

**“When I met the other participants, I saw that they are all like me: courageous and motivated to enhance football in Iraq.”**

**Courageous and Motivated  
Examples of Grassroots Collaboration**

**Strengthening Women** in and  
through Football in **Iraq & KRI**



Illustrations by Amenah Bidan

## **DISCOVER FOOTBALL PROGRAMME 2021**

### **PARTICIPATION & LEADERSHIP - STRENGTHENING WOMEN IN AND THROUGH FOOTBALL IN IRAQ & THE KRI**

From March until December 2021, DISCOVER FOOTBALL facilitated a leadership programme for women leaders in football from Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). The programme consisted of 10 online leadership workshops, a conference in Berlin/ Germany in October 2021, multiple self-organized women's football events (action days), and a network meeting in Erbil in November 2021. 20 women in football leadership positions took part in the programme, including players, coaches, referees, club officials, sports administrators and journalists from Iraq and football experts the West Asia and North Africa (WANA) Region.

Through the Leadership Programme participants further developed their leadership skills, gained a deeper understanding of women's rights, practiced networking skills, created a space for exchanging ideas and initiated local activities. Participants benefited from the

shared knowledge and rich experiences that they each brought into the programme.

#### **Specific Programme Contents**

- Participation in an international football conference in Berlin
- Planning and conducting football events (action days) in local communities
- Developing strategies to improve existing football structures
- Creating visibility and using (social) media for women's football
- Ensuring sustainability of change processes in football structures
- Improving interpersonal skills as a leader  
Reflecting on personal development and setting SMART goals
- Developing mental strength and resilience to deal with an unsupportive environment
- Strengthening awareness for gender-based discrimination in society and football
- Enhancing collaboration and mutual support between women in football

In this handbook, we have collected contributions of the programme participants to provide an insight in their work and the way they felt their work was impacted by their participation in the leadership programme. Moreover, the documented actions and projects serve as best practice examples for grassroots collaboration for improving football structures for women and girls.

DISCOVER FOOTBALL would like to thank the GIZ for funding this project and all participants for all their knowledge and contributions.

The project is financed by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the Federal Republic of Germany.





## LEADERS IN FOOTBALL

### PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS FROM IRAQ AND THE KRI

#### Nadia Fadhli Abdulameer (Wasit)

FUTSAL PLAYER

Nadia has been playing soccer since she was 12. She has already played for many clubs and is currently playing futsal.

#### Zina Abdul-Jabbar Hattab (Baghdad)

FOOTBALL COACH | AL-JAISH SPORTS CLUB

Zina is a football educator team and a national women's team, a handball and taekwondo player, the Arab silver champion, and the youngest open-ended football coach in a well-known club, El-Jaish Club. A postgraduate student responsible for the Special Sports Division, and assigned the position of the women's section in the Ministry of Youth and Sport, the Minister's office. She holds sensitive positions in the Women's Football Federation.



#### Sarah Munadhil Abdulwahid Al-Bayati (Baghdad)

VOLLEYBALL PLAYER | STUDENT

Sarah is a young volleyball player, playing for Al-Shabab Sports Club. She also has experience in other sports, such as swimming and football

#### Noor Alhuda Jasim Mohammed Al-Hammed (Maysan)

FITNESS TRAINER | SOFTBALL PLAYER

Noor is an enthusiastic athlete in different disciplines: handball, volleyball, football. She works as a fitness trainer and plays softball.

#### Faten Malallah Alwan (Baghdad)

FOOTBALL COACH | CAPTAIN OF IRAQI NATIONAL TEAM

Faten has been very active in Iraqi women's soccer since 1999. She is known as the captain of the national team and coaches women in soccer.

#### Rana Al-Omairi (Baghdad)

STUDENT | UNIVERSITY OF BAGHDAD

Rana is studying physical education and sports science at the University of Baghdad. She was involved in many organized sport activities, so football became part of her daily life.



### **Fatimah Al-Quzweeni (Baghdad)**

JOURNALIST | FORMER FOOTBALL PLAYER

Fatimah grew up in Syria and loved playing football from an early age: "Football is my life!". She played football for Biladi Women's Club/ Al-Zawraa Club. Actually she works as a reporter at UTV IRAQ channel.

### **Sohad Mohsen Mohammed Mohsen Al-zobeidi ( Maysan)**

MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS

Sohad works for the Ministry of Youth and Sports and is responsible for the women's sector in Maysan. She forms women through various sports.

### **Amenah Bidan (Baghdad)**

TRANSLATOR | ILLUSTRATOR

As an illustrator, Amenah works on a series of stories that raise awareness on women's football and promote it. Football is her passion.

### **Robina Gorgis Shamo (Dohuk)**

COACH | FOOTBALL ANALYST

Robina is head coach and analyst in the Dohuk Women's Sport Club, former football player and former Fastlink Academy Coach for young ages.

### **Khoze Hameed Abdullah Hamo (Dohuk)**

TEACHER | COACH

Khoze started playing football in 2007 and coaching in 2016. Besides her job as a college teacher, she has been coaching a team of the Akree club since last year and is a coach assistant of the national team.

### **Ibithal Mohammed Youssef (Mosul)**

PHD STUDENT, UNIVERSITY OF TIKRIT | COACH

Ibithal is a PhD student in Physical Education and Sports Sciences at the University of Tikrit. Her specialization is sports psychology for people with a disability. Ibithal is also a psychology coach for people with a disability.

### **Intisar Nawaf Abd (Diyala)**

FOOTBALL TEAM LEADER

For more than ten years football has been Intisar's passion: From her point of view football is one of the most popular sports and can be extremely helpful for young people. She works for Spirit of Soccer, an organization which delivers programs for children in communities devastated by war, in camps for refugees and Internally Displaced People.



### **Ata Dawood Raban (Duhok)**

BASKETBALL PLAYER | FOOTBALL COACH

Grown up in a family of athletes, Ata has been playing football for over 15 years in various Iraqi clubs. After her PE studies she started to coach football and other sports in cooperation with international NGOs. Besides being a basketball player for the Iraqi national team, she coaches young football teams.

### **Ahed Dheaa Younis (Mosul, Nineveh)**

FUTSAL COACH

Ahed works as a futsal coach and a futsal referee. She supports and works especially with young women.



## **EXPERTS FROM THE WEST-ASIA AND NORTH-AFRICA REGION COOPERATING IN THE PROGRAMME**

### **Esraa Awad (Cairo, Egypt)**

FOOTBALL PLAYER AND ACTIVIST IN CAIRO

### **Rajaa Chatah (Tripoli, Lebanon)**

AZM SCHOOL | ASIAN FOOTBALL  
CONFEDERATION

### **Fadwa Elbahi (Tripolis, Libya)**

HERA ORGANIZATION

### **Lyne Ismail (Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates)**

FA LEVEL 2 CERTIFIED FOOTBALL COACH AND  
COMMUNITY ACTIVIST

### **Yasmeen Shabsough (Jordan)**

FOOTBALL COACH AND FORMER NATIONAL  
PLAYER

## BEST PRACTICES OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

### Dohuk Women's Sport Club (DWC) Initiated in 2007 / 2019

Text contributed by Robina Gorgis Shamo

Before starting, I would like to thank Chris Younis and Nalla Super for believing in my capabilities and trusting me within this. I am pleased and proud to be the head coach and analyst of the team. I am looking forward to being the first and champion of the year. The club started in 2007, but unfortunately, it got closed for some reason. However, the doors got re-open by 2019 to the present day.

As a Coach, Knowing to manage and work for progress is a big expectation which I hope we as a club get to professionalism. While as an analyst, I have been promoting the development of our favorite sport among clubs and individuals. I provide a complete set of products to bring together videos, data, and information on each player, competition, or game. All in one place!

The challenge is enormous! I know where we are right now, and I also know the expectations from the club, which is immense. However, I am very ready for this. We had challenges of players being in different cities (Duhok, Erbil, Kirkuk, and Sulimania), which was hard to gather and train initially. Nevertheless, we overcame it and are again training as a complete team due to the many challenges of studying, working, and distances. I hope for success for our team.

So far so, our team has been training for about 3-4 months to be prepared for two championships starting by December 2021. We aim for top first, of course! Because the players are fully integrated into it. I hope we will be different. We are excited to begin a different but fresh new fall season. However, I would be remiss if I did not mention lessons learned while operating through a pandemic. It has been a challenge, but rest assured, Duhok Women's Club is in good hands under the capable leadership of our board and staff. We have looked within to retrace our history, adjust to an ever-changing demographic landscape, and are busy recalibrating our strategic plan with newly acquired lenses.

One thing for sure, the Women's Club has always been steadfast in its mission, and here is an excellent description of what I think attracts many to our unique community. When you have a clear purpose that people are aligned with, coupled with a culture of caring, individuals can experience a true sense of belonging and a connectedness between the concept of purpose and care. Belonging emerges at this intersection. And It's important to surround yourself with others who share a common purpose, care about yourself, those you serve, and those you work with. When connected with others in this way, you will develop a sense of belonging that engages you to do more extraordinary things than you imagined.





## Self-Organised Action Day in Maysan November 10th, 2021

Conducted by Noor Alhuda Jasim  
Mohammed Al-Hammed and Sohad Mohsen  
Mohammed Mohsen Alzobeidi

Text contributed by Sohad Mohsen Mohammed  
Mohsen Alzobeidi

A women's sports event was held in Maysan Governorate for different ages. The event included an awareness lecture on the importance of sports in our daily life and another lecture on the prevention of breast diseases and the importance of early detection and prevention of breast cancer. The lecture was given by Dr. Laila. A friendly football match was held, where some participants were playing for the first time and were very pleased. The bell team (for blind men) participated in the event in support of the female component, after which prizes were distributed to the participants. It was an important incentive for women's sports in the governorate, which is the first of its kind, and which left a positive impact on the women of the governorate. Thank you, Discover football, and GIZ for your financial and moral support.





## Self-Organised Action Day in Baghdad November 12th, 2021

Conducted by Nadia Fadhli Abdulameer,  
Zina Abdul-Jabbar Hattab, Sarah Munadhil  
Abdulwahid Al-Bayati, Faten Malallah Alwan,  
Amenah Bidan and Intisar Nawaf Abd

Text contributed by Amenah Bidan

We booked the Alshabab Club pitch in the center of Baghdad. We invited families to join and play together. Everything was ready starting from the jerseys, the gifts which were balls and catering. The organizers made sure to provide water, juices, food, audio, cameras and drones to capture everything well, and the artistic banners of the match which were drawn specially for this action day. The organizers organized a match between the women's team and the men's team (who were family members and relatives of the women team) to encourage the families to support their daughters to play football, normalize female football, and show that there is nothing to be ashamed of if your daughter wants to play football. It was a fun day and the kids joined as well. The organizers gave their speech at the end of the match to



spread awareness of women's football and that football is our peace message for everyone. Balls and stickers were given to the players and their families as gifts. The organizers made sure to give everyone participating certificates and at the end they filled an evaluation of the action day. The match result was 2-3 for the Women's team. The feedback of this action day was amazing and everyone was happy and pleased of this action day for how unique it was and as a first of its kind to happen in Baghdad, and they even asked for another action day like this one. The families got the message of the action day and their feedback was mind blowing. They were so happy, excited and proud while looking at their daughters/cousins doing what they love, which is playing football. We as organizers of the action day felt proud when we saw how peaceful and encouraging the atmosphere of the match was.

As a part of Baghdad Action day I drew the banners and also made stickers drawn by me about women football to give them to the attendees. Their feedback after giving them the stickers was so sweet and encouraging.



## Self-Organised Action Day in Khanki Camp for Displaced People November 24th, 2021

Conducted by Ata Dawood Raban, Robina Gorgis Shamo, Khoze Hameed Abdullah Hamo, Ahed Dheaa Younis

Text contributed by Ata Dawood Raban

An activity was conducted in Khanki camp for the displaced and survivors of ISIS crimes in Iraq. Inside the camp, it was the first time that a sports activity took place, due to the lack of support for women's sports in Iraq. Even in schools, there is no lecture or sports section.

A recreational sport activity was conducted inside the camp, which included the appearance of players playing football for the first time, and the number of participants was 30 players. Recreational friendly matches and other activities were held to cultivate culture and sportsmanship. An activity was also conducted for young children and a group of cartoon characters were drawn on the face. Motivational prizes and footballs were distributed to all participants during the activity.

In conclusion, the activity was very wonderful and there were positive responses from everyone and they demanded sports support and the resumption of the activity and making it on an ongoing basis.





"By participating in the DISCOVER FOOTBALL organization, I found myself **proud** to have arrived at this stage and to be able to become a team leader or be **responsible** for a sporting event in southern Iraq."

"The most important goal is also **trust, support and success** in the field of sports by spreading a culture of awareness in order to form a special women's team"

"The difficulties were great, especially in a closed society and a society that rejects this idea, **but I am strong** and I will stand against the difficulties at the present time and the next time."

"I am in this program to improve myself, to **teach** others the things that I know and to **learn** from everyone!"

"It is great to know all these women. I feel like I have **more self-trust and self-confidence** because of you."

"What I really like about the program is **the empathy we have for each other**. Iraqi women's football will be fine because of you."



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