

Annual Report 2017

*Long-term Projects to Advance Women's
and Children's Rights, Support Refugees & IDP's
and Promote Freedom & Democracy in Northern Iraq*



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Frontpage illustration: March 4, seminar in Seda village, Kalar, about the domestic violence law No.8 of 2011, and the status law. Within the seminar social and legal counseling were provided.

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1. SUMMARY

In 2017, the social and security situation in Northern Iraq deteriorated further and WADI faced many tasks and challenges. Nevertheless, the team spirit remained high, and all colleagues were very committed to make a difference.

WADI continued its efforts to raise awareness on female genital mutilation (FGM) and other forms of gender based violence, and again the teams reached thousands. WADI also started a comprehensive programme to help women in distress and female prisoners to obtain their social and legal rights.

On the field of independent media, WADI extended its activities by including the news media outlet KirkukNow which is producing and publishing unbiased first-hand accounts in four languages from the so-called disputed territories. In cooperation with the Duhok-based Jinda day care center which was opened by WADI in 2015 and then became an independent local organization, WADI continued its emergency help for traumatized Ezidi girls who have returned from Daesh slavery.

In 2017, following the decline of the economy, limited rule of law and growing instability, rising levels of violence, especially against women and children, have been witnessed in Northern Iraq. As a consequence to these disturbing developments, WADI launched its region-wide campaign against violence in November. First focus has been teacher violence against school children. Five schools already solemnly declared themselves violence-free – a promise that pupils at these schools will not be beaten nor face any other form of violence from the teachers' hands.

In Germany, WADI implemented the project „From refugee to citizen“. Hundreds of recently immigrated refugees participated in training workshops where they learnt about ways to participate in communal decision-making processes and pursue their interests within the framework of established democratic procedures in the German system.

In April, as an encouraging recognition of its achievements, WADI received the Roland Berger Prize for Human Dignity “for its longstanding and successful campaign for the human rights and autonomy of Iraqi citizens”. Two Iraqi colleagues were able to travel to Berlin to accept the prize in person.

WADI received another award from the Iraqi-Kurdish Ministry of Health and Heartland Alliance for its efforts to provide psychosocial support for refugees and IDPs.

The supreme spiritual leader of the Ezidi community, Baba Sheikh, awarded WADI for its commitment to support the Ezidi people after the attempted genocide and the countless atrocities committed by the so-called Islamic state.

The total number of direct beneficiaries of Wadi's activities in 2017: **9,104** persons, almost exclusively women and children.

We estimate another **50,000** indirect beneficiaries, which include listeners of the radio, readers of KirkukNow, families in towns and villages for which WADI services were provided, and families who were informed by the anti-violence campaign through the media.

List of direct beneficiaries:

No.	Description of Activity	Total number of direct beneficiaries
1	Mobile awareness teams	2,331 beneficiaries
2	Access to Justice for Vulnerable Groups	Seminars for Professionals: 471 Individual counseling for 44 prisoners Awareness meetings: 1,791 participants
3	Denge Nwe Community Radio	1501 programs have been broadcasted. 517 listeners called in; 341 females and 176 males.
4	Halabja Community Activities	Radio training for 18 girls Seminars and trainings: attended by 647 women Children's activities: 100
5	No to Violence! Campaign	1,500 teachers, parents, school children
6	Playgrounds	136 beneficiaries
7	Mobile Playground	1.305 beneficiaries
8	Help for Ezidi girls who returned from ISIS slavery	244 beneficiaries

2. ACTIVITIES

2.1. COMBAT FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

WADI's activities to end female genital mutilation in Northern Iraq continue. In 2017, awareness teams visited more than 100 villages and informed 2,229 women.



Dec. 12: FGM awareness seminar in a village in Erbil governorate

FGM teams in Garmyan and Erbil held meetings with local and refugee/IDP women throughout the year. Teams in Garmyan worked with 1,002 women and 102 men, and according to their findings 35% of the women were affected by FGM. The numbers are so high even though doctors warn the community

about the physical and psychological damages of FGM, and mullahs preach that mutilating girls is not a religious obligation.

Layla Ahmed, Wadi Garmyan team member stated that *“in 2017 our team visited the district, sub-district and the villages in Garmyan area and held seminars for 1104 beneficiaries both women and men regarding combating FGM, domestic violence and non-violence conflict resolution”. Layla explained that because of their hard work in raising awareness in the community there are 12 villages in Kurdistan which are free of FGM, three of which are in the Garmyan area.”*

In Erbil Governorate, the social workers met 1,227 women, the FGM rate here amounted to 38%.

During these seminars there was an emphasis on explaining to women that according to law no.8 of combating domestic violence FGM is illegal in Kurdistan and is a punishable offense. From a health aspect it was also explained that FGM is considered one of the reasons why a woman cannot have or face difficulties to have sexual desire or enjoy sexual relations.

History

It was the region of Garmyan in Iraqi-Kurdistan where teams of Wadi first encountered that FGM is a huge problem in Iraqi-Kurdistan. Back then our teams did a small scale study and found out that more than 60% of women and girls they interviewed had undergone mutilation. Shocked by these numbers Wadi started a first large scale survey¹.

Since then a lot happened, a Stop FGM Kurdistan Campaign² was set up and finally in 2011 the Iraqi-Kurdish Parliament banned FGM and various awareness campaigns helped to lower the number of newly mutilated girls in the region. A latest survey³ has proved: The number is falling:

“A study by the Heartland Alliance in cooperation with Unicef and the High Council of Women Affairs shows a dramatic decrease in rates of female genital mutilation (FGM) in Northern Iraq when comparing mothers and daughters. Among mothers surveyed 44,8% reported to be cut compared to 10,7% of their daughters. Results also show a direct link between campaigning and decline of rates. Religion remains a major factor among those who continue the procedure on their children.”

Unfortunately few donor organizations show readiness to support this successful campaign, although FGM is still prevalent. Despite a lack of funding Wadi continuous it's work on a small scale, particularly in Arbil and Germian region.

Awareness raising in the villages

Mobile teams come to the villages and collect the women (or men, in case a men's seminar was announced – however men's seminars require a different approach). Sometimes they can speak about FGM right away, in other cases they present themselves as “health teams” first, until they are sure they

¹ WADI's first large FGM study: http://www.stopfgmkurdistan.org/html/english/fgm_study.htm

² <http://www.stopfgmkurdistan.org/index.htm>

³ <http://www.stopfgmmideast.org/heartland-study-shows-steep-decline-of-fgm-rates-in-kurdistan/>

can address FGM. In the beginning, to get a picture they ask about the general situation for women in the village with respect to women's rights. Then usually they talk about health and hygiene awareness issues and finally they address FGM. The teams explain the serious health risks and they show a documentary in which also a doctor and a mullah speak out against the practice. Then they stimulate a discussion among the women. In many cases it is the first time the women talk about it openly. With all the information provided, many women decide to stop FGM and spare their next daughter. However, social pressure may run counter to this decision. For a sustainable change, the community as a whole must decide to change behaviour. To achieve this goal and guarantee sustainability the programme requires continuity.

More than FGM

FGM is a grave women's rights violation. In order to achieve eventually a change in behavior this programme raises awareness not only on the negative psychological and health consequences of the practice, but it creates awareness on the fact that women have rights and they have the right to insist on their rights. This issue goes far beyond the FGM topic and affects almost all aspects of women's lives. Thus, in addition to FGM also closely related challenges like domestic violence, forced and early marriage, polygamy and reproductive health issues are addressed during the meetings. Due to political crisis and weak institutions, influx of refugees/IDPs and the overall deteriorating social and economic situation many of these problems become increasingly pressing. For example, team members observed a sharp increase in polygamy because it became so easy for local men to find desperate young refugee/IDP women who have no choice. The topic was included in the seminars.

2.2. ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS IN NORTH IRAQ

For various reasons, scores of women, men and children in Northern Iraq are denied their basic human rights. Particularly those who traditionally hold a low status in society: women, internally displaced, refugees and prisoners, are the most vulnerable. WADI, in cooperation with Jiyan Foundation and local partners like PANA, NWE, Jinda and the women's legal aid association WoLA, has launched a series of interventions on different levels to support these groups in obtaining their rights.

When it comes to human rights, the Iraqi-Kurdish justice and law enforcement system has a large variety of flaws and shortcomings which need to be addressed and criticized, publicly and in talks with politicians. The public must be informed about the situation in the prisons and the lack of support for victims of domestic violence and honor-based crime. Better access to justice is needed, prison conditions must be checked and improved, and protection mechanisms for women and children need much improvement as well. Hence, lobbying and background talks with government representatives and members of the Parliament are one part of the efforts to be made, in cooperation with other civil society

organizations, media, lawyers, activists and survivors. In a joint effort, we will try to achieve some improvements in certain fields.



Sept. 13: Seminar for the staff of the Directorate of Social Affairs, Elderly and nursery department, about the domestic violence law, violations of the law, methods to make sure the law is implemented. Also social rehabilitation was discussed.

While the system is partly not working properly, widespread ignorance about the concept of individual rights is another factor contributing to the situation as it is. Especially women need to know about their rights in order to demand them. Accordingly, the advocacy efforts are accompanied by a public information campaign, including seminars for rural women, media publications, information events, flyers and posters in Arabic and Kurdish. Seminars on human rights standards and the existing provisions of the law are provided to various professional groups, like teachers, prison guards, police officers, judges and politicians.



August 10: Human Rights Training for police officers in Raparin police station. Topics were treatment of civilians, detention regulations, other legal implications.

In addition, the programme has set out to offer individual advice and legal assistance to women who survived human rights violations and cannot afford a lawyer.

All these elements combined aim to improve the rule of law and access to justice for the most vulnerable groups.



November 5: Seminar for women in Ranya, Raparin Qtr. about the domestic violence law and the personal status law. Some women received social and legal counseling.

More up to date information and pictures on <https://www.facebook.com/accesstojusticeforvg/>

The programme is funded by the European Commission.

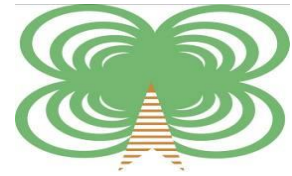
2.3. COMMUNITY RADIO DENG NWE

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

Denge NWE is a community radio station managed by the local NWE organization and funded by WADI. It broadcasts 11 hours daily, from 8:00 am to 7:00 pm, on FM 88.6 frequencies in Halabja governorate, Sharazoor, Hawraman and Arbat. Voice of America (VOA) programmes have been broadcasted in Kurdish language during two hours every day.

The morning programs are broadcasted in Kurmanji dialect and Arabic language by refugees for refugees. It starts with a live broadcast program which consists of interviewing refugees and receiving their phone calls live in the program to talk about their issues.

The afternoon programs include news, music time and various special programs on current issues, women, youths, environment, health, and sports. They are all aired in Sorani and Hawrami dialect.



Dec. 7: Interview with Mula Abduldaïm Hawramy, teacher at Halabja university, about violence against women in the Muslim community.

On many occasions the radio became a strong voice for women's rights. Among others, the radio launched a campaign called *16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence (Violence against women and girls)* on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Daily programs

- Ten world and local news broadcast.
- A daily live program by the name “Hanasay Nwe” in Kurdish and Arabic language about the main subject in the community and peoples issues especially the Syrian refugee and Iraqi IDP along some other interesting subjects about health, social and education.
- Two hour Kurdish language broadcast of American “VOA”.
- Daily radio course for women and youths.
- Separating health, human rights, women and children rights, environmental, traffic regulation awareness and instruction in daily basis.
- Broadcasting public announcement for governmental and nongovernmental institution.

Weekly programs

- Special programs, a live program about the main subjects, hosting people in entertainment field, the authorities and public figures. Sometime the radio air three to four program in a week, the radio broadcasted 137 programs.
- Health awareness, a live program with the help of directorate of health in Halabja, it is broadcasted twice a month which is about health awareness and instructions along with hosting doctors, the radio broadcasted 20 programs.
- Sport Nwe: it is a word and local sport news broadcast, the radio broadcasted 71 programs.
- 10 programs about the “peace building through environment” project, the subjects were about environment and tourism and their effect on coexistence and peace.
- Weekly publications: it is a program for reading the newspapers articles, the radio broadcasted 43 programs.
- 13 programs about psychological awareness, the subjects were about psychological awareness and instructions which was broadcasted and prepared by Zhyan foundation.
- Nwey Rwnakbiry, a program for entertainment news of the artists, new video clips and albums, cinema actors, new movies. The radio broadcasted 49 programs.
- 10 programs on the 16days of activism and the 25th of November.
- 6 programs for world women’s day.
- Zhingaman (our environment), a weekly live program, hosting specialized people in environment to give people awareness and instruction about the environment and how to protect it.
- New technology, a weekly live program about introducing to the listeners the new technology and invention, the radio broadcasted 41 programs.
- The other side of the book, a live program broadcasting twice a month it is about book review and analyzing, the radio broadcasted 8 programs.
- 18 reports about the live condition of the refugees in Arbat camp Kurdish and Arabic language.
- A program about environment and healthy food with the help of AMARK.
- A brief segment about environment, science, entertainment, economy and health subjects daily.

Part three: the other activities

- Live broadcast for an event for Halabja chemical attack anniversary in Kurdish and English language in March 16th.
- A special program for Halabja chemical attack anniversary with Christopher Berger, the German vice consulate in Erbil, about his visit to Halabja in March 16th.
- A program about 25th of November and a week of combating violence against women on November 25th.
- Arranging a workshop about news and news reports for 60 youths with the help of Media Academy Germany.

Part four: outside activities

- Participating in an event of Kurdish journalism anniversary which the radio received an award from Hazhary Mukryany library as a one of the best radio in Halabja.
- Participating in training about "Reporting on Human Rights Issues and Understanding Fundamental concepts of Human rights" which was arranged by Independent Media Center in Kurdistan funded by US Consulate General in Erbil.

Total of Programs and Audience Participation:

- 1501 programs had been presented.
- 517 audience members called the radio; 341 females and 176 males.

This project is funded by Roselo Foundation and Green Cross.

2.4. HALABJA: CITIZENSHIP, PARTICIPATION AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

Inclusion of refugees and IDPs is a key objective in this project, and it has been successfully implemented in all its different aspects. All women were addressed and treated as equals irrespective of their backgrounds: Local citizens and new citizens.

It is all about mutual understanding. Different groups came together, got used to each other, learnt a lot from each other. It became normal to interact with each other, and some even became friends. Especially relationships between locals and Syrian refugees have greatly improved through interaction of the kind we offer because now they can communicate and they are not afraid of each other anymore.

The various summer activities for school children were very much favoured. The kids were happy to have nice activities and entertainment in the long and boring summer holidays, and for the parents it was a huge relief to be able to hand over their kids for some time and to know they will have fun. For the IDP and refugee kids it was a more than valuable experience, they made friends with Kurdish kids and improved their language skills.

All the activities and courses offered within the scope of this project are very popular and in great demand. They made the Halabja women's center an even more lively and colorful place full of inspirations, hope and good intentions.

Training of Community Journalists

3-months training for 18 young women age 16 – 23 from the local, IDP and refugee communities has been conducted. After the training, all participants received a certificate on the successful participation, and they will remain in contact with the radio Denge Nwe team and the team of the news outlet KirkukNow.



November 27: Radio journalism trainees live on air at Radio Denge Nwe! Final stage of training for a group of Syrian refugees and Iraqi IDP's.

Computer Courses

Until end of November, 50 women from IDP, refugee and host communities received a 4-week computer training.



Computer classes in October – November. For most of the participants it is the first time ever they touch a computer.

Language Exchange Courses

Kurdish-Arabic language exchange became very popular among many women, so until end of November there have been four classes (4 weeks each) with each of them 16 participants, equals 64 participants. The language exchange class, beyond teaching language skills, was a very social place because it was about trying to communicate. Women from all national and religious backgrounds had a lot of fun finding out more about the language and cultural customs of others.

As an unintended result some of the host community and refugee girls, who were around the same age, created together an English learning group voluntarily after participating in the NWE courses for three months. They do the courses five days a week for two hours.



A Kurdish-Arabic language exchange group. Participants are really ambitious.

Awareness Raising Seminars

NWE is offering a women's rights awareness seminar every week. Until end of November, 533 women participated. Topics were women's rights, the provisions of the Law No. 8 of 2011 on domestic violence, the rights of children, early marriage, arranged and forced marriage and polygamy.

Children's Activities

In July and August, NWE offered a total of 18 different activities for school-children with IDP, refugee and local backgrounds. For Iraqi children this became a unique opportunity to meet and interact with Syrian children, since Syrians are not admitted to public schools.



Handicraft



Dancing



Painting



English for kids

This programme is funded by MISEREOR.

2.5. THE INDEPENDENT MEDIA WEBSITE KIRKUKNOW

KirkukNow is a 4-language news website which is interested in publishing stories and events unfolding within the “disputed territories” as defined by the constitution in Iraq, or relevant to these geographical areas in order to promote peaceful coexistence and facilitate access to information.



In April 2011, www.kirkuknow.com was launched as an online news agency, the only independent media outlet that covered developments throughout the Kirkuk province, Iraq, and/or developments relevant

to the Kirkuk population in the three main languages of the province, Arabic, Kurdish and Turkmen as well as in English.

The goal of the website was to publish news for all the people in Kirkuk and for everyone who is interested in unbiased news and information about Kirkuk province and since it is “disputed area” between the Iraqi government and the Kurdistan Regional Government and it is home for Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen, Chaldean Assyrians, Sunni, Shia, Christians and other minorities. Any event in Kirkuk as a “disputed area” will both positively or negatively affect the rest of the country, so an independent, unbiased media will asset the process of nation building, stability and coexistence among the different ethnic groups of Kirkuk.

To realise the vision of KirkukNow, in late 2016 the team created a long-term strategy of utilizing media as a tool to achieve peace and coexistence. As a result KirkukNow has included all the “disputed areas” in the country.



Karwan Salhi, KirkukNow freelancer, 25 March 2017, Interview with a local Arab attending a conference.

Mission

To provide information and publish diverse points of view and opinions for the people of the “disputed territories” in a way that promotes peaceful coexistence in those areas.

Vision

To be the most reliable media outlet in the “disputed territories” through providing information and analysis on the basis of fairness, balance, independence, impartiality and professional principles.

Objectives

- 1- Endeavor to establish a new media model void of any political, ideological, religious, sectarian, ethnic, and racist agenda.
- 2- Endeavor to ensure the freedom of access to information and analyze the events and developments from a professional point of views.
- 3- Promote peaceful coexistence among the target audience of KirkukNow, through our media message.
- 4- Observe the transparency and consolidate the pillars of media professionalism and ethical conducts for the press.
- 5- Expand media coverage in the “disputed areas”.
- 6- Endeavor to develop the role of online journalism in the “disputed areas”.
- 7- KirkukNow serves as a platform for the underprivileged groups of the “disputed territories”, such as, women, refugees and IDPs, and people with special needs.

Topics covered

- Developments of the war against the Islamic State (ISIS)
- Women issues
- Peaceful coexistence among different groups of the “disputed territories”
- Plights of refugees and IDPs
- Post ISIS developments
- Education and others

Besides the website, KirkukNow publishes its content on social media platforms such as Facebook⁴ and Twitter⁵. The topics which are posted include the daily life of citizens, the situation of refugees and IDPs, women’s issues and the life of minorities in those areas. KirkukNow’s social media platforms targets young internet users from different backgrounds.

As the website has expanded into more areas in northern Iraq, it is committed to providing information and publishing diverse points of view and opinions for citizens of the “disputed territories” in a way that promotes mutual understanding. As an internet news source, KirkukNow is able to reach citizens from various marginalized groups; particularly refugees, as well as IDPs.

Meanwhile, KirkukNow focuses on issues regarding women and youths to reach beyond the ordinary scope of the media, in order to be a relevant platform of information for citizens; to broaden their perspectives and raise awareness of human rights.

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/Kirkuknow/>

⁵ http://www.twitter.com/kirkuknow_dt

To help build up the media as a tool for social cohesion and citizenship, KirkukNow has recruited staff and freelancers from all different ethnic and religious backgrounds; with the aim that KirkukNow will eventually contribute to bringing about solutions which turn the so-called “disputed areas” into consensus territories.

[KirkukNow received two press awards](#)



December 14, 2017: The winners of the press competition held in Kalar city

Reports from KirkukNow won the first and the third prizes at a press competition in Kalar city which addressed human rights abuses in 2017.

The competition committee selected three reports out of tens of reports that addressed human rights issues in 2017 and the prizes were awarded to the journalists on December 14.

In the competition, 36 journalists from 18 media outlets participated. The jury considered 34 reports, seven were from KirkukNow.

The first prize was awarded to a report titled “*The Morning Komari Neighbourhood Fell, Killing and Human Rights Abuses in the battle for Tuz Khormatu*”, by KirkukNow journalists Zhino Khalil, Ali Mahmoud and Layla Ahmad.

The third prize went to another report by KirkukNow reporter Karwan Salehi titled “*Children of Isis: stuck in legal limbo*”.

2.6. NO TO VIOLENCE! CAMPAIGN

After more than ten years of campaigning against FGM in Iraq, WADI has started a new approach of combatting violence against children. Violence against children is widespread in families and schools. It is the outcome of disrespect for children as human beings perpetuating more violence in society as a whole. Combatting FGM and domestic violence needs a holistic approach also in institutions. WADI's non-violence campaign now started with five violence-free schools in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Violence is omnipresent in war and crisis regions. Long after the last fighters have withdrawn, long after the last shot has been fired, violence remains. It lives in people's memories and experiences and continues to grow in families and schools.

In Iraq and in Iraqi Kurdistan, the experience of violence and oppression is shared across multiple generations and all walks of life. Since the late 1970s, Saddam Hussein's Baath government waged a cruel war against the Kurdish people in the north of the country, in the systematic destruction of towns and villages, the deportation and forced eviction of hundreds of thousands of people, and the widespread use of chemical weapons against the civilian population. "Governance" has only been expressed through control and violence. This experience shapes public and private life to this day.



Campaign logo in Kurdish, Arabic and English

Children are most affected

Children – who have the least power and are highly dependent on others – are particularly exposed to violence in crisis-ridden societies. Violence against children manifests itself through physical and mental abuse, punishment, neglect and sexual assault. It takes place in families and in schools. Parents pass on their own experience of violence to their children, teachers to their students.

WADI has now launched an awareness campaign that starts right there: breaking the vicious circle of violence -which endlessly generates new violence- teachers are consciously deciding, along with their students, to renounce any form of violence. Our surveys have shown the urgent necessity of this campaign.

Children report humiliating and violent punishments as an everyday educational tool in schools. Practically every student interviewed knows a child who is beaten or abused at home.



Five primary schools in various areas of Garman; Kalar, Kifri, Rizgary sub-district, Sarqalla and Chalarash village, declared themselves as violence-free schools. The signs are stating: "we teachers will not exert any fom of violence".

All of them are in the Garman region, which was hit hardest by the devastation of the Iraqi army thirty years ago during the Anfal Campaign. These five schools have committed themselves to stop beating and abuse of children by teachers. Other schools have registered to join the program.

The teachers of participating schools all receive anti-violence training and extensive support. Parents are also included in non-violence and conflict resolution

training sessions. In conversations and events with the children, they are encouraged to stand up for their rights, learn how to behave in the event of abuses, and where to report abuses.

The consequences

The societal impact of a nonviolent education is far reaching. The violent implementation and maintenance of political and economic claims to power characterizes the political culture of Iraq and directly undermine all efforts to build democratic structures. All the abuses experienced – lack of democratic participation, legal uncertainty, corruption – are based on (the threat of) violence. Especially in these politically heated times after the referendum, the campaign deliberately sets a counterpoint: away from the grand narratives, towards the concrete everyday life and interpersonal relationships between people.

Schools should educate children not as subjects, but as citizens who enjoy equal rights and duties and have the means to enforce them non-violently. Everyday in Kurdistan there are more and more people who want to engage with each other and with their children this way.

The campaign

This anti-violence campaign is launching 30 years after the poison gas attacks on the city of Halabja. The campaign is locally supported by former Peshmerga, who were fighting the Iraqi government at the time, survivors of the Anfal campaign, and works in close collaboration with other organizations and local authorities.



Campaign website:
<https://www.facebook.com/notoviolencecampaign/>

Strong, confident children will become citizens who know how to enforce their rights and express themselves without fear of violence is an answer to the region's widespread violence.



Nov. 6, seminar for teachers in Say Mahamud school

Many other schools want to participate. Funding is needed to include them and many more in this campaign. We hope that this small beginning will have a strong impact in Iraqi Kurdistan and Iraq and that many more schools will participate in this program in the coming months and years.

Ending violence against children in schools and the home is part of our larger campaign against all forms of violence against children and women.

2.7. SUPPORT FOR SYRIAN REFUGEE SCHOOLS

In August, WADI has begun a new project which will support 6,000 Syrian refugee students in the Kurdish Region, along with 400 teachers in a total of 15 primary and secondary schools, over the course of 3 years.



As a lead partner WADI will be providing capacity building through staff training, workshops and implementation monitoring of the local partner organization Jinda.

Goals of the project:

- 6000 Syrian refugee students will be enrolled/registered into primary and secondary schools.
- 15 secondary and primary schools for Syrian refugees will be provided with furniture, energy and water when necessary.
- 5000 vulnerable and out of schools Syrian refugees will be provided with education kits.
- 200 vulnerable Syrian refugee students will be provided with transportation (those who are living in the host communities).

- 400 teachers will be trained in the areas of management, supporting and monitoring the students' enrolment and teaching skills.
- Provision of adequate learning material for more than 300 teachers and 6000 students (Syrian refugees)
- 6000 Syrian refugee students will benefit from psychosocial support sessions and peace & co-existence education.
- 9800 Syrian refugees will be supported with appropriate curricula and learning materials in coordination with the Ministry of Education-KRI and other local authorities.
- 2000 vulnerable students will get support through catch-up-classes to fill the gaps.
- 130 qualified teachers will be recruited in coordination with MoE-KRG from the refugees community.
- 400 teachers will be provided with training manuals.
- 400 teachers will benefit from the International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) minimum standard, which they will be provided with.

The project is funded by UNESCO and the European Union.

2.8. PLAYGROUNDS

Sheik Wasanan and Jalamord

Playgrounds did not exist so far in the villages of Northern Iraq. Just as in other places the communities of Sheik Wasanan and Jalamord were busy with rebuilding infrastructure after years of Saddam Hussein's despotism. Both villages had been targets of the "Anfal-campaign" in the end of the 1980s when the Iraqi regime used chemical gas and mass deportation in its scorched earth policy against the Kurdish populations in Northern Iraq. Up to this day the supply of water, schools and medical assistance remains a continuous problem. Often parents are glad if transport to the nearest school is possible, each child has a chair in the classroom and the roof doesn't leak in winter. Creating a space for childhood wasn't a topic thus far. Children are the development potential of every society. They need spaces where they can be children to grow up to be responsible adults.

The need is obvious. Since years WADI staff has been visiting 170 communities with to play mobiles in regular intervals. The busses are packed with slides and swings to set up a mobile playground for a couple hours. The children can also borrow dolls, cars and books. Often the kids are waiting impatiently for the busses to arrive. The busses don't only provide distraction in a meager landscape providing little

stimulation for outdoor play. They also stand for the acceptance of children's needs. With the busses the children find community workers who understand children's needs.

Since the busses were so popular the villagers started asking if they could have a permanent playground. In Jalamord Darko Osman is very proud. The third grader says: "If I hadn't said it out loud about the playground we wouldn't have one now."



The adults assisted. In February and March 2013 the two playgrounds were completed. In the district town Balisan a kindergarten opened at the same time – the first in the district. When it turned out that the kindergarten lacked toys and a playground, WADI helped out with a left over amount from the playground project to build another small playground for the kindergarten which cares for 25 children.

All together the playground project in Sheik Wasanan and Jalamord serves 136 children up to the age of 12.

The project was funded by ProCent.

2.9. MOBILE PLAYGROUND

In 2017, the Play Bus team served the children in the villages of Garmyan. With the influx of IDP's from central Iraq and the refugees from Syria, the project concentrated on involving these children and considering their special needs.



Impressions of Playbus sessions in Dawra village, Barika village, Azhen Primary school-Kifri, December 2017

The team's working hours are from 8.30 in the morning until two in the afternoon. Two female and one male staff are visiting selected villages on four days per week. One day they spend in the office for planning, preparations, evaluations, reporting and administrative duties.

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

The bus is sent as a Mobile Playground to the poor and remote villages in the hot plains of Garmyan. Villages with high percentage of refugee/IDP populations are preferred destinations.

The project aims to support the children through playing and learning, and is assisted by a team of educational supervisors. In none of these villages any facility for children is existing – be it playgrounds or anything similar. For almost all children in this region the Play Bus is the only 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

The Play Bus team offered a combination of activities. Some of them were focusing on entertainment of the children, while others emphasized education, health or the prevention of domestic violence.

These activities included a variety of lectures and awareness programmes for the children and their parents. Often parents are not aware 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. Several times a doctor

joined the team and assisted in basic health care services. In some cases parents lack the skill to see if their children suffer from diseases or sickness.



December 16: A group of actors volunteered to join the Play Bus to entertain children, both locals and Arab IDPs.

The team is 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 team finds itself confronted with severe problems in the families and various forms of violence. Many poor parents do not have concepts how to educate their children in a positive and non-violent way. The team offers advice to parents and tries to moderate in family conflicts.

Approximately **1305** children benefited from the various activities offered in this project.

This project is funded by Roselo Foundation, Green Cross, SALT.

2.10. PSYCHOSOCIAL HELP FOR EZIDI GIRLS RETURNED FROM DAESH SLAVERY

Four specially trained psychologists and social workers are providing psycho-social long-term assistance to the most heavily affected girls in the refugee camps in the Duhok area.

The affected women and girls (many of them are very young) have been abducted and sold as slaves. They have witnessed terrible atrocities and been subject to rape, torture and abuse. They barely got anything to eat or drink, were locked up somewhere and many of them are not only doubly traumatized, but also injured, suffering from infectious diseases and malnourished. Their situation is very bad and they need intensive medical and psychological care, in addition to practical help such as food and clothes, sanitary products and passport issues. The project is implemented in cooperation with Jinda Center and other local medical institutes and NGOs.



Oct. 10: WADI psychologist Rita B. Rofayel (right) with a client in Khanke camp.

In 2017, the teams have treated and supported 244 women and girls. 48 cases have fully recovered in a sense that they feel ready to manage their everyday life.

The project is funded by Heartland Alliance International.

2.11. GERMANY: FROM REFUGEE TO CITIZEN

With the project “Vom Flüchtling zum Bürger / zur Bürgerin” (From refugee to citizen) WADI followed up on the idea citizenship also in Germany. With a million new refugees from the Middle East entering Germany in 2015 and the year following, there grew an urgent need for integration measures. With WADI’s experience in community development, we knew that any measures are most sustainable if people find solutions themselves.

Thus, WADI developed the project „From refugee to citizen“ during the year 2016 with support by a federal Social Ministry, Niedersächsisches Ministerium für Soziales, Gesundheit und Gleichstellung. The main aim of the project was to convey democratic values and possibilities of participation in the German democracy and open the way to use these possibilities.



Workshops

Refugees are trained in workshops how they can pursue their interests within the possibilities of established democratic procedures in the German system. They develop strategies how to approach their topics and how to discuss on equal footing and how to found an initiative.

A day-long workshop is held for a group of 10-30 refugees. The trainers are themselves refugees from Syria and were involved in human rights and democracy activism in their country. Within the workshop the group collects topics they would like to work on, things they would like to change within their surrounding. Then the participants discuss how they want to use the possibilities of participation. First steps to follow up on their interests and needs are sketched up.

To open up the space for equal discussions and to strengthen the idea of solidarity and being able to reach something together, the trainers use games and elements of the theatre of the oppressed by Augusto Boal.

The further process of following up on these ideas and carrying out a self-organization process is monitored by one of the trainers in cooperation with local helpers in the respective community.

Information material

In addition to the workshop, refugees get information material about local democracy, initiatives and volunteering, student and parents representation which was developed in spring 2017 by the project team and discussed with refugees from different backgrounds.



Workshops were conducted in eight cities in Germany. In addition a number of workshops were offered to German volunteers working with refugees so they could function as multipliers.

As a result the team was surprised to find that the main concern of refugees in Germany was to lack contacts to Germans. Another important interest was a space for children and exchange for parents. Together with the team, the refugees were able to organize invitations for interested Germans. In two cities regular parent and children meetings were established.



The project is funded by the Niedersächsisches Ministerium für Soziales, Gesundheit und Gleichstellung.

2.12. GREECE: REFUGEE SHELTER IN ATHENS



In Athens, Greece, WADI supported the newly established *House of Peace*, a shelter for female refugees. WADI covered running costs, helped to create a call for donations⁶ and supported the institution in finding a long-term donor.

In downtown Athens, Danish registered charity *Team Humanity* provides emergency assistance for vulnerable women refugees and their children by renting a home where at least 8 women and their children can be housed. Since February 2017 the *House of Peace* shelter has been providing: rooms, food, safety and psychosocial support. The women who live there have more in common than just their refugee status; they are also women fleeing alone, without any relatives, only with their children. They have established a real community, they live, work, and tackle problems together, committing themselves to creating a non-violent space, and running the centre.

In September, a member of WADI embarked on a fact finding mission to Lesbos in order to meet with the local partner *Stand by Me Lesvos* and find ways to keep the *House of Peace* open. Also other cooperation options were discussed.

⁶ <https://wadi-online.org/2017/07/01/help-us-keep-the-house-of-peace-in-athens-open/>

3. ROLAND BERGER PRIZE FOR HUMAN DIGNITY

In April 2017, WADI received the Roland Berger Prize for Human Dignity⁷ “for its longstanding and successful campaign for the human rights and autonomy of Iraqi citizens”.



On the evening of May 4th, 2017, in a ceremony held at the Jewish Museum in Berlin, Director of WADI Duhok, Chiman Rasheed, held the acceptance speech.

Roland Berger⁸ emphasized: *“For the past 25 years, WADI has initiated and run a wide range of programs in northern Iraq – from information campaigns about female genital mutilation to children’s education programs to medical and psychological first aid offered to Ezidi victims who have been tortured by the*



⁷ <https://wadi-online.org/2017/05/06/wadi-awarded-roland-berger-prize-for-human-dignity/>

⁸ <http://www.rolandbergerstiftung.org/en/the-human-dignity-award/>

terrorist organization IS. It is the founder's wish that other organizations around the world follow the example set by WADI."

President of the Bundesrat and state premier of Rhineland-Palatinate Malu Dreyer gave the laudatory speech. She expressed her deep respect for all three award winning organisations, but underlined how much the long breath of Wadi is impressing her.

Founder Prof. Dr. h.c. Roland Berger and Ambassador Prof. Dr. Harald Braun, Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations in New York, awarded the accolades. Cheman Rashid from Wadi's Dohuk program gave a speech, accepting the award on behalf of Wadi and all its members and supporters in Iraq and Germany.

In her note she said: *"WADI is working on the ground for more than two decades – and it is working with the people rather than just for them. I mean that literally. (...) So WADI is not just a chairperson, a board, a team here and beneficiaries there – it is the many people who work and live in the programs here and there. (...) This encouragement is of great importance for us. It shows that we are not alone – that you care. The price WADI receives today honors them all, us all – and we all are thankful that you chose us as one of the organizations to receive the foundations' award this year."*

Other awards



WADI received another award from the Iraqi-Kurdish Ministry of Health and Heartland Alliance for its efforts to provide psychosocial support for refugees and IDPs.

The supreme spiritual leader of the Ezidi community, Baba Sheikh, awarded WADI for its commitment to support the Ezidi people after the attempted genocide and the countless atrocities committed by the so-called Islamic state.

4. SUCCESS AND CHALLENGES

The new campaign

The launch of the new No to violence! campaign has probably been WADI's largest success in 2017. The idea was developed right on site in talks among refugees, village women and WADI social workers. The teams have been working consistently in the poor, rural area of Garman, Iraqi Kurdistan, where violence against women and children is a serious issue. Through their weekly trainings and seminars, they have seen firsthand that the causes of violence cannot only be seen as individual incidents but rather as a result of a culture of violence. Years of war, terrorism, sectarian violence, displacement, and trauma, have taken a heavy toll.

The newly launched campaign became popular within weeks because in the local context people understand the message immediately. Violence and frustration are part of every corner of life for everyone. Northern Iraq as a whole, is facing a series of crises: the fight against the so called 'Islamic State', an economic downturn, non-payment of civil servants (including teachers) and a large increase in internally displaced persons from central Iraq and Syrian refugees. Many people feel the tensions grow, and at the same time they want to stop this tragic development. They want to say No. No, we won't fight each other again. No, we won't stand by anymore while our women and children are treated violently. The campaign was developed to give these people a voice and to further advance the cause.

Economic and political crisis

Weak institutions and increasing instability are countering the rule of law. People's priorities are shifting away from female health and women's and children's rights.

Iraqi Kurdistan is currently facing a serious economic crisis caused by the continuing fall of the oil price and the conflict about the deal on oil exports and revenue sharing between Iraq's government and the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG). The war against Daesh has been a large additional burden. Salaries have not been paid continuously, banks stopped disbursing assets, and real estate prices are on sharp decline.

Additionally, the Iraqi Kurdish Region is in deep political crisis because the referendum for independence led to international isolation and punitive measures by neighbouring countries. All disputed territories have been reconquered by the central government. Since several years already elections have been postponed and the current leadership is lacking legitimacy. The tense situation has led to some civil unrest. The crisis has hampered WADI's work in many ways, for example money transfer has become more challenging, and traveling to the region has become difficult due to the airport closures.

On the ground, women's and children's rights are increasingly under pressure. They are perceived as a minor issue considering all the existential problems and threats people face. This made it occasionally more difficult to operate.

However, nobody in WADI believes this is a reason to give up. To the contrary, they know women's and children's rights need to be defended more firmly than ever in such times.

5. ARTICLES & MEDIA

This is a selection of international media coverage WADI projects and initiatives received. In matters of the plight of Ezidi girls and female genital mutilation in Iraqi Kurdistan WADI remained a leading news source. Kurdish language TV, radio and newspapers covered numerous activities and reported extensively, however these reports are not included here.

February 6, UNICEF: On International Day against FGM UNICEF publishes their Press Release with a picture of our colleague from Wadi in Arbil https://www.unicef.org/media/media_94562.html

April 24, Human Dignity Forum about WADI receiving the Roland Berger Human Dignity Award 2017: <http://www.human-dignity-forum.org/2017/04/wadi-e-v/>

May 24, Kurdistan Secular: about Wadi's campaign against FGM in Garman: "Through Wadi organization's work in Garman many lives were affected. A village like Chalarash, now stands against FGM. The mayor of Chalarash says: "Now we know that FGM is a crime and we will not accept anyone to do it, it was a form of torture for girls in the past." <http://www.kurdistansecular.com/ku/?p=1188>

June 4, BASNEWS: Female Circumcisions or Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Kurdistan <http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/opinion/355227>

August 7, NRT: 45 minutes TV feature about FGM, including interviews with WADI staff <http://www.nrttv.com/media-Barname-detail.aspx?Barnama=85&Jimare=5885&T=%D8%AE%DB%95%D8%AA%DB%95%D9%86%DB%95%DA%A9%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%86%DB%8C+%D9%85%DB%8E%DB%8C%D9%86%DB%95+%D9%84%DB%95+%DA%A9%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%AF%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%86>
<https://wadi-online.org/2017/08/09/kurdish-satellite-channel-reports-about-fgm/>

November 9, VOA Kurdish: TV Report about WADI's launch of the No to Violence - campaign <https://www.facebook.com/VOAKudish/videos/10154849623370876/>

November 9, KNN: TV Report about WADI's launch of the No to Violence – campaign <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ug75I-MzE7o>

November 9, ZNA: Report about WADI's launch of the No to Violence – campaign
<http://zagrosh.com/45095-1>

November 9, KirkukNow: Report about WADI's launch of the No to Violence – campaign
<http://kirkuknow.com/kurdish/?p=65205>

November 11, NRT: TV Report about WADI's launch of the No to Violence – campaign
https://www.facebook.com/naliatv/videos/1704091999636861/?autoplay_reason=all_page_organic_allowed&video_container_type=0&video_creator_product_type=2&app_id=2392950137&live_video_guests=0

November 12, REGA: TV Report about WADI's launch of the No to Violence – campaign
https://www.facebook.com/brytrerr/videos/1506375099451241/?autoplay_reason=ugc_default_allowed&video_container_type=1&video_creator_product_type=0&app_id=2392950137&live_video_guests=0

December 7, ZNA: Zagros News about activities WADI in Garman conducted on 25th of November to raise awareness against domestic violence and abuse. <http://zagrosh.com/46234-1>

December 22, Deutschlandfunk, interview with WADI team member Sara Hasan in “Die Hinterlassenschaften des IS”, by Björn Blaschke und Susanne El-Khafif, http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/terrorismus-die-hinterlassenschaften-des-is.724.de.html?dram%3Aarticle_id=406582

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