

IRAQ: Ninewa Return Program (NRP)

Introduction

Malteser International is the worldwide humanitarian relief agency of the Sovereign Order of Malta. As a non-governmental organization, our mission is to provide emergency relief, transitional and development aid during and following conflicts and disasters. Christian values and humanitarian principles form the foundations of our work: bringing aid to people regardless of their religion, background, or political convictions. We have projects in more than 30 countries all over the world.

Malteser International (MI) has been working in Iraq since 2004, mainly providing health-related emergency relief. In October 2018, the Ninewa Return Program (NRP) started, focussing on the return of internally displaced people (IDPs) to the Ninewa plains. The Ninewa plains are located in north-western Iraq and are home to diverse ethno-religious groups including several Christian denominations, Yazidis, Shabak, Kakae, Turkmen, Sunni Arabs and Kurds. After the Islamic State (IS) entered Mosul in June 2014, they proceeded to bring large swaths of the Ninewa Plains under their control for several years. Many people were forced to leave their homes; a large number of villages was partially or completely destroyed. Since the recapture of the Ninewa plains in 2017, the needs have been evolving. Beyond the immediate emergency aid to displaced people in camps, there is now a growing focus on transitional aid in the form of assistance for families returning into their homelands.



Figure 1: Livelihood project rehabilitation of irrigation canals

Map of Iraq



Program profile

Duration	October 2018 – December 2020
Location	Governorate of Ninewa, Districts of Al-Hamdaniya and Tilkef
Partners	Local Reconstruction Committees of the Syriac-Catholic, Syriac-Orthodox and Chaldean Church, Christian Aid Programme Nohdra – Iraq (CAPNI), Critical Needs Support Foundation (CNSF), Mercy Hands (MH), Samaritan's Purse (SP), People in Need (PIN), Un ponte per... (UPP), Women Rehabilitation Organization (WRO)

The Program

The geographical focus of the NRP is mainly on the districts of Al-Hamdaniya and Tilkef, located in the Ninewa plains to the north-east of Mosul. Our program employs a unique, integrated and multi-sectoral approach in order to support the return of families in the most effective way. The four pillars of the program are: providing sustainable and dignified shelter through the reconstruction of war damaged houses, enhancing livelihoods and boosting economic development through cash grants and business development support, increasing access to quality education for returning children via school rehabilitation and teacher training, and promoting social cohesion and peacebuilding through inter-religious dialogue and community integration activities.

1.) House Reconstruction

Objective: Formerly displaced people from the Ninewa plains are able to return to their homes.

Due to the period under IS control, whole villages were abandoned and many homes of displaced people were damaged or destroyed, either by IS or during operations to retake the areas. Displaced families desire to return, but many do not have the financial resources to rebuild or repair their homes. Together with local churches and our partner organizations, we are supporting families to rebuild or repair their own homes. As a result, around 2,300 houses are being reconstructed, allowing more than 14,000 children and adults to return to their homes.

2.) Livelihoods

Objective: Small/ medium-sized enterprises are able to resume operations or start new ones. Young people develop skills that will help them earn an income.

In order to have a medium to long-term perspective after returning, families must be able to generate their own income. Our experienced local and international partners provide a range of activities with the aim of generating livelihoods opportunities and boosting the local economy: we are building capacity in business management skills and distributing cash grants to small and medium enterprises. We are rehabilitating wells and irrigation channels to provide a new foundation for the destroyed agricultural infrastructure. Other interventions include: repairing poultry farms and providing livestock, rehabilitating orchards and establishing greenhouses, and supporting the production of grain. These activities are



Figure 2: Leaders of different ethno-religious groups meet with Malteser International Head of Program

complemented by vocational trainings and cash-for-work programs to enhance the livelihoods of returnees.

3.) Education

Objective: The children of the Ninewa plains are able to attend kindergarten and school again.

Families desire to return to a normal and structured daily routine. A major part of this is the necessity for children to be socialised and to be able to have their educational needs and rights met. Since the population started to return, the schools that are functioning are overcrowded and the teachers overburdened with the numbers of children, many of whom are traumatised and require special support. We are rebuilding kindergartens, primary and secondary schools and empowering teachers to meet the needs of students through specially designed trainings.

4.) Social Cohesion and Peacebuilding

Objective: Different ethno-religious communities live and work together peacefully.

Many of the hardships facing the returnees to the Ninewa plains can be solved through the first three pillars of the NRP. By far the greatest challenge is to rebuild trust between the diverse ethno-religious groups. The experience of displacement has left or reinforced grievances and tensions among communities and minorities. The social cohesion component of the NRP aims to strengthen the dialogue and rebuild trust between and within different groups. We are reaching this objective through activities such as cultural and recreational events, vocational trainings, the creation of youth centres, and educational measures which bring men and women of different identities and mentalities together. Participating in joint activities can help overcome boundaries and break down prejudices.

Partners

We are working directly with seven experienced local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and three church partners, who bring a wide variety of technical expertise. We coordinate all our activities with ministries, local authorities, community and religious leaders, the different UN agencies and coordination mechanisms, as well as with other NGOs active in the Ninewa plains.

Published by:



www.malteser-international.org

Headquarters

Gruener Weg 14
50825 Cologne
Germany

Country Office Erbil

Park View Compound
Building B2, App 14
Erbil, Kurdistan
Iraq