



Iraq Genocide Recovery and Persecution
Response - Learning and Pilots (GRPR L&P)

PERSPECTIVES FROM DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS

Iraq Livelihoods Technical Forum

INTRODUCTION

There are an estimated 1.6 million displaced Iraqis as a result of continuous violence culminating most recently in the capture of up to one third of Iraq's territory by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Since the liberation of Mosul (2017), Sinjar (2015), and the Ninewa Plains (2016-17), displaced families have begun to return to start the difficult process of rebuilding their homes, businesses, and communities. Communities affected by conflict and genocide face many challenges, including re-establishing livelihoods, as they return to destroyed areas. These challenges are particularly acute for women and girls, in large part due to the tens of thousands of widowed, separated or divorced as a result of conflict. Today women head 10% of Iraqi households. While men have traditionally been the breadwinners in Iraq, women are assuming new, non-traditional roles in displacement, and many want to continue to work to support themselves and their families when they return home. In addition, many among the young generation of women are interested in gaining the education, skills, and training that pave the way to new opportunities.

Livelihoods programs help affected communities re-establish businesses, identify job opportunities and investment, and provide people with new skills that enable them to pursue work and become entrepreneurs. Organizations that run livelihoods programs geared

towards women face a number of challenges, including: limited capacity beyond traditional women's work; lower levels of literacy among women; women struggling to manage domestic responsibilities on top of participating in programs; gender-based violence (GBV); and traditional attitudes about what women can achieve (from women and men that might be reticent to challenge the status quo after so much disruption to their daily lives). Organizations also encounter structural barriers as they operate in the development space where there are limited funds, durations of programs are short, and donors limit flexibility in designing programs that meet the interests of women.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Iraq Genocide Recovery and Persecution Response - Learning and Pilots (GRPR L&P) activity aims to aid survivors of GBV in the Ninewa Plains and Sinjar as part of broader USAID efforts to help persecuted ethnic and religious minorities heal and restore their communities, support economic recovery, and prevent future atrocities.

The GRPR L&P program facilitates periodic Technical Learning Forums to enhance understanding and effective support for survivors of GBV. These Technical Learning Forums bring together issue experts and practitioners to delve into challenging topics that service providers encounter when assisting fragile communities recovering from conflict and displacement. The forums provide a

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platform for sharing, questioning and learning, as well as an opportunity to network and build alliances for future coordination and collaboration.

The first GRPR L&P Technical Learning Forum on Livelihoods was held in Erbil on August 7, 2019, and included representatives from 13 organizations, including program partners and other experts, implementors and stakeholders. The following organizations participated in the Livelihoods Technical Learning Forum: Action Against Hunger, Baghdad Women Organization, Bothoor Al Khair Organization for Relief and Development, CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Dorcas, International Organization for Migration, Khairat Al-Nahraeen Human Organization, Norwegian Refugee Council, Public Aid Organization, Re:Coded, Sewan Women's Empowerment Organization, and ZOA.

While the focus of the GRPR L&P program is on the Ninewa Plains and Sinjar, to maximize learning about novel approaches and strategies, participants who run livelihoods programs in other locations in Northern Iraq, as well as NGOs who run livelihoods programs targeting other populations, were also invited to the forum.

This Brief is based exclusively on discussions held during the Technical Learning Forum and does not include external information such as research and reports published on livelihoods programming. These discussions focused on how organizations approach livelihoods programming, what challenges they face, recommendations to address challenges, and strategies they have applied to ensure success of livelihoods programming in a post-conflict setting. Questions that informed this discussion are included in Appendix A.

LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMMING

Participants reported their primary approach to livelihoods programming is to increase access to markets and to improve and develop skills through vocational training.

Sectors in which organizations see opportunities in Ninewa, Salahuddin, and Kirkuk include:

- Construction
- Food
- Telecommunications and mobile phone cards

DESIGNING GENDER-SENSITIVE LIVELIHOODS PROGRAMS

Participants acknowledged there are substantial structural and other barriers to significantly enhancing access to economic opportunities, and that these barriers are compounded for women due to tradition and gender discrimination. All recognized the need for livelihoods programming targeted towards women to support them pursuing their interests, in caring for themselves and their families, and to minimize dependence on family members which could lead to or exacerbate abuse and exploitation.

Participants discussed how market and local context assessments are critical to the success of livelihood programs. They emphasized the importance of conducting a market assessment before starting a livelihoods program in order to understand the employment needs of business owners as well as the education, skills, and interests of job seekers or potential entrepreneurs. Participants discussed the value of conducting these assessments in a gender-sensitive way that gives women the opportunity to express their interests in specific types of livelihoods programs, as well as challenges they face in pursuing these opportunities.

PARTICIPANTS' RECOMMENDATIONS

Conduct Market and Context Assessments

Consider the current and potential economy of the community, specifically, whether there is money to pay for goods and services in the local community or, if everyone in areas where people are returning after displacement is similarly struggling, where is the geographic location of the consumer base? Consider whether it is local or whether new businesses should target elsewhere, and if the latter, what support is available and needed to get goods and services to other, more distant markets. Specifically, participants recommend the following during the design phase of livelihood programming:

- Conduct focus group discussions (FGDs)
- Map businesses and employment opportunities
- Identify skills and experience of job seekers and entrepreneurs including education and literacy
- Determine the interests of individual job seekers
- Identify how gender is linked to experience, skills and interests, as well as employment opportunities
- Gather information about local culture and how that influences opportunities and presents barriers

“If we create businesses and there is no demand, it will not work. We do a market assessment to understand the needs of the companies and to know what kind of beneficiaries they will need.”

Build Flexibility Into Livelihoods Programs

Participants acknowledged that livelihoods programs tend to be resource intensive, including significant training or capacity building, yet provide very little time to implement these programs. Organizations tend to focus on what they think will be interesting to the largest number of women, leaving those who are interested in male dominated work such as construction, demining, or security without opportunities to pursue this work.

Conduct Individualized Assessments of Beneficiaries

Participants discussed that when they design livelihoods programs without evaluating the interests of participants, they fail to motivate them, and these programs are not set up to succeed. It is important to carefully select participants based on their commitment and interests, considering everyone's life objectives or plans.

WOMEN AND LIVELIHOODS

Participants who were experienced in running livelihoods programs targeting women shared their perceptions on how to anticipate and prepare for challenges in advance and to incorporate strategies that address women-specific barriers throughout all phases of programming. They discussed the many challenges in implementing women's livelihoods programs, ranging from capacity issues, limited education and literacy, child care and household duties, security, restrictions imposed by family members, and GBV. Below are challenges and recommendations that were identified by participants in the Technical Learning Forum.

“If a woman chooses something different, people around her will tell her ‘you can't do this because you're the only one.’”

CHALLENGES

Socialization of Traditional Gender Roles

One participant pointed out that Iraqi women are socialized from a very young age about what is and is not acceptable, stating, *“They know from the beginning that they are only expected to do certain types of work. The kind of work depends on the history and the location.”*

Several participants reported that in gender-segregated focus group discussions, men often say that women do not want to do non-traditional work. However, women, when asked, say that they are fine with doing non-traditional work, but that they are limited by people around them and by the culture.

Participants did point out that they encounter women who are interested in work that is traditionally done by men in their community, yet these opportunities are difficult because trainings and programs are geared towards men, and because they find their communities to be judgmental and unsupportive. For example, community members and relatives criticize these women and pressure them to go along with cultural norms that are limiting. Participants reported that in their experience, Iraqi women are predominantly interested in traditional areas of work that are considered culturally appropriate for women but are also less intensive in terms of skills required.

“Many women only accept sewing and home economics. Women want traditional things. We find very few women who want to do something different.”

Traditional gender norms have led to **limited literacy** for girls, particularly when there is conflict and families are concerned about protecting girls' honor. Participants highlighted illiteracy among many women as a key concern. At the same time, and importantly, participants said that women who lack education are nevertheless highly motivated and can be very successful.

Urgent Need for Money Can Inhibit Investing in Longer Term Livelihoods Opportunities

In a discussion about sewing programs, one participant explained that many women express interest in developing new skills and launching small businesses. However, due to subsistence needs of their families, they will sell equipment such as sewing machines or other resources that are meant to build and sustain their new business.

PARTICIPANTS' RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop opportunities that **allow women to work together** rather than in isolation, such as factories that make clothing, food, or other goods.
- Establish **women-only businesses and spaces**. Successful examples include women-only coffee shops and shisha cafes in Najaf, and women-only stores in Anbar. These businesses provide a space for women where they do not have to worry about being judged or harassed. Women photography businesses for weddings and other events where women are present provide greater access and can also be very successful.
- Digitize trends that allow **online businesses** where women can shop and work from home and access global markets.
- Promote different gendered perceptions of women's interests and capabilities. Meetings and trainings with men from the community about women's rights and roles in the family and community help to mitigate social and cultural bias. Note: while participants recognized the importance of shifting perceptions, which is difficult and complicated, the discussion did not touch on specific approaches or strategies.

“When we talk to men about whether women can work outside the home, they often say they can only work at home. But when we ask women, they tell us they can do different jobs, but we don't want to cause harm.”

- **Engage community members** and introduce the project to the community before rolling it out.
- Implement **gender sensitivity training**. Participants stated that a critical component of a successful women's livelihoods program is sensitizing male and female staff and participants to the needs and interests and experiences of women as well as the barriers they encounter.
- Include and **involve parents or other relatives** during recruitment stages and at intervals throughout the program. Allow female applicants to interview with a parent present if this is what women want and feel more comfortable with. It can help them to get support from their parents if they understand the program from the beginning. Build regular check-ins with parents and invite them to see the program space and meet the team.

- Given the strong role and influence of families, **engaging** with them as a built-in feature of livelihoods programming has been found to be an effective way to keep them informed, build trust and understanding, and increase the likelihood that women will stay in the program. For example, in one case a young woman had a lot of household chores and felt that she had to choose between them and the program. After the NGO discussed the situation with her and how to approach her parents, they met with the parents and they agreed that she could manage both. Meeting with families and parents helps them to understand the space where their female relatives will attend trainings and other activities, and the people who they will interact with. This can relieve a lot of anxiety which is especially high for those who have undergone displacement and are worried about safety.
- Intervening in individual cases by **negotiating with families** can help women whose families prevent them from participating in programs to attend. Negotiation services need to be managed carefully by experienced negotiators who first meet with women to learn more about their family situation and dynamics to determine whether approaching her family could lead to harm, and to develop an effective negotiating strategy. One example provided involved a woman who worked in a factory where there were men also working. Her family was uncomfortable with this and wanted her to withdraw from the program. Program staff met with her to understand her family dynamics and to develop a plan before talking to them, and they convinced the family to allow her to remain in the program.
- Be flexible and **tailor individualized approaches** to each person's needs. Even though this can be more resource intensive especially in terms of staff time, it also can pay off with better recruitment and retention rates. Find ways to support those women interested in **non-traditional work** even if their numbers are small as well as those who are only interested in engaging in work traditionally done by Iraqi women. Try to design programs that include flexibility.
- **Female trainers** can be beneficial for cultural reasons, making women and their families more comfortable. However, female trainers are difficult to find, and organizations are encouraged to build capacity to develop experienced trainers.

An effective approach to livelihoods programming has been to include psychosocial support (PSS) services with livelihoods programming for women.

- After the program is over, hold follow up social activities, **create a network of alumni** who have completed your livelihoods programs. They can provide social and emotional support and be role models for new recruits.
- Successful livelihoods programming is **holistic** and incorporates services that address **psychosocial needs**.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND WOMEN'S LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMS

CHALLENGES

Participants noted several challenges related to gender-based violence. These include:

- Women routinely face harassment and in extreme cases assault by **taxi drivers**, which can pose a significant barrier to accessing programs, goods, markets, government offices, and so on. One way programs have addressed this is to provide transportation for women. However, this does not address larger mobility issues women face and need to overcome in order to pursue livelihoods after programs are completed.
- Traditional **gatekeepers** to the community can present problems when NGOs look to them for help in identifying female beneficiaries. Such an approach could expose women to risk of indebtedness, sexual harassment or other forms of exploitation. In one case, a Mukhtar gave a woman's name and wanted "something" in exchange.
- One participant said that many women ask them to put the names of their husbands and fathers as **business owners**, because they say that they don't have financial and business experience. Although it was not flagged as a factor, it is also expected that there are cases where men do not permit women to put businesses in their names to maintain control.
- An unintended risk of livelihoods programming with women in a deeply patriarchal context is that family members will **retaliate** as women seek more independence and control over their lives. Participants discussed how family members exert significant control over women's lives and decisions, and sometimes prohibit women from participating in programs, or fail to support them once they have started. Some women start a program but then drop out because they have household chores, or they face issues with transportation.
- Participants acknowledged that beneficiaries' well-being is inextricably linked to the success of livelihoods

programs as they are dealing with many stressors, challenges, and have experienced or currently experience gender-based violence.

"We worked with a woman who was sexually harassed by her boss. She trusted us enough to disclose the abuse. She decided not to continue in her job, and we told her boss she was not coming back. She did not want us to tell him the reason to avoid more problems."

PARTICIPANTS' RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure women's livelihoods programs include **training on GBV** and how to respond in cases of harassment and abuse with women and men **from the outset**. Such training should include information on rights and how to respond in cases of abuse, and how to build trust in the event someone is abused and wants to disclose. This is particularly important in new communities that have not had the benefit of receiving the many trainings that have been delivered in secure areas. It is important to **train men** as well, but it is necessary to be careful about how you share women's experiences, and whether these sessions can be held jointly or separately.
- **Build trust** with women who may need to report harassment and abuse as the livelihoods program is implemented and provide information and referrals about where to get help including from social service providers, lawyers, and law enforcement.
- Participants recommended incorporating **mental health and/or psychosocial support services** as a component of livelihoods programming to support women in dealing with these issues as well as improving their ability to deal with their families.
- Consider ways to address **transportation issues** during the program and after the program. Enquire whether there are ways for women to share transportation, hire trusted drivers, or find other solutions that could open the door to greater mobility.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Participants highlighted the importance of engaging with community members about women's livelihoods programming to ensure community buy-in and support,

particularly because community leaders can create problems if they are sidelined or misunderstand and disapprove of the program. Furthermore, community leaders can be strong allies for programming if they see the value of the program for their community. The participants discussed the need to meet with traditional community leaders such as religious and tribal leaders and Mukhtars, as well as the wider community of potential program beneficiaries and their families.

CHALLENGES

- Local authorities sometimes prevent implementation of livelihoods (and other) programming.
- Local authorities sometimes exploit their positions of influence in the community, especially when organizations continue to go to the same people to identify beneficiaries.
- Traditional community leaders are male, and do not always understand programming for women, and specifically GBV programming.

PARTICIPANTS' RECOMMENDATIONS

- Meet with **local authorities who are decision-makers** before starting your program to build relationships and obtain permission to implement programs.
- **Educate local officials** about the value of your programs, particularly if the type of program is unfamiliar to people in this area, or if it targets women for livelihoods programming that traditionally focuses on men.
- If you lack relationships with local authorities, consider working through **local partners** who have established relationships.
- Hold monthly **meetings with authorities** to update them and maintain regular dialogue – this is very important.
- Engage with **wider community and families** about the program to sensitize them to the program and respond to any questions or concerns.
- Invite families of beneficiaries to gatherings to introduce them to your team and other families to build trust and encourage sustained support for women.

SECURITY AND MOVEMENT

All participants recognized the lack of security and dealing with multiple security actors at checkpoints and in program areas to be a major impediment to programming and to economic growth. The current security situation prevents free movement of people and goods

inside Ninewa and between Ninewa and other provinces. Participants discussed how these problems are exacerbated for women who fear being harassed or even abused at checkpoints, particularly in areas where there is significant distrust between security actors and the local population. They also discussed that security actors from the same ethnic or religious background do not necessarily have the trust of the local population as there are other points of tension, such as political or a known history of perpetrating abuses.

CHALLENGES

- For participants, movement through checkpoints is a major problem, particularly for displaced individuals who might be missing documentation or cannot obtain approval to pass through checkpoints.
- Participants reported that women sometimes faced harassment when going through checkpoints.
- Local authorities maintain lists of people who are suspected of being affiliated with ISIS, therefore potential and actual livelihoods beneficiaries might face difficulty if their name or their relative(s) name appears on a list. If someone's name, even incorrectly is identified on one of these lists, that person could be arrested and detained.

PARTICIPANTS' RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide **training on GBV** that includes practical tips for women about how to respond to harassment and abuse, including at check points, public transportation and other public spaces. Building trust with women is important to encourage them to safely and confidentially disclose harassment and discuss their options. Ensure that women who come forward are not pressured to report abuse unless they want to and put safety measures in place in the event there is harassment.
- Continue to improve referral pathways for GBV services.
- Find allies in security forces who will support setting up a policy, and training security actors on prevention of sexual harassment and abuse. Rely on allies for safe and confidential reporting if women choose to come forward.
- Explore whether your organization needs to obtain special **permission** to facilitate travel for beneficiaries.
- Ensure beneficiaries **understand any risks** they might face if they must pass certain checkpoints, including arrest if their name comes up in a database search, for example.

- **Develop a plan** and take precautions in case someone faces problems such as arrest or detention.
- Develop and **maintain relationships** with security actors in the area where you work as part of your community engagement plan.

ETHNO-SECTARIAN COMMUNITY TENSIONS

After the ISIS genocide, community tension and distrust remain high. In some areas, communities from different ethnic and religious minority communities are starting to establish or re-establish community ties, and this is sometimes done through livelihoods or other types of programs. Participants recognized that the process of reconciliation remains a long and difficult one and currently some community members are not ready to engage with others. Understanding these dynamics is crucial when designing women's livelihoods programming to avoid triggering participants, and to incorporate a conflict sensitive approach into program design.

CHALLENGES

- Community dynamics are constantly shifting as different ethnic and religious groups return to their places of origin in order to rebuild.
- Organizations do not always account for difficult community dynamics and may find themselves unable to work effectively when marginalized groups feel threatened and become critical. Some reported concerns that groups that feel left out may even retaliate against those groups that are prioritized.
- Tensions sometimes exist to a greater extent between security and political actors compared with the local community, and this in turn leads to more tension or problems for the local communities.

"It's not easy to find impartial people. If you manage to find someone it is very important that he or she is not biased."

PARTICIPANTS' RECOMMENDATIONS

- Stay **up-to-date about tensions** that exist between different ethnic and religious communities.
- Working in a mixed community requires that organizations are **inclusive** and do not focus on one group and ignore others, because this will exacerbate tensions.

- **Engage leaders** from different communities, including religious leaders as well as Mukhtars. Sometimes meeting together, can be an effective way to address these sensitivities.
- Make the program **accessible** to everyone in the location where you work. If you only target minority groups authorities will create problems for you, especially since authorities come from different backgrounds. If you are only funded to serve minority communities, be prepared to explain this to local authorities.

DONOR CONSIDERATIONS

There are times when donor priorities and those of implementing organizations do not completely align. When budget limitations, funding cycles, and program design varies from what organizations working on the ground feel is needed to implement effective livelihoods programs, it can lead to frustration for all involved, particularly where, as in Iraq, the operating environment is challenging on multiple levels.

CHALLENGES

- Livelihood programs are often **too short** to achieve meaningful impact. Most projects are funded for six months which is not enough time to do initial research and assessments, run the program, provide ongoing support and make necessary adjustments to the program.
- When deciding what kind of livelihoods program to implement, the most important thing participants noted was to motivate the beneficiaries. This requires applying selection criteria that focuses on the **interests of beneficiaries, not only skills**. Participants noted that the focus of livelihoods programs is not necessarily based on what the people want, but what the donor determines is needed.
- **Donor priorities are sometimes inconsistent with the local context**. In some cases, donors select target groups or beneficiary selection criteria that are not based on the needs or viability of target locations. Participants flagged concerns that there are many requests for proposals (RFPs) and tenders with minimum activities and difficult procurement processes that are very directive and **undermine innovation**.
- **Vetting** beneficiaries takes time. Delays this may cause on programming has an impact in a volatile and unpredictable context especially when targeting displaced people who might move around.

“They want us to target groups and apply criteria that may not be suitable for the areas where we work.”

PARTICIPANTS' RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Communicate regularly** with donors to help them understand the context on the ground and provide recommendations for technically sound and locally appropriate livelihoods programming.
- **Build in time for vetting** beneficiaries so as not to cause program delays.

GOVERNMENT BARRIERS

Structural barriers are, according to participants, some of the most difficult to address because organizations and beneficiaries often find that without the right connections, they become lost in a confusing bureaucracy. Additionally, people distrust government institutions such as banks and Iraq remains a predominantly cash society where people prefer to keep their money at home or for those with more resources, tied up in land and businesses. The Iraqi government lacks transparent procedures and provides only in-person services as opposed to handling some matters online. This places a burden on people who must spend limited resources to repeatedly visit government offices in order to handle business-related matters. For women this has implications since travel is not always secure, and those with children might have difficulty finding child care.

CHALLENGES

Participants discussed several structural (governmental) challenges. These include:

- **REGULATIONS:** Formal procedures generally apply to those establishing larger businesses such as factories, and certain businesses such as salons or restaurants need government licenses which might be difficult for some to understand in terms of procedures or to access with limited resources.
- **TAXES:** The government does not require small businesses, according to participants, to pay taxes currently. There was general acknowledgment that this could change in the future.
- **BANKING:** The country's banking system is weak and has not been fully reestablished in liberated areas. In Ninewa few banks have re-opened.

- **RESTRICTIONS:** Sometimes government officials interfere with peoples' livelihoods by restricting goods in the bazaar.
- **CORRUPTION:** There is a lot of corruption.

PARTICIPANTS' RECOMMENDATIONS

Notably, participants were not able to provide recommendations regarding how to manage these larger structural barriers as they feel they have little influence. However, even if organizations cannot influence these barriers it is critical to understand them when designing programming and they should be included in context assessments.

CONCLUSION

At the time of the writing of this Brief (Fall/Winter 2019) there are ongoing demonstrations in Iraq. Protestors have multi-faceted grievances including rampant corruption, high unemployment, poor government services, and violent repression of protestors. For a country with so much wealth in terms of natural resources and human capital this is a clear indication of a need for significant economic reform which requires tackling institutionalized corruption and poor governance. Indeed, many of the issues plaguing Iraq today are the same factors that led to the emergence of ISIS in 2014, and if not addressed, will likely lead to greater destabilization. For fragile communities that are barely recovering from genocide, this presents grave concerns.

Access to employment opportunities is an issue for men and women. Access to jobs and business development prospects can be especially acute for women who are heads of household, and who are vulnerable to exploitation and gender-based violence. This Brief highlights the experiences of organizations who have implemented or are currently running livelihoods programming in Iraq, and it is hoped will provide a useful addition to existing knowledge and information relevant to this topic. In developing these programs, it is important to address cultural attitudes and beliefs that reinforce traditional roles for women and hinder the full range of opportunities, as well as security issues, capacity and experience, and education. Women's livelihoods programs are more likely to succeed if organizations build in time for assessments, and bring a gendered lens to program design, implementation and evaluation. Fundamentally, what should drive these programs is identifying what the women themselves say they want to do, and then designing programs that support their goals.

ANNEX A – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR LIVELIHOODS' TECHNICAL LEARNING FORUM

TECHNICAL LEARNING FORUM – LIVELIHOODS — DISCUSSION QUESTIONS – AUGUST 7, 2019

Factors that contribute to successful livelihoods programming, particularly for women and including GBV survivors

- 1) What factors in your view make a successful livelihoods program? What sort of outcomes are you hoping to achieve? (Skills/capacity building, landing jobs, starting businesses etc.)
- 2) What additional factors (if any) would make a program successful for women?
- 3) We know sustainability is important, but not always easy to achieve. What steps have you taken to try to ensure that your program benefits people after your funding has ended?
 - Does anyone have experience in following up with people after a program is over? If so, what strategies have been effective (phone calls, in person visits, FGDs etc.)?

Security Issues

- 1) We know movement and mobility for women is a challenge, what strategies have you found effective in overcoming these hurdles? (Checkpoints, vehicles, taxis, sexual harassment etc.)
- 2) What are some of the different ways that the following actors affect women's security AND their ability to participate in livelihoods programs (both positively and negatively)
 - Female family members
 - Male family members
 - Tribal members
 - Armed actors: Militias (PMF), Iraqi / Kurdish security and/or military forces, local police
 - The community generally

Approaches to Livelihoods Programs for Women & Adolescent Girls

- 1) Is anyone running livelihoods programs specifically geared towards adolescent girls? If so, what skills are you focused on and what kinds of livelihood activities are they interested in?

2) Regarding women from different age groups and educational backgrounds, what differences are you seeing in terms of interest, access and expectations.

3) We know that livelihoods programs for women tend to focus on traditional work for women such as beauty salons, sewing, and cooking – in your experience, is this mostly determined by what women say they want to do, or what is possible because of cultural and other restrictions?

4) Do you have experience or views on livelihoods programs that incorporate technology and communication skills?

5) How do you decide what to focus on? Do you conduct assessments? What strategies or tools do you use to design your programs especially when geared towards women?

6) When you engage with women in communities where you work, what do they say about what their priorities are? Do you feel you are able to incorporate their feedback adequately into your program design? How much flexibility do you have and how much is determined by your donors or organizational priorities?

7) What factors do you consider to be most helpful to increasing income for women either through a new job or starting a small and successful business?

Livelihoods Programming for Women and Adolescent Girls in Ninewa

- 1) How much programming is directed to returnees to Ninewa?
- 2) In terms of sustainability, it may be too early to tell – but what factors are you seeing on the ground that indicate whether programs are impactful?

Culture, Traditional Norms and Gendered Restrictions

- 1) Have you had success in running livelihoods programs in non-traditional sectors for women? How were you able to challenge traditional cultural norms?
- 2) What effects does the livelihood projects has on women relationship with her family and community? Have you observed any negative/positive consequences?
- 3) What strategies have been useful to try to mitigate negative consequences such as an increase in GBV? In
- 4) What ways have you engaged men in your livelihoods programming that is targeted to women? Have you found men to be allies and how?