



FONDATION
IMPACT HOPE

Training young people for peace and dialogue

Kurdistan and Iraq

Background

During the past decade, large parts of the Iraqi society have suffered from war, terror and other forms of severe violence. Especially members of minority groups as well as those opposed to the ruling parties have experienced repeated attacks, including persecution and forced displacement, enslavement and disappearance of family members, terrorist attacks and targeted killings.

The violence and trauma of the past decades, and especially of the past four years, have led to an alarming trend of fragmentation and disintegration of different social groups, all eying each other with varying degrees of skepticism and mistrust. This does specifically apply for members of the Yezidi community who feel betrayed by their Arab neighbors and the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) who failed to protect them from ISIS terrorist attacks. It holds also true for rising tensions between host communities and refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs), in particular along ethnic and religious lines, i.e. between Kurdish and Arab, Sunni and Shia as well as Muslim and non-Muslim communities.

Brief summary of the project

The proposed project will contribute to promoting social cohesion and peaceful co-existence in Iraq. It will concentrate on different target groups: children and adolescents who will one day become independent members of the society, young activists who want to engage in peace dialogue within their communities, adult community members who have been affected by violence and trauma and have little or no contact with other groups than their own, as well as community leaders who will support the project goal by speaking out for the importance of dialogue and social cohesion. The project will provide students with information about human rights and the importance of tolerance and dialogue for a democratic and peaceful society, it will support the establishment of a network of young activists and empower them to become active within their communities,

and it will facilitate trauma-sensitive spaces of encounter for members of community groups affected by violence.

Specific objective and expected results

The overall goal of the project is to contribute to promoting social cohesion and peaceful co-existence in Iraq.

The expected results of the program are:

- Children and adolescents aged 6-18 reached by the program know about their fundamental rights and the importance of tolerance and dialogue for a democratic and peaceful society.
- Young activists aged 18-28 reached by the program engage in inter-ethnic and interreligious exchange and act as multipliers for peace dialogue within their communities.
- Trauma-sensitive interreligious and interethnic dialogue is fostered on a community level.

Activities

Human rights and peace education for children and adolescents

This component will take the form of interactive seminars and educational events for school classes. The project will be implemented in eight locations (Chamchamal, Duhok, Erbil, Halabja, Kirkuk, Alqosh Plains/Nineveh, Mosul, Sulaymaniyah). The program will adopt a child-friendly approach and help students to actively participate and propose new ways of community life.

Network of young people involved in peace and dialogue

Participants will act as multipliers and "messengers of peace" within their communities through a series of activities that will reach 400 other community members.

The youth network will operate in three regional groups: Duhok - Zakho - Sinjar; Erbil - Kirkuk; and Sulaymaniyah - Halabja.

During a series of workshops, participants will receive theoretical input and practice dialogue in a secure space. Between workshops, they will strengthen their networks at regional meetings and implement dialogue activities in their communities. A selected number of participants will deepen their understanding of interreligious and intercultural dialogue during a ten-day training course. Each year, five participants will participate in an international summer academy where they will connect with others and become multipliers.

Community dialogue groups on trauma

The project will provide meeting spaces for 800 adult members who have been affected by violence. In order to spread the message beyond closed groups and strengthen the impact of the programme, 25 community leaders will speak out on the importance of dialogue and social cohesion.

The project will be implemented in eight locations (Chamchamal, Duhok, Erbil, Halabja, Kirkuk, Alqosh/Nineveh Plains, Mosul, Sulaymaniyah).

This component of the project will primarily reach people who have experienced violence, are victims of prejudice and have little or no contact with other communities.

Contribution of the project to a real change

Iraq has seen community tensions increase with the disappearance of Saddam Hussein. Every ethnic or religious community has since been trying to survive daily life and escape the worst. A process of dialogue and the establishment of a lasting peace bringing together all communities without distinction is a new phenomenon in Iraq. Once young people understand that a peaceful society brings security and provides them with economic and social opportunities, they will lead others and bring about a change in their living environment.

Location of the project

Several regions of Iraq and Kurdistan.

Local partner

The Jiyān Foundation for Human Rights is dedicated to helping survivors of serious human rights violations in Iraq, Kurdistan and Syria, including victims of torture, genocide, political persecution, domestic and gender-based violence and terrorist attacks. The Foundation provides free medical, psychotherapeutic, legal and social support to men, women and children in eleven locations. Because rehabilitation must be understood holistically, the Jiyān Foundation also engages in human rights work in schools and in peace education.

Direct and indirect beneficiaries

Direct Beneficiaries

- 1,500 children and adolescents aged 6 to 18 years for the human rights education component
- 30 young people involved in dialogue and peace in their community

- 800 adult community members and 25 community leaders in the community dialogue stream

At least 40 per cent of the beneficiaries will be women. At least 30 per cent will be members of marginalized or under-represented groups.

Indirect beneficiaries will be family members, friends or other community members and the wider Iraqi public. It is estimated that the project will reach 10,000 people indirectly.

Sustainability of the project

Education is the best way to transmit values from generation to generation. Dialogue for peace will inevitably create well-being in villages and show the absurdity of community tensions. Young people in particular will be the driving force in this process because they dream of another society and will no longer be afraid to express themselves to bring it about.

Monitoring and evaluation

In each site, the project staff will work with pedagogical tools that they will adapt according to the various experiences developed. The project staff will also adopt tools for quality management and will closely monitor the various components of the project through a system of feedback and capitalisation of acquired knowledge.

Groups confronted with the issue of trauma will be supervised by a health professional. Surveys will be conducted each year to assess the progress of peace awareness.