



**BETTER WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (BWO)**

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Profile

Name: BWO

Year Established: 2017

Areas of Operation: Duhok and Ninawa Governorate

Size: Six board members, six staff, and 30+ youth volunteers

Director: Walaa Musheer Ahmed

Number of people reached through projects: 20,000



Mission:

BWO seeks to protect women and youth from exploitation and empower them to obtain durable solutions and sustainable livelihoods. BWO's goal is to develop peaceful and stable communities in which people accept and respect one other regardless of their differences.

Services:



Basic service provision and non-food item distribution



Sexual and gender-based violence prevention and gender equality advocacy



Protection and empowerment for women and youth



Psychosocial support (PSS)



Prevention of violent extremism



Community development



Social cohesion



Current Projects:

- Strengthening community resilience with programming implemented through the IOM Psychosocial Support Centre in Kabartu camp, Duhok Governorate; IOM subgrant under USAID/BHA funding
- GBV prevention and response services for returnees, internally displaced people, and host community members, in Telafar and Hamdaniyah districts, Ninewa Governorate; funded by UNICEF
- Enhancing safe environment in vulnerable families from host communities in Duhok city; funded by German SOS Kinderdörfer weltweit
- Provision of income generation opportunities for vulnerable families in the field of agricultural for economic development in Telkaif, Ninawa Governorate; ; funded by Hungarian Interchurch Aid
- Improving the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of IDPs, refugees and returnees using minimum service package as a guide, in Duhok and Ninawa Governorate; funded by UNICEF



Past Projects:

Supporting Survivors Participation in Implementation of the Yazidi Survivors Law

- Period: October 2021 – February 2022
- Donor: IOM subgrant under USAID/ BHA funding
- Number of people reached: 790

Promoting and engaging youth and women in social cohesion programming

- Period: December 2020 – March 2021
- Donor: Hungarian Interchurch Aid
- Number of people reached: 420

Youth empowerment initiatives

- Period: August 2020 – October 2020
- Donor: IOM subgrant under USAD/BHA funding
- Number of people reached: 26

Secondhand clothes exhibition

- Period: May 2019 – November 2020
- Donor: Kardu; Go for Climate
- Number of people reached: 200 families

Strengthening the resilience of adolescents and parents in Garmawa and Hassan Sham Camps

- Period: May 2019 – November 2020
- Donor: GIZ
- Number of people reached: 2,140

“My Right in Reparations” campaign

- Period: September 2019 – November 2019
- Donor: IOM subgrant under Australian DFAT funding
- Number of people reached: 785

Creating small gardens in Kabartu 1 and 2 camps

- Period: March 2019
- Donor: Al-Masalah; Program of Academic Exchange
- Number of people reached: 20

Hate speech in Iraq

- Period: February 2019 – April 2019
- Donor: Peace Tech-Lab (USA)
- Number of people reached: 200 families

Adolescent Girls toolkit Program

- Period: September 2019
- Donor: Global Giving
- Number of people reached: 15

Reintegration of youth through life skills trainings and peace education

- Period: November 2018 – April 2019
- Donor: GIZ
- Number of people reached: 120

Preventing radicalization and peacebuilding

- September 2018 – November 2018
- Donor: Diconia University of Finland
- Number of people reached: 100

-Youth Peace Leaders

- Period: October 2017 – November 2017
- Donor: Maypole Fund-UK
- Target number: 50

Empowering women through peer support groups, in partnership with Bishkoreen Organizations

- Period: September 2018 – November 2018
- Donor: IOM subgrant AICS funding
- Number of people reached: 1800

World Interfaith Harmony Week Campaign

- Period: February 2018
- Donor: Go for Climate-Germany; Al-Baraka Company – Duhok’
- Number of people reached: 50



BWO INTRODUCTION:

Established in May 2017, BWO is a CSO founded by young women for women and youth over five years old.

BWO target vulnerable communities in Dohuk and Ninewa Governorates. Its programming includes capacity-building for personnel delivering protection services and activities tailored to empower women, youth, and adolescents to obtain durable solutions and sustainable livelihoods. Interventions include GBV response programming, advocacy for gender equality, and development of socio-economic skills. BWO implements projects that adopt an all-inclusive approach to provide psychosocial support and foster social cohesion in communities.

In 2018, IOM included BWO in its comprehensive capacity-building programme and supported its coordination with other programme stakeholders, including donors.

The organization enhanced its technical and managerial capacities and acquired skills to provide psychosocial support in accordance with IASC guidelines.

BWO has actively contributed to the peacebuilding process in Iraq through its membership in the Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security, established by United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2250, and the Nongovernmental (NGO) Working Group for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Iraq.

Looking ahead, BWO will continue implementing projects that focuses on the empowerment for women and youth through projects on protection, GBV, PSS, livelihood and social cohesion.

DIRECTOR: WALAA MUSHEER AHMED

Walaa Musheer Ahmed is the director of BWO. She began her humanitarian work in early 2015, when ISIL invaded Sinjar.

During her first years in the field, Walaa observed how young women worked together to implement incredible projects and support their communities.

“So, I thought that we as young women can also build something, that we can bring different ideas to build a new environment of work that can better support women,” said Walaa.

Inspired by this, she founded BWO on 24 May 2017, creating a space for skilled and passionate people to join forces in supporting women and youth in different communities by designing and implementing projects.

Walaa and her co-founders aimed for BWO to direct its efforts to the groups their staff know best: women and youth. Starting off the organization at a young age, the founders were able to relate to the needs of young women of their generation. Moreover, they realized the importance of supporting them to achieve their maximum personal and professional potential, and to support their families and communities in the process.

BWO achieves its objectives through a broad and inclusive approach. Walaa recognizes that the organization must reach out to different demographics to realize her vision for women, youth, and adolescents. For example, BWO always supports families as a whole. Walaa explains: “if we build resilience just for the youth, they may find that they are not supported by their parents when they go back to their families.” To fill

the gap, BWO actively reaches out to the parents, so the youth receive support from their families and have spaces to develop their personalities at home.

BWO programming also seeks to foster social cohesion and resilience in Dohuk and Ninewa communities. The organization actively participates in the World Interfaith Harmony Week, which is a globally recognized initiative proposed by UN resolution in 2010 that brings together groups of different faiths to engage in a peaceful dialogue. BWO hosts events during the first week of February each year: in 2018, BWO invited Christian, Muslim, and Yezidi scholars to speak to community members and stakeholders, and in 2019 the organization provided garden spaces in Kabartu camp where women of different faiths efforts to plant and create “Harmony Gardens” together.

Since 2017, BWO has implemented more than 20 projects with a team of only 42 people, including 30 young volunteers. The group’s programming has benefitted over 20,000 community members across genders and ages.

“Motivation and commitment from young people—or perhaps the self-belonging of our staff—are BWO’s greatest strengths,” says Walaa.

With a flat and equitable structure, partners and volunteers choose to stay with BWO. “The team who worked with us on an IOM project in Kabartu in 2019 has stayed with us,” Walaa says, showing an example. “We have a very healthy environment. We created a platform that is supportive and flexible, where the employees and volunteers feel they are a part of this journey.”

The mobile library, which BWO created with IOM support in 2019, is another example of BWO’s innovative programming. Walaa describes how the project came to be: “We discovered through our programmes in different camps that young people really want—and need—to read. So, we started providing books to small groups of young people that reached out to us, and then we created reading groups where they exchange what they read.” The organization later established a library at the IOM centre. To make the library more accessible, staff and volunteers used bikes to deliver books to residents in all sectors of the camp.

IOM’s capacity building program has played an important role in the successful development of BWO. “IOM capacity building program in 2018 was a turning point for Better World,” Walaa said, “It was very important because it helped us develop our network, become more visible in the complex, and trained us on different managerial and technical topics. It has lifted Better World to a good level in a very short time.”

Walaa has benefited from the programme as the director, too. “There are different topics that improved my skills including, for example, proposal writing,” she remarked. “It was an effective training because as director I am the focal point for writing proposals for BWO.” Moreover, the IOM capacity-building programme has expanded Walaa’s skills beyond her expertise in women protection and allowed her to better contribute to BWO.

Reflecting on her organization’s partnership with IOM, Walaa spoke positively: “IOM has a strong system and valuable approaches. What they have transferred to us will remain here. It’s a complementing process.” Walaa believes BWO will continue to be an active player in the community, harnessing her and her team’s skills and motivation to continue providing services to women, youth and adolescents.



NAME

SAHIRA

CSO

BWOCD



PROFILES AND TESTIMONIES

CSO PROFILE(CSU)
BWOCD

Testimonies of beneficiaries
Sahira Saeed Saadun

SAHIRA, ART ACTIVITIES

“When I painted again, I felt I wasn’t alone anymore,” said 20-year-old Sahira.

Being a painter has been a long-cherished dream to 20-year-old Sahira. Inspired by well renowned artists such as Van Gogh, she used to visit artists in Dokri, her village in Sinjar district prior to her displacement.

Sahira’s first four years at Kabartu camp were hard, and she found it exceptionally difficult to pursue painting there, adding to her frustration. This changed when, through her mother, who was attending a BWO sewing skills training course, Sahira was introduced to BWO’s counselling sessions hosted at the IOM centre at the camp.

As soon as Sahira expressed her passion for painting to her counselor, the team at BWO provided her with the materials she needed to begin painting; later, they provided her with the opportunity to hold her own art exhibition, where she was able to display her works for the community.

“This was a turning point on the journey to my dream,” Sahira recalled, “I started to paint passionately as much as I could in a short period of time. When I painted again, I felt I wasn’t alone anymore. The organization gave me

all the trust and made me have more confidence in on my skills. It is an indescribable feeling to turn your imagination into reality while expressing your thoughts without words.”

In 2019, BWO hosted an art exhibition at the IOM centre where around 50 people, both from inside and outside of the camp, came to see Sahira’s paintings. In her collection, Sahira drew many things, including nature, war, humans, and sport activities.

Sahira’s journey as a painter did not just stop there. After the exhibition, BWO supported her to open a drawing course for children between nine to thirteen years old at the camp. She taught three days a week for three weeks, from drawing with pencils to water coloring and more.

“I think it’s very important for the youth to have something they’re passionate about. I always had negative thoughts while in difficult situations, but painting has really helped me shift my focus and become more positive. Left on their own, most youth here spend their time doing nothing, but when they come to the IOM centre, they can meet different people, learn new skills and be more productive.”

MURAD, SPORT ACTIVITIES

Murad and his family lived in Sinjar before their displacement. Since their arrival at a complex in the Sumel district, in Duhok Governorate, they have benefited from programming at the IOM centre on many levels. Murad receives monetary support from the camp as he cannot work due to a health issue. Among the different types of support he receives, Murad is especially happy with the time his sons—thirteen-year-old Abdulla and eleven-year-old Hayaf—spend at BWO’s soccer activities.

Besides supporting the two young boys in mastering their soccer techniques under the guidance of skillful coaches, these activities have provided a safe space for their father to bond with them. Witnessing his sons’ progress made Murad feel fulfilled.

“I am also busy with these activities in a good way as I’m here for my children—to support them,” Murad said proudly. “They were even able to reach the finals in the local competition, and I was happy to attend the matches. I even bought them sport clothes—but will give it to them on the condition that they do well in school.”

BWO’s activities like this are creating peace and cohesion at the camps – for both the youth and their families. These activities not only aim to develop sports skills of youth, but also strengthens community ties, and enhances social networks between families. “I am happy that my sons spend time here doing something useful. Before joining the soccer team, they used to be bored at home, and I didn’t like them going outside of the camp and fighting with other children. When they come here, they are satisfied, and I’m also satisfied.”

In addition to teaching healthy hobbies to the youth, these activities bring together people from different backgrounds.

“I’m happy that my sons are interacting with other football players” Murad said. “I also got to know some new people from varying backgrounds through these activities, and now I’m friends with them, just as our children are also friends.”

Murad’s opinion on BWO’s programming is clear: “If it’s possible, I of course want the organization to provide services to more children—the more the better. I think they get a sense of relief from these activities.”



VOICES FROM CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

The path towards recovery from conflict and displacement
from the perspective of grassroots organizations

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