

Project Title: Peace Initiative
Student Project Lead: Sam Siso Hussein.
School: Ringling College of Art and Design
Dates: Summer 2022
Location: Iraq

PROJECT BACKGROUND

On the night of the 3rd of August 2014, ISIS attacked Sinjar/Shingal, the majority of Yazidis- a minority ethnic and religious group in northern Iraq. and as a result, thousands of Yazidis fled their city to become IDPs in the Kurdistan region of northern Iraq, as for the people who failed to flee their homes on the time it was tragic. Hundreds of men children and old women were killed, and thousands more young women and girls were kept as sex slaves. after 8 years of this tragic event, people still suffer in the IDP camps and Sinjar/Shingal. This genocide left three main problems, a never-seen islamophobia, suffering women survivors, and neglected children. thousands of women and families are still missing, and yet to be found and returned to their homes. And the area is now seeing another phase of suffering, where the Turkish government is bombing Sinjar/Shingal regularly because of YPJ guerillas in the mountains of Sinjar/Shingal.

THE MAIN FOCUS OF THE PROJECT

As our main focus is similar to what we did with the grant that was awarded to us by the (GoMakeDifference) initiative in 2019 during our summer program, we will try to advocate for peace and coexisting between Yazidis and Muslims. and as a secondary goal, we will focus on the main neglected and most affected part of society the women survivors from sex slavery and children, listed as follows:

Solving islamophobia by advocating for peace and coexistence: after 2014 it is safe to say that 100% of Yazidis became **ISLAMOPHOBIC**, and that was mainly because ISIS came in the name of Islam and killed **THOUSANDS** of Yazidis. And to bring peace to the area, a very important part is the acceptance of others, and as part of the peacebuilding process, both Yazidis and Muslims who are residents of Sinjar/Shingal have to come together.

Providing safe space for women survivors from sex slavery: until this date, there are **THOUSANDS** of women kept as sex slaves or lost, and even after **SURVIVING** from isis life in Iraq is not getting easier for them. the government has **NEGLECTED** this very important part of the Yazidi genocide, there are **HUNDREDS** of women survivors in need to help. They face poverty and/or mental health issues and some even commit **SUICIDE**, because many of them lost their families.

Building a safe space for children(MGS): there is no greater than the **TRAUMA** of becoming an IDP or born as an IDP and going through a genocide, there are **HUNDREDS** of children who need care and friendly spaces to recover from the genocide. Since the government has neglected Sinjar/Shingal, there are rarely spaces for children's care.

PROJECT PLAN

Art competition to advocate peace: This Competition Will Include 20-30 Artists (Half Muslims And Half Yazidis). We, Will, Be Holding A 7-Day Training For The Participants To Teach Them How Art Can Serve Peace, And How To Provoke Peacebuilding Ideas Into Meaningful Art. And Then Will Give Them a 2-Week Gap To Create An Art Piece That Advocates Peace And Living In Harmony Together, and we will cap it with a public art exhibition. All The Participants Will Be Paid A Fixed Amount Of Money For Their Participation, And The Top Three Winners Will Get Financial Prizes.

Women survivors from sex slavery: We will be either creating a safe space for Women Survivors from Sexual Slavery for 2 weeks (it will be therapy and mental health training) or giving 100 food/essentials kits to 100 women. If the space was created, then all the women participants will be paid a fixed amount of money to help them as a reward for their participation. (We have a B plan for essentials kits since we don't know how the therapy training will be perceived).

Children of the war: We will be re-creating MGS (Mega Group Space)- it is a space me and my group created recently and we were helping 50 children daily. , and we will be operating it for 2 months. In this space, there will be a 2-month plan of daily activities of 4 hours daily, and it will include four spaces 1. Movie Screenings, 2. Playground, 3. Creativity Space, 4. Dance Space.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

- **Raising** awareness about Peace and coexistence in harmony through art.
- **Helping** small artists to encourage them to spread peace in Sinjar/Shingal.
- **Helping** the survivors of sexual slavery by activating the mental health program.
- **Helping** the survivors of sexual slavery by awarding them a financial prize.
- **Helping** children to go over the trauma through a safe space for entertainment, care, and creativity like MGS.
- **Protecting** children from the danger in the daytime where bombing happens.