

FREE YEZIDI FOUNDATION

2018 ANNUAL REPORT



MISSION STATEMENT



ABOUT OUR FOUNDATION

The Free Yezidi Foundation 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.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Pari Ibrahim
Executive Director

We see it every day when we walk through the camps. We see it when we hear about the suffering and sexual violence that our survivors have overcome. Resilience. This has led our people through our darkest times. It is true for Yezidis as a group, and it is true for each of us. The rights of our people, and for all people, to choose the path, the religion, and identity that we want, not by force. This drives us towards a brighter future. Our goal is to encourage and build upon the resilience of our people.

In 2018, FYF successfully realized a number of goals. This annual report will encapsulate some of our achievements as well as some of our plans for the future. I would like to thank each and every supporter of our Foundation, and supporters of Yezidis in general, for their care and efforts for our people. I also want to highlight my fellow FYF team members, especially those working in the field. Thank you.

In 2018, 371 women graduated from our center, receiving trauma care and holistic education and livelihood trainings. And 492 children earned their graduation certificates from our children's center. We also saw the growth of the Yezidi 'Harikara', further detailed in this report, and some important progress on justice and accountability. Resilience. Even in our dark hours, our hope endures.



PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

WOMEN'S CENTER

"This is the only place we feel we are still human, we belong to a place that takes care of us and appreciates us like a second family. We wish this project would never end, because this is our only respite, the only place we forget our bad past, and enjoy our present with new family and friends."

FYF Women's Center Participant

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Our Women's Center provides therapeutic, educational and economic empowerment activities. Beneficiaries attend the center for six months, and those who successfully complete the program and pass final exams receive a graduation certificate, which can help them in their efforts to find employment in the local economy. Each cohort consists of more than two hundred women and girls. Aside from trauma therapy, yoga, music and art we designed other activities that have changed the beneficiaries' lives.



WOMEN'S CENTER

English & Arabic

Many of the women's center beneficiaries are illiterate. Learning to read, write and speak English and Arabic makes women more independent. After they graduate they can go and do errands themselves, and they have far better chances of obtaining employment.

Sewing and knitting

Women love this class. Some graduates have managed to get a job as sewing instructors at other organisations. One graduate was able to win funding for her own prefabricated building and started her own sewing business, now earning more than an average employee.



WOMEN'S CENTER

Women's Rights

Information about the law, gender-based violence, violence against children, early marriage, and other issues has been an important starting point for our beneficiaries. This is an essential component of personal and also economic empowerment for our beneficiaries, helping them to exert more control over their own lives. FYF's Hewan Arsan Omer and a team of women go to do men's engagement in the community.

ICT

Many women in our community do not even know how to call the emergency number. Making women more aware of access and opportunities by learning to use a mobile phone or laptop empowers them and makes them want to learn more.



Harikara, A Pilot Project

"The psychology program has taught me many things to help me take control over my life and reducing over-thinking about hurtful and bad events we went through. And the breathing exercise help us to relax, sleep better, and control our anger."

FYF Women's Center Participant

In 2018, 26 Yezidi women have been trained in basic MHPSS by our psychologists, focusing on trauma, stress, stabilization techniques, suicide prevention, and conflict management. They attended classes every week and received several certificates. They decided to call themselves the "Harikara", which means "Helpers" in Kurmanci, as they are the helpers and outreach component of the FYF trauma program. In one month alone, the Harikara reached 1500 IDP camp residents with basic information on trauma, stress, and stabilization techniques, reporting severe cases to FYF psychologists for treatment or referral pathways. This project was funded by UN Women.

"FYF has helped so many people to overcome their difficulties and you might not be able to see it but we see that every day, witnessing how people benefit from our work."

-Hala Ismail, FYF Women's Center translator and Harikara coordinator



THE STORY OF ZAINAB: ESCAPE AND RECOVERY

My name is Zainab Saeed. I escaped out of ISIS captivity after many months of suffering. I arrived in Khanke IDP community, and I didn't leave the house. I didn't have any friends and I didn't know people in the camp or surrounding villages. Everything was new and scary to me. I wanted to just stay in the house. I stayed in the house because why would I want to see the daylight after what happened to us, after what ISIS did to us?

At my worst stage, Pari came to me after I escaped. She said: "Come to FYF, you can love life again, you can make new friends." I said, "I don't know anyone here, and after ISIS, what is the use of going anywhere?" Pari kept on pushing that I should at least see the center and the women and girls that were going for graduation. So, I went to see FYF. I walked a long while to arrive at the center. I was very afraid that I would lose track of the road because I hadn't been outside very much. Once I arrived at the center, I liked the idea of these women coming here every day,

learning English and other things, and making friends. I was missing this in my life. I wanted to come and learn English, so I decided to join.

Soon, I started to come to the FYF center every day. I got to know the psychologist who is from England. I liked her a lot. She showed me things that relaxed me. I didn't understand it, because I never heard this before. It was strange to me that all of a sudden, I was feeling much better and I couldn't really identify why or how it was ever possible. It relaxed me and made my anxiety and stress go down a lot. I started to make new friends during the courses and kept going for psychological treatment. I never heard of trauma experts before in my life. When I escaped I didn't go to anyone to be treated. I just sat in the unfinished building near the camp without any hopes for a future.

I was the most relaxed with the psychologist; she really helped me a lot. I changed bit by bit. I liked going to FYF and being among people again.



I felt comfortable in the center and I didn't want to leave. After the graduation they asked me, "What do you want to do in life, what are you interested in?" I answered that I liked to be with the psychologist. I didn't have any experience working anywhere ever, so I thought I could never give something back to FYF and I was afraid that I would fail them. They said, 'Don't worry, we can train you'. I received some basic training and another psychologist from England came on and did further trainings with me. I was trained in psychological first aid and other skills. Here I was, able to help myself and all of a sudden, other women and girls were asking me if and when the psychologist is busy, can we come with you and do some relaxation? I was amazed that I could help others. I felt that I achieved something. FYF gave me confidence after I graduated to become something and make something of my life. I got stronger after ISIS, and I made myself stronger.

I am now at a stage in my life where I live my life again. I communicate with others, help others, and make friends. I just recently told one of the FYF translators

that I will never forget the things that FYF did for us, and what Pari personally did for me.

There was no other organization that cared for our women in this way before. Now it seems to me like more and more organizations are doing the same thing here. I wish I could do more for FYF. I will never forget.

Our community really does not know anything about psychology and trauma treatment. Some women are beating their children, and after they beat them, they regret it. They know it is because of the stress of life and living in the camp and being displaced and all that happened to us. They come to the FYF center for treatment, and now I see that more people achieve something and become better people, and better parents, and so the demand for time with our psychologists is immense.

Now I have the opportunity to resettle in Europe. I will change my role with FYF into a new role, once I am in Europe, to keep on supporting FYF as an advisor on Yezidi women's issues in our community.

- Zainab

CHILDREN'S CENTER

The center provides courses for approximately 600 children per year. The programs have been formatted based on the educational and emotional needs of the population. All courses have been vetted by our trauma experts to reduce trauma and suffering through simple activities such as art and music, as well as educational courses including English and computers. The children's center is decorated with student's drawings and artwork to create a warm and nurturing environment. All staff have been trained in psychological first aid for children. In addition, the center constitutes an important resource for mothers because they can leave their kids in this safe space while they are attending classes at the women's center or going to work.



INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY

Even though international recognition of the ISIS genocide against Yazidis has been generally achieved, the needs of Yazidi IDPs are enormous and will continue for the foreseeable future. Aside from promoting justice and accountability, a key component of FYF's humanitarian advocacy is highlighting the importance of Yazidi-led organizations. Reliance and dependence on the UN or international organizations and the donor community is not a sustainable long-term goal, and it is absolutely critical that Yazidi individuals and organizations are empowered to rebuild the community from the ground up. An important part of this is ensuring that the donor community honors current commitments and that resources are reaching those Yazidis most in need, with support for projects that will provide sustainable tools and skills for Yazidis.



JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

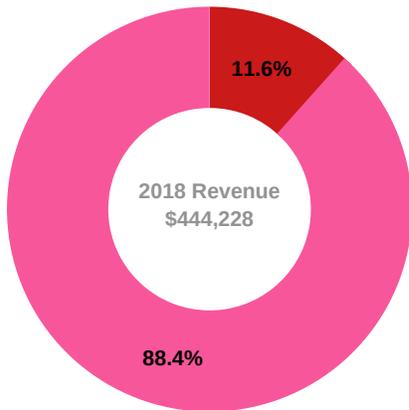
Our approach to justice is designed to empower Yazidi survivors in the quest for justice. Beneficiaries of the program include women and girls who survived ISIS, the broader Yazidi community, and other survivors of mass atrocities, including survivors of gender based violence and oppressed religious minorities. Rather than collect a great number of testimonies or conduct random documentation, FYF conducts highly targeted efforts and coordinates with law enforcement or legal counsel in a strategic manner. Maintaining a survivor-centric and survivor-driven approach, FYF seeks to provide survivors with the best chance to seek justice and accountability in a manner comfortable to them. FYF is engaged in such cases in a number of jurisdictions, including Iraq, Germany, France, and the United States.





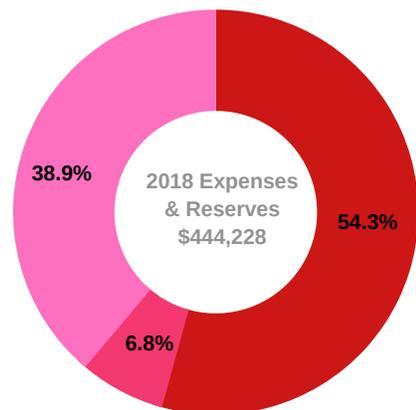
BUDGET

Individual Contributions
\$51,470



Grants
\$392,758

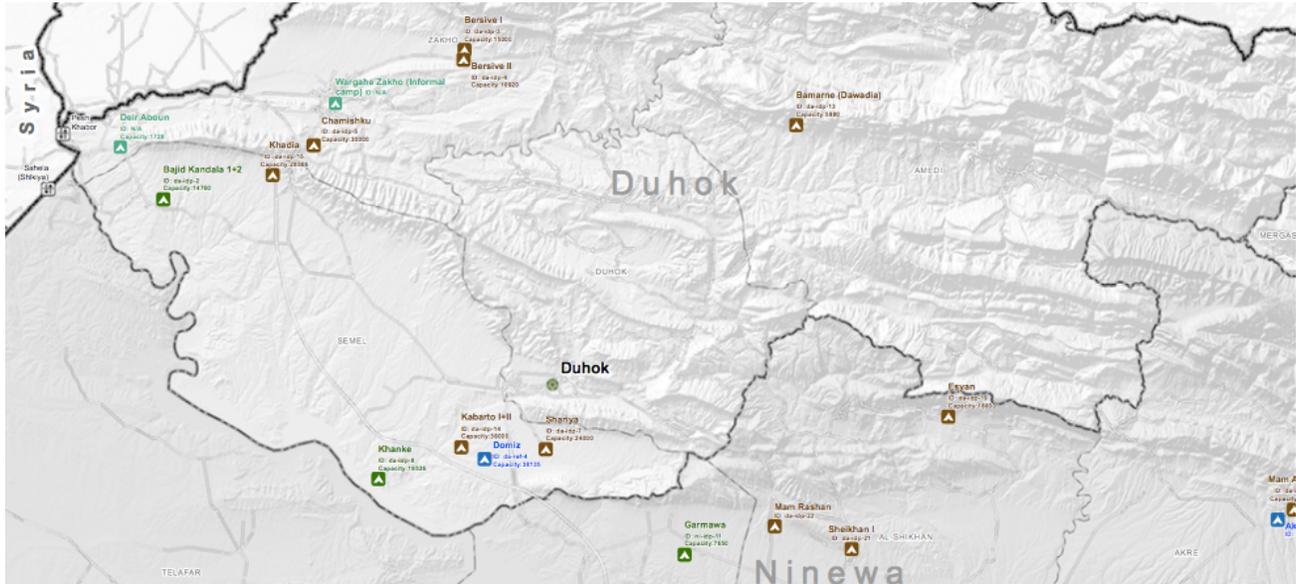
Reserves for 2019
\$172,718



Program Expenses (2018)
\$241,068

Finance & Administration
\$30,442

WHERE WE WORK



16,000+ in-camp displaced Yezidis
12,000+ out-of-camp displaced Yezidis

49% men
51% women

FYF operates out of its base in the Khanke IDP Camp, in the area of Duhok in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. FYF conducts its justice and outreach activities in various areas beyond the Khanke camp, and also in Europe and beyond in pursuit of justice and accountability.

FYF has branches in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, and in New York, United States. The Khanke IDP camp was opened on 20 August 2014. In the beginning of 2015 we started planning to work in this camp because of the number of Yezidis that were displaced.

FYF anticipates a need to stay and work in the Khanke camp for some time and expand our work in the future in other camps and to Sinjar.

STAFF & TEAM MEMBERS

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE PROGRAMS



“I have learned so many things and I’m hoping that in the future to help my community through all the experience that I have gotten from everyone.”

Hala Ismail, Translator & Harikara Coordinator

FYF is led and operated by Yezidi women. Over the last year we have trained our staff, the Harikara, and provided services to beneficiaries and thousands of other Yezidi civilians. One day, when international organisations are gone, it will be us, Yezidis, who have to keep our community strong. That is why Yezidi civil society organisations and investment in Yezidis is so important at this time.

“The funding is really important, without this funding the women and girls would not be able to recover from the humanitarian crisis. It helps the women and girls to begin to believe in themselves.”

Hewan Arsan Omer, Country Coordinator

THANK YOU



Without the generous support we receive from our partners and individual, philanthropic and corporate donors, the Free Yezidi Foundation would not be able to implement these projects. Thank you for your support.



"For those who are suffering in tents, huts, unfinished buildings, especially women and children...the scars are not always visible. The trauma and the ongoing pain can be masked. But we must not be complacent. We in the humanitarian community must make every effort to provide opportunities for growth, recovery, and healing. It is the burden of every individual to seek out or accept a helping hand. But it is our duty to provide access and an open door"

Pari Ibrahim
Executive Director



Free Yezidi Foundation
Postbus 17350
1001 JJ Amsterdam
The Netherlands

 @Free_Yezidi
 Free Yezidi Foundation
 @freeyedificoundation
 Free Yezidi Foundation