

Strengthening resilience in dealing with crises and conflicts in Nineveh (SRN), Iraq

GIZ's approach to support the transition from armed conflict towards peaceful and inclusive communities.

The challenge

Years after the liberation from the so-called Islamic State, Nineveh continues to struggle with the devastating consequences of the armed conflict. Many of the internally displaced people still cannot return to their homes. Tensions and mistrust between different ethno-religious population groups are extremely high and the trust in the state to provide security is low. There are limited income opportunities, especially for young people, and local administrations cannot provide social services sufficiently. Large parts of the infrastructure are destroyed, resulting in limited access to public basic and social services, like schools or water systems. There is no strategy in place for wide scale re-construction. These challenges pose high barriers for the communities and for the return of internally displaced people.

Our approach

The project aims to strengthen the resilience of returnees, internally displaced persons, host communities and local structures in Nineveh to deal with crises. As one precondition for safe and dignified return is a low level of tension and an environment of trust, SRN promotes social cohesion by establishing and capacitating local peace structures to solve disputes peacefully. To strengthen livelihoods within the destroyed economy, the project supports people, especially young adults, to find new prospects for employment. This provides households with a better income and allows them to take part in the local economy actively. Being resilient also means to have access to education and public services. That is why SRN builds and rehabilitates public social infrastructure that allows internally displaced persons to return to their home villages. The combination of social cohesion, livelihoods and construction measures allows the project to address the multiple crises Nineveh faces years after the liberation from the so-called Islamic State so that the resilience of its population can be strengthened.

Project name	Strengthening resilience in dealing with crises and conflicts in Nineveh (SRN)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Nineveh Governorate
National partner	Ministry of Planning, Iraq
Duration	04/2020 – 08/2025

Activities and impact

To promote social cohesion, the project supports local peace structures in Sinjar, Tel Afar, Tel Kaif, Mosul and Hamdaniyah. Key stakeholders from administration, security, and civil society enhance their skills in raising awareness of community priorities and engaging in complex and sensitive conflict resolution processes. These local peace structures are also instrumental in implementing local peace agreements, e.g., in Qayyarah and Zummar. In collaboration with a consortium of international and national experts, young people from diverse backgrounds in Nineveh underwent extensive practical oriented trainings in data collection, conflict analysis and mediation. To support the ongoing reintegration of returning IDPs in one of the communities with the highest influx in Nineveh, Qayyarah, the project offers psychosocial support to the host community and victim family members; this includes family counselling sessions, psychosocial learning exercises for male and female peer groups and recreational communal activities, like sports, creative arts and handicraft classes. Thereby, social cohesion and peaceful and inclusive communities are strengthened. To improve income and employment opportunities, the project provides small and medium-sized grants to entrepreneurs to start or expand businesses, to target new sectors and create employment. Entrepreneurs receive business management and finance training to ensure the long-term success of their ventures.



Photo left: Business management training, Sinjar District.

Photo right: Programme participants in Zummar and Aya-diyah received training in livestock breeding, improved agricultural practices, sustainable livestock management and overall life skills development.

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Photo left: Students are celebrating the opening of five Accelerated Learning Centers.

Photo right: Students perform the Iraqi national anthem during an art exhibition event of the district working group in Tel Keif.

To promote a positive business environment for entrepreneurship, the project supports networking and provides capacity-building measures to the relevant state service providers for economic development in Nineveh. The project also provided trainings in Zummar and Ayadiyah, covering essential topics such as irrigation techniques, livestock breeding, enhanced agricultural practices, sustainable livestock management, financial literacy and overall life skills development. Special emphasis is placed on empowering women to participate in these trainings and support to establishing women's cooperative businesses in Sinjar and Baaj based on market profitability and growth. Short-term employment activities match local labor needs with workforce availability. Participants for these activities are mostly selected through the local peace structures supported by the project. In Sinjar the project is active on the improvement of labor market skills of youth through apprenticeships or on-the-job trainings as part of the rehabilitation of water infrastructure and through short-term employment. Rehabilitating public social infrastructure is a key element in meeting essential needs and service delivery. To improve access to education, water, community spaces and economic opportunities in Nineveh, the project constructs and rehabilitates schools, water networks, a community center, sports centers, roads and a marketplace. The measures were identified by the local peace structures in support of the implementation of local peace agreements. To improve access to schools and contribute to a healthy learning environment, the project implements a Training of Trainers for Accelerated and Literacy Learning in collaboration with the Directorate of Education. These efforts play a pivotal role in providing the chance for formerly excluded students to finish their basic education in higher quality. By including methods of trauma-sensitive teaching in the training, the initiative also contributes to fostering peace and stability in Nineveh Governorate.



Photo: A business owner from Sinjar works in her bakery, a business she started after receiving vocational training from GIZ.



Photo: Youth of Nineveh participate in a football tournament in Haj-Ali area as a peacebuilding community-led initiative.

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