Stabilising livelihoods in Nineveh

Creating livelihoods for returnees, internally displaced persons and the local population in Nineveh in Northern Iraq

The challenge

The province of Nineveh has been the scene of intense fighting between the terrorist group “Islamic State” (IS) and other armed groups since the beginning of 2014. As a result, at least 600,000 people of the former population of about 3.2 million have fled. In Nineveh, the Sunni Kurds and Sunni Arabs make up the majority of the population, along with Yazidis, Shiites, Turkmen, Sunnis, Christians, Kakai, and the Shiiite Shabak. Due to political disagreements between different levels of government, the local administrations and authorities are almost incapable of action and a social safety net that supports vulnerable households is no longer functional. The basic physical and social infrastructure in the communities is largely non-existent and social services, such as healthcare or education, are only rudimentary available due to the massive destruction. Moreover, many areas are still heavily contaminated with explosive remnants of war, improvised explosive devices and mines, and people have few opportunities to generate income.

Our approach

In cooperation with the Ministry of Planning (MoP) and its directorates, the objective of the project is to improve the social and economic situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees and host-communities, and to contribute to the foundations of a peaceful reconstruction process. The project therefore seeks to strengthen income prospects at household level as well as institutional structures and capacities.

The project’s activities include peacebuilding, income generation and improving perspectives for youths, thus the strategic approach is to combine the physical rehabilitation of social public infrastructure with the reconstruction of the ‘social fabric’ and the enhancement of social cohesion.

Regarding its peacebuilding activities, a coordination mechanism for peacebuilding activities in Nineveh at UN coordination level has been established, where representatives of the Iraqi government, international organisations, international and national non-governmental organisations along with the civil society plan, steer and evaluate peacebuilding activities.

The project further supports peacebuilding activities on community and grassroots level, for example through negotiation and leadership trainings for tribal and religious leaders and youth groups.

To revive the local economy, the project continues implementing income generation measures, thus supporting vulnerable households to earn their livelihood while rehabilitating social infrastructure. Additionally, different types of grants are allocated to provide the beneficiaries with the means to (re-)establish a sustainable source of income (an own business, for example) and to contribute to the local economy.

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<tr>
<td>Commissioned by</td>
<td>Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)</td>
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<td>Project region</td>
<td>Nineveh Province</td>
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For improving perspectives for the youth, the project supports the establishment of Accelerated Learning Centers, where children (10-18 years) can make up for their missed school education during the IS occupation by taking weekend classes. Young adults (18 years and older) are further provided with technical and vocational education and training, followed by support for job placements.

In order to improve the access to education for girls, trained mediators support the project by reaching out to families about the importance of education.

Impact

The Peace and Reconciliation Working Group (PRWG), established and financed by the project since October 2018, has had its 8th regular meeting with participation of over 30 different stakeholders. The working group coordinates peacebuilding activities of local and international (non)governmental organisations as well as the Iraqi government to prevent doubling of activities and identifying gaps in the subject area of peacebuilding.
Since 2016, over 32,000 vulnerable households have received financial assistance via Cash for Work activities. As a result, the beneficiaries were able to secure their livelihoods and rehabilitate basic social infrastructure in over 130 projects in their community. For example, since the start of the project, 30 school rehabilitation projects have been completed, where more than 9,000 students are being taught. At the same time, more than 10,000 vulnerable households benefitted from unconditional cash transfers, allowing them to cover their basic needs.

Eleven Accelerated Learning Centers were opened in 2018, which allows currently more than 1,000 students to complete their primary education, which was denied to them during the IS occupation.

Further, a conflict and context monitoring system was developed. Based on monthly data collection and along with information from various assessments and analyses it enables the project and its partners to adapt their programming to the continuously changing context in Nineveh.

Case study: Right to education

In summer of 2014, thirteen-year-old Vian (name changed) was abducted by advancing troops of the “Islamic State” (IS). After being held captive in various locations in Nineveh for over two weeks, she was married to one of the fighters and had to endure his and his family’s violence from then onward. Shortly before the liberation of Mosul in 2017, her captors moved her over the Syrian border, where months of captivity and violence awaited her until her tormenters were eventually captured. She was reunited with her family in 2018.

During this time, the now seventeen-year-old girl was not allowed to attend school or to take part in social life. However, after returning to her home in Sinuni, she found the courage and will to make up for as much as possible. Vian is now catching up on her previously denied education in one of the Accelerated Learning Centres in Sinuni during the weekends.