

NEWSLETTER

Engaging Men in the Women, Youth, Peace, and Security Program



Men Engage Component

The Women, Youth, Peace, and Security (WYPS) Program is a regional initiative aimed at enhancing the meaningful and sustainable participation of women and youth in peacebuilding and comprehensive security across the Levant, Yemen, and Iraq.

In Iraq, the program is implemented by Search for Common Ground in partnership with the Women Empowerment Organization. It seeks to strengthen the role of women and youth as peacebuilders at the political level while promoting the inclusive participation of key stakeholders in both local and national institutions and peace processes. A core component of the program is its focus on shifting social norms to foster the genuine inclusion of diverse actors in peace and security efforts.

The program ensures that Iraq's national Women, Youth, Peace, and Security agenda is informed by lessons learned and best practices from other countries, particularly in the development and implementation of National Action Plans. This approach supports stronger alignment between national and regional strategies, enabling a more integrated and effective path toward sustainable peace and security.

As part of this effort, nineteen male activists from various Iraqi governorates were selected to join the Men Engage Component, a component of the WYPS Program supporting the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. This initiative aims to empower men to serve as allies in advancing Iraq's National Action Plan 1325 and promoting the inclusion of women in peace and security processes at the community level.

Through this engagement, the selected participants received training on social roles and justice to understand structural challenges and develop practical strategies to address them. Moving forward, they will establish networks within their respective governorates and organize four community dialogue sessions aimed at promoting peace, stability, and inclusive collaboration.

The training program was implemented in two phases:

Phase One

Involved a two-day, in-person workshop held in Erbil, during which participants were introduced to the core principles and foundational concepts of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda.

Phase Two

Consisted of a four-day intensive online course designed to deepen participants' knowledge and enhance their practical skills.

The training focused on empowering participants to challenge social norms and traditional practices that hinder equitable participation. It encouraged them to advocate for inclusive approaches that create equal opportunities for all. Participants were also equipped with the tools and knowledge necessary to design and implement community-based initiatives that support women's roles in peacebuilding and contribute to long-term stability.

This initiative ultimately aims to foster a more inclusive society, one in which men and women work together to promote peace and participate meaningfully across all sectors of community life.

Men's Initiatives in Supporting Activities of the Women, Youth, Peace, and Security Project Participant:



Karbala Governorate

Asil Hussein Taleb

I led the “Voices of Women” initiative in Karbala, which focused on promoting positive masculinity and justice within tribal communities. As part of this effort, I established early warning units to support women at risk and foster a safer, more responsive environment. Following the adoption of Iraq’s Second National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325, I collaborated with a local women’s organization to develop a strategic plan for expanding these early warning units. We successfully obtained approval from the local government to begin training relevant personnel to operate them.

My goal is to promote justice, equality between women and men, and sustainable peace through local awareness workshops, engaging men and local officials in support of the National Action Plan by raising awareness of the risks associated with overlooking women’s inclusion in peacebuilding.



Maysan Governorate

Ali Bader Abdullah

I am a member of several local and international networks and coalitions, working in the field of human rights consulting and monitoring rights violations. I have participated in international training programs focused on conflict resolution and negotiation skills and have contributed to initiatives aimed at promoting justice and equity. In Maysan Governorate, I organized a workshop to encourage community engagement on issues related to UNSCR 1325 and led the “Women Peacebuilders” initiative, which aimed to foster stability and constructive dialogue at the local level.

My goal is to promote human rights and achieve justice through peaceful conflict resolution, enabling communities to build peace and stability. I aim to raise awareness and strengthen dialogue to help create a more just and cohesive society.

Men's Initiatives in Supporting Activities of the Women, Youth, Peace, and Security Project Participant:



Wasit Governorate

Sajad Abdul Karim Shbeeb

I am an activist and have been working in the civil and community field since 2007, I have worked within local government on community support initiatives, with a focus on women's and children's affairs. I also lead several organizations and teams dedicated to development and leadership. In collaboration with governmental and non-governmental institutions, I established the "Safe Community Forum", which aimed to raise youth awareness around UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 2250. I am a strong advocate for youth empowerment and work to create safe spaces that encourage their expression and active participation in civic life. Together with my colleagues, I co-founded the "Community Leadership Forum" to promote youth involvement in political processes and economic development. My goal is to establish a "Community Security Cell" in partnership with specialized institutions, aimed at raising public awareness, providing accessible complaint mechanisms, and involving youth in decision-making processes.



Duhok Governorate

Biyar Ezzat Ahmed

I have been a civil society activist since 2005, working with organizations on youth empowerment, local community development, peacebuilding, and human rights. I have taken part in various community support training programs in collaboration with international organizations. Over the past decade, I have actively contributed to programs focused on promoting peaceful coexistence and empowering local communities through advocacy and capacity building.

My goal is to lead professional training courses for youth and women and create sustainable job opportunities for them upon completion of the training.

Men's Initiatives in Supporting Activities of the Women, Youth, Peace, and Security Project Participant:



Salah al-Din Governorate

Saddam Abdul Abdullah

I am a human rights and civil society activist focused on promoting peace, security, and equality between men and women within the community. I actively support projects that raise public awareness, advocate for individual rights, and contribute to building sustainable peace. Through various activities and training sessions, I have helped foster safer communities and expand understanding of individual rights. I have also successfully organized awareness workshops across several areas within Salah al-Din Governorate. One notable achievement was through a community awareness initiative on electoral participation, which led to a noticeable increase in women voters and greater support for female candidates, an encouraging step toward community empowerment. My goal is to leverage social media to spread awareness about peace and equality between men and women, and to encourage community members to actively engage in skill-building and educational workshops that support inclusive development.



Babil Governorate

Abdul Hassan Rasmi Ali

I am a human rights activist and trainer with experience in delivering workshops on individual rights, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution. I have led multiple campaigns aimed at advancing community rights and legal awareness. As part of the global 16 Days of Activism campaign, I organized training workshops targeting personnel in the electricity, interior, health, and labor sectors. These efforts contributed to increasing awareness and responsiveness within key public institutions. Additionally, I founded a local association in Babil Governorate to educate the public about their legal rights and to promote civic engagement. My goal is to raise public awareness through educational seminars and targeted social media campaigns.

Men's Initiatives in Supporting Activities of the Women, Youth, Peace, and Security Project Participant:



Dhi Qar Governorate

Mohammad Thamer Jihad

My experience lies in economic empowerment through my role as a trainer at the Directorate of Youth and Sports. I currently serve as the Assistant Director of the Women's Affairs Department, where I design specialized training curricula and manage workshops aimed at empowering youth to play a more active role in local development. I have participated in numerous dialogue sessions and awareness seminars that focused on individual empowerment, including youth engagement in peacebuilding and negotiation processes. My work has also supported the advancement of individuals into leadership roles, and I have successfully secured the backing of government officials for these efforts.

My goal is to enable individuals to become active partners in implementing community empowerment programs and to raise awareness that challenges and transforms social practices which hinder public participation.



Basra Governorate

Sami Khalaf Hassun

I am a civil society activist working to promote equality and justice between men and women, while also supporting youth through training and awareness-raising initiatives. I have led dialogue sessions aimed at challenging stereotypes and shifting behaviors, which contributed to increased female participation in public and civic life. I have also developed training programs on civil rights and peacebuilding, and launched media campaigns to highlight the importance of peace and community engagement. In addition, I have supported youth- and women-led projects by empowering them to develop their ideas and contribute meaningfully to local development. These efforts are accompanied by regular assessments to ensure the initiatives evolve in response to emerging needs. My goal is to build a more just and inclusive society by empowering women and youth, fostering a culture of equality and justice, and creating real opportunities for their engagement in development and community peacebuilding.

Men's Initiatives in Supporting Activities of the Women, Youth, Peace, and Security Project Participant:



Kirkuk Governorate

Hussein Jamal

I serve as the Program Director at the National Human Rights Institute, where I focus on strengthening the role of women and youth in peace and security. I am deeply committed to defending women's rights and addressing issues that affect them, with the aim of fostering a safer and more equitable society. I have led initiatives to increase women's representation in community policing and collaborated with the Dutch Parliament to promote justice and equality between men and women. My work is driven by a commitment to empowering women and developing sustainable solutions that support inclusive development. Through training on men's engagement, I gained a deeper understanding of the role men can play as allies in advancing justice and equality between women and men, and how this support contributes to systemic change.

My goal is to address the challenges faced by youth, particularly young women and work toward creating spaces where they can thrive, participate, and lead.



Sulaymaniyah Governorate

Nadhir Osman

I have extensive experience in civil society, with a focus on empowering youth and women, particularly within refugee and displaced communities. My work has centered on advocacy, protection, and community engagement for marginalized groups. Participating in training on men's engagement strengthened my commitment to advancing women's rights and supporting their meaningful participation in decision-making processes. I joined the Men's Engagement activity and became an active member of the working group to combat violence against both women and men. Additionally, I volunteered in the 16 Days of Activism Campaign to Combat Violence Against Women and Girls, further contributing to awareness and prevention efforts.

My goal is to raise awareness on issues related to women, youth, peace, and security through targeted campaigns and educational seminars in schools.

Men's Initiatives in Supporting Activities of the Women, Youth, Peace, and Security Project Participant:



Nineveh Governorate

Nibras Khalil Aswad

I am actively working to promote justice and gender equality, while empowering youth under the framework of the Women, Youth, Peace, and Security (WYPS) agenda. My work is dedicated to strengthening the participation of women and youth in decision-making processes, particularly in post-conflict contexts. I am also committed to combating violence, advancing educational opportunities, and supporting the inclusive development of marginalized communities. The training on men's engagement deepened my understanding of the dynamics of promoting justice and highlighted the importance of men serving as allies in these efforts. As part of my advocacy, I have organized community workshops to raise awareness and encourage practices that reinforce justice and equality between women and men. My goal is to actively support the Women, Youth, Peace, and Security agenda by engaging in initiatives that promote justice and peace, and by leveraging social media to raise public awareness and foster inclusive dialogue.



Erbil Governorate

Amer Mohammed Ismail

I am a certified trainer in human development with extensive experience in volunteer work and humanitarian assistance. My efforts have focused on organizing events that support local communities and foster inclusive engagement. I also coordinate awareness meetings with the Women's Union Secretariat, aiming to promote women's rights and protection. I actively utilize both social media and traditional media platforms to amplify these messages and reach broader audiences.

My goal is to strengthen the empowerment of youth and women through training and skill development, while actively contributing to the promotion of human rights, justice, and equality between women and men.

Men's Initiatives in Supporting Activities of the Women, Youth, Peace, and Security Project Participant:



Qadisiya Governorate

Mohamed Ali Abu Al-Heil

I am a lawyer and a certified trainer in financial literacy, leadership, and trainer development. I actively work to combat corruption within the judicial system and lead youth and community initiatives, most notably the “Our Rights” project, which focuses on protecting labor rights. Through my training work, I focus on raising awareness of issues affecting women, such as discrimination and violence, and on challenging stereotypes related to justice. I also conduct workshops on women’s rights, the personal status law, and offer guidance to men on how to be effective allies in supporting women.

My goal is to promote justice and equality between women and men, and to empower women through community collaboration and by defending their rights across all sectors.



Al-Muthanna Governorate

Maytham Al-Haji

I serve as a training consultant and currently hold the position of Head of the Volunteer Work Committee at Al-Muthanna University. Throughout my career, I have been actively involved in initiatives that promote justice and equality between men and women, as well as the implementation of sustainable development goals. I have delivered training courses across several Iraqi governorates on key topics such as the role of women in peacebuilding, conflict management, and countering violent extremism. My efforts have also included raising awareness on women’s rights and promoting their empowerment at social, political, and economic levels. I have conducted workshops to promote positive behavior change and shift community perceptions toward more inclusive and equitable values.

My goal is to mobilize communities in support of women’s political participation and strengthen their role across all sectors, with a strong emphasis on empowering women in leadership positions and protecting them from the challenges they face, thereby contributing to societal stability and sustainable development.

Men's Initiatives in Supporting Activities of the Women, Youth, Peace, and Security Project Participant:



Al-Anbar Governorate

Mohamed Ahmed Sarhan

I am a civil rights activist committed to promoting justice and equality between women and men, supporting youth leadership and civic engagement, and advancing peace and human rights. My work focuses on raising awareness about the challenges facing women and youth and encouraging men to become advocates for their rights. I bring experience in effective communication, project planning, and social analysis, and have contributed to real-life success stories, such as supporting a young woman who launched a sewing business, and a group of girls working in handicrafts, helping them improve their livelihoods and self-reliance. I have participated in various initiatives to support women, including awareness campaigns on domestic violence, and have actively engaged youth through volunteerism and educational programs.

My goal is to empower women and youth as a pathway to achieving social justice and equality.



Diyala Governorate

Ammar Fajr Mazaal

I specialize in community development, with a focus on empowering women and youth, and promoting peace and security through programs that strengthen their participation in decision-making processes. I have extensive experience in organizing capacity-building workshops that promote justice and equality between men and women, particularly in the areas of economic and political empowerment. I have trained men to challenge traditional perceptions of traditional roles, encouraging them to become active supporters of women's rights. Through community workshops and open dialogues, I have worked to foster social cooperation and enhance the representation of women in leadership, leading to the advancement of three women into influential roles within their communities. In addition, I have participated in local initiatives supporting women and led awareness efforts via social media to promote a culture of justice and equality. I have also contributed to advocacy campaigns for policy reforms that strengthen women's rights. My goal is to empower women and youth to achieve justice and active participation in decision-making, paving the way for a more equitable and sustainable society.

Men's Initiatives in Supporting Activities of the Women, Youth, Peace, and Security Project Participant:



Halabja Governorate

Marywan Wahbi Rashid

I am the Director of the Halabja Disabled Organization and am an active advocate for women's rights, youth empowerment, and peacebuilding. Through training on justice and equality, I have gained a deep understanding of the role of men as allies in supporting women's rights, which has enabled me to develop sustainable solutions to empower both women and youth. Among my key achievements is providing training for women in Halabja on poultry farming to enhance their economic opportunities. I also launched a sustainable agriculture program targeting women and youth, aimed at addressing the challenges posed by climate change. I consistently participate in community-based events and leverage social media platforms to spread awareness and promote a culture of justice, equality, and peace. My goal is to promote justice and equality between men and women, and to empower women and youth to build a more inclusive and sustainable society.



Najaf Governorate

Hassan Falah Fakher al-Din

I am a civil society activist and a capacity-building specialist, dedicated to promoting justice, equality, and peace through community-based initiatives. Among these are the "Youth Participation to Support Equality and Justice between Men and Women" program, and the "Digitally Safe" campaign, which aims to raise digital awareness and protect women and youth from cyber extortion. Through capacity-building trainings, I developed a deeper understanding of the critical role men play in supporting women's rights, which I translated into action by organizing awareness sessions and workshops for youth across Najaf. Some of my key achievements include launching the "Dialogue" program, which promotes peaceful coexistence with a strong focus on women's empowerment, and continuing the "Digitally Safe" campaign to combat digital threats targeting vulnerable groups. My goal is to build an enabling environment that empowers women and youth and contributes to peace and sustainable development across Iraq.

Men's Initiatives in Supporting Activities of the Women, Youth, Peace, and Security Project Participant:



Baghdad Governorate

Ali Jamil Mohammed Al-Din

I am a trainer and consultant specializing in digital media and cybersecurity, as well as a committed activist in human rights, peacebuilding, and sustainable development. I work to support the Women, Youth, Peace, and Security (WYPS) project in Iraq by strengthening the capacity of civil society and youth to lead transformative initiatives that advance inclusive peace and sustainable development. My work focuses on empowering women and youth and promoting justice and equality as essential foundations for building stable and prosperous communities. I have contributed by providing strategic consultations and leading innovative campaigns that promote equality and highlight both legislative progress and civil engagement in Iraq. I have also developed creative initiatives, such as documentary projects, to raise awareness and advocate for social justice.

My goal is to support the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security by advancing justice and equality between women and men, strengthening civil society, and promoting innovative approaches that contribute to sustainable peace in Iraq.

A picture from one of the Men Engage Component training activities





Women Empowerment Organization

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