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International Organization for Migration
The UN Migration Agency

IOM IRAQ

MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME

JANUARY – JUNE 2018





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INTRODUCTION

Conflict and displacement are often accompanied by stressors that can be difficult to cope with.

Iraq has witnessed multiple waves of conflict and violence in recent years that have affected millions of Iraqis. Experiencing distressful events, human rights violations, disruption of social networks, loss of property, harsh living conditions during displacement, social tensions and uncertainty are common stressors among people affected by conflict, and have a negative impact on their lives.

Many Iraqis struggle to cope with such life events. These stressors can result in anxiety, depression, low self-esteem and contribute to increasing (domestic) violence. The psychosocial wellbeing of displaced people is affected during the various stages of the displacement cycle, including multiple or prolonged displacement as well as the return process. Host communities are also affected by the high number of displaced communities in their areas, who put further strain on already limited resources and on the fragile security context. The psychosocial interventions of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) are designed to address the coping mechanisms of affected communities both in displacement and upon return, as improved psychosocial wellbeing increases opportunities to rebuild relations between communities. These activities are integrated in a larger peace building and social cohesion framework in order to address the multiple layers of root causes of conflict and prevent new episodes of violence between and within various communities.

The IOM Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) programme aims to improve the psychological and social wellbeing and strengthen the resilience of people affected by conflict. Through a range of activities, IOM supports internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees and host communities to regain a sense of safety and human security, increase self-confidence and community trust, encourage the creation of reactive social networks, and develop tools for affected communities to deal with the past and regain hope in the future.

IOM has been actively providing MHPSS in Iraq since September 2014, addressing displacement following ISIL occupation, Mosul campaign, displacement after the Kurdish Referendum, return and stabilization. The Psychosocial Support and Social Cohesion Unit is currently active in 9 governorates all over the country, adapting its services to the needs of people of concern in the different phases of displacement, both in or out of camps. Services are offered both in community centres and through mobile teams, including outreach visits in both modalities.

IOM MHPSS services are carried out in a manner consistent with ‘do no harm’ principles outlined in the Sphere project, WHO’s definition of mental health, and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services in Emergency Settings. People of concern receive holistic services adapted to their needs, which include:

- Specialized services
- Focused non-specialized services
- Community and family support
- Social consideration in basic services

Girls, boys, women, men, youth, persons with disabilities, survivors of sexual violence and torture, older people, orphans and other groups received age and culturally appropriate support through different services. In each site, groups and individuals with vulnerabilities were identified to create an individualized plan for them.

In order to provide sustainable solutions and increase the impact of interventions, IOM promotes awareness on mental health in Iraq, aimed at reducing the associated stigma among the population and engaging civil society in MHPSS activities. Capacity building for IOM workers, staff members of the Iraqi Government, INGOs and civil society organizations (CSOs) is a key pillar of the programme.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

IOM MHPSS activities reached 15,945 new beneficiaries and provided 56,239 services between January and June 2018. Since the beginning of the operation in September 2014, IOM has reached 103,278 beneficiaries and provided 311,682 services.

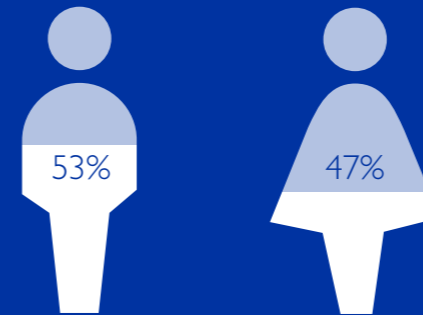
Total Number of Beneficiaries Reached (January – June 2018)



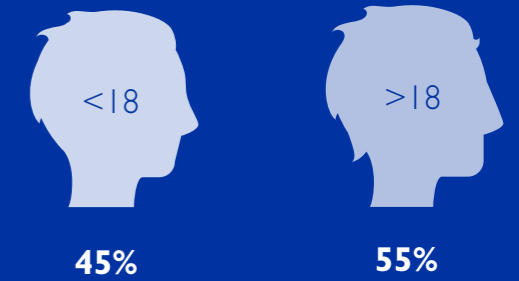
- **Active in 22 community centres in 9 governorates:** Targeting both camp and urban settings.
- **4 new community centres established:** In Sharya, Sari Blind, Al-Haidariya and Qaraqosh, supporting the needs of returnees, recently displaced households and host communities.
- **Mobile teams working in 15 locations:** Reaching settlements with smaller populations where permanent presence is not viable.
- **2 new teams hired:** To identify the needs of returnees in Mosul and Telafar and establish community centres.
- **2 planning workshops organized:** Team leaders and area coordinators came together to discuss context updates and plan the development of the programme for the following 6 months.
- **4 needs assessments reports produced:** In Sari Blind, Al-Haidariya, Talafar and Mosul, prior to establishing community centres.

- **3 agreements signed with universities:** Kufa University, Karbala University and College of Political Science (CPS) in Mosul university, to support academic expertise on the impact of displacement and return to the psychosocial well-being and social cohesion of people of concern in Iraq.
- **Co-chairing the Ninewa MHPSS Working Group:** Together with DoH Ninewa and IMC.
- **National MHPSS WG established in June 2018:** After IOM and IMC advocated to the Health Cluster and MoH to coordinate efforts and fill gaps in MHPSS services. IOM is collaborating with partners to develop a work plan and will lead the capacity building task force.
- **Self-care packs for returnees developed:** The packs will help them support their well-being when leaving the camps to return to their place of origin.
- **Silent social theater activity in Kirkuk:** conducted to foster acceptance and inclusion of people with disabilities among the community.
- **Walk to heal activity in Dohuk:** Walking activity organized to strengthen social cohesion between Yazidi IDPs and their host communities.

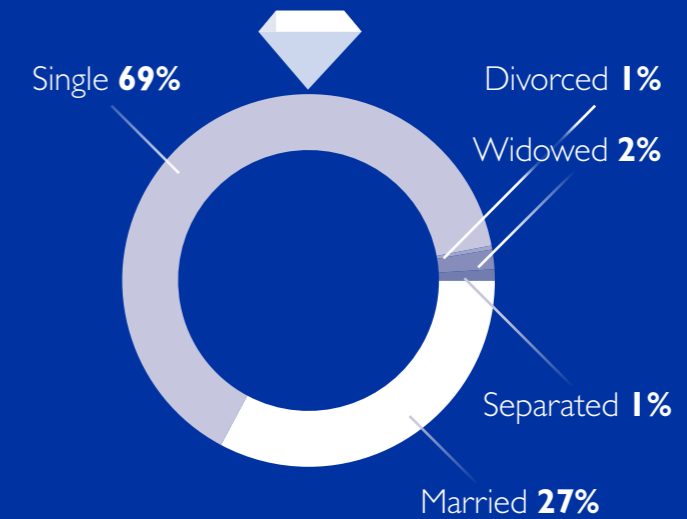
BENEFICIARY GENDER



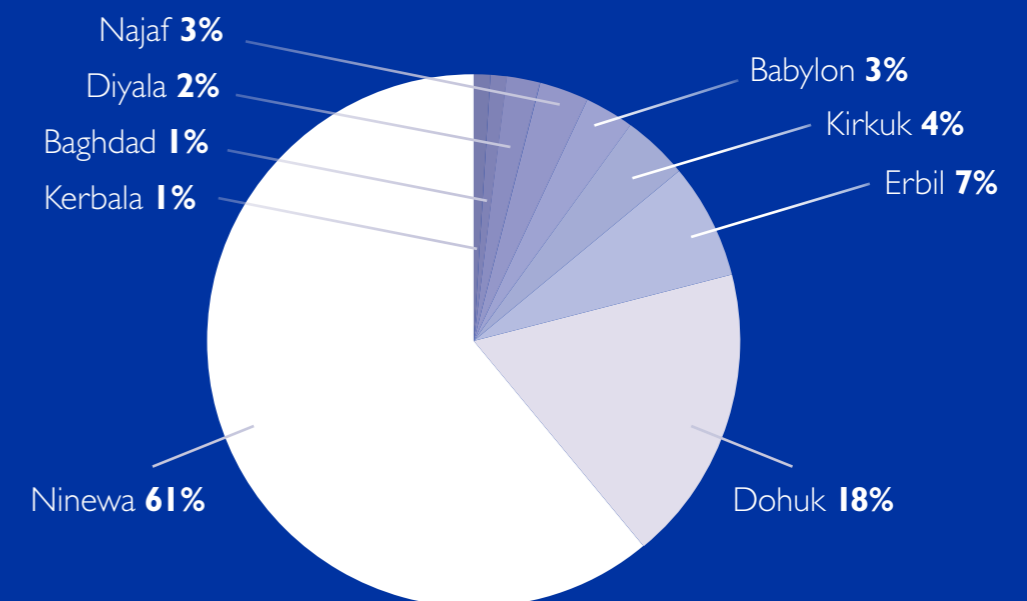
BENEFICIARY AGE



BENEFICIARY MARITAL STATUS



SERVICES PER GOVERNORATE



COMMUNITY CENTRES AND MOBILE TEAMS

During the first half of 2018, IOM's Psychosocial Support and Social Cohesion Unit was active in 22 community centres. In this period, 3 of these centres were closed as IDPs returned to their areas of origin in 9 governorates and 4 new centres were established in the following locations:

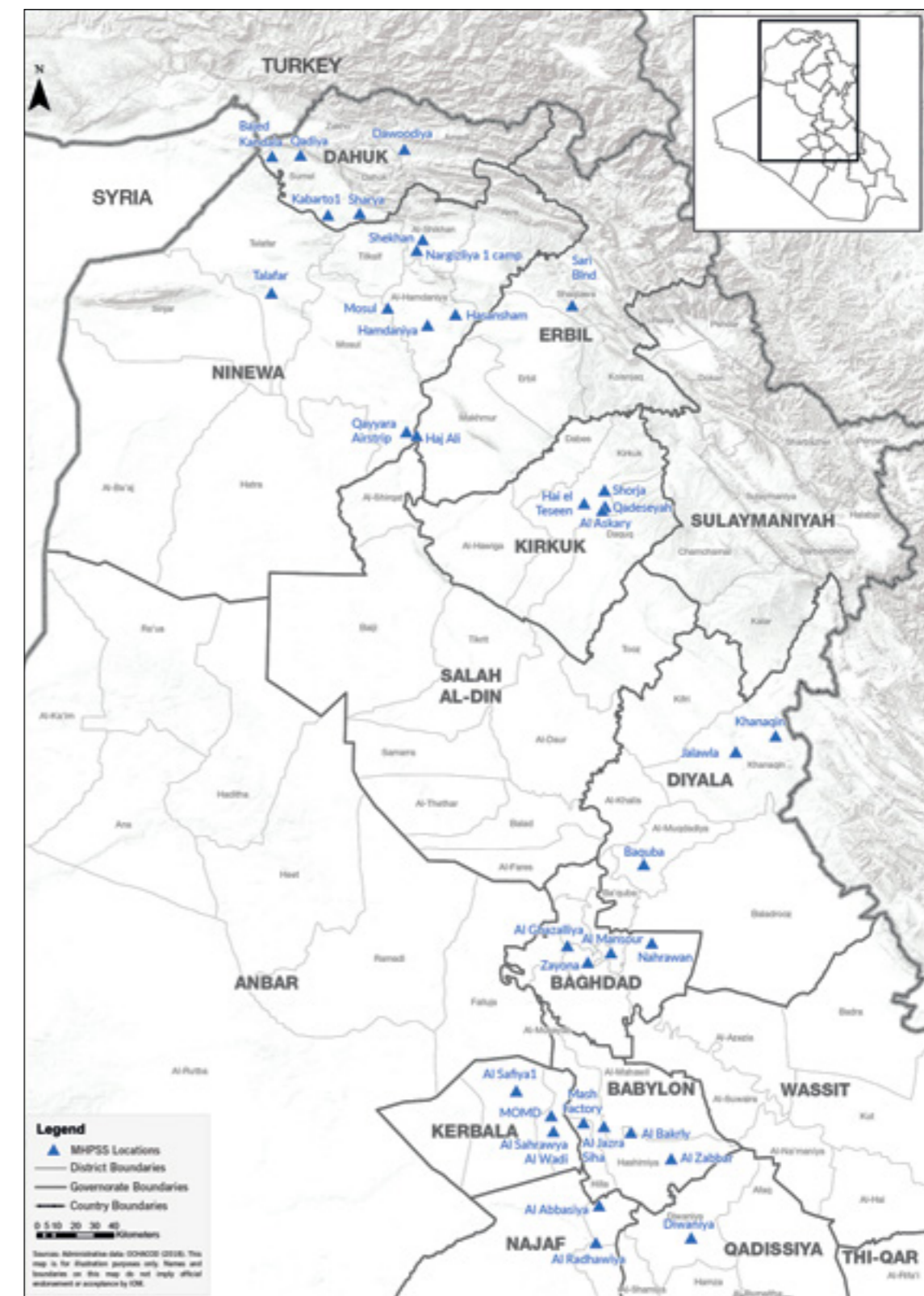
- **Sari Blind in Erbil Governorate:** IOM MHPSS teams started working in this area in October 2017 to support newly arrived IDPs from areas affected by conflict and displacement following the Kurdistan Referendum on Independence in September 2017. In January 2018, a centre was established to support 600 IDP families living in the area and promote good relationships with the host community.
- **Qaraqosh in Ninewa Governorate:** Activities in Hamdaniya started in 2018 to support IDPs returning to their area of origin following the retreat of ISIL. In Qaraqosh city, the chosen location to establish an IOM office and offer MHPSS activities from February 2018 was Taaky Sakany, a compound where 330 of the households with the lowest incomes in the area live.
- **Sharya in Dohuk Governorate:** This area was established as a priority, with 4,610 IDP families from Sinjar living among 1,553 host community families. IDPs in this area occupied the houses of families who left Iraq and reported lack of services, future perspectives and income generation opportunities. Social instability was reported, as result of uncertainty and worries that also lead to psychosocial problems among the population. IOM's community centre was established in June 2018 to support these families.
- **Al-Haidariya in Najaf Governorate:** Activities in this area began in February 2018 to support 250 IDP households residing in this informal settlement. Families relocated into this site after three years living in guesthouses in Yahussien Road, due to increased tensions with the local communities after the retreat of ISIL in their areas of origin and the decrease of support from NGOs and other entities. The centre opened its doors at the beginning of June 2018.

New teams have been recruited in Telafer and Mosul to assess the needs of returnees and host communities and start offering services. Community centres will be established during the second half of 2018.

In addition to community centres, mobile teams cover different sites in Najaf, Baghdad, Karbala, Babylon and Kirkuk. Teams are composed of educators, social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists who work with the support of community focal points in each location. They receive regular training, supervision and coaching by IOM.



MHPSS LOCATIONS



SPECIALIZED SERVICES

Psychiatric consultations and clinical psychological counselling are provided to people with pre-existing and/or emerging forms of severe stress, behavioural and relational problems or moderate to severe mental disorders.

5 psychiatrists and a clinical psychologist offer these services on a regular basis, and referrals to other mental health specialist are made in areas where they are not available.

- 1. 527 specialized consultations
- 2. 155 referrals to other specialized services

The main issues reported in consultations were psychosis, schizophrenia, illness anxiety disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder and major depressive disorders. IOM mental health professionals intervened rapidly in urgent cases, when people were identified at risk of hurting themselves or others. Children diagnosed with autism or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder were also referred to specialized services.

All patients receiving these services are regularly followed up by case workers, who use the psychometric tools RQ20,

PHQ9 and SDQ to measure progress. Family psychoeducation is offered to households with members affected by mental health disorders, in order to increase their knowledge and facilitate support within existing social networks.

Feedback from Cases

You turned me into a woman with hope in life. I feel optimistic, there is no problem without solution.

FOCUSED NON-SPECIALIZED SERVICES

IOM MHPSS teams identify cases in need of focused non-specialized support through community centres and outreach activities.

A team of trained social workers, educators and psychologist implement these activities daily to promote resilience and healthy coping mechanisms.

- 1. 2,524 individual counselling sessions
- 2. 3,798 group counselling services
- 3. 2,227 emotional support sessions and PFA services

Psychological First Aid (PFA) is offered to recently displaced families in distress. This intervention helps to reduce stress symptoms and assists in healthy recovery following a highly distressful event. This evidence-informed approach helps

offering safety and comfort, emotional stabilization, information, practical assistance, in connection with social support and links to services. All staff in the IOM MHPSS team are trained to provide PFA, together with IOM staff working in other units with frequent contact with IDPs.

Individual and group counseling are used at a later stage, in the framework of a case management systems that follows up on each individual, identifying which services are more convenient in their case. The main issues observed and supported during individual sessions were family related problems, depression, anxiety, bed wetting, domestic violence, phobias, isolation, nightmares, brain fog, stress and aggressiveness.

Groups counselling and group support were offered to families or groups of individuals sharing the same challenges. Frequently discussed topics include grief, aggressiveness, difficulties expressing feelings, fear, anxiety, stress, lack of trust and adaptation to life in displacement. Relaxation sessions are also frequently organized for groups of people.

One of the tools used by the IOM MHPSS team is Problem Management Plus (PM+). This evidence-based programme was developed to facilitate individual psychological help for adults impaired by distress in communities exposed to adversity. This intervention follows a problem-solving approach and can help people with depression, anxiety and stress, and improve aspects of mental health and psychosocial well-being.

In 2018 one of the key interventions has been to support returnees by supporting them to be prepared before their departure from their areas of displacement and upon arrival to their areas of origin. To do so support groups were organized in the camps to discuss topics such as self-esteem, self-care, communication, self-motivation and healthy thinking. A total of 500 self-care boxes for returnees were prepared to be distributed. The boxes contain journals, stationary, games, crafts kits and 5 brochures on relevant MHPSS topics, which will support returnees to continue with activities initiated in the camp that helped them improve their well-being.



COMMUNITY AND FAMILY SUPPORT

Most people of concern are able to maintain their mental health and psychosocial well-being if they receive help in accessing community and family support.

Conflict and displacement caused social network disruptions. IOM's MHPSS team helps to strengthen or re-establish these networks. Community celebrations, communication on positive coping strategies, and educational, livelihood and recreational activities, aim at improving the welfare of people of concern, building trust and strengthening social cohesion.

IOM particularly focuses on care-giving in communities affected by conflict and displacement. In various governorates, care-givers trainings were organized for families and professionals dealing with children in stressful circumstances.

The role of youth has been another specific concern of IOM programming in communities affected by conflict and displacement. IOM's community centres offer social spaces

where youth can recreate, engage in vocational trainings and meet other peers to discuss community divisions, (re) build trust and address other social issues of concern.

- 1. 7,321 guided group discussion services
- 2. 1,182 livelihood services
- 3. 3,637 educational services
- 4. 13,361 recreational and art crafting services
- 5. 7,129 sport services
- 6. 5,636 event services

Guided Group Discussions

People of concern sharing similar interests or challenges gather to discuss topics related to their psychosocial well-being and strategies to promote growth and address difficulties. IOM facilitators help people of concern to see diverse perspectives, recognize and question their assumptions, improve their listening and conversation skills and engage as agents of their own development.

A wide range of topics are discussed every month, such as anger management, stress management, anxiety, self-care, positive thinking, parenting, the importance of youth in society, communication within the family, peer pressure, addictions, traditions, time management, leadership, women's rights, healthy relationships, motivation, peace building, coping mechanisms, problem solving and planning the future.

Suicide was one of the most relevant topics, and its reasons and consequences were debated. These discussions were part of a holistic plan to prevent suicide among those affected by conflict in Iraq.

Workshops on critical thinking, leadership, self-confidence and basic mediation and peacebuilding trainings also aim to increase capacities to mitigate conflict, develop self-confidence and build trust within and between community members. These capacities are further developed during group discussions on identity formation, social capital, the role of youth in peace-building, the role of media in the perception of other communities and civil activism.

Feedback from Participants

In the past, I would never have imagined myself participating in a discussion forum, with men, in the evening, in a public garden.

Since I started attending your centre, I stopped contacting friends who were affecting me negatively by encouraging me to smoke, drink and steal. I realized how bad that behaviour was and how much I was hurting my parents.





Education and Vocational Training

Courses organized by IOM's MHPSS team included leadership, awareness raising, vocational training, music, languages, computer classes, teaching methods, self-regulation, parenting sessions, general knowledge, self-awareness, self-care, adolescent's development, life-skills and PFA.

Libraries were established in many of the community centres. These spaces helped to increase the motivation of children, youth and adults to study, focus on reading and feel that they are in a quiet and welcoming environment. In some of the sites, libraries are used as spaces to provide school support to children.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR WOMEN AND YOUTH

Though this training, women and youth are empowered to be active members of their community, speak up to claim their rights and start their initiatives.

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGNS TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS

Young volunteers were trained in MHPSS and on how to facilitate MHPSS awareness raising campaigns. This training capacitated them to conduct sessions in their communities, increasing the outreach capacity of the IOM teams.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Sewing, hairdressing, barbering, accessories making, electricity and calligraphy, are some of the courses organized on a regular basis. Vocational trainings offer spaces for people to connect with others, learn new skills and develop their confidence and self-esteem. Vocational training is one of the most demanded services and is used to engage participants in other activities and to identify cases in need of additional support. Some of the participants started their own business or became employed after completing the courses, increasing their ability to support themselves and their families. The end of vocational trainings is usually celebrated with an event to bring the community together and showcase what participants have learned.

Feedback from Participants

Before displacement I wanted to enrol in a barbering course, but could not. I was disappointed, but when I heard that in your centre there was a youth barbering course I regained hope to achieve this wish. Now that I have completed the course I have opened my own shop. I work in my own salon and have a profession. I thank the IOM for giving me this opportunity.

MUSIC COURSES

Music is used to reduce stress, regulate mood, enhance concentration and learning, achieve self-awareness, connect with others and express emotions. Adults and children from different communities attend violin, guitar, organ, saz, tambor and korg classes.



LANGUAGE COURSES

Literacy, English, Turkic, Kurdish and Arabic classes are offered for children and adults. These courses support the integration of IDPs in new areas of displacement and in schools, enhance cultural knowledge and understanding, and help small children who grew up away from home to learn their mother tongue.



Feedback from Participants

I benefited greatly from this course. I learned life skills and started using them in my life. I got out of my isolation, started to contact new people, and the number of my friends is increasing.

I was very shy and did not have any friends. Now I am in touch with so many people, even outside the activity.



**Recreational Activities,
Arts & Crafts**

Poetry, storytelling, interactive theatre, dancing, board games, crafts with paper and recycled materials, glass painting, embroidery, knitting, wood carving, baking, beading, pottery, painting and drawing are some of the activities used to create safe spaces for the community to come together, improve people’s self-esteem, enhance communication skills and promote awareness on mental health, psychosocial support and social cohesion. This kind of activities is especially useful for children, as it helps them develop their cognitive skills and express their feelings in non-verbal ways, and enhances psychomotricity. These activities are also used to support people with disabilities.



Feedback from Participants

I’m so happy because I learnt how to knit. Disability is not in the body, it’s in the mind; and my mind will not stop.



Before I participated in the pottery course, I was isolated in my house and rarely got out. When I received an invitation from IOM to participate in the course, I wasn’t too enthusiastic. However, once I started, I kept going. I met other participants from different governorates of Iraq, and gained information from the lectures and discussions facilitated by IOM staff about peace, diversity, and psycho-education.

Poetry shows us that words sometimes are more harmful than bullets, and more merciful than a nurse.

Theatre is very important to me. Through theatre, we can express social issues that concern society. We wanted to create a play that would reflect the psychosocial impact of domestic violence and look for ways to address and reduce this phenomenon.



Sports

Sports teach participants teamwork, dedication and problem solving and leadership skills, while boosting their self-esteem and reducing stress and pressure.

Sports are used to improve acceptance and trust among different communities, raise awareness on various topics and encourage healthy decision-making. Women are especially encouraged to try new sports and participate in competitions.

Volleyball and football tournaments were organized in most sites, with participants from different communities in each team. Table tennis, tennis, chess, fitness classes, yoga, running and self-defence for women were also offered. One of the participants in the self-defence course in Najaf has started teaching other girls in her community.

Feedback from Participants

I want each girl to get what I get, she will feel strong.

WALK TO HEAL

In order to strengthen social cohesion between Yazidi IDPs and their host communities in Dohuk, the team in Kabarto camp organized an event on 15 May called 'Walk to Heal', in cooperation with the University of Newroz in Duhok. A total of 100 students from the University of Newroz and 100 young IDPs living in Kabarto camp walked together about 5 km around the lake of Duhok, along with 50 other participants. This activity aimed at encouraging interaction between youth from both communities, increasing awareness about the

situation of IDPs living in camps, reducing the social isolation of IDPs, strengthening trust and reducing fear among both communities. Students from University of Duhok and other people living in the camp expressed their happiness with this event and their wish to participate in similar joint activities.



This is the first time someone has done something like this for us.

We felt like prisoners in our tents, but after this event new doors were opened to us. We met new people, students who are focusing on their studies and on their lives. We have been invited to their university.

We walked and talked about our studies and I really have been moved by the fact that they [IDPs] tried to encourage me to finish my studies and to have hope for the future.

Religious and Cultural Events

Public events are an important part of Iraqis' life. Celebrations of significant days help them maintain their culture and traditions alive, get together and get out of the routine. Events are used to bring different communities together and help them learn from each other.

NEW YEAR

1 JANUARY

The year started with a community celebration, including recreational activities and distribution of gifts, clothes and cookies made during IOM trainings.

WORLD DAY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

20 FEBRUARY

The teams organized recreational activities and awareness raising sessions on equality. Participants discussed discrimination and the benefits of respectful behaviour through different activities.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

8 MARCH

This day included awareness raising on women's rights, tournaments to promote the inclusion of women in sports, storytelling on powerful women in history, sharing stories of successful women in their own communities, skills building to enhance self-confidence, group discussions, poetry reading, exhibitions, distribution of roses, and recreational activities to promote women's empowerment. In Baghdad the team ran a campaign during the whole month of March in different locations, including in universities.

Feedback from Beneficiaries

I'm a woman who wants to complete her studies. I want to become educated and raise my children without using violence. I do not care about what other people say about me. I want to work to support my family, not to have to get married. I want others to understand and accept me for who I am, and I have your support to reach my goals.



NEWROZ

21 MARCH

This day was celebrated in all IOM community centres in the Kurdish Region of Iraq. The team organized activities about the heroic story of the blacksmith Kawa, how Newroz started and how it became a day without violence. In Erbil, community activities around a fire were organized for over 200 participants to create links between IDPs and the host community.

MOTHER'S DAY

21 MARCH

Events included recreational activities, music and writing letters to the participant's mothers. In Hamdaniya an event for 60 people with a session on self-care and distribution of rose seeds to be planted was organized.

YAZIDI NEW YEAR'S EID, RED WEDNESDAY

18 APRIL

All teams in Dohuk were engaged in celebrations. Community focal persons and participants celebrated the day placing flowers on doorsteps, wearing traditional clothes, lighting candles together and sharing coloured eggs, which are all symbols used to welcome the New Year. The day was celebrated with activities such as the traditional game 'hekane' and discussions about Yazidi traditions.

RAMADAN AND EID

MAY AND JUNE

During the month of Ramadan, all teams organized events in the evening for both women and men. These events included sports competitions, music, games, poetry reading, stand-up comedy, bazars, group discussions and symbolic actions. To celebrate Eid, some teams supported beneficiaries in baking traditional sweets or open a women's salon and a men's barbering shop, so everyone would get ready for family reunions.

BASIC SERVICES AND SECURITY

Due to the impact of inadequate living conditions on the well-being of beneficiaries, the IOM MHPSS team supports IDPs to access basic services, reducing their levels of stress and worry.

Through awareness sessions, coordination with relevant entities and referrals to other services, IOM supports people of concern to feel safer and live in better conditions. This includes occasional distribution of items such as clothes and wheelchairs to support vulnerable people.

In coordination with camp management and other NGOs, IOM identifies the needs of IDPs, informs them about available services, refers them to the appropriated service providers and advocates for their needs. Cases in need of medical support were referred to specialized services in coordination with IOM's Medical Unit, particularly for ophthalmology and neurology services.

In coordination with IOM's Communication with Communities (CwC), around 4,000 fire prevention leaflets have been distributed in camps during outreach activities, since this a main worry of IDPs living in camps, especially in the summer.

On 26 April, a cleaning campaign was organized together with TdH in Sari Blind, to clean the area with the help of children and adults from the community. Later on, the team distributed 21 garbage containers in the neighbourhood, at the request of local leaders. This will help them to maintain the area clean and to create a better community environment.

Awareness sessions on different topics were frequently organized in all sites, including on how to prepare for exams in school, racial discrimination, social justice, cholera prevention, hygiene, women's rights, violence in the society, negative effects of smoking, harassment and early marriage.

In April the team collaborated with CCCM in providing a series of awareness raising sessions for IDPs on early marriage, in informal settings in Erbil Governorate.

- 1. 8,189 awareness raising services
- 2. 117 coordination meetings held
- 3. 295 referrals to basic services



CAPACITY BUILDING

IOM provides regular training to IOM national staff, community focal points and qualified Government, UN, NGO and CSO staff, in order to build sustainability and create greater outreach for these services.

- A 2-day PFA ToT was organized in Erbil together with UNHCR at the request of the Kirkuk MHPSS Working Group. 19 participants from different organizations attended on 7 and 8 January.
- On 17 January a self-care training was facilitated for 26 IOM staff members.
- A 2-week life skills course was organized in cooperation with VTC-MoLSA in Babylon for 15 IDPs and host community members. It was held from 11 to 24 January.
- A 4-day training on PM+ and case management was implemented jointly with IMC and UNHCR in Erbil, from 5 to 8 February. This was the second phase of a MHPSS in Crisis Settings training organized in December 2017. 22 workers from IOM, IMC, UNICEF, TdH, Seed Foundation, UPP, HI and INTERSOS participated.
- A 3-day training for 25 nurse students was held in Qaraqosh from 6 to 8 February, which included post-crisis PFA and MHPSS and an introduction to MhGAP.
- A clinical training on Mental Health was held from 10 to 22 March in collaboration with WHO in Baghdad, with the participation of 30 MoH nurses from different governorates.
- 6 training sessions were offered for partners' protection field staff in Hassan Sham U3 camp between 6 and 19 March. The topics included common reactions after a crisis, how to work with children, self-care, stress and coping. As other partners expressed interest, a second training was offered from 7 to 10 May.
- A psycho-education and peacebuilding training course for 11 governmental employees was held from 18 to 25 March in cooperation with the Centre of Capacity Building for Governmental Employees (CCGBE) of Babylon.
- A 2-day MHPSS workshop for 20 employees of the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights was held between 15 and 16 April in Baghdad.
- An induction training for new IOM staff was held from 23 to 29 April in Erbil, with 20 participants.
- A 3-day ToT about the stigma related to psychological problems was facilitated for 25 teachers and community leaders in Dawoodya camp, in coordination with GIZ, on 29 and 30 April. About 2,000 people of concern were reached through this initiative.
- A 5-day MHPSS workshop was organized for 4 local NGOs: Women's Development Centre, Um Al Yateem, Al Rased, Al Amal and Al Iraqiya. 20 field workers attended this training between 8 and 12 April 2018.
- A training for 8 community focal points was held in Erbil from 14 to 16 May.
- Capacity building for Civil Society Organizations in Dohuk started on April 15 with an opening ceremony. The first part of the training on MHPSS and Social Cohesion lasted for 17 days, with 30 participants from 15 organizations.

CONFERENCES

IOM participated in the Second International Conference on Displacement and Migration held at Kufa University on 24 February. IOM's Psychosocial Support and Social Cohesion Unit offered two lectures, one on MHPSS and Iraq Crisis and the second on IOM MHPSS Intervention in Iraq.

IOM's Psychosocial support and Social Cohesion unit organized the first national scientific Conference on Educational and Psychological Sciences, in collaboration with the Psychology Department at the University of Karbala on April 4. National researches from the whole country participated and shared their experience on the psychological effects of displacement.



INDIVIDUAL SUCCESS STORIES

Sleeping Disorder

One of the cases that the team dealt with was that of a woman who received psychiatric support and regularly participated in activities. Through her case, the team found out that her husband suffered from a sleeping disorder, which was the cause of severe family problems. The MHPSS team visited the husband, who agreed to be treated. Now he is able to manage his sleeping problem thanks to the IOM MHPSS team intervention. The woman reported that now they enjoy a normal family life and feel happy again thanks to the support they received.

Mental Health Issues

An 8-year-old girl faced mental health issues in the camp where she was displaced. She tried to commit suicide several times due to the distressful events she faced during Mosul's occupation, had behavioural problems and was treated like a mad person by people around her. After 7 months of treatment she changed completely. She now feels peaceful, helps her mother in the tent, goes to school and participates in activities in the community centre. Her mother said that before receiving support from IOM centre, they had lost hope to see her like she was before the war. The family is very happy about her recovery. Her mother and father were also facing psychological issues, and after 5 months of treatment they are better and feel more empowered to support their children.

Loss of Speech

An 8-year-old boy who stopped talking due to the traumatic events experienced during ISIL's occupation received the support of the MHPSS team. When he started going to the centre he was very aggressive and nervous, did not communicate with anyone, used to have several energy drinks per day, smoke and wet his bed. IOM supported him through special-ized consultations and psychosocial activities. He is now talking again, quit smoking and stopped having energy drinks. His parents are very happy with his progress and said that it is like the second birth of their son.

Hemiplegia

A girl affected by hemiplegia did not have any hope in the future and did not want to get out of the tent the first time the team spoke with her. She was invited to participate in a knitting course, where she met other girls and learned a new craft. She feels better now and regained confidence and trust in the future. She said that in IOM's centre, she discovered that nothing could limit her and that every crisis has an end. She wants to continue working for a peaceful future.



IOM IRAQ

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منظمة الأمم المتحدة للهجرة
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