by creating specific Facebook groups and pages for each targeted school. Students were invited to join the virtual sessions. Ultimately, the teachers actively posted sessions according to the schools' headmasters schedules and the goals in the camps were successfully achieved according to the targets.

This project has not only enabled continuity of school education for Syrian refugee children, but also raised the teaching quality standards.

Unfortunately, after project end and lack of funding, most of the targeted schools have been closed because no agencies or donors were willing to pay teachers' incentives in the Syrian refugee camps. This caused a miserable situation which even brought the education process to a halt for a while. When the Regional Government finally tried to cover this gap, they could not pay for all required teachers in the schools. This will definitely lead to considerable education deficits.

3. LOCAL PARTNERS, SUPPORTED BY WADI

3.1. SUPPORT FOR YAZIDI ISIS SURVIVORS

Jinda Center has supported Yazidi ISIS survivors - women, girls and kids from different ages and areas - with job opportunities, vocational courses, including (English, Computer, Art, STEM) and social and medical support. Additionally, Jinda has put lots of efforts into coronavirus prevention and awareness raising in the camps and beyond.

Due to the continuing spread of the pandemic, Jinda continued producing protective materials which have been distributed in six camps in Dohuk, in Shingal, in schools and universities, camp managements, community centers, volunteers groups and orphanages. Jinda also supported five ladies from the camps to produce face masks. The ladies received monthly materials and fees for their work. The masks that have been produced were distributed by local volunteers who also encouraged the community to keep their distance and wear their masks.

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The recent Covid-19 crisis has left lots of people jobless. This situation is very difficult and affects the women and girls and also their kids. This activity gave the possibility to generate income and gave effective help in this difficult situation.



Covid-19 awareness activities in the camps

The pandemic unfortunately is spreading very high in the IDP camps. The camps are already lacking health service. Jinda which has been taking care of refugees and especially Yazidi women for years, has been involved in the distribution of food and basic necessities, but also of sanitary materials, such as masks and disinfectants. Hence the idea of producing masks and

protective material for the distribution to the Yazidi community and in general to the population in need.

This program started in May 2020 and is still being implemented. It is planned to continue producing masks throughout 2022.

In addition to sewing masks program, Jinda has opened educational courses for Yazidi orphans who live in different camps in Dohuk. The kids were left without father, mother or both. Jinda's idea is to support those kids who have lost their parents during the attack of ISIS in 2014.

Some of these kids live in orphanages located in Sharya, Shikhan and Dohuk. Others live with family members in small tents in the camps. Those kids, especially those who have been brainwashed by ISIS, need psychosocial support, education and entertainment.

In addition to supporting orphans, Jinda also opened several courses for ISIS survivors - women, girls and boys - who live in six camps in Dohuk (Kabarto 1 , Kabarto 2, Sharya, Esyan, Rawanga, and Khanke camps).

The courses included

- Basic Computer Skills
- English for Beginners
- Art
- STEM (Science, Mathematics, Engineering and Technology)

Through this project, the beneficiaries received a sustainable improvement in this difficult situation due to Covid19 and the lack of services especially in the camps. Within 2021, Jinda was also able to celebrate international women's day with fifty women and girls, International Children Day with one hundred kids, Christmas with 135 kids and supporting 136 families effected in Sharya camp fire.

As we enter a new phase of living with the dangers of COVID-19, and low average of vaccination especially in the IDPS Camps, Jinda started the implementation of the Covid-19 and vaccine awareness campaign project to reduce the spread of Covid-19 by promoting simple safety and prevention measures such as masking, use of hand-sanitizer gel and providing accurate Covid vaccine information with the aim of empowering camp residents.

The team gathered 10-15 women in an open place with a large area separated to practice the social distancing. The social workers and psychologist explained the project goals and activities to them and shared all the information needed for the protection. The women and girls received



Kids party with children from Kabarto I and II on International Children's Day

health kits including masks, sanitizers and health instructions brochures. Masks were also distributed in the camps, health facilities, support centers, schools, etc.

Activities of the project:

- Daily visit of social workers to the camp with the help of camp volunteers and self-awareness teams to deliver unbiased information and convince people to get their vaccine.
- Explaining the virus and its risk, ways of infection and health consequences.
- Raising awareness on fake news about the virus, why vaccination is a great idea - in fact the only idea that promises any hope - expose the myths and provide fact-based information.
- Helping people getting a vaccination appointment by registering online or visiting vaccination centers nearby.
- Print and distribute health posters and brochures.
- Distribution of masks and sanitizers.



International Women's Day with ISIS survivors

The misinformation continue to make the situation even more dangerous for an already vulnerable group. We continued to intensify informing people about the basic steps they can take to protect themselves and each other. There is still a lot of misinformation and 'fake news' being shared about Coronavirus and the vaccine, and there is a large cultural resistance to practicing basic prevention measures such as social distancing and mask wearing.

We expanded our project to reach more camps and involving self-awareness groups to support their community. As Covid infections rise again in the camps Yazidi refugees are still – 7 years after the genocide - forced to live in, groups of young camp residents (many of them women and girls who survived captivity of the Islamic State) are taking action. The self-organized groups are raising awareness and working within their communities to encourage vaccination. This dynamic ground-roots campaign is not just a matter of public health, it is also an emotional plea to protect the vulnerable Yazidi community.

As one team members explains: “Our grandfathers and grandmothers survived the grip of Daesh, we do not want to lose them because of Corona.”

Each team consists of four young ladies who escaped the attack of ISIS in Shingal in 2014. They settle in six camps in Dohuk (Kabartu 1, Kabartu 2, Sharya, Khanke, Eryan and Qadya). This campaign started in December 2021, and in this short time, vaccination rates have gone from 20% to 50%. Jinda is planning to continue this important campaign in 2022.

The teams of Yazidi youth have chosen to organize themselves in order to campaign within the camps to raise awareness on the safety of the vaccines. Misinformation runs rampant, and access to sound medical advice can be hard to come by. These 6 teams of volunteers are advocating for their communities to protect themselves, and to work together to protect each other. They meet with camp residents and go tent to tent, talking, answering questions about vaccine safety, sharing leaflets, putting up posters, handing out masks, and sanitary hand-gel.

52,685 masks, 183 sanitizers and 2,500 posters and flyers have been distributed.

Jinda is supported by Roselo Foundation, Crosspoint Europe, Joss Stone Foundation and SEZ.

3.2. COMMUNITY RADIO DENG NWE

Radio Denge NWE, the independent community radio, is dedicated to women's and youth issues in a community and local context.

Denge NWE is a community radio station managed by the local NWE organization and supported by WADI. Very exceptional in this region, the station is completely independent and not affiliated to any party. It is broadcasting 11 hours daily, from 8:00 am to 7:00 pm, on FM 88.6 MHz in Halabja governorate, Sharazoor, Hawraman and Arbat.

The morning programs are broadcasted in Kurmanji dialect and Arabic language. They are dealing with hot topics of local society, focusing especially on refugees and IDPs, but also including other health, social or cultural issues.

The afternoon programs present news, music time and various special programs on current issues. The programme includes daily coverage of youth and women's issues, as well as daily awareness on health, human rights, women's rights, FGM, children's rights, refugees in Iraq and Syria, environment protection, electricity and water infrastructure. It is aired in Sorani and Hawrami dialect.

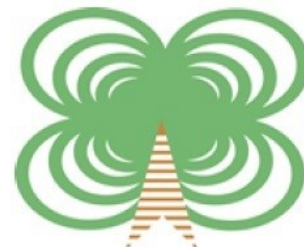
Daily Program

- Women and youth topics
- awareness about health, human rights, women's rights, FGM, children's rights, refugees in Iraq and Syria, environment transformation, electricity and water
- private announcements, "lost & found"

Weekly program

- Special program: live program about the hot topics and hosting the responsible people inside the area, sometimes three to four episodes are presented, 29 programs were broadcasted.

- Special programs about refugees and IDPs: live program focusing on the situation of refugees and IDPs in Halabja province and Arbat. The refugees and IDPs were invited to the studio to discuss their problems and needs, or the presenter visited their camps or their houses. During the year there were 43 programs and reports.



Dangi NWE Radio

Community Radio for Women and Youth



Special program about COVID-19 with the Director of Health Department in Halabja

- A series of special programs about an environment awareness raising project which was realized in Halabja by NWE organization in collaboration with the German Consulate in Erbil. 12 programs have been broadcasted.



On December 4, 2021, as a part of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence a special program was held, Lawyer Marwan Alubaidy from Salahadin joined us to talk about violence cases and the killing of women and girls along with increasing the statistics of violence in Iraq.

- A series of special programs on health about coronavirus protection in 3 languages, Sorani, Kermanji and Arabic, was presented by hosting the doctors and experts in this field. 46 Programs have been broadcasted.

- A series of special programs about the Takamul project, "public awareness for water conservation " which was implemented by NWE organization by the cooperation with USAID in Halabja province, 12 programs have been presented.

- 6 radio spots about water conservation have been produced in Arabic language and Kurdish (Sorani and Kurmancji)

- A series of coronavirus special programs, dealing with protection, how to quarantine at home and how to treat infected persons. This project was implemented by NWE in cooperation with the German Consulate in Erbil. 12 programs have been broadcasted.

- 12 radio spots about coronavirus awareness have been produced. Implemented by NWE and in cooperation with the German Consulate in Erbil.

- A series of special programs about the protection and response for the sexual violence and violence based on gender inside the refugees and IDPs in Sulaymanyah and Garmian, this project was implemented by the development center for democracy and human rights in cooperation with UNHCR. 6 programs have been broadcasted.



On November 18, in the context of confronting online harassment in Barika and Ashty camps, a special program was held. Aso Wahab, digital security trainer, joined the program to discuss how to deal with harassment in social media.

- A series of special programs about the "16 days of activism against violence on women" was broadcasted under the slogan of "Orange the world". The aim was to prevent violence and honour killings. 16 Programs have been broadcasted.

- A series of special programs about the no-to-violence project and gender equality. Implemented by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in cooperation with UNFPA. 3 programs have been presented.

- Klili komalga: it is a live program about women's problems and how to solve them in a legal way. The program is hosted by a legal assistance organization. 13 programs were presented.

- A program about monitoring the general directorates of Halabja province: it is a live program about the problems of the general directorates of Halabja province. The program is hosting experts. It is part of a project which was supported by Halwest and NED. 24 programs were presented.

- Sport NWE : this program focuses on the national and international sports news, 32 programs were presented.

- Zhingakaman : weekly live program which includes hosting environment experts to discuss environment topics and provide awareness. 12 programs were presented.

- Simay parezga is a live program. 12 programs were presented. Simay parezga is reporting news about Halabja governorate.

- Sayai partuk is a live program about literature. Authors are always invited. 8 programs were presented.

- Short topics: environment information, science, economy and health

Much more about Radio Denge Nwe's daily journalist work may be found on:

<https://www.facebook.com/NWE-ORG-halabja-1587251261293645/>

Radio Denge Nwe is supported by Roselo Foundation and private donations.

3.3. SUPPORT FOR REFUGEES IN LESBOS/GREECE

Since 2019, Wadi has been supporting self-organized refugee teams in Kara Tepe Camp in Lesbos/Greece. Refugees are active in many fields, such as recycling, cleaning, maintenance and education.

The situation for refugees in Lesbos is not as dire anymore as it used to be. Food, security and accommodation have gradually improved in Kara Tepe camp, although they still do not meet international standards. The real problem is how people are treated in terms of their future prospects. In many cases the asylum procedures take years. People tend to feel powerless and insignificant towards a bureaucratic machinery which is holding them in the camp indefinitely without any prospect for a better life. People are basically doomed to doing nothing and being completely dependent on the aid organizations and structures in place.

In this situation Wadi is supporting the people in restoring their dignity and self-respect. Most things do not require aid workers to do it FOR the people. People can help themselves, and they know much better than any aid organization what they need and how it should be done.

Wadi supported Moria Corona Awareness Team (MCAT), the Moria White Helmets (MWH) and Moria Academia, all of them are self-organized refugee groups made up of committed camp residents. Until October, support was coordinated in cooperation with Stand By Me Lesbos, a committed local NGO.

The **Recycling Project** involves a recycling campaign whereby camp residents use recyclables in exchange for food received from the food line. The project participants also receive fresh cold water in the summer and different food items such as eggs, onions, juices, etc. in the winter. This project raises awareness of the importance of waste management, which, in turn, becomes a tool for environmental education. The camp residents who are non-participants also benefit from the positive effects of the reduced amounts of rubbish present in their living environment. This campaign improves the overall public health in the camp.



In the new temporary camp of Kara Tepe, there were approximately 7,000 asylum seekers residing in the beginning of the year. Poor waste management has, in the past, caused a huge waste issue within camp, leading to a public health issue. This issue is further compounded in times of Covid-19 and must be addressed for the safety of all on the island. Approximately 40% of all daily rubbish is comprised of plastic bottles.

This project aims to recycle these bottles, reward the project participants with fresh, cold water (in the summer) which is highly lacking in camp, and raise awareness on waste management, as well as bring environmental education, with special interest to child and adolescent engagement. The project takes 15,000 plastic bottles daily out of camp and to recycling. It strengthens Mytilene Municipality's position in the camp and is implemented with collaboration of the refugee self-help group, Moria Corona Awareness Team (MCAT).

The project started at Moria Camp in March 2020 and is continuing with success in the New Temporary Camp of Kara Tepe. The affected groups were the 7,000 asylum seekers residing in the Camp and the roughly 30,000 people residing in Mytilene. The direct target group are camp residents who are participating in the project, recycling water bottles, receiving fresh drinking water in summer or different food items such as onions, potatoes in winter. In addition, once a week, they receive hygiene products, and opportunity to participate in educational activities. The camp residents who are non-participants also benefit from the positive effects of the reduced amounts of rubbish present in their living environment.

This campaign improves the overall public health in the camp. Consequently, the families and community members who interact with the individual participants of this project also benefit through obtaining additional information on waste management, recycling and environmental conservation. MCAT members have received education and training with regards to waste management, recycling and environmental conservation in order to relay said material to project participants.

Mytilene has seen an immediate impact from this project with the reduction of plastic bottles reaching streams, roadways and the sea. Proper education on recycling and environmental conservation directed to asylum seekers has and will improve the daily practice of individuals on the island, as well as further protect the ecosystem on Lesbos. Nearly 40% of camp residents are below 18 years of age and lack activities. This project is designed to engage and educate, especially during the time when the lock-down measures were put in place for Covid-19.

Corona Awareness Campaign: From the first wave of the covid pandemic a small group of immigrants inside the camp with the help of Stand By Me Lesbos started the campaign of information and protection against the deadly virus. This action has two parts. The first part concerns informing migrants about the virus and how they can protect themselves.

Moria Corona Awareness Team visits from tent to tent handing out leaflets as well as using a loudspeaker to inform every family and every resident of the camp. The second part concerns the distribution of hygiene items and protection against the virus. Every week through Stand By Me Lesbos they distribute masks, vitamins, antiseptics, soaps and gloves in order to be safe. It is very important to continue this action because Covid19 become more dangerous than ever and conditions inside the Maurovouni camp are not ideal.

The **Distribution Project** involves distributing aids to refugees. MCAT partners with the Hope Project in delivering donations to around 70 refugees daily. The volunteers go from tent to tent and collect the aid request forms from the refugees. They are packed at The Hope Project warehouse accordingly. Stand by me Lesbos picks up the donations, and passes them to MCAT at various recycling points. As a result, the refugees in the camp receive the requested clothing and items they need.

The refugee camp's **Waste Management** project is managed by the Moria White Helmets (MWH). The program involves the regular collection of rubbish to ensure the inside, as well as the outside of the camp, remains clean. The Mytilini Municipality works in collaboration with the MWH, in cleaning the areas outside of the camp around old Moria, Mytilini city. SBML serves as a bridge to host both the local community and the refugees. This collaborative project has become a means to increase the engagement of both parties and to improve social cohesion.



The **Electricity Project** is a cooperation between the camp's Management Technical Team and Moria White Helmet, supported by SBML as the bridge between Greek authorities and self-organized groups. This project involves crucial services of both providing electricity to tents and constant electrical maintenance in different zones of the camp.

Moria White Helmet (MWH) and its Special Skill Electric Team, are in charge of conducting and maintaining electrical work in the new camp, by a shared agreement of working with and under the supervision of the Camp Managements Technical Department. MWH involves in minor electricity issues such as fixing damages in different zones of the camp. It supports the Electric Team from the Camp by offering emergency technical support and material support in weekends, holidays.

Academia is an informal education center run by camp residents for camp residents. The aim of informal education is not to take over Greek authorities' competence in education, but to prepare a smooth transition from informal to formal education in schools in order for camp residents to be integrated into the country they will be living in. The Mobile Classrooms which are located inside the camp enable the selforganized groups to run their projects using the mobile classroom buses as a learning space, and to access teaching resources and materials stored on the buses. Our Classroom Programs include first aid training, fire safety training, tool lending, computer lessons, music lessons, languages lessons and a dedicated sewing space, all create the ability for camp residents to improve the daily situation and increase the health and safety of camp residents.

Support for refugees in Lesbos is funded by private donations.



3.4. KIRKUKNOW - INDEPENDENT NEWS OUTLET

KirkukNow is an independent electronic news website. It publishes stories and events taking place within or relevant to Iraq's disputed territories, as defined in the Iraqi constitution, with the aim of promoting coexistence in those areas and providing easy access to information.

Overall progress assessment



kirkuknow.com/en/

The main focus of KirkukNow's strategy from the beginning of 2021 was to achieve the goals of the contract signed with the European Endowment for Democracy for 2021 and 2022 with KirkukNow. The overall goals which include expansion and achieving a wider diverse reach of audience in Iraq's disputed territories, more diverse sources of funding and capacity building are being taken into consideration in the third reporting period of the project.

KirkukNow's team has worked on improving the outreach to the local communities of Iraq's "Disputed Territories", such as religious and ethnic minorities, women and the IDPs. They have produced dozens of stories addressing each of the topics in concern and the impact of the stories and their reach has been addressed.

Furthermore, from June to November of 2021, KirkukNow successfully ended a project about documentation and publishing of violations committed against journalists and media workers in

the Kurdistan Region and the disputed territories. The project was funded by Internews Organization. The project included the publishing of 80 stories related to violations against journalists, among them 30 investigative reports produced by KirkukNow staff, the other 50 reports were produced by Internews. 30 of the stories were translated and published in English, two different categories were started in the Kurdish and English sections of KirkukNow website under (Free Press) where the stories were published. All the articles of project have reached around 984,288 audiences during the six-month period of the project across all our platforms.



"Breaking News"

In December 2021, two stories by KirkukNow won first prize in a press competition for best reports of on human rights issues in 2021. The competition was organized by Deng (Voice) Radio in cooperation with the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), in which two reports by KirkukNow, among 25 reports, were awarded the first prize equally. The two stories by KirkukNow were selected for the first prize among many other stories in a local press competition to choose the best reports of 2021 about human rights. In 2017, 2018 and 2019, the stories and follow-ups of (KirkukNow) correspondents won prizes in the same competition.

More than 3,195 pieces (858 pieces on website, 984 posts on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Kirkuknow> and 492 on our Instagram page, in addition to 861 tweets on our twitter account) pieces from all genres were produced during this four reporting period, which is in line with the contract required 2400 for four months. The stories included news, reports, follow-ups, my story, from people, video and photo stories (See the graph No. 01 Annex 03).

KirkukNow has been active on Facebook and other social media platforms throughout the third reporting period and has increased the numbers of likes and followers on Facebook, KirkukNow Facebook page likes have increased to 224,330 from originally 202,655 likes during the third reporting period. Meanwhile, with publishing 854 tweets during the third reporting period, the twitter account had 722.1K impressions.

In terms of sustainability, KirkukNow has been able to reach an understanding to work together in a new project. The purpose of this project is to dispel misinformation and rumors around

COVID-19 and the vaccines, by establishing two-way communication, and by collecting community perspectives, questions and concerns around the pandemic and vaccines. The project aims to respond to communities' COVID-19 information needs, while effectively raising community awareness on the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic and the importance of vaccinations and promoting coordinated assistance to IDP inside camps and in communities.

Main lessons learned, challenges and opportunities

There have been a number of key lessons learned during this reporting period. While covering the Iraqi elections in 2021 and during work on Internews's project, it became clear that the members of the security units have no or little information about how to deal with journalists. Most of the time, they dealt with journalists the same way they dealt with ordinary citizens and prevent them from doing their work. Before any project, such as the elections process, the journalists need more preparations. Due to the large number of candidates, delays in the elections, and since they were early elections, KirkukNow could not catch up with all the lists and candidates to work on. Another lesson learned is that KirkukNow can cover areas outside the geography it works on, for example when working on human rights issues, freedom of express and IDPs, which gained importance to during the past four months. It appeared that KirkukNow has audience there, too. One of the reports which were awarded in December 2021 was related to human rights in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Meanwhile, there have been a few challenges in the reporting period. Political risks; negative attitude of local political fractions and or militia's makes them take a negative stance against KirkukNow and its reporters. KirkukNow team sometimes face threats and defamation when using some professional words in its stories, for example when using (killed) instead of (martyred). This has become a big problem the staff is faced with.



Security risks: Journalists across the country face violence and intimidation. KirkukNow has documented dozens of cases across the country. Politicians, party members and militias are behind the threats. Meanwhile, chances of getting funding has decreased and became more difficult. The restrictions across the world have made it difficult for media organizations to meet and build better networks. Still many militants who belong to different radical groups operate in the areas of our focus. As a result, security concerns are always a challenge for team and journalists in the disputed territories of Iraq. Financial sustainability is another concern. Further diversifying the sources of income for KirkukNow is one our major tasks in order to help KirkukNow become more sustainable.

Meanwhile, as we are heading towards the new year of 2022, challenges of the pandemic including vaccination and related Covid fake news as well as dealing with problems related to the draught and other major challenges remain as priorities. Local independent media outlets and freelance journalists need more training. We need a fresh generation of journalists to enter

the market. Safety of journalists remains a big issue, as politicians and militias became more hostile against journalists.

All in all, the press freedom in Iraq and especially the areas we cover are featured by serious concern, particularly the behavior of the security apparatus, the selective application of laws, and the lack of compliance with relevant legal procedures and international human rights standards, including fair trial.

Gender and cross-cutting issues

Considering gender perspective remained one of our main tasks during the third reporting period. In the past four months, (KirkukNow) produced a number of reports on issues related to violence against women and violation of women's rights, specifically in Kirkuk province. Producing and publishing these reports was at a time when no shelters were available in the province for battered women, though KirkukNow had in the past 10 years underlined through its news and reports the need to the establishment of such shelters. Finally, in December 2021, the Iraqi federal government decided to open a shelter as soon as possible, according to Intisar Karim, director of Development and Women Affairs' department in the Kirkuk local administration, who emphasized that, "as soon as the restoration work of the shelter's building is completed, abused women will be safe here with us."

According to statistics obtained by KirkukNow from Kirkuk Police Command, nearly 500 cases of domestic violence have been officially recorded since the beginning of 2021.

Links of several reports related to violations against women during the past four months:

<https://kirkuknow.com/en/news/66961>

<https://kirkuknow.com/en/news/66394>

<https://kirkuknow.com/en/news/66774>

<https://kirkuknow.com/en/news/67177>

In a ceremony held in Sulaimaniya city on November 27th, 2021 and attended by a range of religious figures, writers and journalists, KirkukNow released "*Kaka's in the Time of Corona*" booklet, in cooperation with Tolerance Without Borders Institute, which also participated in the



KIRKUKNOW Home News Reports Follow-ups Multimedia My Story From people Iraq Votes FreePress

Shelter for abused women in Kirkuk soon

2021-12-04

Nineveh, March 2019: A painting expressing violence against women, in a women's gathering for the residents of Sinuni sub-district of Shingal (Sinjar) district. Ibrahim Yazidi

By Karwan Salihi in Kirkuk

The Iraqi federal government has approved to inaugurate a shelter for women exposed to violence, after unremitting and continuous efforts by activists and defenders of women's rights.

The opening of the shelter, according to Intisar Karim, responsible for the development and women's department in the Kirkuk province administration, is currently dependent on time and a number of logistical matters. The shelter is scheduled to open its doors to women exposed to

More News

- IDPs and refugees vaccinated by mobile and rotary teams
- Admin issues impede access of Christians to Covid jobs in Kirkuk

Report about the opening of a shelter for battered women:
<https://kirkuknow.com/en/news/67022>

event by releasing a book named *“Diversity and Pluralism in Kurdistan Region”*. The ceremony was organized jointly by Tolerance Without Borders Institute and KirkukNow. It was the second time the “Kaka’is in the Time of Corona” booklet being introduced after it was first released and introduced in ceremony held in Rizgari compound in Daququ district, 44 km south of Kirkuk province.

In a new move, KirkukNow will soon open its news section for its Podcast. Earlier, the first podcast was produced by KirkukNow in November 2021. Three topics related to violations against journalists were produced as podcasts.

<https://kirkuknow.com/ku/news/66872>

<https://kirkuknow.com/ku/news/66853>

<https://kirkuknow.com/ku/news/66807>

Other activities

KirkukNow is engaged in talks with Internews to work as a partner in a new project called “Rooted In Trust”. The purpose of this project is to dispel misinformation and rumours around COVID-19 and the vaccines, by establishing two-way communication, and by collecting community perspectives, questions and concerns around the pandemic and vaccines. The project aims to respond to communities’ COVID-19 information needs, while effectively raising community awareness on the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic and the importance of vaccinations and promoting coordinated assistance to IDP inside camps and in communities. According to the experience of the first stage of the project and what was discussed between the partner and representatives of Internews for the Rooted in Trust project, the partner will perform the following tasks to contribute to the fulfilment of the global objective IR2. Strengthen national-level responses to the infodemic and COVID-19 vaccine distribution in target BHA countries for communities also experiencing existing humanitarian crises.

Supported by Roselo Foundation and Free Press Unlimited.

4. ARTICLES & MEDIA

Wadi member about situation of Yezidis Rudaw TV 06-01

<https://www.facebook.com/sfin.alamr/posts/1514944118706572>

Environment Campaign Kurdsat TV 03-02

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2691868470957138>

Environment Campaign PUK Media 12-04

<https://www.pukmedia.com/KS/details/?Jimare=169758>

Environment Campaign BASNEWS 15-04

<https://www.basnews.com/so/babat/682232>

Environment Campaign Payam TV 15-04

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=3881553745264275>

Environment Campaign Wishe 16-04

<http://www.wishe.net/details.aspx?=hewal&jmare=116161&Jor=1>

Environment Campaign VOA TV 17-04

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1009371582801056>

Environment Campaign Jinha Agency 19-04

<http://jinhaagency.com/so/ALL-NEWS/content/view/8202>

Environment Campaign Jinha Sorani 26-04

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=569018697821881>

Environment Campaign Roj News 27-04

<https://rojnews.news/%da%98%db%8c%d9%86%da%af%d9%87%e2%80%8c/%da%95%db%8e%da%a9%d8%ae%d8%b1%d8%a7%d9%88%db%8e%da%a9-%d8%a8%d8%a7%d8%ae%da%86%db%95%db%8c-%d8%ae%d9%88%db%8e%d9%86%d8%af%d9%86%da%af%d8%a7%da%a9%d8%a7%d9%86-%d8%b3%db%95%d9%88%d8%b2-%d8%af%db%95/>

“Iranian Girls Face Genital Mutilation Risk”

Majalla

25-06

<https://eng.majalla.com/node/143866/societyiranian-girls-face-genital-mutilation-risk>

Environment Campaign PUK Media 27-06

<https://www.pukmedia.com/KS/details/?Jimare=172880>

Environment Campaign Gali Kurdistan TV 05-08

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=520262019213021>

Environment Campaign Rwmal Media TV 26-08

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=224117859727024>

Environment Campaign Newjin 11-11

<https://www.newjin.net/details.aspx?kodtech=20609>



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or see contact details on page 2.