Lighting Candles in the Dark

Displacement has had serious socio-economic and psychological implications on children, youth and adults, male and female. After living normal life in dignity; going to school; mingling with relatives, friends and neighbours; and, practicing hobbies young IDP have been going through bad psychological trauma. Due to the hard circumstances they experienced, many young men and women have lost family members, lost years of study and lost their income sources. In the midst of this dark scene, IHSCO is trying to light candles which can provide a glimpse of hope for IDP through its community-based and youth ambassador programme.

Zainab is a 21 year old young woman who was displaced from her Twebeh village (361918: 431631) of Shora, south of Mosul. She had to leave her home on 9th June 2014 when ISIL broke through and leveled down their house as her father was a colonel in the police. She left her home, happiness, memories and future behind. However, she had a strong desire to continue her university studies during displacement as she was year 3. After recapturing her village, she returned to her destroyed home full of energy, equipped with her university degree and fully dedicated to help rebuilding her community but she did not know what and how to do that.

On the other hand, Najat was displaced from Mosul to Hamam al-Aleel IDP camp and she has been suffering because she was forced to leave her secondary studies. Nonetheless, she did not let her hard conditions and sorrow overcome her determination or suppress her energy.

The lines of both young women came across at IHSCO CBRE and REYA programme where they have found the right platform to play key roles in protecting lives of their community members rebuilding their communities as well as building their personal future and rebuilding their damaged personalities. Each one of them is providing risk education and distributes materials to local and IDP communities.

Zainab is an active community-based risk education volunteers who is supporting IHSCO team in Shora by providing community-based RE and distributing materials. She explained

I wanted to volunteer with an NGO to make a difference for my community but did not have this chance in my small distant village. I was thrilled to see IHSCO team coming to my village and attended their presentation. I decided to talk to the team and see if they would need my volunteering service. My dream is coming true! I was so happy to know after they interviewed me that I will become a volunteer to prevent death, destruction and disability.
Meanwhile, in Hamam al-Aleel, Najat is moving around tents talking to people in the IDP camp and distribute materials. One of her successful achievements is changing behaviour of young scrap collectors. She knew that her cousin, Amer, is one of a group of young returnees to Mosul who work in metal salvage and scrap collection from ERW. Najat informed IHSCO team and she helped the team with providing risk education and information about the risks of this behaviour. She is very proud this success story for her.

This case study reflects on the impact of IHSCO CBRE and REYA programme on civilian populations. It established a sustainable local risk education community-based capacity in
contaminated areas and among prospective returnees to hazardous areas. Moreover, it empowered young women to be active citizens in their community. It has also proved to be a successful psycho-social inclusive technique of victims of conflict, like IDP, into the normal social life. The interaction of civilian beneficiaries has led to a target groups that was not planned for.