



Annual Report 2019



Reaching Her!

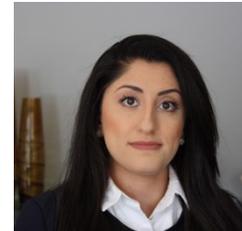
Letter from the Executive Director

The suffering of the Yezidi people since 2014 has left our people and our supporters with heavy hearts and, at the worst of times, the feeling of hopelessness and despair. However, there are increasing glimmers of hope and positivity even in the midst of tragedy. In this spirit, the Free Yezidi Foundation has expanded its programs and scope in 2019. New projects, such as combating gender-based violence in the Yezidi community, a comprehensive justice and accountability team, and plans for a Yezidi-run bakery are innovative approaches to empowerment, growth, and improvement in our society. At the same time, we are expanding existing programs like trauma treatment to other Yezidi IDP camps, where beneficiaries are in great need. With FYF-Netherlands and FYF-USA, the Free Yezidi Foundation has been able to bring a survivor-centric, gender sensitive model to an increasing number of participants. As we close the chapter on 2019, we look forward to many more successful years to come. I am very proud that our core team, both in the field and abroad, has grown and matured. We have now received grants from the United Nations, the United States, the Netherlands, Hungary, and a variety of private individuals and prestigious foundations, including the Oak Foundation. Despite all that is being done by the Free Yezidi Foundation and others, the needs are still immense. Hundreds of thousands remain in IDP camps, more than five years since they

fled their homes in 2014. Perpetrators walk free, survivors suffer from trauma and painful memories, and Yezidis cling to a very uncertain future in Iraq and abroad. It is very challenging to be optimistic, and yet a positive and

encouraging outlook is a critical component of our interaction with beneficiaries, including women and men, children and the elderly. During the COVID-19 outbreak, the flooding of camps, and the continued displacement, FYF remains steadfast in

looking to the future and investing in the skills and education to make that future brighter for our beneficiaries. I would like to warmly thank our supporters and donors for their generosity and solidarity. That includes individuals, organizations, government officials, and all those who have stood with us and helped to propel our growth. And I would like to especially thank the FYF team members, on the ground and around the world, for their focus and dedication to our beneficiaries and the Yezidi people. I am very proud to share with you the projects, the stories, and the photos of the Free Yezidi Foundation in our 2019 annual report.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pari Ibrahim', written over a light-colored background.

Pari Ibrahim
Executive Director

Mission

The Free Yezidi Foundation (FYF) is designed to assist Yezidis in need. The Foundation was established shortly after terrorists attempted to eradicate the Yezidi people in August 2014. The Free Yezidi Foundation seeks to implement projects to protect and support the most vulnerable members of the Yezidi community.

Background

FYF was founded in August 2014 as a direct response to the genocidal campaign by ISIS in Iraq. The organization is committed to supporting Yezidi survivors through advocacy and justice, as well as by providing mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), education, economic empowerment, community reintegration, and capacity building services. FYF began by opening a Women's and Children's Center in the Khanke IDP camp in Duhok. Since then, the organization has provided development and humanitarian assistance to countless survivors and their families.

Drawing on the experience of its team of international and national experts, FYF has also engaged in activities to protect and promote human rights and pursue justice on behalf of Yezidis affected by ISIS crimes. FYF is a formally registered ANBI charity in the Netherlands, an incorporated 501(c)3 charity in the United States, and registered to operate in Iraq since 2015.

FYF's field operations are based out of the Khanke IDP Camp, in the governate of Duhok. FYF's international branches are located in Amsterdam and New York, where it conducts its justice and outreach activities across Europe and the United States. The Khanke IDP camp was opened on August 20th, 2014. FYF continues to run its main activities in Khanke, while also expanding into other areas, including Shariya and Sheikhan. FYF is committed to continuing its work in IDP camps in Iraq until such time that it is safe and feasible for the Yezidi community to return to Sinjar.



General statistics on Yezidis as of 2019

Yezidis internally displaced	→	360.000
Yezidis missing	→	2.930
Mass graves discovered	→	80
Yezidi Shrines destroyed	→	68
Yezidi children orphaned	→	2.745

2019 at a glance

Protection

Prevention of Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) | Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) | Child Protection

Justice & Accountability

Advocacy | Legal Support | Justice for Survivors

Education

Arabic & English | Numeracy | ICT | Women's Rights

Livelihood

Income Generation | Vocational Training

Advocacy & Global Awareness

Conferences | Media | Reports

By the numbers

Children's Center Graduates	→	620
Women's Center Graduates	→	325
Gardening Graduates	→	16
Staff	→	86
Locations of Operation	→	4



Women's Center

The FYF's Women's Center provides holistic support to women and girls in and outside of the Khanke IDP camp. FYF combines professionally guided MHPSS activities with livelihood training and basic educational courses to ensure that women have access to safe and effective support. Beneficiaries attend for six months, and those who successfully complete the program receive a graduation certificate, which helps them in their efforts to find employment. The courses are designed to provide relevant skills that are transferrable if and when beneficiaries return to their areas of origin.

FYF's livelihood program provides Yezidi women with sewing and knitting classes, as well as developing short-term income strategies and empowering them to use these skills in the local economy. In addition to this, FYF provides women's rights courses to all participants as a matter of principle and to inform Yezidi women of global norms in gender rights and their rights under Iraqi local and national law.

Women's Rights: Peer to Peer Learning

100% of respondents said that they had felt empowered enough to educate another woman on her rights; a significant change from the baseline reports, in which very few even knew of their rights and even fewer had educated other women on them.

“I was educated about my rights for the first time ever at the FYF women's rights class. I learned a lot about education, work, and the ability to learn. But it went beyond the basics. We learned about early child marriage, the importance of completing our education, and that as a woman we can have a future and a voice; not just washing dishes, etc. After the course, I helped one of my friends. She is 16 years old and nearly left school to get married. My friend didn't know about women's rights. I took a couple of days to sit down with her and talk about everything I learned at FYF and why education is so important. My friend changed her mind and returned to school after she learned this information. She has now become the top student in her class. ”

Nadia, 17 year





“I was born in Sinjar. I fled my hometown to escape the Islamic State fighters in 2014 along with my parents and eight siblings. After a week-long journey my family and I arrived in Khanke village, we had nothing. My family and I were assigned to make a makeshift tent outside the official camp, which was already at capacity. Without basic aid or assistance, my family and I struggled from economic challenges, isolation, and discrimination as an ethno-religious minority. As a result, I did not receive education, health, or social services. I was not able to reestablish myself and build a new life. After two years spent in destitute conditions, lost in thoughts about the suffering of my friends and family, I was offered a slot at the Free Yezidi Foundation’s Women’s Center. Eager to start something new, I enrolled. I gained valuable skills and received trauma treatment. For the next two years, I was a fixture in the center. As I learned and healed, I felt confident enough to look for a job in Khanke village. Since graduating, I have been employed in a local tailoring shop, using the skills I learned from the FYF sewing instructor.”

- Shaha, 25 years

Education is Key

FYF's educational curriculum is based on the skills women need to be productive members of the local workforce, including teaching them essential skills such as information and communications technology (ICT), English, Arabic, and mathematics.

In 2019, 325 women received graduation certificates from FYF's Women's Center program. After graduation, many women shared that the program provided them with the confidence to look for work both inside and outside the camp. Many women also noted they were better able to cope with and manage daily life.

Overcoming illiteracy is a major challenge for many women in our community. This is articulated to our field staff on a regular basis. For this reason, basic literacy has immediate and real-world impact on the lives of women and girls. After a few months, they are able to use more tools on their phones and participate in aspects of society from which they had previously been excluded due to lack of education.

Primary Interests of Community Members

Surveys in the Khanke IDP camp revealed the following subjects as important to beneficiaries, beyond basic education: gender equality and gender relations, early marriage, family issues, conflict and abuse, stress, trauma, suicide, and employment.

“I was unable to read or write and this became a major problem for me while living in the camp. The smallest and simplest things were difficult to do. In the camp sometimes they distribute benefits to the people. In order to receive the benefits, I had to list my tent number and section. I was unable to read it from the tent and write it down. I always had to run around and ask people to help me read and write my tent number and area. I started to participate at the Free Yezidi Foundation women's center. This was the first time I felt that education is not only for young people, it is for all ages. I am an older woman. I am not here to earn a certificate for the purpose of getting a job. I am here to earn a certificate to be able to do the basic things in daily life while living in the camp. It has made me feel very good.”

Sabri, 46 year





Challenges of the Disabled in IDP Setting

Throughout Iraq, including in the Yezidi community, individuals with disabilities can face stigma and suffer from lack of opportunity. Those with disabilities are disrespected and sometimes considered incapable and unintelligent. Without opportunity for education or employment, they are often dependent on family members. This challenge is even more acute in the IDP/refugee setting.

Disability and Empowerment

In the Yezidi community, there are many people with disabilities, but often they are forgotten. It is an important principle of humanitarian relief that aid organizations do not turn a blind eye to those facing such challenges. The Free Yezidi Foundation believes that education and opportunity are for everyone. We take concrete steps to ensure that we are inclusive and open our doors to everyone, including preparing the necessary arrangements for those with a disability. There is always an opportunity with us.

We don't stop with education. If and when disabled beneficiaries graduate from our women's center, FYF tries to find employment, sometimes within our organization, and continues to care for their welfare. Nesrin was a beneficiary at the women's center. She finished all the courses and graduated. Nesrin was a great student. FYF offered her a position as a 'Harikara' at our center. She received extensive training from our international psychologists. Nesrin finalized that training and received a certificate. Now she works with a team of other women. She has her own salary and is a role model to other camp residents, demonstrating that even if you are faced with a disability, you can be successful in the community.

In the next story you will read about Kafia. She has been living her whole life with a disability. Women like Kafia and Nesrin are often neglected and not given equal opportunities. Growing up, she was afraid to be a burden on her family because of her disability. Kafia and Nesrin have been successes in their cohort, inspiring the women around them to seek support and the possibility of economic opportunity. FYF seeks to empower women and we cannot and will not exclude those with disabilities. We will help to support their efforts, and we are proud to be part of their successful journeys.



“I continuously asked my family why I was not sent to school like all the other girls. My family tried to register me in school, but the school didn’t accept me because I have a disability with my legs. At one point I heard about the Free Yezidi Foundation registering women to participate in their projects. They told me they even have bus drivers to pick up women who live far away or unable to reach the center by themselves. I was not sure if they would accept me because I am not like others because of my disability. It was the first time I was ever accepted to enroll in classes. I was so happy. I was amazed that people like me could get a chance to get an education. I love learning, especially English and Arabic. I learned so much about women’s rights, and I felt more empowered than ever before. I never expected to be enrolled and equally accepted like everyone else. I will keep trying hard to learn and achieve something, so I can become more independent. I don’t like to be the disabled women that is a burden on her family or other people.”

Kafia, 15 years

Trauma Treatment

The Yezidi community suffers from immense and layered untreated trauma. Trauma from the genocide perpetrated by ISIS, but also trauma from past years, historic oppression, entrenched inequality, conflict and war, and gender-based violence in the home. Untreated trauma may be the primary impediment halting or slowing efforts to rebuild the community. Many Yezidis do not have the tools to cope with their trauma, and many have suicidal thoughts. FYF's experienced trauma experts work directly with survivors in group and individual sessions to provide them with restorative support.

“I had a wounded heart. I lost a 23-year-old son. Therapy helped heal my heart. I still think of him; we will never forget our lost ones. But we live our lives. I now do exercise and practice the four elements [coping techniques].”

- women's center beneficiary

From 2017-2019, UN Women funded our pilot program to train teams Yezidi women, who called themselves the “Harikara” (helpers). They were trained in basic MHPSS (Mental Health and Psychosocial Support) by our psychologists, focusing on trauma, stress, stabilization techniques, suicide prevention, and conflict management. This year a team of 26 Harikara continued, supervised by the FYF Psychologists. Harikara meet with families throughout the camp. The Harikara constitute one of FYF's creative solutions to immense trauma needs in a community that severely lacks capacity and expertise in the field. The Harikara reach

thousands of Yezidi IDPs each year with information about trauma, stress, and basic coping mechanisms. Many members of the Yezidi community benefit from the sessions with the Harikara. A lot of Yezidis do not know how to cope with their own trauma and that of their family members. After a couple of visits by the team, there is greater understanding of what trauma means and some strategies to manage it. More Yezidi women are trained in the coming years to become part of the Harikara team.

“The most important thing was someone listening to us.”

- women's center beneficiary



A 'Harikara' (front, right) discusses trauma and coping mechanisms with Yezidi men in the IDP camp

At this stage the Harikara are not able to handle all cases they encounter. There are many Yezidis who have severe trauma and are in need for expert psychologists. The Harikara are trained to refer these cases to our clinical psychologists. We have seen the positive impact that our trauma treatment has had on many lives.

In addition to the trauma treatment, FYF used a small plot of land to build a garden adjacent to the Center. The gardening program ran from March - September, providing women with a space to grow fruits and vegetables for their families while also benefitting from the therapeutic effects of gardening. The Gardening Project gives participants a sense of achievement and allows them to address their past trauma in a supportive environment. Beneficiaries also harvest and keep all the fruits and vegetables they grow. In 2019, 16 women participated in FYF's Gardening Project. The women were able to grow their own food, at the same time connecting with and supporting other women in the program. The program including two women with experience gardening as instructors. FYF prioritized beneficiaries by choosing those who were in greatest need of financial and emotional support. By the end of the project, FYF saw significant improvement in their well-being.

“Being at the center and being respected, me and the other women, it made me very happy. I like it at the center so much, that sometimes I catch myself coming to the center early, before all the classes start. My mental health has drastically improved since participating.”

Sairi, 60 year



Treatment by the Numbers - 2019

- Direct group and individual trauma sessions: —————> 162 sessions
- Participants in women's sharing circle: —————> 70 beneficiaries
- Harikara community sensitization visits: —————> 581 visits
- Camp residents reached by Harikara: —————> 2391



All children have fundamental rights. Those living as refugees or internally displaced people are in great need of protection, education, safety, and a nurturing environment.

The Free Yezidi Foundation provides a child-friendly space, adhering to a strict child protection protocol, to safeguard the fundamental rights of these boys and girls.



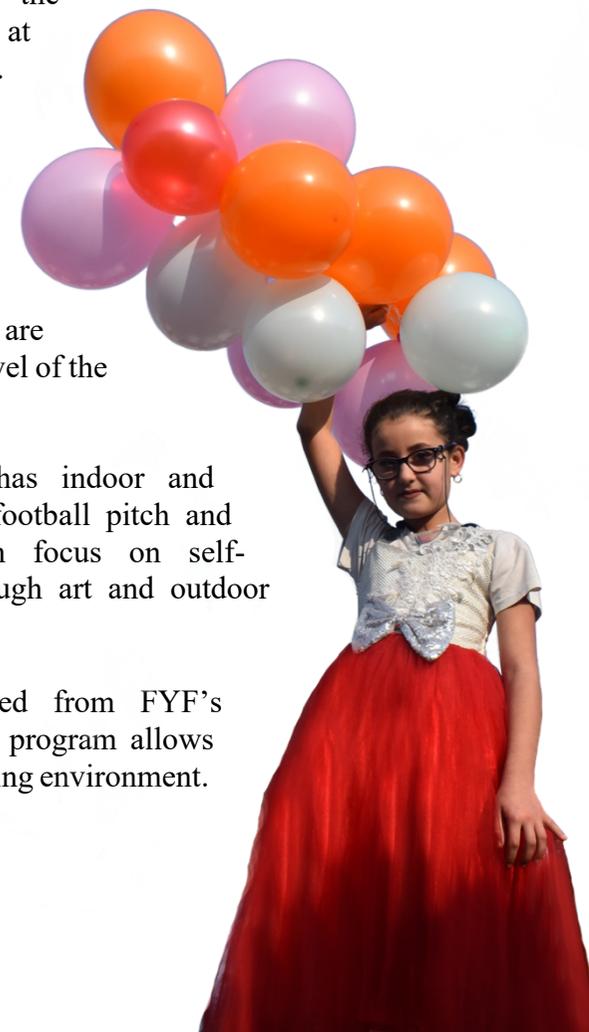
Children's Center

The FYF's Children's Center provides children in Khanke IDP camp with a safe environment to learn and play, accompanied by MHPSS support from the organization's expert psychologists. FYF's programs have been designed to meet the educational and emotional needs of children who have experienced trauma and suffering. The center accommodates two daily cohorts, in the morning and afternoon. This also serves as a cost-free daycare for many mothers, giving them the opportunity to attend programming at the Women's Center or go to work.

The activities of the Children's Center are focused on education and play. FYF provides children with school supplies to support their classroom learning. Lessons focus on language and ICT and are tailored to the age and education level of the students.

The FYF's Children's Center has indoor and outdoor play areas, including a football pitch and playground equipment. Children focus on self-expression and socialization through art and outdoor activities.

In 2019, 640 children graduated from FYF's Children's Center programs. This program allows children to play in a safe and nurturing environment.



Justice & Accountability

Over the past several years, FYF has pursued justice and accountability on behalf of Yazidi survivors for crimes committed by ISIS. FYF's justice project seeks to combat impunity for atrocity crimes, including conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. FYF's team of lawyers and trauma experts are uniquely positioned to collect evidence of these crimes in a timely and ethical manner and build cases in collaboration with relevant United Nations, Iraqi, and European authorities and civil society members.

FYF employs a survivor-centered approach, prioritizing the survivor's well-being and empowerment in the fight for justice.

FYF's Justice Project aims to collect and analyze evidence of atrocity crimes from displaced Yazidi populations, including tracking suspects, through information provided by the Yazidi community. Using the information gathered, FYF's lawyers prepare perpetrator dossiers pertaining to the crimes and the identification of suspects. FYF cooperates with law enforcement authorities in support of prosecutions in Iraq and internationally.

Information about such activities are confidential, but FYF has issued some reports and statements regarding important cases. This has included cases that could potentially be prosecuted in the United States, Germany, and Iraq. Since late 2019, FYF has been part of a justice-focused consortium funded by the US State Department.

FYF adheres closely to international standards in terms of witness protection and confidentiality and ethical treatment of survivors, particularly survivors of sexual violence.



Advocacy

FYF continues to advocate for the needs of Yazidis in international events and forums with key stakeholders. Since 2014, there has been an outpouring of expressions of support for Yazidis, but this does not always translate to meaningful developments to Yazidis most in need. Further, some elements of the ISIS attacks and Yazidi suffering have been the subject of sensational and exploitative coverage. FYF seeks to identify ethical partners and stakeholders who can help to support and collaborate on programs to assist Yazidis in need. In this respect, advocacy is less focused on media stories and general awareness, and more focused on identifying governments, organizations, institutions, and individuals who are interested and capable of advancing the rights and the welfare of Yazidis in ethical and sustainable ways.



FYF brings beneficiaries to Lalish, the Yazidi holy temple

2019 Reports

- Withdrawal of US Troops from Syria (January)
- FYF Report – Case of Samantha Elhassani aka Um Yusuf (September)
- FYF Memo – United States of America vs. Samantha Elhassani (September)

2019 Statements

- Yazidi Children Born from Rape; Rights of Yazidi Women (April)
- Netherlands Immigration Authorities to Deport Yazidi Asylum Seekers (April)
- Daesh (ISIS) Burn Crop Fields in Shingal, Iraq (June)
- FYF Executive Director Congressional Briefing on Refugees and International Religious Freedom (July)
- Five-year Commemoration of ISIS Genocide against Yazidis (August)
- FYF Executive Director Testimony at USCIRF Congressional Hearing (September)
- Death of ISIS Leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (October)

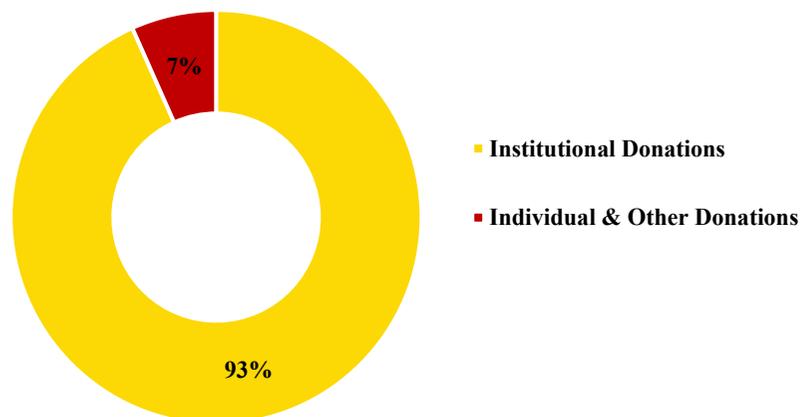
One of the important roles that FYF plays is to publish statements and reports on matters that are important to the Yazidi community. This serves the dual purpose of informing Yazidis in the diaspora and in Iraq about important developments while also sharing viewpoints and concerns with the human rights and development stakeholders in the international community.

Stichting Free Yezidi - 2019 Financials

In 2019, FYF activities were funded by governments, foundations and private donors, either directly or through consortia or partnerships. These include the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the United Nations Women's UNTF, Women for Women International, the Oak Foundation, the Roddick Foundation, the Network for Social Change Charitable Trust, the 5th Element Group and the Semnani Family Foundation, and other sponsors and donors.

2019 Incoming funds¹

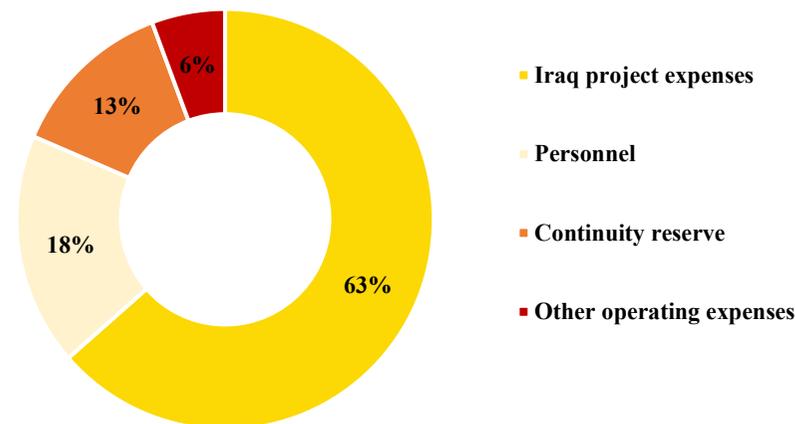
€ 1.394.907



¹ With institutional funding, an amount of € 773,157 has been received as grants to be implemented in 2020.

2019 Expenses & reserves

€ 618.494

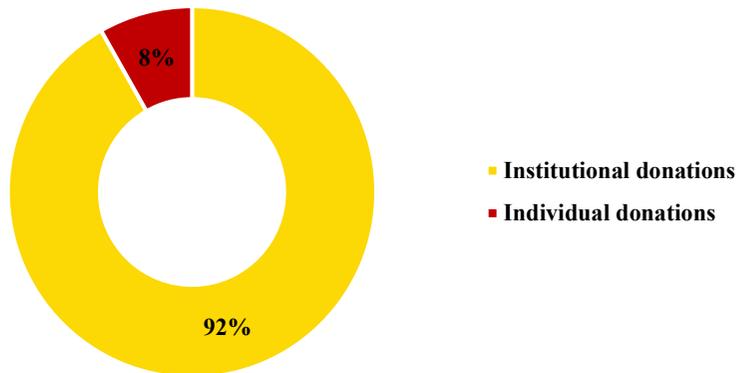


Free Yezidi Foundation USA, Inc. - 2019 Financials

FYF-USA commenced operations in the last quarter of 2019. Activities were funded by governments, foundations and private donors, either directly or through consortia or partnerships. Supporters include the Department of State, USAID, and other sponsors and donors.

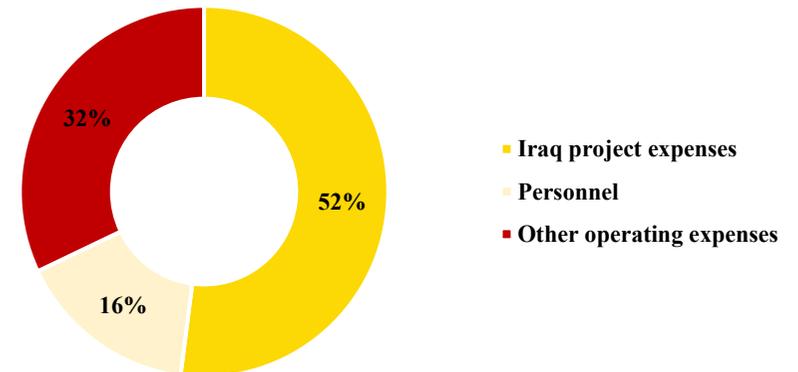
2019 Incoming funds

\$ 236.867,70



2019 Expenses

\$ 75.744,06



Thank You!

FYF is also grateful to all our supporters, who have helped us to grow and implement our projects. Thanks to the generous support we receive from our partners and individual, philanthropic and corporate donors, the Free Yezidi Foundation is able to reach beneficiaries in great need. Thank you!

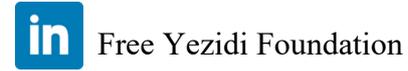
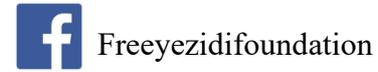
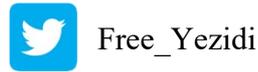


FYF works to support the most vulnerable members of the Yezidi community through projects that provide them with education, economic empowerment, trauma treatment, and access to justice.

To continue doing this important work, we need your help. FYF relies in part on donations from our generous network to support our programming. If you share our vision and want your donations to have a real impact in the lives of women and children affected by conflict, please consider giving to FYF today, or spread the word to make sure we can reach the widest possible audience.

You can follow our work on Facebook, Twitter, through our mailing list, and our website. Please consider sharing this report with your friends and family.

Thank you for your support and solidarity with the Yezidi people.



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