

## Newsletter Autumn 2014

As a state of crisis persists in Iraqi Kurdistan, WADI continues to work to adapt to the ongoing difficult situation and empower people and strengthen human rights in the region. Continuing violence due to ongoing clashes with IS terrorists in both Iraq and Syria drive an intensified militarization of society and the humanitarian disaster that is made more acute by non-payment of public wages, which account for the majority of jobs in the Iraqi Kurdistan region. Thank you in great part to the generous donations of people from all over the world, WADI continues to work with local partners to move forward with various projects, address the severe refugee situation, and serve the people of the region.



Meeting of WADI staff in Sulaymania



Campaign against violence against girls

### Assistance to Refugees

The violent campaign of the IS terrorist group has triggered yet another refugee crisis in Iraq, including tens of thousands of Yazidi refugees who fled their ancestral homes in the Sinjar region as the terrorists advanced. An estimated 60-70,000 Yazidi refugees are living in the Khanke camp in the Dohuk province, the largest refugee camp in Iraq, and thousands of others are living in other similar camps or unfinished building structures in the region.

As a reaction to the refugee crisis, WADI, together with CPT and the Alind organization in Dohuk, has sponsored 102 Yazidi families living in unfinished building structures and is meeting with these families to understand their needs and is providing necessary supplies to help ameliorate their situations.

WADI and CPT, together with Alind, have distributed food and kitchen supplies as well as nylon sheets and tools to these families to allow them to build makeshift windows on the structures and provide protection against the elements, and is



Yazidi-family in Dehok



Yazidi-refugees in Dehok

also distributing lights and heaters and fuel to the families, along with winter clothing and other supplies. Winter seems to be arriving early in Iraqi Kurdistan, and nights are already cold, making the need for winter supplies all the more urgent. As well as continuing to provide much needed aid to these sponsored families, a team from WADI recently visited the Khanke camp and met with the refugees to better understand their needs and what assistance is most urgent, including medical care for those who have suffered directly at the hands of the ISIS terrorists. WADI continues to liaise with concerned parties on the plight of the refugees in the Khanke camp as well.

In addition, WADI, in cooperation with partner organization Alind, is establishing 3 all-female teams of social workers who will work directly with female refugees on physical and mental health issues, a project set for immediate launch which is funded by Germany's Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).



Distribution of blankets to Yazidi-refugees in Dehok

As a supplement to refugee relief efforts, the WADI team in Iraq is playing a role on lobbying for recognition of IS crimes against Yazidis, including the kidnapping of thousands of women and girls, as a genocide. WADI has prepared the first report for the women's committee of the Iraqi Kurdistan parliament. It includes interviews with survivors of IS crimes and their families and other documentation of crimes committed in this campaign against the Yazidi population.

## Campaign against FGM

WADI continues to focus on the pressing issue of Female Genitale Mutiation (FGM) in Iraqi Kurdistan, and has recently partnered with both UNICEF and Netherlands-based organization HIVOS, leveraging WADI's decade of experience in the field and broadening the network addressing the issue. In addition to the 3 WADI teams addressing FGM in Halabja, Rania, and Germiyan, the project's footprint has recently expanded through cooperation with local organisations to establish 6 additional teams, increasing the scope to now include Dohuk, Erbil and other areas. These teams work with local women, religious figures, and local government officials to raise awareness of FGM, discussing its various negative effects as well as recent laws sanctioning to those who continue to practice FGM. Despite increased awareness, FGM is still prevalent in Iraqi Kurdistan and has many ardent defenders, especially among the older generation. WADI has also recently undertaken media effort to raise awareness, which should be launched by year end, and is conducting a series of seminars throughout Iraqi Kurdistan with local organisation WOLA targeting various audiences including doctors, religious leaders, and activists.



Village woman reading an FGM brochure



Awareness course in a village in Germiyan

## Children's Play Buses

The children's "play bus" project is one of WADI's long term ongoing efforts in areas of Iraqi Kurdistan targeted by the Anfal campaign of genocide in the late 1980's. In cooperation with Green Cross, a Swiss organisation known for its work in Chernobyl following the 1986 nuclear accident, WADI maintains two play buses staffed by 3 person teams who facilitate various activities for area children including sports, arts and crafts, and puzzles and other games. The WADI play bus teams, currently based in Halabja and Goptapa, visit different villages in their respective regions and provide healthy, fun, and intellectually stimulating activities for the children and use their visits as opportunities to raise awareness of the importance of childhood education, and promote practices to maintain health and hygiene.



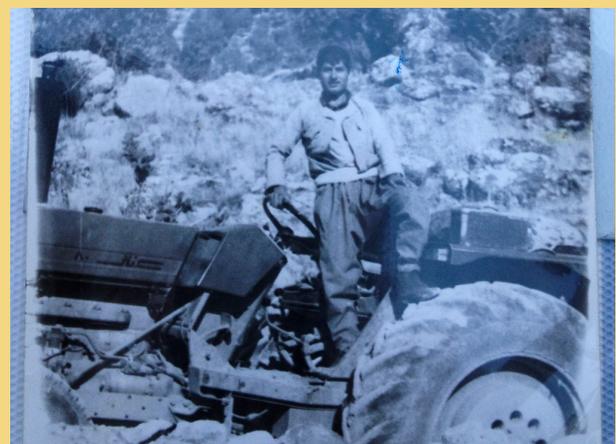
There is not much time for kids just to play

## Oral History Project

WADI's oral history project, another effort focusing on areas affected by the Anfal genocide, aims to construct, using primary sources, a detailed, accurate historical account of life in four Kurdish villages (Goptapa, Anab, Sewsenan, and Sheikh Wasnanan) prior to the genocide. All four of these villages, located in different parts of Iraqi Kurdistan, were heavily impacted by Anfal and the Iraqi government's chemical attacks, with their combined population being reduced from 606 families in 1977 to only 263 families today. A team of 4 trained specialists has gathered and systematically indexed over 1,000 pieces of information from the villages, including photographs, videos, and audio recordings, and artifacts, which cover various aspects of life including family life, culture, commerce, and politics. The aim of this project is to provide a comprehensive view of normal life in these villages before Anfal, giving a realistic picture of village life and move beyond simply characterising inhabitants of these villages as victims of a crime against humanity. Once indexation of information is completed, a proposal will be prepared to request funding to expand this project.



Two boys in front of their house in Shekhwasanan in 1978



Photograph of a farmer in Shekhwasanan in 1975

## Local Democracy

The local democracy initiative is another WADI project now in the implementation phase, undertaken in cooperation with international partner organizations Hivos and Oxfam and the local partner Kurdistan Institute for Election (KIE). The overall aim of the project is to address the UN resolution 1325 (Women, peace and security). WADI's efforts in Iraqi Kurdistan are part of a broader effort which also involves similar projects in Syria, Yemen, and the Palestinian Territories aiming to educate young people on the principles of local government and work with citizens to accountability of local government officials to a population expressing their views in a democratic society. In Iraqi Kurdistan, groups of young persons from four cities (Sulaymaniyah, Halabja, Rania, and Kalar) have been trained and will engage in exercises aimed at promoting local democracy, identifying problems and then working with local leadership figures (e.g. community, business, and municipal government personnel) to address them. The city teams will begin to perform opinion polls soon to identify key local issues.



Meeting of a group of young activists in Halabja

Please support this ongoing work with your donations!  
Bank Account: Postbank Frankfurt;  
WADI e.V., Herbornerstr. 62, 60439 Frankfurt, Germany  
IBAN: DE43500100600612305602 BIC: PBNKDEFF

For further information see: [www.wadi-online.de](http://www.wadi-online.de)  
Prepared by Jeff Allan