

English Supplement

# Al-Muntada

of the Iraqi Association

[www.iraqiassociation.org](http://www.iraqiassociation.org)

## IRAQI ASSOCIATION

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### Our Local Elderly Day Centre



Iraqi Association has been running this centre since 1998. It's our vision that all older people should retain their independence, dignity and peace of mind. In the borough of Hammersmith, we operate an elderly day centre to serve over 40 people every week. Our worker, with the help of volunteers offers array of services. Such as weekly exercise, healthy lifestyle advice, welfare advice, outreach service and health advocacy work. Gelass is one of our long-term elderly day centre Volunteers, she welcomes the day centre users every week and inform them about the day's activities.

Many of the service users have suffered psychologically as a result of the war and sectarian killings in Iraq. They have lost family, friends or relatives. Just over a year ago, Hameed, one of our service users, sadly lost his 5 year granddaughter in Baghdad, she became another victim of the sectarian killings. Here in Hammersmith, we offer them a place where they can talk and share their concern and anxiety. Equally, we provide practical help and assistance, such as visiting lone elderly people at their home, and ensure that their health needs and welfare protection are met.

Our day centre in Grove Neighbourhood Centre, Hammersmith, which has been in existence for over 10 years, is open to all local users every Tuesday. If required, we provide transport where possible, and we provide freshly cooked meals. It caters for all elderly users in the community irrespective of their backgrounds, it is totally wheelchair accessible.

Users are engage in a range of activities, including wheelchair based exercise, crafts, card games and dominoes. Often we receive referral from social services, GPs, family/friends or self referral. We can also help our clients by referring them to other specialist agencies if and when required. In addition to that, we offer outing to vulnerable elderly people, to visit local places and other relevant places in the greater London area.

Furthermore, this year we have increased exercise and walking sessions, and conversation in English, health awareness sessions and Iraqi traditional folk games.

New activities were introduced by the Hammersmith centre, such as making the use of the facilities provided at the location, and the positive feedback from users also suggested to have activities like healthy eating and cooking workshops.

This centre is popular among the local elderly people and the borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. We want to continue this vital community-led services, without it hundreds of local elderly people will have nowhere to go to seek help and assistance. It's making a difference to the lives of the many vulnerable people.

### Iraqi Association Comment

#### Don't Choke Communities, Power Them

"I am a child of an immigrant, I have always been regarded as an immigrant despite being born here. But when I go to the country of my parents, I am regarded as a British, or a foreigner. Where exactly do people think people like me belong?" Said Salam, one of our young recent service users.

The reality is that when British people go overseas to work and live they call themselves "expats". When others come to the UK to do the same, they are immigrants. It's becoming a stigma which often opposes the integration process. We need to tackle this double whammy approach. This myth has created a culture that immigrants live in ghettoised communities and not socialising with others, and they are unable to organise their communities.

The fundamental point here is that many exiled communities and Diaspora people have successfully settled and integrated here, and are proud to be British. Our experience of working with members of the community to settle and integrate confirms that there were no real problems, beside that forced integration did not seem necessary.

What many exiled community groups need is direct support and recognition, don't choke community groups, give them adequate oxygen, to enable their members to settle and integrate successfully in this country. This is simply the sole way to nurture and build a healthy and positive community in this society. We do not want segregation, nor do we want to live forever in ghettoised areas. Opportunities must be shared equally by all, and not only by a handful of private consortiums and charities with household names.

As a small charity, we continue to serve vulnerable and needy people, on average every year we serve over 6000 people, on issues associates with poverty, employment, training, education, distressed women, excluded youth and families with children, elderly, disabled and volunteerism.

Many small community groups suffers from the lack of priorities from big funders, such as the Big Lottery Fund (BLF), which was created by merging the Community Fund, the New Opportunity Fund and the Millennium Commission. It distributes 50 per cent of good causes' money. Many believe that it has concentrated more on funding government initiatives, medium and big charities and local authorities, to the detriment of small community organisations. As Stephen Bubb, chief executive of the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations, said: "There are many thousands of applications from smaller organisations which go in every year but only a third get funded. The ones that fail are told that there are insufficient funds." Changes in lottery funding have led to smaller organisations not getting support. The Big Lottery Fund, in particular, has been more interested in government priorities than in the voluntary sector."

For example, a medium size charity has received more than £5m grants in 2007, under the Lottery's BASIS programme. This will undoubtedly deprives smaller refugee community groups to receive funding and recognition. Meanwhile, the diversion of £675m Lottery good cause funds to meet the increased cost of the 2012 Olympics will have a detrimental impact on many small charities.

Furthermore, community groups which serve established community needs are being destroyed in the name of "community cohesion". At the same time "mainstreaming" - the new buzzword - means that specialist areas are being lost and agencies without skilled staff or expertise are being given the impossible task of meeting the very different needs of a large number of diverse groups.

Many refugee community groups are struggling to survive because of funding problem and a lack of permanent commitment on the part of funders. Beside this, like other voluntary sector organisations, community groups receives funds to pay for the provision of direct services, but not the core costs of their work. The reason is that until funders are prepared to approve full cost recovery, many small community organisations will not be able to continue their services. Furthermore, many cosy clubs of partnerships and private consortiums has been set up to grab the largest slice of the funding bids on behalf of community organisations without prior consultations or input from the intended users or beneficiaries. This is happening against a background of increasing inequality and an acute shortage of services to refugees and those who seek safety at our shores.

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## 20 Years of Volunteerism and Still Going Strong

Since its inception, Iraqi Association has been working with volunteers, we put volunteering and community activism at the heart of the charity's work. Our volunteerism has created a strong link between voluntary activity and overall life satisfaction of many of our service users, and those who offers their time to become volunteers. Beside that, volunteering has a positive influence irrespective of a community's social class or wealth. At Iraqi Association volunteers are those who would like to make a difference to the lives of others. On average, the charity is engaged with 10 regular volunteers every week. We provide induction, training, briefing and supervision, and they participate in meetings and discussion panels. They offer various contributions such as Suham, she is a carer, "When I hear of someone locally in need, disabled, semi-bedridden, I go and cook and try to help out. It is truly gratifying work and I hope that if I need help someday, that someone might come to help me."

Meanwhile others are engaged to help out in different fields, Thar is a volunteer helper at reception area, she is a lawyer by profession. "I enjoy dealing with people, particularly traumatised and vulnerable, I want to contribute towards helping others and make a difference to their lives"



Thar

Volunteering at Iraqi Association has achieved many benefits, both to volunteers and the community. Since the establishment of this service many new refugees gained language skills, self-esteem and a stake in the community. In another case, Ali, with PhD in mathematics, is one of our volunteers. His time at Iraqi Association as volunteer has given him experience of office protocol in the UK. " Now, I know about Quality Mark, Case Studies and UK style CV preparation."

As a client-led charity, Iraqi Association is continuing to serve all age groups, despite its prudent budget. The VOIA project (The Voice of Iraqi Association) is run by youth volunteers to cover the west London area. It's on air every Monday from 11am-2pm on Westside Radio 89.6FM, the new sound of west London. Mazin is one of the volunteers, who has completed his studies in Sound Engineering, he assists other volunteers every week to prepare and organise youth-led programmes.



Ali



Mazin

Mazin said, "I am thrilled to have this opportunity, this will give me work experience and necessary training to join the competitive market of sound engineering ". VOIA is also lucky to have DJ Ahmad, a young Iraqi volunteer who offers his skills and experience and collection of vibrant and unique mixed style music to listeners of VOIA every week. His programme attracts many emails and messages of feedback.

DJ Ahmad said, "I am pleased to air my collections, I hope this will attract many young people in the area to join the existing listeners." While Susan is helping the VOIA team, she is also a full-time worker, but committed to offer her time with the VOIA project. Other recent volunteer includes, Labwa, she is actively seeking to link with other young people to join VOIA team.

As a non-sectarian group, Iraqi organisation services everyone who needs the help of the charity. Our community volunteers can give their time to do something they are passionate about and can lead to tangible results. Samantha was one of our volunteers who has helped with our fundraising work. She sent us a note saying that "I am extremely grateful for the opportunity which you have given me, I have learnt excellent skills and met very interesting people, I am also pleased that I contributed towards the work of your charity".

As a grass root community organisation, we are very proud of our volunteers and the contributions which they make. Many volunteers have gained confidence, skills and experience to improve their employability, and to make positive contribution to this society. Ekram is a librarian by profession, she lives in Richmond and offers few hours every week to welcome our clients and meet them at the reception area.

Ekram deals with different people from different social backgrounds. "Engaging with people who are anxious about their settlement needs is a challenge for me, but at the same time, it gives me confidence and motivation".



Ekram

Every year Iraqi Association involves hundreds of part time volunteers in a diverse array of services, from office work to practical help and outreach work. Such as volunteers uses telephone method to reach disabled clients and build contacts and networking. Or to make arrangements to see vulnerable clients at GP surgery. While others assists us to organise evening events, such as seminars or group sessions with Community members. We also offer choices such as the development of creative writing, print and design of publication, so that they can gain new skills and realise their potentials. Or engage young local people with sport activities. The recent growing local demand from young people has encouraged us to develop a soccer team with the help of a qualified professional volunteer coach, Sadiq Al-Wuhaily, who is committed to help and develop the skills of our youngsters locally.

Our volunteerism is easily accessible to everyone at every level, regardless of their age, race, faith, gender, disability, class, sexual orientation, employment status or any other factor. Volunteering at Iraqi Association is a positive aspiration that meets real needs and is intrinsically worthwhile. Our volunteers are at the centre of our vision. If we look back since the development of this work at Iraqi Association 20 years ago, volunteering brought as people together, giving them a purpose and potential to develop themselves as well as their communities. As a Quality Mark registered organisation, we have a volunteer policy and accordingly, we recruit, brief, retain, train and supervise them.

The fact is that many grass root community groups offers fantastic services including volunteerism, their role must be recognised and supported. It's not only because of the cost effectiveness, but because grass root groups can directly reach potential users while mainstream agencies cannot reach. Beside that, Iraqi Association has been working in this area for many years, our experience tells us that often fear and lack of trust deters the hard to reach people beneficiaries to use the services. With resources and recognition, community groups can develop many innovative ideas and projects to involve and evolve disfranchised young and excluded families and children.

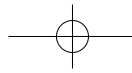


Susan

The chance to gain experience to develop personally and professionally - is high on our list of our young community members, according to the Director of Iraqi Association, Jabbar Hasan. " A large numbers of our local young excluded people are eager to gain confidence and break the terrible isolation and the poverty trap, majority of them are British born with native Iraqi parents. They face enormous social and economic difficulties, lack of opportunities to help these youngsters will alienate them further."

In essence, volunteering assists exiles and refugees to settle and integrate, and gain necessary experience to develop their skills and confidence. This will enable them to contribute towards our society and will lead them to compete in the job market. However, without direct support and resources this cannot be achieved. This requires diversity in sustainable funding to support community groups, to enable them to establish an effective volunteering infrastructure. A healthy community will have volunteers of all ages and from all sections of society.

**Our 20 years of volunteerism confirms that volunteering needs direct support from an effective infrastructure, if we want to flourish it.**



# Listen, don't walk away, I have nowhere to go.



**£5 Can feed a hungry child for a day in Baghdad**

**£75 Can provide meals to 20 orphaned children every week**

**£170 Can pay for a child's treatment for a month**

Secure Online Donation [www.iraqiassociation.org](http://www.iraqiassociation.org) Or fill in the coupon and post it with your donation to: IraqChild Appeal, Freepost 21599 London W6 9BR. Thank You.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

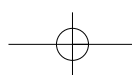
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Charity No. 1101109

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### Media enquiries during the last three months

Highlights of some of media work during the last worker which Iraqi Association was mentioned or interviewed:

1. Abu Dhabi TV on 24/06/2008 covered an interview on Iraq 5 years later.
2. Abu Dhabi TV on 16/05/2008 covering IraqChild project.
3. SANA TV story about Iraqi Association work.
4. Interview with Metro on Iraqi Association and IraqChild on 02/06/2008
5. Al Sharqia TV on 3/06/2008 and 04/06/2008 on Iraqi refugees in Jordan and UK. In addition to that, we had telephone enquiries from BBC and regional radio stations.

### In Baghdad, Carnage, Anger and Grief

Extracts from Iraqi Association press release issued on 19/06/2008:

Yesterday's blast was the deadliest attack in Baghdad since March 6, when a pair of bombs detonated in the district of Karradah, killing 68 people and wounding about 120. "Yesterday's cowardly attack in Hurriyah district, in Baghdad, murdered 63 and wounded over 70 people, many women and children were among victims. We hope that this will not encourage further sectarian hate and violence". Said Jabbar Hasan of Iraqi Association in Hammersmith and Fulham.

Hurriyah once had a large population of Sunnis, but sectarian hate and violence led by militias and extremists drove out thousands of Sunnis. The unresolved emotions from the bloodshed and convulsions that swept the district during those years poured out after Tuesday's attack. But even amid the rage and anger, some residents said the solution was not vengeance, but for the neighbourhood to go back to the way it was before the extremists, when Iraqis lived together regardless of sect.

We utterly condemn yesterday's indiscriminate acts of terror, and we wish to convey our heartfelt sympathies to families of the victims and those who have been injured.

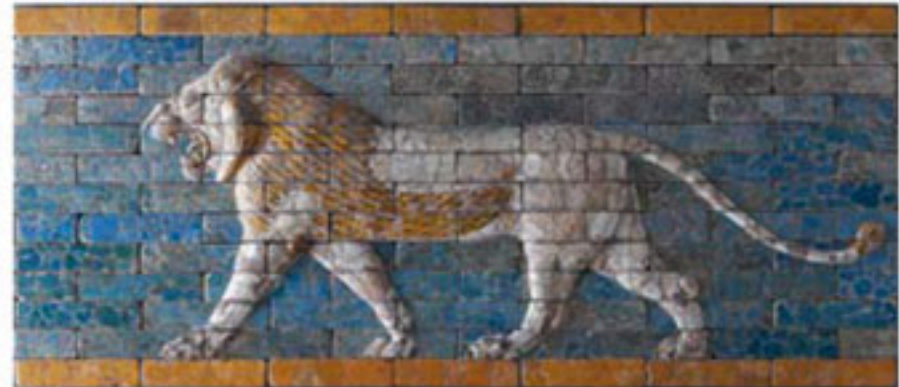
### Iraqi Association Services and Activities during the 2nd Quarter of 2008

1st Quarter 2008 Iraqi Association Clients	April 08	May 08	June 08	Total
Employment & Training	25	27	32	84
Welfare Advice	159	147	217	523
Healthy Lifestyle Advice	39	35	42	116
Family Reunion	17	13	15	45
Immigration Advice	101	83	79	263
Media Enquiries & Case studies	03	04	6	13
Telephone Advice & Enquiries	165	138	187	490
Regular Volunteers	10	08	10	28
Elderly Service	134	128	122	384
Referral From Agencies	22	18	28	68
Referral To Agencies	47	41	31	119
Education Guidance	56	62	72	190

Quarter 2 represents 2323 cases with different profile of users in relation to needs, age groups, genders, locations, status and living conditions. This reflects 11% of new clients. An increase of 7% for the same period last year.



Get involved and make a difference... As well as doing something to benefit people, you could be improving your employment prospects. Volunteers wanted in the following areas:  
 - Research  
 - Admin  
 - Elderly Day Centre  
 - Youth and Family  
 Email your C.V. to: [info@iraqiassociation.org](mailto:info@iraqiassociation.org)



### Babylon

The British Museum Exhibition 13 November 2008 – 15 March 2009 Room 35

Babylon was the greatest city of ancient Iraq, and its name and image have endured throughout history with amazing vigour. This fascinating exhibition will explore both the archaeology of the city at its height during the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar II (605–562 BC), and the wealth of later art and legend that Babylon has engendered. The exhibition will conclude with Babylon's reinvention as a state icon and a consideration of its tragic recent history, including its subjection to damage through conflict.

**Nisaba Theatre**  
 قرفة مسرح نيسابا  
 أيام الأسبوع الثمانية  
 تأليف الشاعر صلاح حسن  
 إعداد وإخراج  
 أحلام عرب  
 The Eight days of the week  
 written by the poet Salah Hassan  
 Adapted and directed by  
 Ahlam Arab  
 At  
 The cockpit Theatre  
 Gateforth Street -of Church Street  
 London NW8 5EH  
 29th -31st - of August 2008 at 8:00pm

for more info: 02077921413/07788663542 -WWW.nisabatheatre.com

### Big Thank You to Rosa...

email message from one of Iraqi Association Trustees

Dear Jabbar,

Just a quick email to let you know that I successfully completed the Race for Life last Sunday, in 35 minutes and 25 seconds!

The atmosphere on the day was fantastic, and it was a great race. I would definitely do it again, and hopefully raise even more money for IraqChild!

I have attached a few photos from the race, which were taken at the end.

I am unsure as to exact amount I have raised, as some people are yet to give me the sponsorship money, and others I know had donated on-line. But the money I have raised so far amounts to about £185. I also need to donate on-line the money I had raised earlier on in the year, which amounted to £120.

I hope that other members of the Community have also been donating on-line.

Regards,

Rosa

