



# WOMEN'S ADVISORY BOARD LOCAL INITIATIVES REPORT



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the defeat of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in late 2017, local governments in affected provinces struggled to rebuild their communities, leading to decision-makers overlooking the needs of Iraqi women. Women from the provinces affected by the ISIS conflict to this day continue to face high unemployment rates, forced and early marriages, and underrepresentation in the public sphere. Increased presence of Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs) and Iraqi troops in the liberated provinces of Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salahaddin, has led to digression of women's rights, weakening women's groups in the provinces. Displacement of families as a result of unresolved territorial disputes and continued security concerns have hindered women's access to basic services and livelihoods. Women continue to suffer from a growing list of issues, such as a lack of reliable independent income and access to employment, fear of harassment, traditional socio-cultural gender norms, gender-based violence, and exclusion in decision making.

To fill the gap and address provincial issues with a gender-focused lens, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) convened a select group of women from the provinces of Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salahaddin and launched the Women's Advisory Boards (WABs) in 2019. Currently, WAB members from the five liberated provinces have successfully launched and completed 10 local initiatives focused on addressing dire community issues. The COVID-19 global pandemic, which only compounded the challenges faced by underrepresented and marginalized communities, led to backsliding of gender equality and access to resources for vulnerable members of society. Local initiatives therefore addressed a number of concerns related to the pandemic's effect on vulnerable community members.

WAB members from Kirkuk arranged a bicycle parade, involving mainly female volunteers, to raise awareness on COVID-19 precautions. To guide parents through the new world of online education, the Salahaddin WAB provided virtual training to parents on the use of an online educational platform designed by the government. Ninewa's WAB ensured that vulnerable retirees receive their monthly allowances directly rather than risk exposing themselves to COVID-19 by going out to collect their allowance. Alongside helping the senior community in Ninewa, WABs also organized an art competition to highlight the rise of domestic violence cases in the country.

Other local initiatives addressed very local issues that affect women in the province, including the rehabilitation of a laboratory for female students in a vocational training school in the Anbar province. Anbar members also organized an advocacy campaign in Ramadi to promote the employment of women and girls with special needs. The Ninewa WAB focused on providing psychosocial support, basic necessities and medical consultations to female inmates and their children in Telkaif Prison, and raised awareness to relevant authorities on their dire conditions.

Some local initiatives undertook efforts to improve the infrastructure of their communities. In Diyala, WAB members took over the reconstruction efforts of a park in the Jawlala sub-district, which was destroyed during the ISIS occupation. The WAB in Kirkuk rehabilitated the green space inside the Kirkuk Technical Institute and developed an awareness campaign to highlight the importance of having a green environment to improve the overall health of the community.

The program *Supporting Gender-Sensitive Local Governance through Women's Advisory Board* is funded by the Government of Canada.

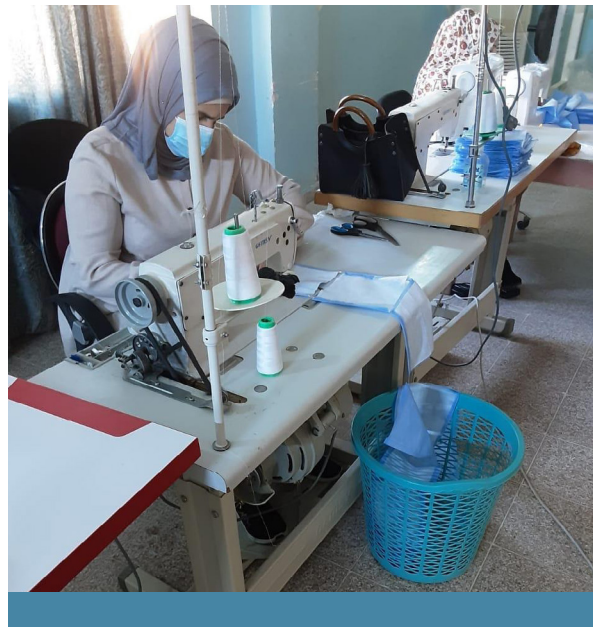
# ANBAR: ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORT THE EMPLOYMENT OF GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES

This initiative supported girls with disabilities between the ages of 14 and 25—with a focus on those who are hard of hearing, have speech impediments, or minor cognitive disabilities—to provide them with employment opportunities in the public sector. The lack of institutional services and special centers that focus on the needs of persons with disabilities (PWD) evidently excludes girls with disabilities from access to employment opportunities, hindering their chances in securing economic independence, autonomy, and restricting their overall human rights.

In order to level the playing field, members of the WAB in Anbar launched an advocacy campaign, in which girls and young women participate in a number of workshops established to provide them with the practical skills and experiences needed to enable their integration into the workforce and engagement in public services. On the basis of reestablishing the rights of girls with disabilities guaranteed to them by Law No. 28 of 2013, which prohibits any form of discrimination due to disabilities and ensures high degree employment opportunities in governmental and private sectors.

## Activities and Project Implementation

Anbar WAB members organized and met with a number of local officials, stakeholders, and decision makers to advocate for promoting the employment of women and girls with special needs. Through holding meetings with the Director of the Sunni Waqf Board and the Mayor “Qaem Maqam” of Ramadi, WAB members were able to increase awareness and ensured that essential community leaders shared the vision of improving access to employment for PWDs. WAB members coordinated with the Directorate for Persons with Special Needs and organized the campaigns’ workshops, hosting dozens of female participants with disabilities in their center located in the city of Ramadi. Teachers from a local civil society organization (CSO) supported the workshops and enabled women PWDs to showcase their skills.



WAB members also met with a group of young girls with disabilities who have been recruited to work within the directorate’s departments and discussed the most important challenges and obsta-

cles they face that limit their integration into society and prevent them from enhancing their competence and gaining self-confidence.

WAB members and staff from a local CSO visited the headquarters of the Directorate for Persons with Special Needs affiliated with the Labor and Social Affairs Directorate in Anbar to launch the organized advocacy campaign. The campaign included educational awareness sessions and psychological and health support workshops. A number of officials from the Directorate of Education and Educational Supervision, Social Welfare, Culture and Arts, as well as a group of civil activists, ranging in specialties, and a number of CSOs interested in disability affairs. During the workshops, WAB members spoke with twenty girls with special needs on psychological support and personal development.

Participating young girls with disabilities showcased their skills and abilities and defied public perceptions that limited their abilities. Participants produced a number of works in various fields including sewing, weaving, cosmetics, preparing baked goods, and various other crafts.



# ANBAR: EQUAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FEMALE STUDENTS AT AL HURRIYAH VOCATIONAL SCHOOL – AL FALLUJAH / MEDICAL EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT

## Background

In the two-story building that is Anbar's Al Hurriyah Medical Equipment Repair Vocational School, female and male students study to develop necessary skills for repairing broken medical tools and equipment frequently used in hospitals and healthcare offices. While the school is considered to be co-ed, male students occupy the second floor, which hosts the only repair training laboratory available for students' use. Because female students do not feel comfortable in a mixed lab environment, they end up lacking the training necessary, leading to lower grades and an increase in dropout rates. To address the issue, WAB members in Anbar launched a local initiative that aimed at rehabilitating the Al Hurriyah Vocational School's medical laboratory in order to provide female students exclusive access to hands-on and theoretical courses as well as practical trainings. Female students were introduced and trained on various medical devices, including microscopes, dentist chairs, EKG devices, and oscilloscopes. Female students are also learning how to operate and maintain the devices to ensure proper usage and longevity.



## Activities and Project Implementation

WAB members held a number of meetings with key decision makers, stakeholders, and government officials to collect the resources necessary for the initiative. With support from the General Director of Health in Ramadi, WAB members obtained a dentist chair, an essential item for the female school laboratory. Additional assistance was provided with support from the Director of Vocational Education in Anbar Province, Director of Education of Fallujah and the Mayor "Qaem Maqam" of Fallujah, who directed all administrative units to cooperate with the WAB's implementation team. The Director of the Municipality of Fallujah organized a clean-up campaign to collect waste from inside and outside the school and prepare for the arrival of the equipment.

Following a number of successful meetings between various parties to coordinate the implementation



of the initiative, WAB members successfully attained all the necessary equipment to provide female students the necessary exclusive access to hands-on experience. Despite the cancellation of the inauguration ceremony due to COVID-19, WAB members successfully presented the new female exclusive laboratory. In November 2020, the necessary devices and equipment were moved from Baghdad to the school. Equipment was then organized and the devices installed. The WAB members volunteered to provide curtains and six tables to place the laboratory devices, as well as equipping the laboratory with disinfectants, cleaning products and face masks. Due to the neglect of the school, the building accumulated waste and was in poor condition so WAB members also deep-cleaned and painted the lab.

By December 2020, WAB members presented the new laboratory to students and teachers. Both the administrative and teaching staff expressed their gratitude to the WAB members and the local CSO partner for the initiative, reasserting their commitment to future cooperation with the WAB when needed. Female students responded positively to the new laboratory, highlighting that in the past, they would be harassed by male students, which led to an increase in female dropout rates from lab-focused courses and, evidently, led to a detrimental effect on their final exam results. Students who participated in the hands-on course at the laboratory were impressed and committed to pursuing their studies at a mixed vocational school now that a special laboratory has been set up and equipped especially for them. The new laboratory, as mentioned by the school director, is now a driving purpose for the increase in the number of female students who have joined the school in the academic year.

With strong community engagement, WAB members were able to successfully implement the initiative. WAB members developed a stronger understanding of their capabilities in terms of resource management, overseeing laboratory set-up, and overcoming obstacles and challenges.

# DIYALA: REHABILITATION OF JALWALA PARK

## Background

Located in Khanaqin District, Jalawla Park is a public space that provides a recreational and relaxing environment, most frequently used by families and female students. The park, which has large gardens and evergreen trees, also receives a large number of people from surrounding villages that gather during the holidays and special occasions. Despite its popularity, the park was severely neglected due to lack of financial resources allocated to maintain the space. The park fell into further ruin during the ISIS occupation and, as a result, a substantial amount of waste accumulated over the years and gardens and green spaces that once brightened the district deteriorated due to lack of maintenance. From a health and safety standpoint, the space is not suitable for hosting the large number of families and female students who were the most frequent visitors of the park. Through the initiative, WAB members aimed to provide a clean and green environment for study and recreation and encourage park users to maintain the space's clean condition.

## Activities and Project Implementation

To get started on the project, WAB members established an action plan which included communication with key stakeholders and local government decision makers in Jalwala. WAB members met with a number of government agencies and officials, including the Governor of Diyala, Director of the Municipality of the Engineering Center, Assistant Electrical Director, Director of Water and Sewerage of Jalwala, Director of the Municipality of Jalwala and Jalwala District Council. These meetings focused on planning the rehabilitation process and obtaining the approvals necessary to proceed with the initiative. WAB members also held three meetings with their volunteer teams—20 volunteers per team—to raise awareness on the importance of a clean environment and its impact on the community's public health, society and economy. The sessions also addressed the accumulation of waste in the park and how users can prevent it and to advocate for a clean environment.





Through coordination with the Director of the Municipality of Jalwala, the WAB was able to clean up rubble and other building waste that accumulated in the park throughout the years. The municipality provided motorized machines to complete the job, and three large trash bins and smaller ones were also set up on the outskirts of the park. In cooperation with the municipality and with efforts from the Department of Water and Sewerage of Jalwala, sewer pipes were installed to treat the sewage issue in front of the park gate. In addition, a power grid, in coordination with the Electrical service of Jalwala, was installed to provide lighting at night. Volunteers and WAB members also built a number of

park benches, planted 160 plants and 150 seedlings. Following the cleaning of the walls surrounding the park, WAB members and volunteers painted the doors and the walls. Volunteers also set up signs with advocacy messages on ways to maintain the cleanliness of the park and its effects on the health and environment of the community.

WAB members successfully reopened the newly refurbished park in the presence of stakeholders. WAB members were encouraged to continue to undertake similar initiatives, emphasizing the importance of the role that WAB members play in the province.

# KIRKUK: TOGETHER AGAINST COVID-19

## Background

WAB members from Kirkuk organized a campaign to raise awareness and draw attention to the dangers of COVID-19, following the dramatic rise of cases in the province. Due to the lack of commitment to preventative measures as well as the lack of knowledge and citizen awareness, WAB members' targeted campaign focus toward increasing public awareness on the precautionary measures issued by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the federal and provincial crisis cells. These measures can dramatically contribute to reducing the number of infections and preventing people from exposing themselves to the life-threatening disease, as well as reducing public spending and psychological stress on families. The campaign aimed to encourage citizens to take precautionary measures to protect themselves and their families against COVID-19. WAB members launched their initiative, a targeted campaign to raise awareness, especially among women, on methods to fight and prevent the spread of COVID.

## Activities and Project Implementation

To prepare for the initiative, WAB members held a number of activities including meetings with Kirkuk's Traffic Directorate and the Kirkuk Police Director to attain permission to share the roads and coordinate safety measures. To ensure the health safety of all participants, WAB members met with the health department, who agreed to provide ambulance services for the initiative as well as assistance in creating posters for the targeted campaign. WAB members also met with the Olympic Committee to involve the Cycling Union of Kirkuk in participating in the initiative.

The initiative was launched on November 7, 2020, where thirty girls participated as well as 10 boys. All participants wore matching t-shirts with the slogan: "Wear a mask, do not kill your loved ones." With the cooperation of the Police Department, the Traffic Directorate, Civil Defense Directorate, Kirkuk Health Department, and the Cycling Union. During the two hour parade, participants also used bullhorns to announce all measures citizens can take to protect their families. This initia-



tive is first of its kind in the province and the parade was accompanied by civil defense and emergency vehicles. WAB members also distributed pens with the logo: "Social distance to stay safe."

The initiative had a positive impact on the community. Citizens welcomed the ideas spread by participating women - of educating the community on preventative measures - and welcomed WAB members developing this project in other parts of the city.

# KIRKUK: A GREEN ENVIRONMENT FOR THE KIRKUK TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

## Background

The Kirkuk Technical Institute, a prestigious scientific institution, was founded in 1976 and contains 16 scientific departments as well as various divisions and scientific, administrative and service units. The Institute hosts over 4,000 students and 800 employees from provinces across the country that participate in daily classes. Despite its central location and frequent visitors, the Institute suffered years of severe neglect due to lack of human and financial resources. Evidently, the Institute transformed into a landfill and lost all green spaces due to desertification. With the aim of providing a clean green space for students, staff, and visitors, WAB members from Kirkuk worked to create a green space at the Kirkuk Technical Institute. Through this project, WAB members hope to encourage students, from both genders, to take care of their environment to mitigate waste and prevent the spread of diseases linked to poor environmental hygiene.



## Activities and Project Implementation

WAB members, in compliance with COVID-19 restrictions, communicated with key stakeholders, including the local municipality, the Kirkuk Technical Institute, and the Department of Agriculture. In coordination with the Kirkuk Technical Institute, WAB members held four discussion sessions with 210 students—45 to 55 students per session—to recruit potential community leaders and form volunteer groups. Discussions addressed: environmental awareness, impact of a clean environment on public health, economic effects of waste accumulation, and the lack of investment in environmental sustainability.

To implement the initiative, students, grouped to ensure efficiency, participated in cleaning and removing dried out bushes, developing sustainable pipe networks to hydrate and water the plants and trees, as well as installation of eight benches and eight trash bins across the site. Students also planted 217 large trees to provide shade for students, 350 fruit trees, and 50 flower trees.

# NINEWA: TELKAIF PRISON PROJECT

## Background

Ninewa WAB members visited a women's prison in the district of Telkaif in September 2020 to conduct a needs assessment, where members discovered that female inmates and their children are living in dire conditions. Female prisoners have experienced psychological trauma due to periodic isolations from family visits along with physical health deterioration due to neglect and lack of medical resources. This initiative aimed to support some of the basic needs of the women and children and provide them with psychological support, basic necessities, and medical consultations, in addition to continuation of advocacy efforts alongside key decision makers to discuss ways of improving their living conditions.

## Activities and Project Implementation

WAB members organized roundtable discussions and listening sessions with key stakeholders and decision makers to develop a better understanding of what the female prisoners' needs are. Ninewa WAB members gathered stakeholders, decision makers, and CSOs, and invited them to listen to the female prisoners, resulting in the development of a set of recommendations to address the needs of female inmates.

The initiative was implemented in several stages, beginning with contacting the prison administration to introduce the Women's Advisory Board, followed by obtaining the necessary approval from the security authorities to enter the prison and meet the prisoners. WAB members, alongside the Telkaif Health Center, established a health committee composed of specialists who successfully provided female inmates with access to health support. The formed health committee would routinely provide diagnostic and treatment visits to ensure the women's needs are met. In turn, 80 female prisoners were provided treatments. WAB members were also able to put together sanitary baskets, which included basic necessities such as shampoos, bars of soap, feminine care products, hair brushes, and tooth brushes. In addition to physical needs, WAB members organized a psycho-social support session to 53 inmates to address the larger, long-term aspect of mental health support for inmates. Preceding these efforts, WAB members organized a deep cleaning session, in coordination with the prison directorate, to improve the overall sanitation of the prison.



During the second stage, required medication was purchased and distributed to the patients, followed by another psych-social support session, which was provided to 24 prisoners in two close stages. The last event was a focus group session in which the aforementioned people participated.

WAB members successfully included a doctor that specializes in critical gynecological diseases in the initiative. The doctor was able to diagnose conditions of female prisoners, and, through understanding the circumstances of the prisoners, put in a formal request to ensure that the prison has a permanent specialist. In addition, during the psycho-social support sessions, WAB members identified a key issue that has deteriorated the mental health of the female prisons, the continued interruption of family visits. The inconsistency in access to family has proven to be detrimental to the mental health of the inmates.

In seeing the weak conditions of the prison system, WAB members aim to continue to work with the prison administration to meet the needs of the female inmates. WAB members also identified key issues that require immediate attention, including: providing prisoners with essential medication and clothing, milk and diapers for infants, rehabilitation courses for female prisoners with a psychologist, expanding the prison site to accommodate the large number of prisoners, and the maintenance of sanitation of the prison.



# NINEWA: PROTECTION OF RETIREES PROJECT



## Background

The province of Ninewa is severely lacking ATM machines that service the Qi-card—cards responsible for distributing retirees monthly pensions—forcing the elderly to leave their homes during the pandemic to go to the nearest government licensed private office in charge of salary distribution. These offices operate on specific distribution schedules, which are announced by government banks through visual and audio adverts, in addition to specific smartphone applications. Due to the increase in awareness on the importance of personal protection against COVID-19, especially for the elderly who are

among the most vulnerable groups, it is becoming increasingly challenging for them to attain their pensions without risking their lives. To address this issue, Ninewa WAB members raised awareness on the importance of personal protection, specifically against COVID-19, to protect the elderly when leaving their homes to collect their pensions. The main goal of the initiative was to encourage the retired elderly to follow social distancing and preventive measures.

## Activities and Project Implementation

The initiative was implemented between the months of November and December, in conjunction with the scheduled payday. The initiative targeted five offices that host a large number of retirees - two in the east side and two in the west side of Mosul, one in Qayyarah and one in a sub-district in the north of Mosul. WAB members successfully implemented the initiative by organizing tape markers on the floors to promote social distancing when citizens wait in line. Members also installed hand sanitizer near the entrance of the offices for the elderly to use before entering and leaving the building. Water, face masks and gloves were also distributed to the elderly along with information pamphlets on ways to improve personal hygiene when leaving your home, in efforts to educate the elderly on preventative measures and mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

“I plead to Iraqis not to hold or attend large gatherings. Whether it is for your wedding or for getting groceries, do not hold large gatherings,” said an elderly waiting in line. “We need signs [like the facemask and hand sanitizer stations] to remind us that the virus is still here.”

# NINEWA: ART COMPETITION PROJECT ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

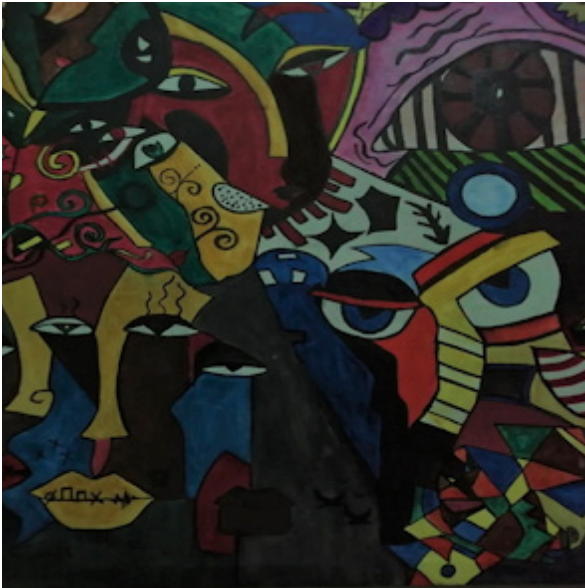
## Background

In October, the Iraqi Council of Representatives intended to present several pieces of legislation, including a draft law on domestic violence, during their legislative session. And while this law was welcomed by many, a number of politicians and citizens expressed their objection to a number of provisions of the law, characterizing the legislation as ‘dangerous’ and a threat to the family institutions of the country. In an effort to combat false stigmas and raise awareness on the importance of the Anti-Domestic Violence Law—with a special focus on the rise in violence against women (VAW) during COVID-19—WAB members from Ninewa launched an art competition for young women in the province to showcase the positive impact the law will have on society. The selection of the winners of the competition was conducted by a committee composed of WAB members and a professor from the College of Fine Arts of Mosul.

## Activities and Project Implementation

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, participant outreach was mainly conducted through social media. The competition began in November 2020 where a total of 57 youth submitted their artwork for consideration. By December 2020, the results were announced and copies of the artwork were displayed around Mosul in February 2021. Participants demonstrated that art can be used as a weapon to combat violence against women (VAW) in the country and provide a platform for women to stand up for their rights. The initiative also revived a critical part of Ninewa, which was dying off due to shifts in focus following the spread of COVID-19.

Stakeholders among the artists welcomed and admired this initiative and praised the initiative for providing a platform for the topic of domestic violence and violence against women. As society attempts to address the issue, this campaign provided a better understanding of the issue and enabled future implementation of VAW in the education sector.



### First Place Winner

Nineteen year old first place winner from the city of Mosul commented, “My heart will continue to beat despite the internal failures. I will build my dream despite the destruction.”



### Second Place Winner

Twenty two year old second place winner from the city of Mosul hoped that her piece will show that ignorance, customs and traditions will not be an obstacle to achieving her dreams.



### Third Place Winner

Third place winner from Mosul reflected on her artwork, stating, “She blossoms despite the pain, and waters the smile of others with her tears. She gives despite the hardships and misfortunes.”

# SALAHADDIN: NEWTON PLATFORM PROJECT

## Background

Due to lockdown measures imposed to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the class from the last academic year ended without completing their end-of-the-year exams. All students systematically passed with the exception of the 6th grade in high school. To rebuild Iraq's academic institutions and modify them to meet the new standards of online learning, the Ministry of Education developed a new system for the new academic year, which began mid-September. However, not everyone is aware of this new platform, which is considered by the Ministry of Education to be the only channel between teachers and students for online education. In efforts to improve student turnout and assist students and parents with the new technological system, WAB members from Salahaddin trained 30 families on the usage of the Newton Training Platform. WAB members also launched a campaign to raise awareness for parents on the new system.

## Activities and Project Implementation

The first phase of implementation included a series of radio interviews to raise awareness of the Newton Platform. WAB members held a total of four interviews—two per station—with Al-Malwiya Radio in the Samarra District and Al-Qithara Radio in the Tikrit District. The geographical reach of the radio stations expanded to Al-Ishaqi sub-district in the south, North and South districts of Al-Dour, Al-Hamra area in the north. It also reached villages and rural areas with elementary, intermediate and high schools. Two of the episodes preceded the trainings of the families, where listeners had the opportunity to ask questions about the Newton Training Platform, registration details, and details of the training such as time and location. WAB members answered all questions and provided more information about the initiative, the training objectives, targeted groups, and participation mechanisms.

To launch the training on the platform, WAB members created a WhatsApp group for trainers where a total of 20 members - 10 female and 10 male - from different regions in the province participated. Trainers established a training schedule and focus on topics such as "how to download Zoom onto your devices." A total of three courses were held, with ten participants in each training. Additional participants from the provinces of Anbar, Kirkuk, Baghdad, Ninawa, Diyala, Basra and Najaf also listened in on the training sessions. Participants requested more training sessions and encouraged expanding training sessions to become more engaging with teachers in the community, as they are also affected by the new system.

The Women Advisory Board is ambitious to serve the community during the pandemic, which has numerous urgent needs that need to be addressed. WAB members aim to establish partnerships with other international organizations, undertaken by the National Democratic Institute, to implement the initiative on educating the community on the Newton and Zoom platforms, ensuring that it becomes nation-wide trainings. The training staff of the WABs have become technically qualified and familiar with training after experiencing it through our initiative. WAB members are also open to training other women to become technical trainers in the same initiative and expanding the circle of training and education workshops to cover the largest area and as fast as possible due to the pressing need for the training in society. Iraq's education system is currently in a hybrid phase, where students attend classes in-person once a week, with the remaining days spent on e-education. There is a serious need to continue these training sessions and WAB members hope to continue supporting local and national families transition into the new online world.

"Most of the community members were not convinced nor receptive to e-education because of the ignorance of most groups in using electronic platforms. However, after our training, we noticed that there is a demand from the community to conduct the training again and expand it and to engage the educational staff in it to clarify the mechanism of work on Newton Platform and the Zoom application... Moreover, to be frank, we noticed that the community members recognized the Women Advisory Board and its members more than before."

# SALAHADDIN: SOCIAL PROTECTION PROJECT

## Background

During the pandemic, many people in Salahaddin experienced a dramatic decline in income, particularly citizens with special needs, disabilities, and the elderly. To assist impoverished and vulnerable communities, the government issued a social protection program. However, out of fear and precaution against COVID-19, PWDs and the elderly are not able to go to the Directorate of Social Protection to fulfill necessary paperwork to receive the aid they are entitled to. To address this issue, Salahaddin WAB members established this initiative to reach out to these groups and assist them in the process of registering for the social protection program.



## Activities and Project Implementation

WAB members collaborated with mobile teams from the Social Welfare and Protection Network Department in Salahaddin and traveled to the districts of Tirit, Al-Dawr, and Samarra to register those who are eligible for social welfare but are unable to travel to the department to register. In the province, 36,000 people have applied and 3,000 families have received funding. WAB members focused assistance for households with no income or men, PWDs, widows, divorced women, prisoners' wives, orphans, single women over 35, and people with special needs. Those selected are all currently living below the poverty line.

To implement the initiative, WAB members held meetings with key decision makers and stakeholders to present the initiative. In October 2020, WAB members met with the director of a local CSO. During the meeting, WAB members were informed of previous assistance efforts provided by the mobile teams in Samarra, and discussed the challenges they faced due to unforeseen circumstances. WAB members also interviewed citizens from targeted groups to develop a better understanding of who they are and what their main struggles have been.

Over the course of two-months and following a number of strategic meetings, WAB members implemented their initiative, where they assisted 40 households across Tikrit and Samarra.

