



المنظمة الدولية للهجرة  
منظمة الأمم المتحدة للهجرة  
International Organization for Migration  
The UN Migration Agency

IOM IRAQ

# SOCIAL COHESION PROGRAMME

## ANNUAL REPORT 2017



The IOM Social Cohesion Programme aims to mitigate tension between IDPs, returnees and host community members, and to strengthen social cohesion within and among different communities. Expected outputs include improved access of IDPs, Returnees and Host Communities to social and recreational services, information on and opportunities for community engagement and dialogue, improved socioeconomic infrastructure, and increased capacity to diffuse tensions, manage conflict and channel stress and frustration effectively.

### Focusing on Four Objectives

1. Strengthening the capacity of individuals and communities to cope with the ongoing crisis in Iraq.
2. Helping to mitigate tensions between IDPs and host community members and strengthening social cohesion.
3. Supporting the role of women in peace and security.
4. Increasing the understanding of IOM and the humanitarian community on community dynamics and the factors linked to the youth mobilization.

### Program Insights

Countries that experience protracted conflict often suffer from economic underdevelopment and damaged assets. More critically, psychosocial welfare and social relations are often ruptured. After war, individuals and communities can become insular, leaders may start to rationalize that resources are for 'us' and not 'them', and parents may caution their children against the children of others. These cracks in the social fabric mean that even as the country starts to recover economically, citizens may not be willing to return to the coexistence and mutual trust they once had. In other words, after a civil war, not only the financial and human capitals but also social capital is often depleted. However, a breakdown in social relations is never a fait accompli. Individuals and communities often prove remarkably resilient; this is particularly the case in Iraq where a long practice of coexistence and mutual tolerance have retained an enduring legacy even in the recent years of conflict. The challenge for development actors is to recognize that post-conflict reconstruction is not just about repairing physical assets; more critically, it is about supporting communities to work towards common objectives, to which social cohesion is central. IOM seeks to use community-based initiatives such as infrastructure rehabilitation and social service provision as

tools of conflict mitigation and social repair. The foundation of this programming is a robust understanding of the sources of tension in each community, as well as the opportunities to bring people together. To this end, after the completion of social cohesion assessments across four governorates IOM established five community centers in Baghdad, Kirkuk, Zummar, Khanaqin and Baquba.

Fifty communities were surveyed and participants were asked about the interaction between different groups; triggers for stress and disputes; and ways in which people build and maintain positive community relations. The findings reflected both pressures and strengths within each community. Many IDPs spoke of the efforts made by host communities to include them: schools would add extra classrooms, hospitals welcomed all patients, and host communities made do with fewer hours of electricity as their grid shifted to incorporate new demands. Often, people identified specific people or social habits that connected them and strengthened their sense of common identity. Others highlighted challenges. Most common of these was overstretched resources, which often generated resentment and hostility towards IDPs. This is not a new revelation; across the world, overextended resources are a common source of stress amongst communities. However, the novel finding of IOM's assessments was the level of detail participants conveyed, specific to their areas. No two communities were the same. For some, they explained that the overcrowding of particular schools generated tension; for others, it was waste disposal; and others reported that intermittent electricity was a particular source of stress between groups.

IOM used these findings to identify infrastructure projects that might alleviate emotional and social tensions. Other findings informed the way IOM engages with local peacebuilders, and carry out activities that support healthy relationships within diverse communities. Ultimately, it is about seeing stabilization programming as a fundamentally social endeavor, and one that addresses underlying tensions.



## 5 COMMUNITY CENTERS BUILT

IOM's Social Cohesion Program is managing five community centres across Iraq that engage communities in peace-building and social cohesion activities. [Continued on Page 9](#)



## 9,295 BENEFICIARIES SUPPORTED

Out of all the beneficiaries that participated in social cohesion activities 61% were male and 39% were female. Increasing women's participation is a focus. [Continued on Page 10](#)



## 300 CAREGIVERS TRAINED

In order to support caregivers to influence youth to make positive choices IOM designed and delivered an 8 sessions-course for parents, teachers, social and health workers. The topics of the training focused on the effect of the conflict on the youth, youth psychosocial development, communication and mediation skills with youth. [Continued on Page 11](#)



## 25 WOMEN TRAINED IN SECURITY

Women in Northern Diyala participated in a 5-day training on peace and security. As a result of the training, the women prepared Action Plans for ongoing advocacy with local authorities. [Continued on Page 13](#)



## 250 MEDIATORS TRAINED

IOM delivered an intensive conflict mediation training and follow-up activities for a total of 250 individuals across the Ninewa, Diyala, Baghdad and Kirkuk governorates. [Continued on Page 14](#)



## 24 INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS COMPLETED

IOM supported the rehabilitation of 24 community infrastructures identified through a consultative process in both displacement-affected and newly liberated areas. [Continued on Page 15](#)



## 14 COMMUNITY VIDEOS & 35,000 BOOKLETS

IOM engaged community members in Ninewa, Diyala, Baghdad and Kirkuk governorates in a mass awareness communication campaign with the production of 14 peace message videos, a photography booklet titled "Youth, Art and Peace in Iraq", a peace notebook and stickers. [Continued on Page 17](#)

IOM's Social Cohesion Program is managing five community centres across conflict-affected areas in Iraq that engage communities in peace-building and social cohesion activities. Activities aim to build trust and mutual understanding between people of diverse backgrounds, and involve a mix of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host community members, as well as individuals of different ethnic and religious background. The community centres delivered activities in three phases, informed by regular community inputs.

### PHASE 1

#### Grow community members' trust and understanding.

IOM's Social Cohesion unit aims to grow trust and understanding through holding cultural events, social gathering and meaningful activities for community members.

- Peace events, such as joint religious or cultural celebrations, peace festivals, art exhibitions, and music events.
- Sustained community-based activities such as vocational training, computer skills, handicrafts, language lessons (Arabic, Kurdish, English), and recreational activities such as social theatre, sport, music courses.



### PHASE 2

#### Build conflict management skills, critical thinking, advocacy and action planning.

Phase two strives to deepen trust by teaching community members to resolve conflicts to ensure the sustainability of the established trust.

- Structured debates on topical social issues.
- Dialogue groups: book café, movie nights, interest groups.
- Social theatre, designed and performed by the community.
- Community initiatives that improve public space.
- 8 week peace-building course for youth aged 15 – 20 years.
- 8 week women's leadership course.
- Small grants for social cohesion initiatives (e.g. rehabilitation of park, cleaning campaign, women initiatives).



### PHASE 3

#### Strengthen community networks that support an inclusive, diverse society.

With the foundation for lasting trust laid, Phase 3 strives to widen that trust.

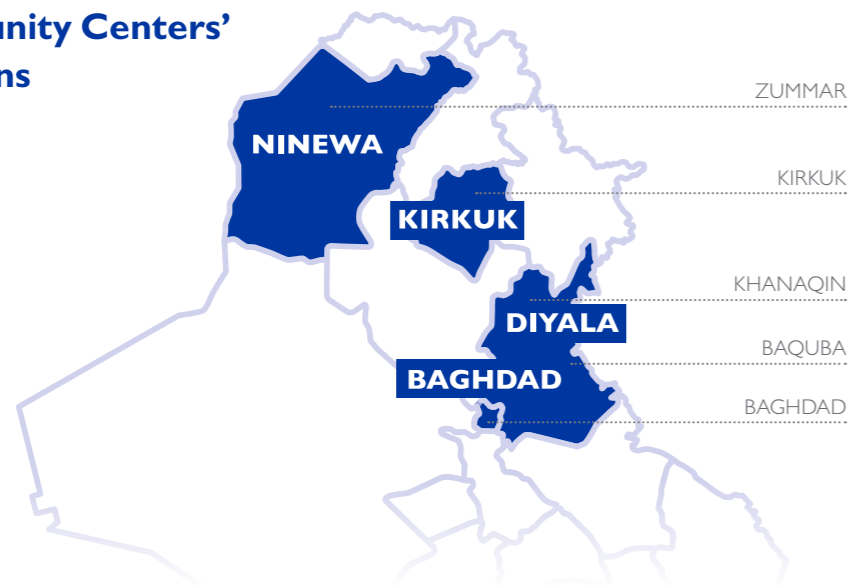
- Self-help groups
- Caregiver support groups
- Community networks
- Mediation courses

# COMMUNITY CENTER STATISTICS



IOM employed a monitoring and evaluation tool to obtain feedback throughout the beneficiaries. This tool-kit was applied only to beneficiaries who attended a sustained activity that lasted an average of 8 weeks (including peacebuilding and dialogue.) The reason for this is that the objective of the action – to increase social cohesion – requires constant engagement, and this is reflected also in the monitoring and evaluation indicators which measure relationships, changes in perspective attitudes and psychosocial well-being. Large group events, by contrast, were an essential tool to raise awareness of IOM's program and offer wide coverage, but were not intended to contribute directly to social cohesion indicators.

## Community Centers' Locations



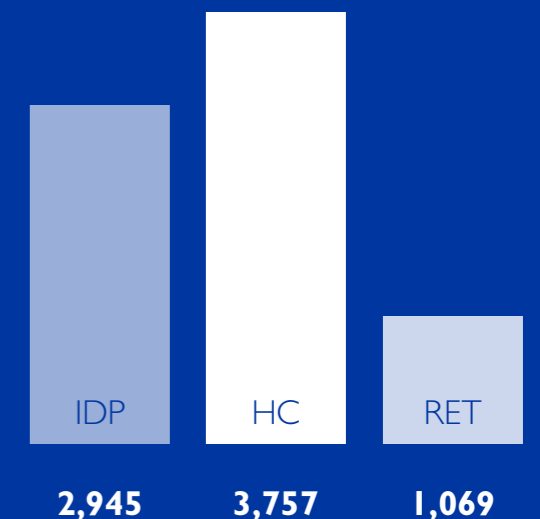
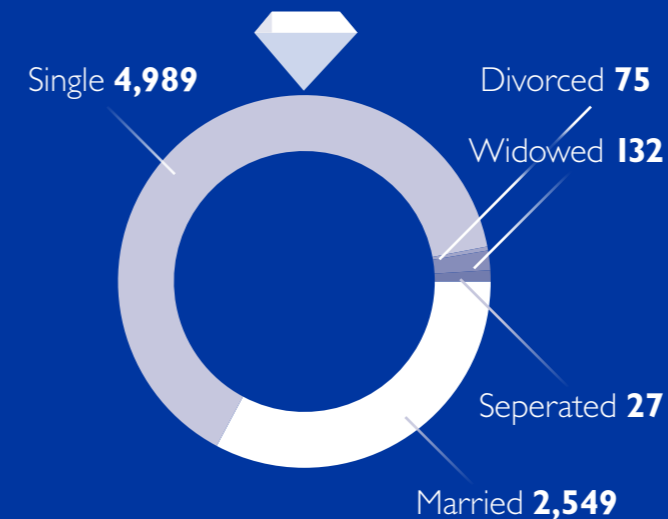
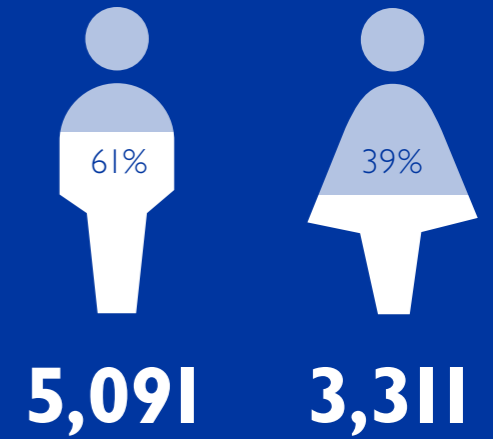
## Total Events Held 2017

<b>2,296</b> Large Group Events
<b>4,097</b> Sustained Community Activities
<b>780</b> Social Improvement Initiatives
<b>1,187</b> Peacebuilding Events
<b>731</b> Structured Discussions
<b>417</b> Capacity Building Courses

# 9,295

## TOTAL ATTENDEES

84% First Time Attendees





Caregivers are among the most important members in the community. Parents, teachers, health and social workers have deep impacts on future generations and thusly the community as a whole. In order to support caregivers to influence youth to make positive choices, IOM designed and delivered an eight-sessions course. In 2017, three hundred caregivers received the course and IOM continues to engage participants via caregiver support groups.

### Topics of the Training

- 1 THE EFFECTS OF CONFLICT ON YOUTH  
Impact of violence on social relations; risks to youth in conflict-affected areas; peace-building potential.
- 2 YOUTH PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
How youth develop a sense of self; family psycho-education; the effect of violence in the home.
- 3 MEDIATION SKILLS WITH YOUTH  
Constructive techniques for dealing with tension or family problems; communication skills for dealing with youth.
- 4 COMMUNICATION SKILLS WITH YOUTH  
Communication skills for dealing with youth, explanation of social media, the risks & benefits; advice on how to manage youth engagement with social media in a safe way.



### Feedback from Participants

*I found it really helpful to understand how youth develop their identity, and how parents can support a good mental state for their children.*

*“This training really helped me to understand how to deal with teenagers and family problems. It showed that using violence against children or youth is ineffective and affects their development.”*

*“Before I did this training I was completely against social media. But now I can see how to manage it, and give my teenage children guidance on how to use social media safely.”*



Research is an essential component of IOM's social cohesion programming. The social cohesion team carries out a variety of researches and assessments on conflict dynamics, mobilization, PVE and social relations.

**Women in Peace and Security in Northern Diyala**

In July 2017, IOM released a Policy Report: Women in Peace and Security in Northern Diyala. This was accompanied by 4 detailed conflict profiles for the areas under study.

The study found that increased social capital is essential to strengthen women's role in peace and security, and their access to authorities and decision-making. Building social capital is not simply a matter of connecting women to services, or setting up new civil society organisations. Rather, it is about allying with women to create spaces, institutions and relationships that gain their trust; understanding the role of intermediaries who support women to access authorities; working to diversify the intermediaries available to support women access authorities; and working with women to promote narratives that challenge restrictive social norms. Supported by the Italian Agency for Development and Cooperation (AICS)

**Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE)**

In partnership with the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), IOM produced a paper research on "Causes and Consequences of Mobilization in Iraq". The study reflects the fact that there is a proliferation of armed groups operating in Iraq. The challenge these present means that the opportunity afforded by retaking ISIS territory is being lost. If communities are unable to co-exist, Iraq will face long-term issues and the space for another organisation like ISIS to emerge cannot be ruled out. Strategies are therefore urgently required for reconciliation, community building, re-establishing the rule of law, property restitution, and the provision of appropriate compensation.

The research was accompanied by 14 detailed communities profiles in six governorates of Iraq – Baghdad, Basra, Diyala, Erbil, Kirkuk, and Sulaymaniyah – between March and May 2017. This explores the mobilization into armed groups, by helping to identify the structural factors, key actors, local/national/regional dynamics, and conflict/recruitment drivers. Supported by the European Union



Please contact IOM if you would like to read the study "Women in Peace and Security in northern Diyala" in full.

**Conflict Dynamics and Non-State Armed Groups in Dyala**

Between December 2016 and March 2017, IOM, in collaboration with the Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies at the University of Dohuk (CPRCS), completed a study on conflict dynamics and non-state armed groups in the governorate of Ninewa. The study focused on four towns in north-east Ninewa. The study aimed to: Map current tensions; Understand motivations driving mobilization into non-state armed groups; Consider community views on the future of non-state armed groups; and Inform IOM's transition, resilience and community stabilization programming. Supported by the Government of Japan



IOM delivered conflict mediation training and follow-up activities for 250 individuals across Baghdad, Diyala, Ninewa and Kirkuk governorates. The training was provided in 3 different groups according to the needs of the different locations: 50 community leaders, 180 community members and 20 teachers.

To ensure maximum contextualization to the local environment and consideration of conflict and political dynamics, IOM engaged local partners to provide mediation training.

- 1 SANAD FOR PEACEBUILDING (BAGHDAD & KIRKUK)  
Sanad for Peacebuilding was shortlisted and recommended for Baghdad and Kirkuk, due to their high technical skills, extensive experience, and relevance of their proposed activities to the Iraq context.
- 2 UNIVERSITY OF DOHUK (NINEWA)  
The University of Duhok was shortlisted and recommended for Zummar due to their strong technical skills and experience in mediation and conflict management training, as well as relevance of their proposed follow-up activities to Ninewa.
- 3 IRAQI CENTER FOR NEGOTIATION SKILLS AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT (IQCM) (DIYALA)  
IQCM initially submitted an application proposing activities in all four areas targeted by the project. IQCM trainers and facilitators have very good technical skills and experience and past experience of IQCM has been extensive and extremely relevant to our Call for Proposals. The organization was recommended for Baquba, as there is no other organization with the capacity to implement in this area.
- 4 ORCHARD ASSOCIATION FOR CHILDREN PROTECTION AND EDUCATION (OACPE)  
OACPE have experience delivering mediation and peace-building training across Iraq, as well as experience working in Khanaqin. The curriculum and program design were prepared in coordination with IOM's Conflict Advisor and covered conflict-mitigation, mediation techniques and peace-building approaches. Prior to the training, OACPE developed a video training manual to demonstrate conflict mitigation and peace-building techniques, in order to support an interactive method of training.



# COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROJECTS



IOM supported the rehabilitation of 24 community infrastructures identified through a participatory process in both displacement-affected and newly liberated areas in the Governorates of Baghdad, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Dyala. Through the rehabilitation of community infrastructures, IOM improve the access to essential services for approximately 85,000 beneficiaries.



5

WATER NETWORKS



3

ELECTRICITY NETWORKS



7

PUBLIC SCHOOLS



4

SPORTS FIELDS



5

COMMUNITY FACILITIES



## Feedback from Beneficiaries

### Rehabilitation of Al Ufouk Elementary School in Kirkuk

*“My daughter who is 9 years old, a student in Al Ufouk Elementary School in Kirkuk, which IOM has rehabilitated its infrastructure. She did not like to attend the school, because of the large numbers of students in the class room, which resulted in overcrowding and many of them sharing the same seat; sometimes she even suffered to find a place to sit, and therefore she was obliged to sit on the floor. That is why her behavior at home changed, she became very nervous and refused to attend the school and used excuses and cry in order not to go to school. But now after the school is recalibrated and the overcrowded problem was solved, she is keen to go to school even her mood has changed; she became more cheerful and optimistic and loves to go to school.”*

### Rehabilitation of Water Network in Mafraq Community in Baquba

*The direct route to the biggest school in Mafraq community was completely flooded. Students were obliged to go to school through a very long road in a dangerous area. In addition, the environment around the school was unhealthy and polluted from the waste. As representative of the directorate of water we couldn't take any action due the lack of resources. The residents were complaining about us and they were also arguing among themselves because no one was taking action to maintain the area clean from the waste. The tension was extremely high. IOM rehabilitated the water network to re-enable the road and to ensure a most efficient use of the water resources. The situation improved immediately and I can say that this project was important to reduce the tension in our community.*



IOM launched a mass awareness and communication campaign that aims to build social cohesion and tolerance through messages on people's common humanity, and the common challenges faced by various groups of IDPs as well as members of the host community across Iraq. This initiative was funded by the European Union.

IOM engaged community members in four Iraqi Governorates: Baghdad (Center), Diyala (Baquba), Kirkuk (Kirkuk) and Ninewa (Zummar) in the production of:

- 6 peace message videos and 6 radio clips, created by youth in Baghdad. IOM provided one-week training aimed at building the capacity of young social media users and journalists in video editing using a smartphone application called Kinemaster.
- 6 peace message videos and 6 radio clips focusing on IOM activities at the community centres.
- 2 peace message videos focusing on independent social cohesion initiatives carried out by community members.
- Print materials resulting from IOM community centre activities. Participants in a drawing course have produced paintings portraying their own images of social cohesion and peace: these symbolic messages have been compiled and will be used to produce greeting cards for Ramadan and Eid, as well as posters for dissemination in public spaces such as schools, youth centers, health facilities and government offices. A second product was a small photography book, which consolidated images of music and art activities delivered under this project. The book included interviews with the artists to explain how they express peace and social cohesion in their art. In Baghdad, a group of volunteers developed the design for a peace notebook and stickers. The materials were after distributed across the country to promote social cohesion messages.





# IMPACT OF SOCIAL COHESION ACTIVITIES



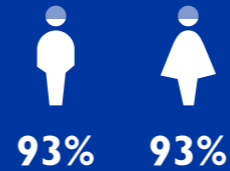
IOM witnessed significant growth and development within the active communities throughout social cohesion projects in 2017. In the beginning, few women attended; people did not freely engage in dialogue, particularly when it came to sensitive issues like social relations post ISIS; and most activities were led by IOM and not community members. However, women were a strong and vibrant component of the program; dialogue on sensitive issues was taking place frequently through structured activities or during informal interactions at the community centre; and community members frequently initiated their own activities including social theatre, advocacy and self-help initiatives.



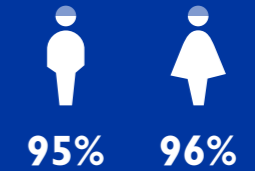
IOM obtained feedback from 749 persons who regularly participated in community-based activities, including 400 women and 349 men. All participants attended a course at one of IOM's community centres for at least 8 sessions.

From the participants who **agreed** or **strongly agreed** the following feedback was received:

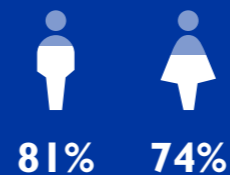
*I made at least one friendship with someone outside my own community.*



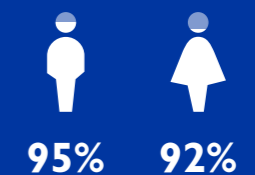
*I feel a greater sense of trust towards people from different communities living in my area.*



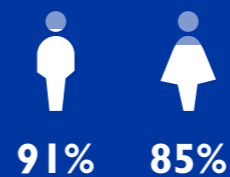
*My view of people who belong to a different community to me has changed.*



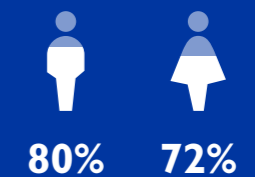
*I feel a stronger sense of belonging to my neighborhood.*



*The activity increased my ability to cope with stress and frustration.*



*The activity increased my ability to manage conflict or tension.*



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