



**Zeena's name and photo changed for privacy*

Impact in Iraq: When Women Speak Out



WITH YOUR SUPPORT, NP HAS BEEN WORKING WITH WOMEN IN SOUTH MOSUL TO ADVOCATE FOR INCREASED SAFETY AND SECURITY.

In South Mosul, Iraq, Zeena* and other women in her community face daily threats of gender-based violence (GBV), including harassment and domestic abuse. By living in the local community, NP was able to build deep trust in the area through constant engagement, visibility in public at all hours, and relationship building with both leadership and citizens—especially women and girls.

As we built relationships with Zeena and the greater community in South Mosul, women increasingly asked us to engage with them on how to address the daily violence they face. And they wanted us to support them in engaging with the people who should be providing protection to women, such as government officials, police, and other security forces.

Engaging the Community

To reach adult women, NP informally met with women in their homes. We worked with women we had built strong relationships within the community, like Zeena, for example. Zeena would invite her neighbors and relatives over to her house, and it would turn into a group of 20-30 women who would join NP. From sexual harassment in public spaces to domestic violence, NP heard the women's concerns directly. The team supported these women as they shared their needs and strategized on how to address them.

To reach young women, NP held a training series for youth—both boys and girls. Youth from youth councils, schools, informal local leadership, and existing local



"I am telling you now. Before NP started doing all this work, I never imagined that I could come to any public institutions and report on issues,"

Zeena from Qayyarah shared during a community meeting in South Mosul.





volunteer initiatives showed up. While many young people are keen to affect positive changes in their communities, young women are completely excluded from local decision-making (and young men allowed only a small role), even though they have a huge appetite to engage their own communities on the issues affecting them.

The seemingly simple act of having these community gatherings built collective power among the women and youth. They built solidarity and support among each other by being able to talk together about the violence they often experience, violence that persists in part because it hides in the shadows and remains silent.

Providing a Safe Space

But NP’s work didn’t stop there. Because the concern was not only about the violence itself, but also the lack of protection from the groups women expected protection from, we worked with the women to take the next step. From these conversations and trainings, a group of 25 adult and young women decided to raise their voices and concerns and joined NP’s Community Security Forums to talk with security actors and government agencies directly. Based on the women’s concerns, NP invited local officials to the meetings.

These meetings are an opportunity for mutual trust



“ We used the space ... to raise our concerns regarding the police’s abdication of their responsibility to protect women and failure to prevent GBV. ”

building between the community and these security and government officials. The officials begin to recognize the women as proactive and engaged community members, and the women, in turn, see increasing responsiveness and good governance on the officials’ part. Everyone involved felt this meeting was a positive step forward. The Municipality Director, for example, shared that “this is my first meeting with women to learn about their issues related to the municipality because most of the people who visit my office are men.”

The forums also continue to be a safe space for the women attendees to advocate on deeply embedded and challenging protection risks such as GBV – a topic seen as taboo that is now being discussed openly. Not only can the women like Zeena now discuss these

issues among themselves, some for the first time, but also now as a powerful group of women speaking out in a public forum. As this violence continues to come out of the shadows, it loses its power.

Zeena has already seen concrete changes. At the

Community Security Forums, the women asked for the police to take their issues seriously and change their behaviors as a result. They now patrol and provide presence near schools where Zeena had not wanted to send her daughter because she experienced harassment outside the school. Zeena’s daughter told her she already feels safer on her way to and from school, and can focus more on studying. And Zeena’s family isn’t the only one impacted. Zeena and her daughter are just one of the hundreds of women and girls in this community who are now safer.

NP will continue to work with this group of engaged women to create community protection teams. These teams will provide more trainings on gender-based violence to the community and schools and promote public campaigns for violence prevention. NP will also begin projects specifically with men to talk to other men to decrease domestic violence, as well. All of these efforts will work hand-in-hand to build a society free from violence for Zeena, her daughter, and all women in South Mosul.

Reaching the Hard-to-Reach

UPDATES FROM OUR NEWEST PROGRAMS: SUDAN & UKRAINE



NP in Sudan has met with over 1,000 different stakeholders: women, youth, and men in displacement camps, as well as nomadic groups in North and West Darfur.



NP in Ukraine has evacuated 200 civilians from Kupyansk, Schevshenkove and Kovsharivka in partnership with a local organization.



300+ civilians, including women and men in displaced and nomad communities of North Darfur, have attended NP's community protection orientations & trainings.



NP in Ukraine has conducted 80+ protective accompaniments for people to access essential legal support and identification documents.

Paving the Path to a Future of Peace



Hadji Gapor, an Imam and a community peace leader in Mindanao, Philippines, first met the NP team when they came to his village to de-escalate clan tensions using nonviolence. This was the kind of social impact Hadji was looking to have—he was eager to participate in NP trainings and seminars to build on his knowledge of peacebuilding. Now, he teaches lessons from NP's trainings to civilians in his community. He calls it “re-echoing.”

“They don't know about their rights, and this is why they are abused. If they know about their rights, they can uphold them.”



Will Wallace has 25+ years of experience in youth and community work in North Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.S. He has been a voice for engagement between police and community during times of crisis. Now, Will is leading our program of Community Peace Builders—the brothers—to show what nonviolence looks like in action.

“The brothers had this opportunity to embrace change in a way where they can change their narrative. Now it is up to them to just look and say, instead of me sitting in the back of a police car, I'm sitting in front of the police chief.”



SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT



Kathleen and Mark

Kathleen Anzicek, DO, and Mark Leventer, MD, are doctors in the small town of Grass Lake, Michigan, where they have run a practice for over 40 years with an emphasis on prevention and holistic care.

Inspired by the engaged Buddhism movement practiced by Thich Nhat Hanh and Joana Macy "Sarvodaya" – which is a movement to be involved in a socially responsible way to change the world – Kathleen and Mark became supporters of NP.

"They [Thich Nhat Hanh and Joana] teach that each person is of great value and importance. And NP has such a wonderful methodology and plan to implement that in the world," said Kathleen and Mark. "It is great to have values, but you can do things to manifest them in action - **and that is what NP does, it manifests its values.**"



Nonviolent Peaceforce has proven to be so effective from South Sudan to North Minneapolis, it really speaks to the wisdom of the work.



All the ways to make an impact!

Go to NonviolentPeaceforce.org/donate.



Make a planned gift.

Leave your legacy of peace through a bequest, charitable IRA rollover, or even designating a portion of your retirement.



Donate with stocks.

Giving stock is one of the most tax beneficial gifts you can give to NP.



Give with crypto.

Through the Giving Block, you can donate your cryptocurrency to NP with ease.

For more information on ways to give, go to NonviolentPeaceforce.org or call 612-871-0005.