



Improving Sustainable Livelihoods and Increasing Resilience: Rebuilding Women's Farmlands in Sinjar

مبادرة **NADIA's**
نادية **INITIATIVE**



Government
of Flanders

Final Report

February - November 2022

Many of the over 150,000 Yazidis who have returned to their ancestral homelands in the Sinjar region of Iraq are struggling to rebuild their lives.

Conflict disproportionately affects women, and the ramifications of ISIS' 2014 genocide against the Yazidi community are still felt to this day. In Sinjar, women are struggling to re-establish themselves financially, physically, and psychosocially. Many women's husbands were murdered or are still missing. As a result, these women are now the sole breadwinners for their households. As culturally designated caregivers, the burden of caring for their families and earning a sustainable income is now placed on their shoulders.

With little access to job opportunities or international support to rebuild their lives, women face an increased burden of survival and significant barriers to income generation.



Seven years after the liberation of Sinjar, the return of Yazidis to the region remains slow due to the immense destruction, lack of essential services and investment in rebuilding, and security risks.

Pre-2014, 75% of the Yazidi community's income was agricultural based. However, ISIS intentionally destroyed Yazidi farmlands, severing the Yazidis' life support and hindering their ability to return and survive in Sinjar.

EMPOWERING FEMALE FARMERS IN SINJAR, IRAQ

For Yazidi farmers, this destruction represents an obstacle to their return and a threat to food security in the region.

Women, in particular, have endured tremendous suffering and should now be afforded the opportunity to provide for their families and become fiscally independent.

ISIS destroyed the means of the Yazidi people to survive by destroying their livelihoods, infrastructure, and agricultural resources.



Pre-2014, farming contributed to 75% of the region's income.

Irrigation systems were destroyed, boreholes were polluted, pipelines were disrupted, and pumps and generators were stolen and vandalized.



PROJECT AIM

Nadia's Initiative designed, developed, and implemented a sustainable farming project for women who are sole breadwinners or female-headed households in Sinjar.

By providing comprehensive rehabilitation to farming households, women can restart cultivation of their lands. This cultivation not only provides a source of healthy food for these women and their families, but also a sustainable source of income.

This project also contributed to revitalizing Sinjar's agriculture industry. Reclaiming Sinjar's agricultural land, enabling the return of farmers, and supporting the local economy are steps toward reversing some of the effects of ISIS' genocide on the Yazidi community.

OBJECTIVES

- Repairing electricity connections and irrigation capacity;
- Building greenhouses;
- Providing seeds, fertilizers, water tanks, and simple tools;
- Providing training (theoretical and practical) to increase technical knowledge related to greenhouse farming, sustainable water usage, crops and planting, production, and distribution.



IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

Identification and Assessment of Beneficiaries

In February 2022, community outreach was conducted in North and South Sinjar to identify the agricultural and livestock livelihood-dependent communities in need of support.

The Nadia's Initiative team then interviewed women to assess their economic situation and eligibility criteria.

35 female-headed farming households
were selected for the project

Beneficiary criteria included:

- Had pre-genocide livelihoods based on farming and, therefore, have agricultural experience;
- Are struggling with the destruction of irrigation and/or agricultural lands;
- Are able and willing to remain in Sinjar;
- Have at least one female survivor of genocide in the household who is physically able to run the agricultural business;
- Have access to 0.5-25 donum of cleared land and are willing to cultivate this with the provided inputs;
- Are interested and able to contribute their own inputs to the project activities (in the form of labor);
- Are interested and able to attend the training provided throughout the project.

As a result of the assessment, the primary needs of women with farming experience, land, and the physical capacity to farm were:

- tools
- seeds
- greenhouses
- fertilizer and other supplies

The project sustainably **improved livelihoods and resilience** by creating **income generating opportunities** for families where women support the household

In the environmental context of Iraq, which is already suffering the effects of climate change, sustainability is even more pertinent to ensure the long-term functioning of these farming households.

Greenhouses are an effective way to establish sustainable farms given that they are:

- ✓ water efficient
- ✓ reduce the prevalence of insects and animals that have the potential to damage or destroy plants
- ✓ minimize exposure to extreme weather conditions, such as extreme temperatures and droughts



Theoretical Trainings: Agriculture and Livestock

After a recruitment process, a trainer was selected who had the knowledge and experience to meet the needs of the female beneficiaries.

Theoretical training was provided for all female beneficiaries. Topics covered during the training included:

- Crop rotation
- Livestock and fertilizer production
- The difference between manufactured chemical fertilizer and organic fertilizer produced from animal remnants
- Sustainability
- Sustainable water usage/irrigation
- How to increase milk production



Distribution of Required Tools, Equipment, and Supplies

Distribution to Agricultural Farms



32 - Green Houses

96 bag/sachets - Cucumber seeds

8 bottles - Pesticides

256 bottles - Fertilizer

64 - Shovels with wooden hand

64 - Rakes with wooden hand

32 - Back Sprayer 16 Lt

32 - Water tanks

32 - Tiling the soil

1 - Solar energy system

Distribution to Livestock Farms



24 - sheep

2,000 kg - Barley

Construction and Installation

Under the supervision of Nadia's Initiative's engineer and the program team's oversight, the contracting company constructed and installed the infrastructure needed to establish sustainable agricultural farms.

- Greenhouse construction
- Solar panel installation
- Irrigation rehabilitation
- Borehole rehabilitation



Practical Trainings

Each woman received a practical training session to discuss:

- How to divide and prepare their ground;
- How to avoid pests and safely use chemical pesticides for pest control;
- How to effectively use fertilizer, including methods commonly used to fertilize crops based on crop rotation and soil type;
- How to sustainably use water through environmentally informed irrigation cycles and crop-specific irrigation cycles.

By October, many beneficiaries had begun harvesting their first crops. Some had already started selling their crops at the local markets.



Ongoing Support

Ongoing technical assistance was available to the women from the trainer and NI staff to ensure all the women had the continued support needed to reestablish their farms successfully. This included regular follow-up visits for outreach and monitoring purposes.

PROJECT STRATEGIES

Women's Empowerment

Increased Resilience

Increased Livelihood
Opportunities

Decreased Reliance on
External Aid



Long-term Sustainability and Gender Equality

These households benefit from functioning agricultural lands and greenhouses, which reduces the burden of survival by providing income-generating crops and sustainable food sources.

Re-establishing livelihoods can encourage displaced populations to return home. This project aimed to help women enter the local economy, thus empowering them and challenging harmful cultural norms. Nadia's Initiative aims to continue implementing agricultural projects that enable female returnees to cultivate their lands using sustainable farming practices.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Nadia's Initiative has an ongoing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) process. It ensures beneficiaries can provide feedback and suggestions that will inform future projects.

The project was a great success and positively the lives of the selected women and their families.

The project:

- Helped women restore their farmlands
- Provided a sustainable source of income for women and their families
- Empowered women to participate in the local economy
- Improved the community's access to local produce at more reasonable prices

"Women can be leaders and supporters, and will do anything to earn a living for their children."



BENEFICIARY FEEDBACK

Theoretical Trainings: Agriculture and Livestock

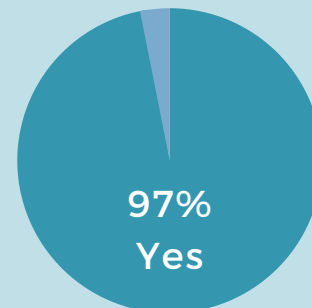
"The theoretical training was the success of the project."

"We were in dire need of this training."

Was the training helpful?



Did you already know some of the information?



Do you know how to use a greenhouse for farming?

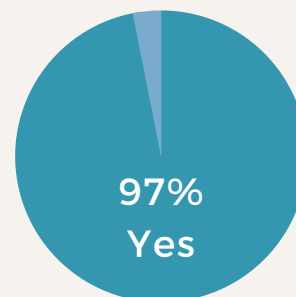


Do you think this training will help you farm in the future?



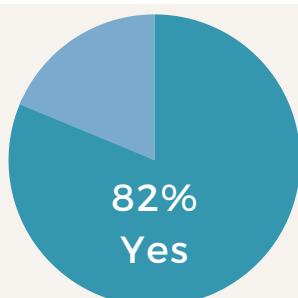
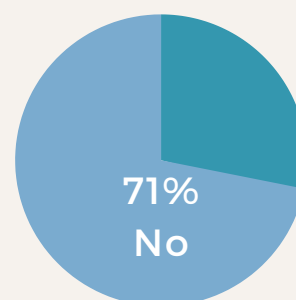
Distribution and Construction

Do you have all the equipment you need to continue farming?



Do you know how to look after and maintain the greenhouse and the equipment?

Did you have any challenges with the collection of the equipment?



Do you need other resources to use your greenhouse and successfully cultivate crops?



9 beneficiaries mentioned they needed more support during the **distribution and collection process.**

10 beneficiaries mentioned needing a **heating system.**

Practical Trainings

100%
Yes

100% of beneficiaries replied YES to these questions.

"There was enough information and training for farming."

"The practical training was a big part of the support."

"We would like to see more projects like this."

Was the practical training helpful?

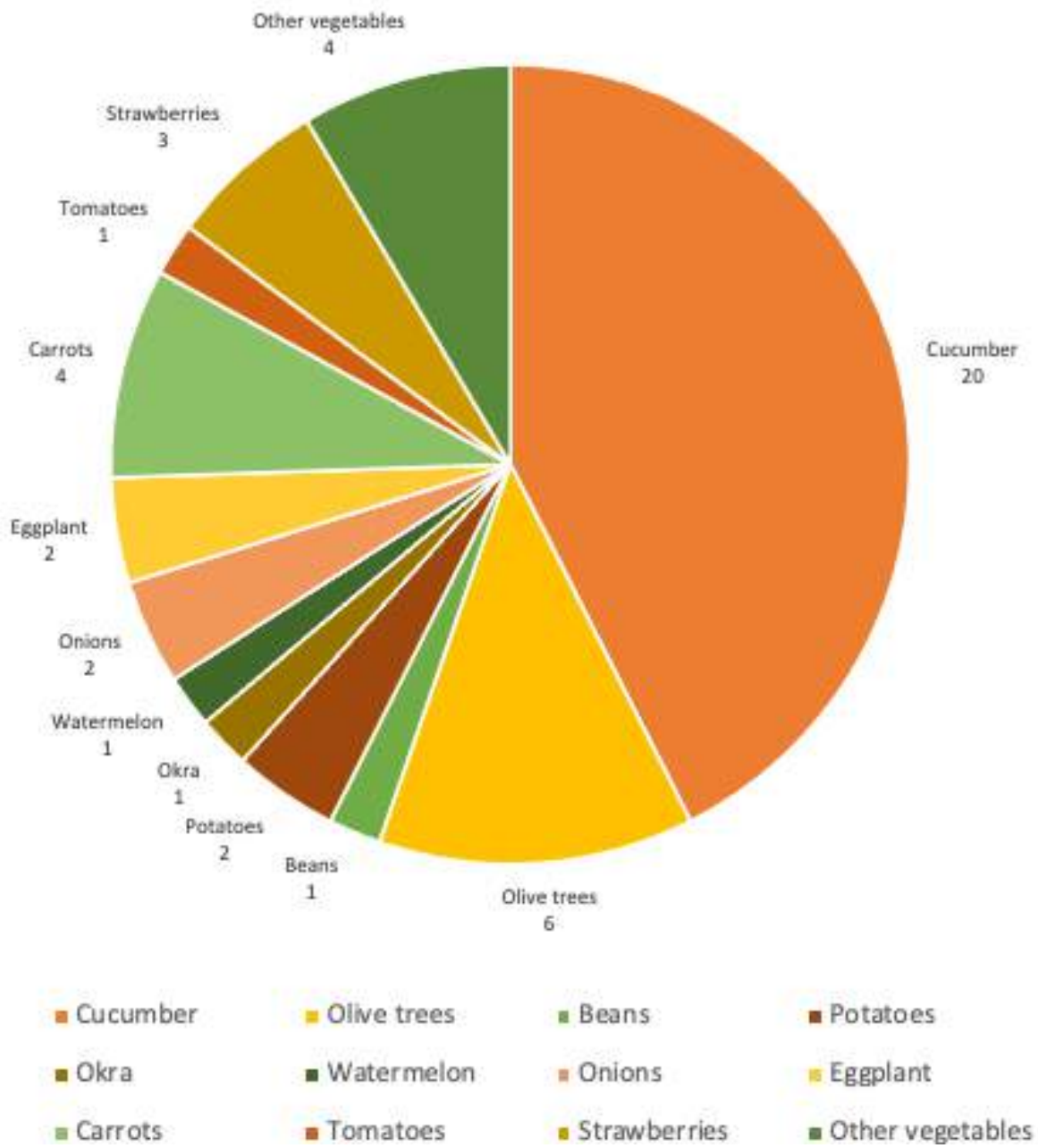
Did the trainer teach you how to apply theoretical knowledge to your farming?

Did you have the support you needed to start your farm?

Were you able to contact an NI staff member or the trainer for any additional support you needed?



What are you planning on growing?



General Feedback

What does sustainable agriculture mean to you?

“ Not compromising the ability of **future generations to survive** on agriculture activities and obtain a fair and adequate income. ”

- **26** beneficiaries related sustainable agriculture to **better income** for their family.
- **9** beneficiaries related sustainable agriculture to sustainable water usage and **saving water**.
- **4** beneficiaries related sustainable agriculture to **environmental protection**.

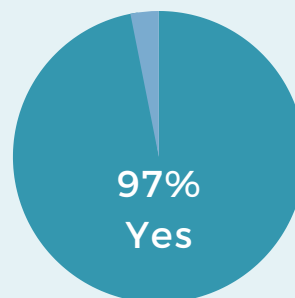


"I am very happy with this support. Now I am able to meet my children's needs."

100% of beneficiaries found the practical training helpful and thought they got the support they needed to restart their farms.



97% of beneficiaries feel economically independent.



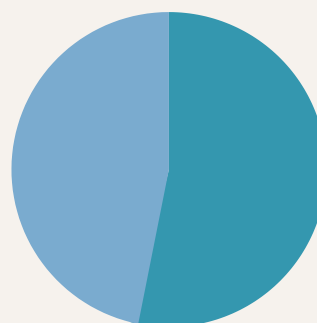
2 beneficiaries mentioned the need for more support in **training on new methods and equipment**, and 1 mentioned the **need for more greenhouses**.

80% of the beneficiaries would like Nadia's Initiative to continue supporting them.

All the women mentioned how helpful the theoretical and practical trainings were and showed an interest in receiving more training.

Through these types of projects, Nadia's Initiative is fostering a community of learning and knowledge sharing among women in Sinjar.

54% of beneficiaries would like to receive more training.



Sustainability and Increased Resilience

Do you think this project will positively impact your life?	100% YES
Do you intend to continue farming?	100% YES
Are you happy with this project?	100% YES





About Nadia's Initiative

Nadia's Initiative is dedicated to rebuilding communities in crisis and advocating globally for survivors of sexual violence. Nadia's Initiative's current work is focused on the sustainable re-development of the Yazidi homeland in Sinjar, where Nadia Murad grew up. When ISIS launched their genocidal campaign, they not only killed and kidnapped Yazidis, but also destroyed the Yazidi homeland to ensure the community could never return.

Nadia's Initiative works with the local community and a variety of implementing partners on the ground in Sinjar to design and support projects that promote the restoration of education, healthcare, livelihoods, WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene), culture, and women's empowerment in the region. All Nadia's Initiative programs are community-driven and survivor-centric, and work to promote long-term peacebuilding. Nadia's Initiative advocates governments and international organizations to support efforts to rebuild Sinjar, seek justice for Yazidis, improve security in the region, and support survivors of sexual violence worldwide.