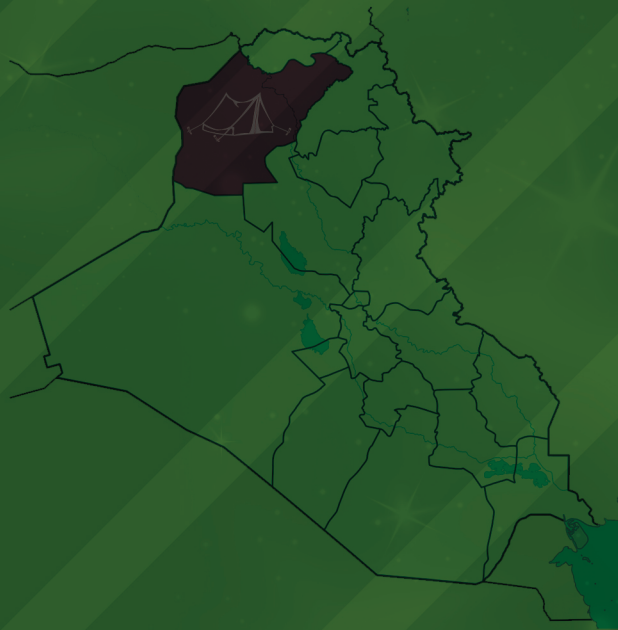


Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion in Nineveh Governorate



By
Vaheel Jabbar Chalabee

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Duhok – 2017



University of Duhok
Center for Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution

Name of Book:

Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion in Nineveh Governorate

Author's Name:

Vaheel Jabbar Chalabi

Design:

Hakar Findi

Deposit Number at Baderkhanyeen Library:

(17/ 2085 /- D)

Printed by:

Khani Press – Duhok - 2017

This book was printed with support from the International
Organization for Migration and the Government of Japan



Notice:

This booklet is part from “Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion in Nineveh Governorate” project activities, which was carried out by Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies at the University of Duhok, with support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The views and information included in this booklet do not represent the views of Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies or the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

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Introduction

Peacebuilding is the process of capacity building to enhance communication in order to build relationships. It is a process of sharing and exchanging the information and experiences. In this context, it is an opportunity to discover or invent examples that encourage cooperation, or encourage constructive optimism in learning from the negatives points of the relationship and the handling of mistakes. That is because peacebuilding is not a final goal. The goal is rather to establish the culture of peace. This requires a number of activities to change the state of conflict among parties, and transform such state from a negative situation into a positive one through which the roots of conflict and crisis management can be identified and structures can be established to reduce the possibility and recurrence of conflicts.

Peacebuilding is a tricky, complex and difficult process. That is because it takes place in an area that may have just emerged from conflict or where there are ongoing ethnic conflicts, whose people suffer from deteriorating relations, loss of trust and dominance of suspicions, in addition to the grievances and losses inflicted by the conflict. Therefore, the peacebuilding process requires the fulfillment of certain elements and involves a number of dimensions, and it also needs assistance from various institutions and parties. On the other hand, there are factors and circumstances that may constitute obstacles to the success and loss of trust. It is an important process, because it expresses the interest of States and individuals alike in providing peace and stability as an alternative to wars. This fact has led to intensified and coordinated efforts by various organizations, centers and bodies for the success of this process

and for the achievement of its desired objectives that would provide humanitarian assistance and establish peace.

Since social cohesion refers to relationships and interactions within the society that support and help to create an inclusive identity, the question of understanding social cohesion from the perspective that it is a fundamental part of peacebuilding in a society that has experienced wars and conflicts or has been subject to displacement is a very important question. And as the goal of social cohesion is to create a system based on equality and justice, overcoming social divisions and accepting others, hence social cohesion is a process by which citizenship is promoted by reducing all forms of inequality in society. A cohesive society is a prerequisite for political and social stability and peacebuilding.

Civil society organizations, awareness and cultural centers, international organizations, with the assistance of the government and the concerned parties, all endeavor to provide social and awareness assistance and services, as well as media reports on peace and war. Such parties may play a greater role in reducing the impact of violent conflict on the population and promoting social cohesion through targeted peacebuilding activities, leading to lasting peace.

From here came the idea of implementing this project and preparing this booklet or brochure, as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in collaboration with the Center for Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution at the University of Duhok, and in order to achieve the goals of peacebuilding and social cohesion mentioned above, implemented the project of (peacebuilding and social cohesion in Nineveh Governorate). That is because this governorate, together with its districts, sub-districts and villages, has witnessed a conflict and was subject to occupation by ISIS in the

summer of 2014. Then, those areas witnessed large displacements followed by the return of the displaced people as well as mass killings and kidnappings. At the same time, those areas have a lot of ethnic diversity, and some of them are among the disputed areas covered by Article 140 of the Iraqi Constitution of 2005. Thus comes the significance of this project to provide support to the community and local leaders on the one hand, and to promote social cohesion by spreading its contents among the components of this area on the other hand. That is all in order to create community peace away from conflicts, respect for diversity and pluralism, co-existence and acceptance of others, as peace, social cohesion, democracy and acceptance of others are concepts that the people should be aware of. They are neither a recipe nor a ready-made prescription that can be presented to a society at all times and in all places.

The aim of the project is to focus and combine good efforts and practices regarding the mutual assimilation of social components and the support of social cohesion by raising the awareness and developing the skills and social assimilation, and sometimes conducting activities. The project was implemented in five areas within this governorate, namely Ain Sifni, Rabia, Zilikan, Mahd, and Alqosh. In order to explain and clarify the concept of peacebuilding and the concept of social cohesion, and also in order to comprehend the IOM's project for peacebuilding and social cohesion in Nineveh Governorate, we will divide this booklet into two sections. In this section we will define social cohesion, while in the second section we will focus on the activities of peacebuilding and social cohesion in Nineveh.

Section One

Definition of Social Cohesion

We will divide this section into three paragraphs. In the first paragraph we will address the concept of social cohesion; in the second paragraph we will explain its components, while the third paragraph will be assigned to its effects.

First: Concept of Social Cohesion

In societies in general, and in post-conflict contexts in some societies, it is important to integrate the study of social relations and social cohesion into the monitoring and evaluation of development projects. This is important for two reasons. First, social cohesion may contribute to development, which may be crucial in the context where development has already been interrupted by conflict. Second, development interventions may weaken social cohesion, which may already have been weakened after the war. However, the establishment of the methods and procedures for the best study of changes in social cohesion remains a challenge.

Social cohesion is a historical concept. It is not just an academic concept, but rather means many things. In 2002, researcher Regina Berger Schmidt analyzed the definition of social cohesion in two dimensions:

1. The first dimension may soon be referred to as the dimension of inequality. Its aim is to promote equal opportunities and reduce disparities and divisions within society. This also includes the aspect of social exclusion.

2. The second dimension may soon be referred to as the dimension of social capital. This is related to the goal of strengthening social relations and interactions, and it embraces all, which are generally considered the social capital of society.

The dimensions of this definition focus on relations within society as being not equal. In other words, the lack of equality among the members of society undermines the opportunities for social cohesion to enhance peacebuilding.

Social cohesion has a rich theoretical history. In one way or another, it comes down from the concepts of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, the concepts of mechanical and organic solidarity in Durkheim's theories, and Parsons' standard integration. In their most radical interpretation of this concept, it includes social solidarity, collective social care, aspirations and equality. Sociologist Emil Durkheim was the first to use the concept of social cohesion. He considered social cohesion a feature of society, and defined it as "interdependence among members of society, loyalty and mutual solidarity". For Durkheim (the continuous distribution of different human tasks is the main component of social solidarity), a cohesive society depends on the common loyalties that citizens owe to one another, and ultimately to the state, because they are linked to interdependencies. Talcott Parsons, whose work is still debated in social sciences, was sensitive to what he believed as the dangers of excessive liberalism. In defining the concept of social cohesion, he focuses on the existence of a set of common values and standards. This will enable the members to identify and support common goals and objectives, and share a common set of ethical principles and codes of conduct through which they interact within the society.

The World Bank defines social cohesion as "the process of improving the capabilities of disadvantaged people and giving them the opportunity to participate in society. Achievement of integration depends not only on the capacity of the individual or the community to absorb the survival requirements of the social system, but also on the degree of integration of society

itself, in a way that urges the individual to engage and participate, or vice versa". Integration involves a series of processes (integration of excluded persons) from the perspective of exclusion, which Owen calls the operations conducted by the concerned governments and institutions with a view to reintegrating excluded groups into society, whether exclusion was caused by poverty, narrow participation, poor resource allocation or social discrimination.

We can conclude, from the previous definitions, that social cohesion is "a broad concept that includes, inter alia, the participation of all members and components of society in political, economic and social life within the society, the elimination of discrimination for any reason whatsoever, and the provision of governmental, humanitarian, civil and sometimes international efforts to spread the culture of dialogue, the acceptance of the other, the provision of equal opportunities and justice, and the distribution of resources and work equally among all, which ultimately lead to peacebuilding and the elimination of the causes of conflicts".

There is no unified concept among scholars of (social exclusion) in identifying the main causes of exclusion that lead to its occurrence. Three schools of thought have emerged in this area. In their interest in the main causes of exclusion, these three schools seek an answer to the question: Who causes the exclusion? According to their different intellectual principles, the answers of the three schools were as follows:

1. The first school places the behavior and moral values of individuals first. This school stresses the importance of moral values and behavioral interpretations, focuses its analysis on socially excluded individuals, and blames them as it considers them responsible for their situation. It stresses that they have put themselves in this position.

2. The second school emphasizes the importance of the role of institutions and systems, from the state of welfare or socialism to capitalism and globalization. In its view, the civil and economic institution makes the opportunities available for some certain individuals and groups, apart from others, a kind of restriction of opportunities for others.

3. The third school emphasizes the importance of excellence and the lack of actually-implemented rights as a major cause of exclusion. In its analysis, the socially excluded people are at the mercy of the powerful, therefore they consider the elite fully responsible.

Apart from the intellectual schools and their analyses of the causes of social exclusion, we may mention the causes of this phenomenon as follows:

- A. Political Causes:** The monopoly of decision-making by some individuals, and the lack of organization that ensures the participation of individuals in dealing with their issues and problems, lead to individuals' sense of distress, which appears in the form of tension and a great willingness to explode.
- B. Economic Causes:** The economic factor is the most important factor that leads to the emergence of the aspects of exclusion from the depth of social structure, in view of the role the economic factor plays in determining the effectiveness of individuals in the social system, and the extent of their control in expanding or narrowing the circles of individual's activity, as wealth is the most important determinant of individual's exclusion or integration into society.

C. Qualitative Causes: The sex of the individual in society determines the individual's role, status and even the starting point of education. Some cultures differentiate between males and females in their preparation for different roles determined by their gender. This fact has led many movements calling for lifting the restrictions and forms of women marginalization and exclusion to perform a number of new roles, which are usually the result of social and economic changes known to societies.

So, cohesion is the ideal that societies must strive to look forward to, but they do not fully achieve. This makes the accurate definition elusive. Social cohesion, in its literal sense, is related to what binds communities together. All communities are the result of the interaction between gravity and centrifugal forces. The things that bring people together and the things that lead them. The forces of unity and the forces of division, the interests of the individual and the interests of the society. In other words, it is the creation of societies capable of managing and changing the conflict in constructive and creative ways. The risks to societies in failure are high, and may even include armed conflicts. Modern experience in Europe shows that this danger is not just a theory.

Second: Components of Social Cohesion

Conflict prevention draws more attention to social cohesion/ integration, although they are intrinsically interrelated. The most important characteristics of a flexible society for violent conflict are the elements of social cohesion. They include:

1. Comprehensive, just and responsible political and social institutions. Dissatisfaction with the existing political institutions makes the crisis of legitimacy prevail. The ruling political elites have relied on the legitimacy of force in general to preserve and reproduce their authority, as well as the failure of the political system to represent the various values, interests and classes of society. Also, the inability of the political system to absorb new changes in society, especially new groups that have not had the opportunity to participate. And the weak role and place of Parliament in the political system.
2. Economic, social and ethnic diversity rather than polarization and hegemony.
3. Growth and development that secure fair benefits across society, including the provision of basic services and needs such as education, health, housing, clothing and food, thus enabling access to security and welfare throughout society.
4. Culture and dialogue rather than violence.
5. Treating potential causes of conflict. The causes of conflicts vary depending on the variety of the underlying or apparent objectives and interests of the parties to the conflict. This is called the subject of the conflict. Such objectives may be the result of the social, cultural, religious, political and economic structures of the parties that affect their interests. Therefore, the causes of conflict must be monitored and treated radically and in time, not just reaching a truce or a ceasefire agreement, otherwise conflicts will resume and continue in a way that prevents stability.

6. Using the support of public budget and the sector-wide approach as tools for redistribution and social justice.
7. Public education and media campaigns: Promotion of healthy lifestyles, non-racial discrimination and other issues. These may be used to inform the people about their rights or to deal with other forms of racial discrimination, discrimination or lack of respect for labor standards.
8. Investment in Culture: Teaching the people their heritage and the heritage of other cultures may promote understanding, tolerance and respect for diversity if bias and superstition are avoided. Also, investment in tangible and intangible heritage has positive external effects on tourism. Heritage must be accompanied by cultural activities that support the arts, encouragement of the creativity of new artists so that culture remains alive, and popular collective events that everyone may enjoy, such as street activities / parties in the spirit of entertainment and general "cultural communication", as they are all important ways to promote social cohesion.
9. Support of the leaders of change: The community and national leaders who encourage fair discussions and comprehensive alternatives are familiar allies to gradually change values, to empower people and to strengthen associations: excluded people tend to feel inferior and to suppress their voices. But the lack of voices and the inability to dialogue may generate social dangers and may lead to violence. When people meet and share their problems, the result is often increased courage, ability to self-defense and

ability to organize in order to create positive change for themselves and their communities. Associations help communities to defend their interests, and may be linked to microfinance, cooperatives and other local development programs.

- 10.** Making Governments Responsible: Loss of trust and indifference are the result of isolating the people and separating them from the decisions that have an impact on their lives, and may lead to isolation, exclusion and violence. Finally, citizens trust governments that respond to their problems and hopes, reliable, avoid injustice and work to build stable societies that benefit the people and provide social justice. Maintaining the social contract between government and citizens is necessary to promote social trust and social cohesion.
- 11.** Role of social dialogue: Given the important role played by organizations of all kinds, it is necessary to activate the development of such organizations, so that they become capable of promoting social dialogue and facing socio-economic changes. The development of social dialogue structures contributes to good governance and social peace, which will have a positive impact on productivity and economic growth. This will consequently support equal opportunities and work in conditions of freedom, security and dignity, all being elements that affect social cohesion, so that social dialogue plays a key role in job creation and economic development.

12. Development of civil society: To improve social cohesion, there should be an increasing social capital, which still requires the development and promotion of civil society participation in all spheres of cooperation between both sides (government and citizens). This cannot be accomplished without an appropriate context of democracy, defense of human rights and the fight against discrimination, and without the stability necessary for the development of civil society. However, conflict prevention remains in fact a specialized issue, which is handled by conflict prevention specialists. Most of the national and sectoral strategies of economists and sector specialists engaged in conflict issues have been designed in a way that neglected internal frictions and "political" sources of tensions, and thus have been excluded from development. A number of countries are still suffering from social prejudice. If oriented social reform is ignored or suppressed, it may lead to further violence. It is essential that national development strategies recognize and address the sources of conflict before tensions escalate. The same applies to interventions, both by government or by international actors.

As for the constraints of social cohesion, support for social cohesion requires real and effective commitment to combating poverty and inequality in society. All this entails the support of more equal and consolidated societies, which cannot be achieved in isolation from the establishment of democracy, in order to give everyone real possibilities to obtain basic rights and work, enabling them to actively participate in society and benefit from economic growth. The great challenge of

cooperation in the areas that have witnessed conflicts or ethnically diverse areas is the appropriate mix of economic development, labor, equity and solidarity, through integrated strategies adapted to the specific realities of each country.

In this regard, in order to reduce the incidence of poverty and inequality that persist in post-conflict societies and to achieve development goals, cooperation must be based on elements affecting social cohesion, including the human factor, and the need to make appropriate use of the potential properties of migratory trends and appropriately managing them, the improvement of work levels, the promotion of labor rights and collective bargaining, the promotion of social dialogue, the development of civil society, and the awareness of peace concepts. The standard of living of the majority of the population cannot be raised because of the large increase in the population. There is no doubt that this increase has consequences both for the educational system and the labor market. If this population growth is not appropriately dealt with, it will have negative implications for social cohesion and will generate cases of exclusion and poverty.

The strategy of social cohesion must first define the factors of division within the society and then design or facilitate mechanisms, processes and institutions that prevent them from becoming so acute to the extent that may set social peace to danger. Diversity is not in itself divisive. European associations do not consider multi-ethnic, religious, cultural and ideological pluralism as an obstacle to social cohesion but as a source of wealth, dynamism, adaptability and power. However, managing diversity in a way that unleashes its potential for good is a challenge. It involves combating racial, ethnic, religious, gender and other forms of discrimination and

requires active policies to integrate migrants and all kinds of minorities and groups with special needs into the mainstream society on the basis of respect for difference and full recognition of their rights.

Another important factor of division within society is the great gap between the rich and the poor. Free market economies, like any other economic system, produce differences in wealth and social status. These differences will be tolerated as long as the people feel that they have equal opportunities to improve their situation. However, if the differences become very blatant, and above all if the less advantaged groups feel that they have little real hope of improving themselves, and that they are trapped in poverty and social exclusion, this impediment will pass from one generation to another, and in short, they will feel that they have no interest in the society because the society has nothing to offer them - and hence, social and economic divisions will begin to put social cohesion seriously at risk.

The social cohesion strategy includes action to combat poverty and social exclusion, particularly in areas such as housing, health, education, training, employment, income distribution, education and social services. But it should go beyond addressing the symptoms of exclusion, and should also more positively seek to strengthen those forces that help to create social solidarity and a sense of belonging. It is clear that some of these forces fall within the legitimate scope of government policy.

Social security systems are among the most powerful institutional expression forms of social solidarity. Any social cohesion strategy must therefore have a primary objective of strengthening social security systems, particularly as many

questions arise about their future development and funding. Family is a key factor in social cohesion, and may be described as the place where social cohesion has been built and established. This is another institution that faces great challenges and is subject to long-term changes, so household policies will naturally take their place in a strategy of social cohesion. Particular attention should be given to the needs of the most vulnerable family members, namely children and the elderly, and to the reconciliation of work and family life. A variety of civil society bodies, including churches, political parties and trade unions, are also important factors of social cohesion even though some countries have experienced some losses in membership and influence, which is perhaps a reflection of the society that gives significance to individual freedom more than that given to collective belonging. On the other hand, non-governmental organizations and voluntary bodies have been thriving, and have everywhere become indispensable partners of the Government in building social cohesion.

In order to address social cohesion as a public policy objective of the state, some key issues need to be addressed: The first concerns values. Social cohesion, as a concept, cannot really be separated from the generation of shared values, identities and standards. There is a measure of social consensus on the rules and values that are not only related to social cohesion, but are in fact inherent and coherent within the society. Public institutions (especially service providers) generally play an important role in generating and maintaining such values. The second includes any degree of social consensus, and involves standards of fairness and equity. The third is to provide security in order to have access to basic

livelihoods and services, which is very important to social norms related to social cohesion.

In the context of the contemporary view of citizenship, we believe that ensuring livelihoods is accompanied by a degree of guarantee for some basic services. The role of education in this regard is also noted, as primary education, at least since the creation of the Napoleonic model in France, has been a major tool for building a common national identity. The role of the state is very important for these three issues.

Third: Effects of Social Cohesion

All those interested in social development processes and the mechanisms of promoting social cohesion may agree that the main benefit of social cohesion is a society that is essentially free of violence and that everyone has access to decision and justice centers at the same level and importance, but the most important benefits are believed to be as follows:

1. The stronger the cohesion of the groups, the greater the awareness of the importance of joint action and joint contribution to the development of social reality and social stability, and the greater pace of belonging to the country.
2. When there is a high level of social cohesion, society can face the various political and economic pressures and the effects of wars and conflicts.
3. By promoting social cohesion, individuals and components become increasingly confident of each other and mutually contribute to protecting the social system from any risks and threats.
4. With a high level of social cohesion, the level of awareness of risks and how to face them in civil and civilized methods

become more common, and the process of building civil peace becomes faster and stronger.

5. The existence of social cohesion enhances the opportunities of development at various levels and contributes to the development of human rights and the guarantee of the rights of all social components with their different affiliations.
6. With the promotion of social cohesion, there is a sense of psychological and societal security and stability in the rapid growth of the society.
7. The existence of a high degree of social cohesion has positive consequences for the role of individuals within the group and promotes belonging to the larger community rather than narrow affiliations based on specific identities.
8. By promoting social cohesion and growth, the percentage and level of creativity rise, and the society witnesses sound growth, economic prosperity, rights development and a decline in the level of social violence.
9. Social cohesion leads to proper development of social relations among the components of society, and to an increased social interaction of various issues affecting small groups, which are sometimes perceived as forgotten and marginalized.
10. By promoting social cohesion, the level of violence in society declines from gender-based violence to electoral violence or violence based on identity or resulting from hate discourse.

- 11.** The development of social cohesion promotes the concept and principle of competitiveness, equality, activities of social and economic development, and coping with sudden deterioration of social infrastructure in cases of sudden wars or violent conflicts.
- 12.** The spread and promotion of social cohesion contributes to the development of the information society and to the greater access to new technologies in the modernization and generation of further knowledge and the reduction of social inequalities at the level of the various strata and groups of society.
- 13.** Social cohesion promotes the space of liberties, the guarantee of human and minority rights, and the strengthening of the role of civil society in partnership by focusing on the need to ensure the status of women at all stages of the fulfillment of social cohesion.

Section Two

Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion Activities in Nineveh

The (Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion Project in Nineveh Governorate), implemented by the Centre for Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution at the University of Duhok and supported by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), aimed at building local capacity for peacebuilding and social cohesion in five areas (Ain Sifni, Rabia, Zelikan, Mahd and Alqosh), all of which are located in Nineveh Governorate, which was heavily affected by the armed conflict. Before presenting the activities that have been carried out within the project and the stages of preparing them, a brief description of these areas targeted by the project of peacebuilding and social cohesion in Nineveh Governorate should be presented.

First - Areas in which peacebuilding and social cohesion activities have been carried out:

1. Ain Sifni

The town of Ain Sifni is the center of Sheikhan district. It is located 45 kilometers north of Mosul. The Sheikhan district – the center of the district (Ain Sifni) – is composed of (25,000) twenty five thousand people. Within its administrative borders, there are seven camps for the displaced, namely, (Isian – Sheikhan – Mam RaSha – Karmava - Kees Qal'a – Nerkazliya – Qaimawa). After the recent events in the area and the advent

of ISIS thereto, the area witnessed a great movement of displacement and a change of social reality, together with pluralism and diversity in the identity of the components that have been displaced to the area.

Therefore, Ain Sifni is now inhabited by citizens of various affiliations (Kurds, Arab, Turkoman, Kakais, Shabak), in addition to various religions (Islam - Yezidi - Christianity).

The area has also been very much affected by the arrival of displaced people through the great demand on services, a fact that has resulted in the emigration of a large number of its people due to the spread of horror and fear that resulted from the arrival of ISIS to areas near the city center. That is because the farthest point where the Peshmerga defending the area was the Nawaran area, only 15 km away. Also, the massive change due to the arrival of thousands of displaced people to the city center has also been so significant that has had an impact on the reality of social cohesion in one way or another.

2. Rabia:

Rabia sub-district is located north-west of Mosul and is part of Tal Afar district, bordering the Syrian borders. It is bordered from the south by Sununi sub-district, from the north by the Kurdistan Region, and from the east by Zummar sub-district. Rabia sub-district has (78) seventy-eight villages. In terms of population, it is inhabited by (84,000) eighty-four thousand inhabitants, about (14,000) of which are in the city center, while the rest are in villages. They consist of two ethnicities, the Arabs (mostly of Shammar clan) and Kurds.

Like many other areas in Nineveh Governorate, Rabia sub-district witnessed a large wave of displaced people after it was occupied by ISIS in August 2014 and re-liberated by the Peshmerga forces at the end of the year. It also witnessed social change after many of its people had left out of Iraq and to cities in central and southern Iraq and the arrival of citizens from neighboring areas as well.

3. Zelikan:

Zelikan is a sub-district affiliated to Sheikhan district. It has about (20) twenty villages. The people of this area mostly work in agriculture and cattle raising. This sub-district was created in mid 1990s.

The population of Zelikan area is about (30,000) thirty thousand people. Citizens of various ethnicities (Kurds – Arabs) and religions (Islam – Yezidi) live there. Zelikan has (24) villages, two of which are inhabited by Arabs, and five by Yezidis, as well as people of various clans, mostly the Goran Kurdish clan.

Zelikan witnessed the arrival of large numbers of displaced people from the center and surrounding areas of Mosul. It witnessed a large movement of population change. It contains some camps of displaced people, the largest of which being the Qaimawa Camp. Large numbers of displaced people live in the villages belonging to this sub-district and in the centre of the sub-district as well.

4. Mahd

Mahd Compound belongs to Zelikan sub-district, Sheikhan district. It is located 14 kilometers south of Ain Sifni, the centre of Sheikhan district. It is one of the ancient places. In terms of population, it is inhabited by (10,000) ten thousand people. The

citizens of Mahd Compound come from eight villages (Kendala – Betnar – Baqsari – Muqbila – Muskan – Mahmudan – Mam Rasha – Mahd Qadeem). They came to these villages after the destruction of their villages in the Arabization campaign in the area in 1975. They are Yezidi Kurds.

At present, Mahd witnesses a rapid movement of social change due to the arrival of thousands of displaced people from Sinjar, Bashiqa and Bahzani, and also due to the presence of Mam Rasha camp near the town – the town of Mahd, or (Maht) as it is called in some sources.

5. Alqosh:

Alqosh town is located 40-50 km north of Mosul. It belongs to Talkef district. It has more than 20 Christian and Yezidi villages as well as a number of Arab villages. It is situated on a mountain range separating Nineveh and Duhok governorates. The history of the Alqosh dates back to the Assyrian Empire. It houses Christians. Historically, the city was a haven for Chaldean Christians in Iraq, as well as other Yezidi and Jewish religious minorities. At present, Alqosh is the exclusive home of Christians. The current population of Alqosh is about 5,000 – 7,000 five to seven thousand people.

Like other towns in the region, Alqosh witnessed a significant change in its social reality following the wave of migration from the region out of Iraq after the occupation of a number of nearby towns and villages, such as Talesqef, Batnaya and Baqufa at the hands of ISIS, as well as the arrival of thousands of displaced people from the towns of Nineveh valley.

Second – Rehabilitation and preparation of peacebuilding and social cohesion activities:

In order for the implementation of peacebuilding activities to be effective in achieving their effects, those in charge of such implementation should be rehabilitated and trained in peacebuilding skills and the design and implementation of activities. That is in order to bring about changes in attitudes, behaviors, systems and structures that build peace as a result of the processes and links that begin with these workshops. Especially:

1. Building acceptance and understanding of the link between change, opposition and the potential for change to contribute to peace.

2. Development of long-term relationships and linkages among actors with the aim of development at different levels and different sectors, to achieve that by shifting away from conflict and blaming others for problems, recognizing common responsibility, and building commitment in a common way.

The peacebuilding and social cohesion project in Nineveh Governorate consisted of four phases. The **First Phase** consisted of a five-day training of volunteers on peacebuilding skills with the aim of building their capacities and capabilities in concepts of conflict and social cohesion, as well as concepts of conflict resolution and management, conflict assessment, and designing the activities they would undertake in the already mentioned areas. The **Second Phase** consisted of the implementation of a peacebuilding and social cohesion activity in each area within one month as of the completion of training. The **Third Phase** consisted of a two-day training to assess the

first set of peacebuilding activities, demonstrate their strengths and weaknesses (SWOT points), and prepare for the second set or batch of activities. The **Fourth Phase** consisted of the implementation of the second and third batches of peacebuilding and social cohesion activities to demonstrate results and lessons.

Workshop on Training of Trainers on Peacebuilding Skills

The participants were selected by the Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies, as the Centre communicated, through the project coordinator, with the relevant authorities in the five areas to explain the content of the project and the conditions that must be met by those who intend to apply, such as academic certificate, experience in this field, that is if they have already acted as local leaders and peacebuilders in their communities, as well as experience in the civil field, and whether they are prepared to accept the obligations involved. After identifying a number of candidates in each area, the Centre studied the applicants' CVs and made a list of the candidates who met the required conditions. Then the project coordinator contacted them to find out additional information about them, and also conducted an interview with them. Ten (10) of them were selected, with an average age of 20 to 27 years, three of them females and seven males, to work as volunteers for the implementation of the project.

- Training the Trainers:

This project targeted ten activists in the five sites mentioned above, with two persons per site where sexual balance was maintained as much as possible. Three girls, of the 10

participants, took part in the course. In the first workshop of five complete days, the participants volunteering to implement the activities were lectured on all the topics that would qualify them to be trainers, such as the concepts of conflict resolution and management, and the content of peacebuilding such as the mechanisms, concepts and means of peaceful coexistence, social cohesion, acceptance of the other, project management, good communication and listening, not causing harm, achievement of justice, and elimination of the causes of conflicts. The participants implemented their various projects in their areas, supported by the trainers, through their field visits and almost daily contact via various means of communication, facilitating their tasks and eliminating administrative obstacles through the centre coordinator and the trainers themselves.

After the successful implementation of the projects, the participants were called back to another workshop of two complete days to discuss their projects, make reports, and identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges they encountered during the implementation of the first activities. The three trainers from the Centre for Peace Studies gave their instructions in this regard. The next day, they designed and prepared the second activity and took notes on each project. Each team presented two or more ideas, one of which was selected and developed. And again the trainers made their field visits before implementing the second activities. Then, after agreeing with the funding organization to implement the third activity, three teams, out of five, were selected to conduct the activities. After visiting them again and identifying the idea of their projects, they were successfully implemented. Participants were again called to a two-day

course devoted to lessons learned from their projects and activities, what lessons they learned on the personal level and at the level of the communities in which they live, and preparation, by each team, of the profile of each area.

- **Dates of training, follow-up and visits:**

1. First workshop for peacebuilders (project implementers): (5 days) 14-18/12/2016.
2. Workshop for data collectors: (3 days) 20-22/12/2016.
3. Second workshop for peacebuilders: (2 days) 30-31/1/2017.
4. Third workshop for peacebuilders: (2 days) 27-28/3/2107.
5. First visit: Alqosh – 16/1/2017.
6. First visit: Mahd – Zelikan – Ain Sifni 18/1/2017.
7. Second visit: Alqosh – Ain Sifni 13/2/2017,
8. Second visit: Mahd – Zelikan 14/2/2017.
9. Third visit: Alqosh – Mahd – Zelikan – Ain Sifni 23/3/2017.

- **Workshop on Evaluation of Activities (SWOT):**

After implementing the first batch of peacebuilding and social cohesion activities in the targeted areas, the third phase of the workshop was on the evaluation of (SWOT) points, that is to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, to explain the foundations of the successful project, to divide the teams to discuss future objectives of the project's recent activities, to evaluate of the three trainers (trainers from the Centre for Peace Studies are Mr. Adnan Yousif, Siddiq Siddiq and Khider Domli) of the projects presented by the five teams, and to explain and define the tasks of the fourth stage and the logistical and financial matters by the project manager and coordinator on 30-31/1/ 2017.

The fourth phase of the peacebuilding workshop in the peacebuilding and social cohesion project in Nineveh Governorate was held on 27-28/3/2107. It reviewed the projects of the second phase of the five work teams. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were identified, and the work projects of the third phase for three teams were reviewed, as well as identifying the lessons learned and how to contact the trainer in charge of preparing the brochure or booklet.

Third - Implementation of Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion Activities:

As already mentioned, three groups or batches of peacebuilding activities were established in the five areas mentioned above. The details of these activities will be presented below.

1. Peacebuilding Activities in Ain Sifni:

Three activities were held in Ain Sifni. The first activity was under the title of "Tree Planting in Ain Sifni Cemeteries", the second activity was under the title of "Symposium for Teachers of Religious Education in Ain Sifni", and the third activity was a symposium on social cohesion. We will review these activities below.

A. Tree Planting in Ain Sifni Cemeteries

The two volunteers carried out an activity in Ain Sifni aiming at enhancing social cohesion levels in the town and strengthening social ties among its various components. The activity was that a number of the town's people of the main components (Muslims, Yezidis, Christians, Arabs and Kurds)

carried out the planting of a number of trees in the cemetery of each group on 24/1/2017. The aim was that as Ain Sifni witnessed tensions in the past for religious reasons, that activity was a kind of synthesis of religions together and an establishment of mutual contact in order to promote cohesion.

Seventy five (75) people participated in the activity, including twenty (20) persons of the minorities in the town, in addition to the participation of eight (8) women.

The activity was considerably supported by most people of the area through the participation of local figures, clerics, intellectuals and activists in the same activity as well as the participation of the public. This diverse participation indicates the high level of the possibilities of social cohesion in the town that needs strengthening and support. Although the main weakness that challenged the activity was the limited funding allocated thereto, which constituted an obstacle to the involvement of as many people as possible in the implementation thereof, in conjunction with the lack of cooperation of some authorities such as the sub-district administration, the participants' reactions were largely positive, proved by the voluntary and spontaneous participation in the activity. The participants expressed their great joy in the participation and called for continued activity to cover all areas of the cemeteries in Ain Sifni with the participation of the majority of the town's population. It is worth mentioning that the relatives of the dead who were buried in those cemeteries expressed their joy in this activity. Therefore, it is estimated that the impact of the activity amounted to approximately 3,000 three thousand individuals.



A Muslim and a Yezidi clerics cooperate in tree planting in a Muslim cemetery

A. Symposium for Teachers of Religious Education in Ain Sifni:

The second activity was held in Ain Sifni on 16/2/2017 under the title of "Symposium for Teachers of Religious Education in Ain Sifni" consisting of the various religions in the area. The aim was to target a certain group, namely teachers of all religions, in order to promote communication, build and develop relations, and spread peace among school students in Ain Sifni.

The group directly targeted by that activity was the teachers of religious education of all religions, and the group indirectly targeted was the community figures such as the Director of Education, the Director of Endowments, the priest of Christians, with the attendance of Kurdistan Satellite Channel, Duhok TV and the local committee. The number of participants was (40) being the direct beneficiary group, the number of participating women was seven (7), and the representatives of minorities

were (25) persons, while the number of the indirect beneficiary group was (700) persons.

When the activity was completed, the project volunteers considered that the strengths of that activity were the support it obtained from the Directorate of Education and that there was enough time to implement it, while the weaknesses were the non-attendance of some beneficiaries and the procedures for obtaining approval. As for the reactions, they were positive, as the Directorate of Ain Sifni district requested the expansion of the project. It was posted on Facebook on more than seven pages.



Teachers of Islamic, Yezidi and Christian religious education in Ain Sifni participate in a symposium on the components of social cohesion

C. Symposium on Social Cohesion:

The two volunteers, with the participation of fifty (50) town's youths, set up a page on the social networking site, Facebook, under the name of coexistence and peace. It aims at spreading the implications that promote social cohesion, disseminating news about the town's activities that aim to promote social cohesion, encouraging the various components of the town to join the page, and disseminating the implications of social cohesion therein. On 19/3/2017, the peacebuilders organized a symposium designed and advertised on the page and in the cultural centers in the town, such as the Lalesh Cultural Centre. The symposium was held at the hall of Lalesh Cultural Centre in (Peerstek) village near Ain Sifni. It was moderated by a facilitator of the Centre for Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution. The symposium started by explaining topics on social cohesion and conflict resolution. It was attended by (50) persons, including (6) women. Attendance was of all groups, that is Yezidis, Muslims and Christians, and of various age groups.

Activity implementers felt that participants' reactions were positive, that there was cooperation in this field, and that everyone wished the activity to continue. Among the touching stories in the activity was that after participating in the activity, the youths expressed their views and said that it was much better than spending time uselessly on social media and uselessly going to the cafeteria, because they were very much impressed by the project and spread ideas about it.



A Number of participants during the first part of the activity



A trainer of the Centre for Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution explaining the implications of social cohesion in the village of Peerstek in Ain Sifni

2. Peacebuilding Activities in Rabia:

In Rabia, three activities were also held with the aim of peacebuilding and social cohesion. The first activity was entitled "Festival of Popular Poetry", the second was "football match", while the third was about "Women's Role in Peaceful Coexistence and Peacebuilding". Below is a brief review of these activities.

A. Festival of Popular Poetry:

The first activity was held in Rabia on 21/1/2017. It was a festival of popular poetry attended by a large number of poets, with heavy attendance of participants. It was attended by more than (120) a hundred and twenty participants from various groups, in the presence of a number of social and governmental figures, with the participation of more than (15) fifteen poets.

The directly targeted groups of the activity were the youths of the various segments and components. They were (120) as mentioned above, including (10) women. The indirectly targeted group was the general public of (300) three hundred persons. That was because the people needed to feel some change and to follow up new and entertaining things, including poetry, and how to write poems that promote tolerance, cooperation and social cohesion.

The volunteers implementing the activity concluded that the strengths of that activity were the support obtained from the local government and social figures in the area. The weaknesses were the lack of funding that led to a small number of participants. The threats to this activity were the lack of support

by some parties for activities, especially those related to women. As for reactions, they were very positive, to the extent that the attendance demanded the activities to continue and greater support for participation to be provided.

Also, among the touching stories in this activity was that a large number of children walked a long distance to attend the activity, and they demanded to have their own activity. Also, the attendance of a number of disabled people to participate despite their health condition. And there was the attendance of a number of women for the first time in their lives. They were happy because there were projects focused on supporting women in such activities in that area due to its tribal social nature.



One of the participants in the activity while reciting poetry

B. Football Match:

The second activity was held in Rabia on 17/2/2017. It was a sport for peace between two teams, one representing the Arabs and another representing the Kurds of the area, with the participation of twenty (20) players, that is a team of each ethnicity, and an audience of more than eighty (80) people. The aim was to establish communication among the players as well as among the public, who were of various categories, and to make mutual friendships. The directly targeted group was the youths, and the indirectly targeted group was the public. The strength, as evidenced during the activity, was that it was easy to spread the culture of peace among the youths, as they loved sports, especially football. Therefore, a friendship group was in the end established on Facebook. The weaknesses were the non-participation of women, because of the tribal nature of the area, and the absence of a good stadium in Rabia. There was a positive reaction from the participants that they asked for such activities to continue. The threats were that it was raining. The touching story was that the people came from remote villages, although the stadium was simple, as they came in large numbers carrying peace slogans. There were neither TV cameras nor media, but they could document some scenes and take pictures that expressed the effectiveness and joy of the people of the area.



Participating children of the two ethnicities – Arabs and Kurds – carrying the logo of the organization and supporting the activities held



Players of different ethnicities during the match

C. Women's Role in Peaceful Coexistence and Peacebuilding:

In continuation of holding peacebuilding and social cohesion activities, a third activity was also held in Rabia under the title of "Women's Role in Peaceful Coexistence and Peacebuilding" at a symposium on 19/3/2017. The participants were thirty (30) women of the various components, being the direct beneficiary, with the attendance of a large number of women, amounting to fifty (50), and five (5) children. There was a positive reaction from the participants in this activity. A woman said she used to stay at home and had no connection with anybody nor knowledge about such topics, and that she wanted such activities to continue in order to change the tribal ideas and the pressure practiced on women in this area.



Distributing some materials to participants in the activity during their break time

3. Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion Activities in Zilikan Area:

Three activities were held in Zilikan. The first activity was the (Qaimawa Camp Cleaning Campaign), the second was a (Volleyball Match), and the third was entitled (A Session on the Concepts of Peace and Promotion of Social Cohesion for Teachers in Zilikan). Below is a review of the activities.

A. Qaimawa Camp Cleaning Campaign:

The first activity was held under the title of (Qaimawa Camp Cleaning Campaign) on 22/1/2017 with the aim of helping the people healthily dispose of rubbish, garbage and sewage, and increase communication with the engagement of the various groups and components in it. So, the number of participants in this cleaning campaign was actually seventy five (75). This number was the directly targeted and beneficiary group. The indirectly targeted group was the displaced people of various age groups, (15-25) years old. The indirect beneficiaries were more than (1,100) people, as the participants conducted a large cleaning campaign. The women were two (2), and the representatives of minorities were five hundred (500) people.

After analysis and deduction, the volunteers implementing the activity found that one of the strengths of that activity was the ability to easily implement it, while the weakness was, as in the previous activities, the lack of funding. The threats were the bad weather and insufficient time. The opportunities were that the camp staff cooperated in implementing the project.



cleaning the sewage channel in the camp



During the activity, participants from various groups clean up various paths and places to help dispose of garbage

B. Volleyball Match:

The second activity (Volleyball Match) was between two teams, the camp and Zelikan, in order to enhance communication and establish friendships that may lead to social cohesion among them. The activity was held on 23/1/2017. The participants in this match were twelve (12) players as a directly targeted group, while the indirectly targeted group was the public, whose ages ranged from 18 to 25 years. The indirect beneficiaries were a hundred (100) persons.

At the end, the strength of this activity was the obtainment of experience in this field, and the weakness is the unavailability of all the necessary requirements for the implementation of the project. The threat was the bad weather. The opportunity was the desire for such activities to be frequently carried out by the youths.



Volleyball match between displaced people and members of the host community in Zilkane

Session on the Concepts of Peace and the Promotion of Social Cohesion for Teachers:

This activity was held on 19/2/2017 in order to promote peace and social cohesion with the participation of (40) teachers, including (7) women, being the direct beneficiary group, while the indirect group amounted to (700) persons, with the attendance of the director of the sub-district and some Party cadres. The goal was that teachers could transfer those ideas to their community, including their families and neighbors, and basically their students. It is no secret that education has an impact on community, as it builds the individual in community; it is the main drive in the development of civilizations and the axis of measuring the development of communities, as communities are assessed according to the proportion of its learned people.

The strength of this activity was the easy access to participants, as they had a good idea of the subject. The weakness was the absence or lack of necessary requirements, such as the data show. It was an opportunity for teachers of primary, intermediate and preparatory schools to spread this culture at schools, being the directly targeted group. The students, and the community in general, were the indirectly targeted group.

The implementers concluded that the reactions were very positive. The participants desired and demanded the project to continue for a longer period (a month, for instance). A touching story was that the implementers had indirectly realized that the teachers had actually implemented that idea at schools and that the message had been properly communicated to the students and the community in general.



Intervention by a participant with the presenter of an activity about the concepts of social cohesion

4. Peacebuilding Activities in Mahd Area:

Two activities were held in Mahd, namely (Session on the development of relations between the youths of the Mam Rasha camp and Mahd compound to promote social cohesion) and (distribution of gifts to orphans at the Mam Rasha camp).

A. Symposium between the youths of the Mam Rasha camp and Mahd compound to promote social cohesion:

The first activity was held in Mahd under the title (Symposium between the youths of the Mam Rasha camp and Mahd compound to promote social cohesion) on 23/1/2017 in

order to increase communication between the people of the Mam Rasha camp and the people of Mahd compound and spread the culture of peace among them. That is because dialogue is of great importance, being one of the effective means of communication. The participants cooperated to stress the significance of mutual communication through such activities. It is a human demand to use the methods of constructive dialogue to satisfy man's need to integrate into a group and to communicate with others. Dialogue achieves balance between man's need for independence and need to participate and interact with others. It also reflects the civilizational and cultural reality of nations. Symposiums, meetings and conferences are means for practicing effective dialogue, which addresses the issues and problems facing modern man.

The participants were thirty (30) individuals, including fifteen (15) male youths and fifteen (15) female youths, from the people of the Mam Rasha camp, residents of Mahd, and the people displaced to Mahd. The vulnerable group in the activity was the (displaced people), the directly targeted group was the youth (participants) of both sexes, and the indirectly targeted group was the attendance and the participants' families of two hundred (200) people.

Volunteer implementers found that the strengths of the activity were the availability of a place and the assistance of friends and parties in the area, and the weakness was the non-attendance of some participants due to the lack of confidence, as it was the first project in the area. The opportunities were to increase experience, skills and communication with participants and with influential people in the area. The threats

were the bad weather and the disruption of the hall's electricity. The reactions were positive, and the participants expressed their happiness and called for the continuation of such activities.



A participant while presenting a summary of the methods of communication between the people of the camp and residents of Mahd

B. Distribution of Gifts to Orphans:

On 23/2/2017, gifts were distributed, at Mam Rasha camp, to orphans of both sexes: eleven (11) boys and nine (9) girls, making a total of twenty (20) orphans aged between (8-12), being the direct beneficiary group, while the indirect beneficiary group was (300) person. Some of those orphans have lost both parents, and some others' fathers were killed by ISIS following the invasion of Sinjar on 3 August 2014. The aim was that laws, religions, customs and projects provided for rules and ethics aiming at achieving social justice among the members of a society or among members of multiple societies, and urged to maintain the principles of solidarity, assistance and cooperation so that there would be no one poor or having a problem. They urged to provide aids in order to achieve social justice and reduce poverty levels and marginalization rates in

order to build a cohesive society in which no one would feel deprived.

Speeches were given by the influential figures at Mahd compound and Mam Rasha camp about coexistence and the inclination to assist the orphans and protect them from violence. The vulnerable group directly targeted by the activity was the displaced orphans, while the indirectly targeted group was the attendance, camp residents, and organizations in the area.

The strengths of the activity were the cooperation of Mahd's youths with the implementers, the assistance of VOP organization as they stopped their work for a day to implement the project, the cooperation of the camp director and the camp mayor who also expressed their readiness for any service, as well as the cooperation of the local committee. The weaknesses were the failure to quickly obtain security permit and the inappropriate timing as it was the time of half-year exams.

On implementation, the volunteers found out that the threats to the activity were the non-attendance of some people due to the lack of confidence in the subject, as no activities like this had been conducted before, and the opposition of some people in the camp. The opportunities were the increased communication with the camp director and mayor as well as the increased communication with the participants.

The touching story was by the camp director who did not permit the volunteers to start before the implementation of the project, because he did not trust them. But when he saw the project after implementation, he changed his idea and

expressed his joy for the project. Immediately after the project, he apologized to the volunteers for not permitting them to start at the beginning.

It is worth noting that the implementers asked the camp director to interview the orphans before the activity in order to see their requirements and also to feel safe.



Director of Mam Rasha camp giving a gift to an orphan



(Speech on social cohesion by the Director of the Sheikhan Branch)

*** Note: The approval of the orphans relatives was obtained to take pictures of the project, and the place was cleaned after the end of the activity.**

5. Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion Activities in Alqosh:

In continuation of the implementation of the Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion Project in Nineveh Governorate, three activities were also held in Alqosh: "Safe Dealing with Social Networks", "Women's Role in Promoting Social Cohesion", and "Symposium Entitled the Role of Civil Activists in Promoting Social Cohesion". We will explain them successively.

A. Safe Dealing with Social Networks:

This activity was carried out on 19-21/1/2017. It was awareness sessions on how to use social networking sites. It was implemented for twenty (20) participants of no more than (12-18) years old. All participants were from minorities. Law No. (6) of 2008 was addressed, as it dealt with preventing the

misuse of communication devices in Iraqi Kurdistan in order to be aware of the consequences of misusing communication networks and how to use such means to sow the seeds of social cohesion and not to harm others through comments and photos posted on such sites. To the contrary, such networks should be used to spread concepts and topics on social cohesion and acceptance of societal pluralism, and to accept posts on such sites by people of other religions and ethnicities, leading to establish peace which means, among other things, the acceptance of others as they are.

The number of participants in this activity was (20) individuals, including six males and fourteen females, from a vulnerable group, that is the orphans. The number of indirect beneficiaries was about two hundred (200) to three hundred (300) individuals.

It became evident that the strengths of this activity included gaining experience in that field, knowing the law, and making relationships with persons required to assist in the implementation of the project. The weaknesses of this activity were the non-commitment of some beneficiary participants to attend on time and the inability to meet the participants' request to continue implementing such projects. The opportunities of this activity were the possibility that the beneficiaries participate in a second activity and the spread of the culture of peace. There were also threats, such as the bad weather and the absence of some participants.

The participants' reactions were positive in terms of the project and their desire for the project to continue for a longer time (one month or more), because this activity was their first

participation in such courses and the project implementers were the first to explain the law to them.

A touching story in this activity was that a participant stated her problem with the social networks and the violation of her personal account. She also stated her lack of previous knowledge of a law that would protect her personal rights on social networks and communication devices.



Youths from Alqosh discussing the use of social media in promoting social cohesion

B. Women's Role in Promoting Social Cohesion:

This activity was carried out on 16/2/2017 under the title of "Women's Role in Promoting Social Cohesion" for twenty-five (25) women (locals, displaced, Yezidis, Christians) from the centre of Alqosh and the surrounding villages (Bouzan, Beban, Sharafiya, Bendwaya), all ranging between (19-40) years of age, being the direct beneficiary group. In the first part of the

activity, women rights in society and at home were addressed. Then, the second part tackled their role in promoting social cohesion, and how to plant these seeds in their children since childhood. That is because some groups, including women, possess the ability to change the course of conflicts towards peace due to the advantages they have, such as their proportion in society. Their role may be greater when they are organized, qualified and able to work, which requires them to have access and to be supported in order to contribute to and participate in various projects and activities. The participants in this activity were twenty five (25), being the vulnerable group; the number of direct beneficiaries was the same; and the number of indirect beneficiaries was about three hundred (300) individuals.

It came out that the strengths of this activity were the obtainment of a lecturer qualified in this topic, the ability to provide all the necessary requirements, and the accessibility of participants. The weaknesses were the participants' delay in attendance due to snowfall, and the non-continuation of the project for a longer time. The opportunities were the contribution to sowing the seeds of social cohesion and culture of peace for future generations. The threats were climate conditions and non-attendance of some participants. The reactions were positive, and they asked for more such activities to spread the culture of peace.



During a lecture on women's role in peacebuilding and social cohesion to a group of Christian and Yezidi displaced and local women

C. Symposium Entitled "The Role of Civil Activists in Promoting Social Cohesion":

A third activity was also held in Alqosh area on 19/3/2017 under the title of (Symposium Entitled "The Role of Civil Activists in Promoting Social Cohesion"). It consisted of holding a symposium for civil activists to discuss the problems facing the area and how to mutually cooperate to solve such problems and to spread the culture of peace and promote social cohesion. The participants were nine (9), being the directly targeted group, including four (4) females and five (5) males. The indirectly targeted group was one thousand (1,000) individuals, including two (2) of the minorities.

The strengths were the strong relations with some civil activists involved, easy planning for project implementation, and knowledge of civil society organizations about these activities within Alqosh.

The weakness was non-commitment to symposium time. The opportunity was to strengthen the relations with civil activists. The threats were non-commitment to attend and climate conditions. The reactions were positive, and the participants asked that such symposiums be held periodically.



Intervention by a civil activist about sharing the problems faced by civil activists in peacebuilding and finding methods to solve or avoid them

The general framework of the project

Fourth – Lessons Learned, Common Observations, and Interviews:

In order to demonstrate the lessons learned from the project as well as the reactions and results presented by the project implementers in the last symposium, we will divide them as follows:

A. Lessons learned

As mentioned earlier, the participants were again invited to a two-day course dedicated to the lessons learned from the projects and activities they had conducted, and what lessons were learned on a personal level and on the level of the communities where they live. Each team was to prepare the profile for each area. The lessons learned from the project will be generally demonstrated by dividing them into lessons learned on the volunteer implementers' personal level and on the community level in general, as follows:

First – Lessons Learned on Personal Level:

- 1- Increasing confidence and experience in lecturing.
2. Ability to hold activities of interest to community.
3. Communication with community figures and local officials.
4. Increasing information on conflict and peacebuilding.
5. Increasing human feeling towards others.

- 6 - Communication with and assisting different groups of community (especially the marginalized and disadvantaged).
7. Ability to take responsibility and face difficult situations.
8. How to conduct symposiums.
- 9 - Respect and appreciation by community as implementers are peace activists.
10. Work objectively and away from discrimination.

When the implementers were asked about which of these points interested them most, priority was for the first point, then the seventh, the ninth and sixth.

Second – Lessons Learned on Community Level:

- 1- Increasing communication among various ethnicities and religions in community.
2. Mitigating conflicts in community.
3. Breaking customs and traditions in traditional communities.
- 4 - Sharing and solving the problems experienced by community.
5. Increasing community awareness in terms of spreading the culture of peace and social cohesion.
6. Cooperation to solve the problems facing community through establishing social networks.
7. Women's knowledge of the significance of their role in community.
8. Knowledge of marginalized groups of the significance of their role in community.
9. Linking community to outside world through international and domestic organizations.
10. Increasing community interest in activities of international and domestic organizations.

When the implementers were also asked about which of these points interested them most, focus was on the second, sixth and first points respectively.

B. Common Observations and Analysis of Questionnaires

We will demonstrate the common observations of all implementation teams. Then we will explain the results of some questionnaires carried out by some volunteer implementers.

First – Common Observations: There are several common observations of the project, including:

1. The activities focused on the youths, as they are the group most in need of the culture of peace, and also as they are the next generation that will lead the community. Women were also selected, because the woman is the mother that raises children. Then the orphans were selected, as they lack assistance. The activists were also selected, as they distribute these ideas in the community indiscriminately.

2. Activities in these areas and in the camps are very necessary due to their urgent need of assistance of any kind, since most of the organizations are currently busy in the battle of Mosul, the fact that there are tribal conflicts in these areas, and there is ethnic diversity therein also.

3. Activities were consistent with the nature of the area. They were humanitarian activities that have no other purposes.

Second – Results of Questionnaires:

The questionnaires that were distributed to the beneficiary participants of the project included specific questions and showed different results. They had ratios for gender, age groups and the percentage of ethnic components therein, as

well as the displaced and the original people of the area. We will explain them respectively:

1. Sex:

The correct percentage of female participants in the questionnaire was (34.4), while the correct percentage of male participants in the questionnaire was (65.6). The correct total number was estimated at (160) male and female participants, i.e. (55) females and (105) males.

2. Age:

After studying the questionnaires and extracting their percentages, there were different age groups of the participants in the questionnaire. (30.0%) were (15-20) years old, (31.2%) were (21-26) years old, (8.1%) were (27-32) years old, and (30.6%) were (33) years and above.

3. Ethnic Composition:

The ethnic composition of the participants in the questionnaire included (8.1%) of those who did not answer the question, (11.9%) were Arabs, (66.2%) Kurds, (12.5%) Chaldeans, and (1.2%) Assyrians.

4. Status of Displacement:

The displaced people who participated in the questionnaire and in the project in general constituted (49.4), that is about (79) participants; the participants from the host community constituted (40.0), that is about (64) participants; and those who did not answer this paragraph constituted (10.6), that is (17) participants. That makes the total number of participants (160) as mentioned above.

5. Participants from Nineveh Governorate Centre and Affiliated Areas:

On putting the number of those who participated in the questionnaire together, it appeared that all participants were from Nineveh Governorate: (21.9%) from Alqosh, i.e. about (35) participants; (19.4%) from Rabia, i.e. about (31) participants; (17.5%) from Mahd, i.e. about (28) participants; (22.5%) from Ain Sifni, i.e. about (36) participants; and (18.8%) from Zelikan, i.e. about (30) participants.

6. Answering the Questions of the Questionnaire:

In answering the question about which activity you took part in, the answer was that (6.2%) participated in the activity of tree planting in cemeteries of ethnicities in Ain Sifni, (6.2%) participated in the activity of a seminar for teachers of religious education in Ain Sifni, (10.0%) participated in the session for women on social cohesion in Ain Sifni, (8.8%) participated in the workshop on how to use internet sites in Alqosh, (10.0%) participated in the activity of women's role in promoting social cohesion in Alqosh, (3.1%) participated in the activity of creating a social group on the social network in Alqosh, (9.4%) participated in the activity of facilitating the dialogue and social cohesion among the youths in Mahd, (8.1%) participated in the distribution of gifts to orphans in Mahd, (1.2%) participated in the activity of poetry symposium in Rabia, (15.0%) participated in the football match in Rabia, (3.1%) participated in the cleaning campaign of Qaimawa camp in Zelikan, and (9.4%) participated in the teachers' activity on concepts of social cohesion in Zelikan.

In answering the question about (How would you describe the general *level of your satisfaction or dissatisfaction*

with the activity?), (1.9%) did not answer, (70.0%) said that they were very satisfied, and (28.1%) were satisfied.

As for the question on the easy access to the site, (1.2%) did not answer, (71.2%) were very satisfied, that access to the site was easy, (26.9%) were satisfied, and (1.6%) were dissatisfied.

Also, as for the safety of place, the results showed that (1.2%) did not answer, (73.1%) were very satisfied, (24.4%) were satisfied, and (1.2%) were dissatisfied.

(0.6) did not answer the question on the cleanliness of the place, (65.6%) were very satisfied with the cleanliness of the place, (32.5%) were satisfied, and (1.2%) were dissatisfied.

The question on whether the place was suitable for the number of people involved, (65.0%) were very satisfied, (33.8%) were satisfied, and (1.2%) were dissatisfied.

As for the question on whether the materials and equipment for these activities were sufficient for participants, (63.8%) were very satisfied, (33.8%) were satisfied, and (2.5%) were dissatisfied.

Regarding the question (The employees of the community centre treated me respectfully), (75.0%) were very satisfied and (25.0%) were satisfied.

As for the trainers and their respect for the participants, (74.4%) were very satisfied and (25.6%) were satisfied. And whether the trainer was capable and presented the subjects clearly and comprehensively, the answers were that (73.1%) were very satisfied and (26.9%) were satisfied.

As for whether the participants have obtained new knowledge and developed new skills, (73.1%) were very satisfied and (26.9%) were satisfied.

As for participants' expectations of the activity, (63.1%) were very satisfied, (36.2%) were satisfied, and (0.6%) were dissatisfied. As for whether the participants felt safe in the activity or not, (0.6%) did not answer, (55.6%) strongly agreed, (35.0%) agreed, and (8.8%) were neutral.

A question in the questionnaire was about care provided for children and whether they were in a safe environment. (16.2%) did not answer, (40.6%) strongly agreed, (33.1%) agreed, and (10.0%) were neutral.

As for the question on dealing with all participants in the same manner and without discrimination, (63.1%) strongly agreed, (26.9%) agreed, (9.4%) were neutral, and (0.6%) disagreed.

On viewing the questionnaires extracting their results in the question on how much the activity has resulted in positive changes in their lives, (3.1%) did not answer this question, (56.9%) strongly agreed, (28.8%) disagreed, and (11.2%) were neutral.

(3.1%) of the participants did not answer the question on how much they changed their view of people belonging to different groups after participating in the activity, (51.9%) strongly agreed, (28.1%) agreed, and (16.9%) were neutral.

On feeling more confident in people of various communities living in their area after participating in the project, (56.2%)

answered that they strongly agree, (35.0%) agreed, and (8.8%) were neutral.

The activity helped to communicate with people from outside the participants' community, (56.2%) strongly agreed, (35.6%) agreed, and (8.1%) were neutral.

On how much the participants were able to make friends with at least one person from outside their community as a result of their participation in the IOM project, (57.5%) of the participants strongly agreed, (33.8%) agreed, and (8.8%) were neutral.

(53.8%) strongly agreed with the stronger sense of belonging to their area / community after participating in the activity, (37.5%) agreed, and (8.8%) were neutral in the answers. And as for the question that the activity increased my ability to deal with stress and frustration, (1.9%) did not answer this question, (46.9%) strongly agreed, (41.2%) agreed, and (10.0%) were neutral.

As for the question that the activity increased my ability to express my feelings, (2.5%) did not answer, and (54.4%) strongly agreed, (33.1%) agreed, (8.8%) were neutral, and (1.2%) disagreed. Also, the activity increased my ability to manage the conflict or tension, (2.5%) did not answer, (45.0%) strongly agreed, (43.1%) agreed, (8.8%) were neutral, and (0.6%) disagreed.

If I was dissatisfied with the way the service was provided to me, I know who to complain to. (4.4%) did not answer this question, (40.0%) strongly agreed, (40.0%) agreed, (10.6%) were neutral, and (5.0) disagreed.

C. Interviews

Interviews were conducted by the person authorized to prepare the brochure on Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion Project in Nineveh Governorate with some implementers of the Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion Project in Nineveh Governorate as well as with some participants who benefited from the activities of this project. We will present successively:

1. Interviews with Implementers:

The questions of interviews with the implementers were as follows:

- A. What have the course subjects added to you?
- B. Have you felt that there was a change in your abilities to conduct a dialogue, a session or a discussion?
- C. Has there been a change in your personal attitudes toward a particular group that was passive before?
- D. Do you feel that at the end of the project you will continue to work as social cohesion activists?
- E. Do you have any other thing to add?

In answering these questions, A peacebuilder in Sheikhan area, said that he had gained more experience in work and how to create and deliver projects, had intellectually achieved great change toward doing humanitarian work, and had become more confident in personally managing an activity like this. He said that he did not like the Arab ethnicity before doing this project, but his ideas have changed now after doing this project and participating with an Arab, as he began to respect and accept them because they are his fellow people in humanity. He said that through his contacts he will go on in peacebuilding and social cohesion, and if assistance was provided to him he

would further serve his area, because peaceful coexistence is the best way to live within the community. He concluded that he hoped the projects of the Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies to continue, because many people need such activities.

A peacebuilder an implementer from Alqosh area, said that before the course she did have information, but it was not full. After performing this project, she gained further experience and knowledge about issues of peace and how to resolve conflicts. Her information on how to implement projects and manage meetings and dialogue increased. She now has experience in work and how to bear costs. She had no passive view of any ethnicity or religion neither before nor after the course, and she would continue to work as a peace-builder within her community. She had nothing else to add.

Commenting on these questions, A peacebuilder an implementer in Rabia area, said that he had gained experience in the field of peace that he did not previously have, he had broken the sectarian and racial barrier, he now has a strong incentive to spread peace in every area, he had gained boldness and confidence to run dialogues and discussions, and there had been a change in his ideas towards the Arab ethnicity and had made new friends who had been really sincere and had established communication with them. There had been nothing of this before this project. He would continue to serve as a peace-builder. He added that he would do all he could in order to bring the message of peace to the community.

A peacebuilder from Zelikan area noted that his experience had increased after implementing these activities. His ideas on

how to manage projects had expanded. There had been a great change, as they had become able to give and organize lectures and had obtained ideas about social cohesion and conflict resolution. The view towards other nationalities had changed for the better, as they had not used to pay attention to other religions such as Yezidism and Christianity, or other ethnicities like Arabs, but now, through the lessons on pluralism they had, they had begun to respect them.

In his interview, A peacebuilder from Mahd area said that their confidence in people had increased, and they had more experience in the implementation of projects, in the management and organization of symposiums, and how to solve conflicts. They had increased communication with dignitaries, clerics and various groups in the community. They had been introduced to new mechanisms in managing peacebuilding projects. They had increased mutual confidence. He desired to continue on such activities, only for humanitarian considerations, because their areas need them.

1. Interviews with participants benefiting from the project:

Interview questions with beneficiary participants were:

A. Do you think the activity has changed your mind about conflict, peacebuilding and social cohesion?

Do you believe that such projects are important at this time and the in circumstances in which we live?

B. What part of the project was more important to you?

C. What do you think about the project implementers?

D. Do you have any other thing to add?

Answering these questions, a participant benefitting from the project activities in Ain Sifni area, said: "We were very happy, as participants were from the three religions. That is important in order to strengthen relations and thus to promote social cohesion. The people attended and expressed their joy. The implementers were good and ready to answer any question. We ask for such activities to continue, because the area needs them.

A beneficiary participant in Rabia area, said that he had attended the two activities (evening poetry and match) The activities had been very good for them. They had mingled with the Arab ethnicity, especially in the poetry activity, and had been introduced to the Arabic poetic style. This activity had been like a mixing of cultures. The match also had Arab players. That is very important, since we are two ethnicities living together. Therefore, the bonds of mutual communication should be strong. As he is a teacher of Kurdish language, he liked the poetry activity most. However, the match had also been important, as the youths are the fuel of society, and they needed such concepts. I would like to congratulate the project implementers as they exerted great efforts. We ask for such projects to continue.

There has been no opportunity to contact the participants from Alqosh area. But as for the participants from Zelikan area, (Khalida Abdullah) stated that the activity had been very good and important. With the allocated amount, the sewage channel had been cleaned. The open channel had not been built, therefore that channel needed to be cleaned. The maintenance department had been busy repairing the tents and setting up those that would collapse and fall, and had no time to clean the

channel. The implementers were wonderful. We strongly ask to kindly continue with such projects.

A participant benefitting from the project in Mahd area, answered the questions and said that those activities were very good and of great importance as they benefitted us in obtaining information on peace and social cohesion. The implementers were respectful and so refined. We ask for such projects to continue.

Thus, we generally find a set of conclusions, and we include some suggestions as follows:

First: Conclusions

1. Peacebuilding and social cohesion are interdependent concepts, as peace cannot be established and built without supporting the bonds of communication and strengthening and cohering the relations among the various components of society, including the various religions and ethnicities, governments, parties, dignitaries, civil society and international community. That is social cohesion is a prerequisite for peacebuilding.
2. Peacebuilding is a difficult, complex and long process. It must be conducted at various levels within the society, from the base that is the people, to the centre such as the organizations, up to the top that is the leaders of society.
3. Social cohesion is linked to sociology, and requires awareness and expansion of its contents in order to guide the people to how to accept the other as it is, focus on common matters such as humanity, and discard divisive matters such as sectarian standards.

4. The International Organization for Migration's (IOM) peacebuilding and social cohesion project in Nineveh Governorate was of great importance in the areas where the activities were held, which fall within this governorate, as the people needed such activities.
5. This project achieved success, because it was held in an area that was in need of it. It has witnessed a conflict after the attack of ISIS on it. It is among the areas disputed by the Government of Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government. It has ethnic diversity, including religious, ethnic and linguistic diversity. It is a tribal area where some groups, such as women, are marginalized.

Second: Proposals

1. The areas that have experienced conflicts and have just come out of them are often in difficult circumstances and witness the loss of relations and cohesion and the collapse of infrastructure and services. Therefore, they should be focused on when carrying out activities of peacebuilding and the dissemination of the culture of social cohesion, whether by the government, by local or international organizations, or by civil society in general.
2. Youths are the driving force of the society and they deliver the message of peace, therefore they should be as much as possible engaged in the activities of peacebuilding, social cohesion and pluralism.
3. When applying for conducting peacebuilding and social cohesion activities, governments and security authorities should be as facilitative as possible, they should facilitate the obtainment of such approvals, and they should provide project implementers with as much assistance as possible.

4. It is necessary to provide any support by any party and of any kind for projects in these areas. It would be better if organizations could increase the expenditures made for the implementation of such projects, as implementers face financial, administrative, security and preparatory difficulties on implementation.
5. Engagement of marginalized groups in society in the process of self-empowerment may lead them to participate in various aspects of societal life: economic, political, social and cultural.

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Appendixes

Participant Satisfaction Survey
(sustained activities)

Respondent Bio Data

Sex	
Age	
Ethnicity	
Displacement status	
Governorate	
Community Centre location	

Which activity did you participate in??	
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Activities satisfaction

مدى الرضا عن النشاط	راضي جداً	راضي	غير راضي
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Activities satisfaction

How would you describe your overall level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction in regard to the activity?	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Not satisfied
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Regarding your current or most recent visit/service, to what degree are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following:

The location is easy to reach	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Not satisfied
The location is safe			
The location is clean			
The location is suitable for the number of people who are participating in the activity			
Materials and equipment for the activities are sufficient for participants			
The community centre staff treated me with respect			
The trainer treated me with respect			
The trainer was competent and presented the topics in a clear and comprehensive manner			
I acquired new information and developed new skills			
The service met my expectations			
If you are not satisfied, please explain why?			

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?...

I always felt safe while I was participating in the activity (ies)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
If you did not feel safe, please explain why?				
[If applicable] Children were provided with suitable care, in a safe environment				
[If applicable] Please mention any concerns regarding children				
All the participants are treated in the same way and with no discrimination				
If I had a question, it was easy to ask the trainer or Community Centre staff				
Participation in the activity resulted in some positive changes to my life				
If you agree/strongly agree, please describe the positive changes				
After participating in the activity, my view of people who belong to a different community to me has changed				
If strongly agree or agree, please explain how your view has changed?				
After participating in the activity, I feel a greater sense of trust towards people from different communities living in my area				
The activity helped me to connect with people outside my own community				
I made at least one friendship with someone outside my own community, as a result of participating in IOM's activities				
After participating in the activity, I feel a stronger sense of belonging to my area / community				
[If applicable] The activity increased my ability to cope with stress and frustration				
[If applicable] The activity increased my ability to express my emotions				
[If applicable] The activity increased my ability to manage conflict or tension				

Accountability

If I am not satisfied with the way I was provided the service , I know where to direct my complaints	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
If you strongly agree or agree: Where will you give the complaint?	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree

Recommendation

Would you recommend this service to your family and friends?	
If yes, why?	
If no, why not?	
Please explain how the service could improve?	
Do you have any suggestion, note, complaint you would like to deliver the center management team?	
If yes, please explain	
Please explain how the service could improve?	

This book was printed with support from the
International Organization for Migration
and the Government of Japan

