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Humanitarian aid for vulnerable children and their families in Iraq through the distribution of shelters.

A project by Terre des hommes and Better Shelter

Context

The humanitarian crisis in Iraq remains one of the largest in the world. The violence perpetrated by the Islamic State (IS) group has forced hundreds of thousands of families to flee their homes. Many of them have been living in precarious conditions and are unable to provide for their children's basic needs such as food security and health care.

The humanitarian crisis in Iraq has entered a new phase: nearly 4 million Iraqis (3.9 M according to IOM) have returned to their homes and are faced with destruction and devastation. *“Culturally, for Iraqi people, home is not just a house made out of walls. It’s a place full of memories,”* explains Intisar Rashid, one of our liaison officers in Iraq. Ripped of their 'place of memories', and having endured three years of traumatic experiences, the situation remains difficult for children.

Zones like Al Anbar and Tal Afar were under IS occupation for three years. Children experienced violence, were indoctrinated in IS schools or were hidden by their parents to save them from IS indoctrination. They were exposed to displacement, violence and a lack of schooling.

Situation in numbers:

- 4 million children in need out of 8.7 million people affected (OCHA, 2018)
- 1.95 million internally displaced people
- 3.95 million people returned to newly accessible areas (IOM, 2018)

In 2017, Terre des hommes (Tdh) helped more than 400,000 people in Irak:

- **220,500** internally displaced persons received lifesaving non-food item distributions
- **128,000** children were supported through education, protection, access to water and hygiene
- **800** children were given individual support through case management

Areas of Tdh intervention:



Tdh is active along the Baghdad-Mosul corridor, in Sherqat, Baiji and Tikrit, as well as in Tal Afar (west of Mosul), and Kirkuk, Daquq and Tuz districts.

This year, Tdh continues to provide emergency aid to the most vulnerable displaced families. Our teams started activities in child protection, education, water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH) in the districts of Hawija and Baiji.

Current needs in education

Childrens' lack of access to formal education is due to their IDP status, distance from infrastructures dedicated to school, destruction from existing schools, or lack of ID papers to prove the child's identity and level of education.

Areas of return are particularly affected by the lack of services such as psychosocial support, case management and sanitation services. These precarious situations can lead families to adopt negative coping mechanisms such as early marriage and child labour (as family income is prioritized).

For those who are able to attend school, access is still impeded: overcrowded classes and lack of material, which consequently affects children's ability to concentrate and perform.

Most of the children have lost years of education. The number of teachers is insufficient (up to 100 pupils per teacher) and results in a schedule made of shifts for the children. Moreover, teachers are not prepared, or do not have the tools to adequately support children who have been out of school for so long and meanwhile exposed to trauma.

At Tdh, we believe that child education is one of the starting points to recover from this conflict. Even though traumas are not yet overcome, ensuring access to education and preventing dropouts is the first step towards a sustainable future for children in Iraq.

Tdh's focus on education:

- Improvement of learning conditions
- Improvement of school access
- Improvement of the quality in learning techniques
- Strengthening of the child's protection system

As well as distributing material to help families return to their homes, Tdh focuses on access to education in a context of overcrowded classes with different levels of education. In the schools we work in, we first look at how much the teacher is affected by the conflict. *"One of the common fears for staff in schools is that IS will return or attack again,"* says Cynthia Winkelmann, Tdh expert for humanitarian aid. Teachers have an important role within the communities. We provide them with psychosocial help to cope with the situation. They are also trained to adequately care for children who have experienced trauma.



In 2017, Tdh supported six Temporary Learning Spaces (TLS) which benefitted more than 6,000 children that year. We have adapted our emergency response to the new needs of children to reintegrate schools in their places of origins and in stabilized displacement zones. Through school rehabilitation and distribution of school furniture, we support the return of formal education as a primary source of protection for children and key activity to allow their resilience.

Tdh coordinates its efforts with the relevant authorities:

- Headmasters and teachers at school level
- District of education at district and governorate levels
- Ministry of education at national level

These actors are key in designing the best intervention, to target zones and infrastructures with the largest needs, and to ensure mediation with the communities.

Using the shelters to support the return of children to school

Early June, it was found that the distribution of the shelters to support the reconstruction of family homes were no longer adapted to the population needs. Indeed, the context in Iraq evolves very quickly and the humanitarian crisis has now entered a rehabilitation phase. The teams are continuously meeting with other organisations and humanitarian clusters to implement the most relevant response in order to address the most pressing current needs.

Due to the high level of school building destruction following combat operations against IS, Tdh in agreement with the Ministry of Education and the Education Cluster is planning to implement the Better Shelter units in the SAD and Kirkuk governorates, to be used as temporary learning spaces in schools.

Tdh was provided a preliminary list of schools in need of additional classrooms by the SAD and Kirkuk directorates of Education. Tdh team will carry out physical assessment of 200 schools during the month of September. Distribution of the units will start in the second week of

September, and the installation will start the third week of September. The shelters will also be accompanied with fire extinguishers and electricity connections.

2018 Workplan:

September 2nd to 20 –

Assessment	Assessment in SAD schools (15 schools per day)
	Assessment in Kirkuk schools (15 schools per day)
	Finalize the schools list and number of units for each school

September 9 to October 11 –

Implementation	Train people on the installation of the BS units
	Distribute BS units for SAD schools (50 units per day)
	installing the BS units in SAD schools (38 units per day)
	Distribute BS units for Kirkuk schools (35 units per day)
	installing the BS units in Kirkuk schools (35 units per day)

October 28 to December 6 –

Monitoring	Conduct post distribution monitoring (100 schools per week) Focus group discussion with children and women
	Collect information and analyze it
	Evaluation and Lesson learned workshop