

SHAO

ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2023 - 2024

Shams Al-Insaniya Orgnization for Women and Child



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## SHAO's Background:

Shams Al-Insaniya Organization for Women and Child (SHAO) is a women-led, non-governmental, non-profit organization. SHAO established on 2019 and officially registered with the NGO Directorate of the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers under number 1OK2209064 on September 27, 2022.

SHAO works to defend the rights of Iraqi women and girls and empower them to live safely and with dignity in their communities. SHAO collaborates with more than 30 local and international organizations and works closely with government institutions to combat gender-based violence, sexual violence, and human trafficking. SHAO also focuses strongly on preventing violent extremism against women, girls, and children by implementing projects that promote gender equality, legal awareness, and social justice.

Over the past five years, SHAO has gained extensive experience in the fields of reconciliation, transitional justice, and women's protection in Anbar Governorate. SHAO has implemented programs with partners such as the United Nations Development Programme, International Organization for Migration, Women for Women, and Search for Common Ground, focusing on supporting returning women and building their leadership and advocacy skills. SHAO has also built strong relationships with tribal leaders and local government departments, enabling it to amplify women's voices in semi-official peace processes and integrate its recommendations into local policies. Additionally, SHAO is an active member of the Women's Committee, the Monitoring and Analysis Committee, and the Preventing Violent Extremism Committee of the Anbar Provincial Council.

## SHAO's main goal:

SHAO's main goal is to achieve gender equality and protect women and girls from all forms of violence, including gender-based violence, sexual violence, and human trafficking. To reach this goal, SHAO designs and implements educational, social, and advocacy programs that raise awareness of women's rights and empower vulnerable groups.

## SHAO works to:

- 1- Strengthen food security and economic independence of women-headed households through vocational training and small business support.
- 2- Build leadership capacities among women and youth to enhance their role in peacebuilding, advocacy, and decision-making at the community and policy levels.
- 3- Promote legal, health, and social awareness, ensuring that women and girls have access to information and services that protect their rights.
- 4- Encourage youth participation in democratic processes, dialogue with authorities, and conflict prevention.
- 5- Advance the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda by implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325, ensuring women's voices are central to peace processes and transitional justice.

## SHAO's vision

SHAO's vision is to build a society where women, girls, and children enjoy full economic, social, and health empowerment, and where they play a leading and influential role in strengthening livelihoods, peace, and social cohesion. We aspire to a world free from violence and discrimination against women, girls, and children, where gender equality and equity are realized, and where all individuals, including marginalized and vulnerable groups, have equal access to education, health services, and food security. Our vision is of a civil society in which every person enjoys human rights, dignity, social justice, sustainable development, citizenship, and democracy, with resilience and empowerment serving as the foundation for cohesive and peaceful communities.

## SHAO's Mission

SHAO's mission is to support and empower women, girls, and children to overcome the challenges they face by promoting their rights, protecting them from gender-based violence, and providing safe access to education, health, and economic opportunities. We are committed to fostering independence and well-being through programs that enhance food security, vocational training, and social inclusion. Our mission also focuses on empowering youth as agents of change by building their leadership and advocacy skills, encouraging their active participation in peace processes, and strengthening their role in democratic decision-making. By implementing the Women, Peace, and Security agenda and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, SHAO strives to ensure that women and children are central to peacebuilding efforts, contributing to a just, resilient, and dignified society for all.

## SHAO's Locations

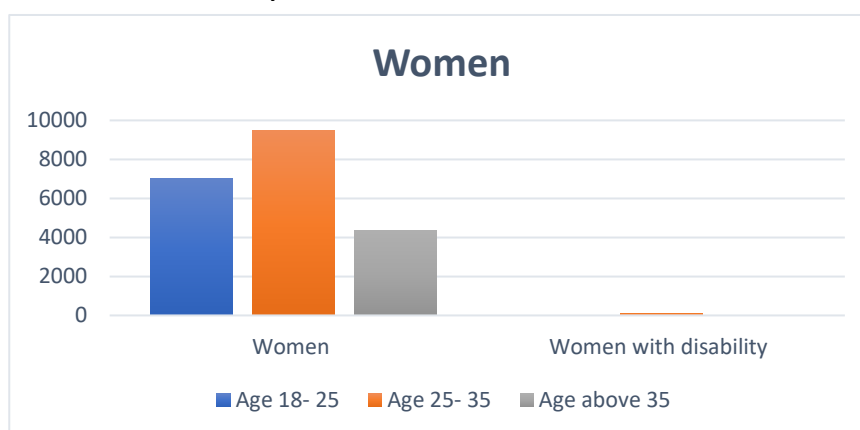
1. **Head Office:** Located in Ramadi, Anbar Governorate, it serves as the central hub for all project operations.
2. **First office:** Located in Kirkuk Governorate, it extends the organization's reach to northern Iraq.
3. **Second Office:** Located in Tikrit, Salah al-Din Governorate, this office supports activities in the surrounding areas.
4. **Third Office:** Located in Mosul, Nineveh Governorate, it extends the organization's reach to northern Iraq.
5. **Fourth Office:** located in Baghdad, this office support to implement the projects in Iraq central.

## Main Achievements: 2023 – 2024

### Direct beneficiaries

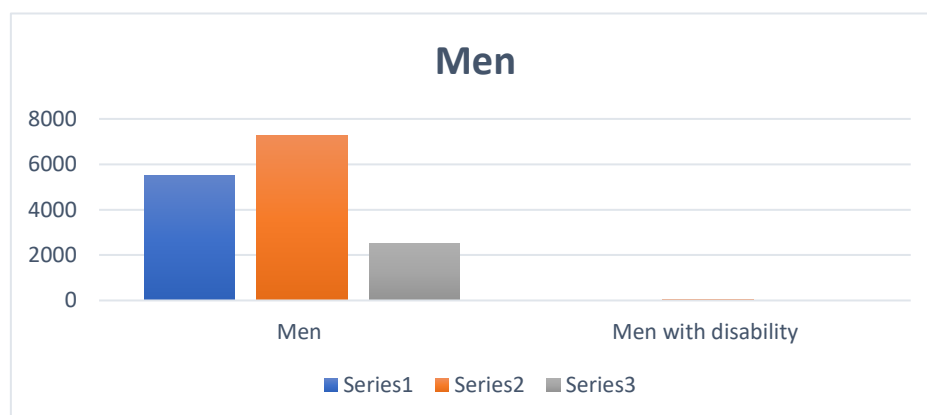
#### 1- Women and girls:

SHAO targeted from 2023 to 2024 about 20850 beneficiaries from women and girls from martialized groups, returnees, divorced, IPDs, social activist, college students, employees, families' leaders, widows, survivors, journalist, lawyers, women, peace and security workers, disabilities, and local authorities. Their ages were from 18 to 60 years.



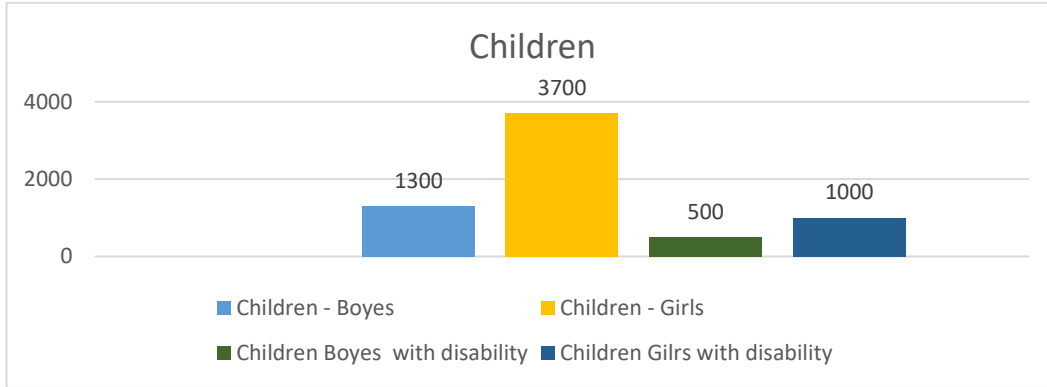
#### 2- Youth and men:

SHAO targeted from 2023 to 2024 about 15250 youth and men from social activist, local authorities, teachers, human rights defenders, disabilities and employees



### 3- Children

SHAO targeted 6500 children in 2023 and 2024 divided into following (1300 boys, 3700 girls, 500 boys with disabilities, 1000 girls with disabilities) from schools, camps and OOSC



### Provided Services

- 1- Advocacy campaigns to combat violence against women and girls:** (You Are the Foundation Campaign) This campaign aims to reduce and eliminate all practices and forms of violence against women and girls and raise their awareness after remaining silent about the violence they face. The campaign targeted abused women and girls in Anbar Governorate, with approximately 26 posts and 18 awareness videos.



**2- Awareness campaigns on Resolution 1325 and the strategic plan for women, peace, and security:** 60 female employees from the Women's Empowerment and Women's Affairs departments at Anbar Governorate universities and government departments were trained on how to write strategic and local plans for Resolution 1325 and monitor its implementation.



**3- Breast Cancer Early Detection Awareness Campaigns:**

SHAO has implemented several annual breast cancer early detection awareness campaigns in October of each year. The campaigns targeted schools and universities, as well as conferences, to reach the largest possible segment of women.



#### 4- Meetings and conferences on the role of women in countering violent extremism and building peace:

SHAO has organized several meetings and conferences on the importance and role of women in countering violent extremism and building peace, considering women as a tool for spreading a culture of peace and tolerance.



#### 5- Back-to-school campaigns for children: SHAO has implemented numerous back-to-school campaigns for children who have dropped out of school and has raised awareness among parents about the importance of involving girls in education, as girls' education is a fundamental requirement for building a cohesive society.



## 6- Education for Peace Programs:

SHAO has engaged nearly 700 young men and women in education for peace programs to spread the values of peace among young men and women in Anbar Governorate, using education as an advocacy tool to promote concepts of tolerance.



## 7- Hearings for women returning from displacement and recording their needs:

SHAO conducted numerous hearings for women returning from displacement camps. Their needs were recorded and discussed with the local government regarding the issuance of identification cards for their children to enable them to enroll in schools, salaries for martyrs' families, and follow-up on other needs with service departments in Anbar and the provincial council.



## 8- Women, Peace, and Security Sub-Network Meetings:

SHAO holds monthly meetings with partner organizations working on women's rights. SHAO chairs this network, working to promote women's rights and discuss progress on the National Plan for Resolution 1325.



## 9- Training workshops for youth to participate in decision-making dialogues:

Engage youth of both genders in training workshops to develop effective communication skills for engaging in dialogues with government agencies, ensuring youth voices are heard and their participation in decision-making.



## 10- Policy discussions that contribute to women's role in addressing climate change:

SHAO has conducted several meetings and conferences to discuss climate public policies and the role of women in addressing climate change in Iraq.



## 11-Dialogue sessions to engage youth in decision-making:

SHAO conducted dialogue sessions with directors of service departments, including the Department of Immigration and Displacement, Community Police, and the Department of Social Welfare in Anbar, to discuss the societal problems facing the community.



## 12-Tree planting campaigns in Ramadi:

SHAO has implemented tree-planting campaigns on main streets and to raise environmental awareness among children. A tree-planting campaign in schools aims to teach children how to grow plants and conserve the environment. This campaign aims to present Ramadi in its most beautiful form and increase vegetation cover for a clean and sustainable environment.



### 13-Training workshops for women's economic empowerment:

SHAO conducted training workshops on handicrafts to empower women economically, enabling them to start small businesses and generate income for them to support their families in the face of difficult living conditions.



### 14-Leadership training workshops for women:

SHAO conducted training workshops on leadership and communication skills, with the training reaching 186 women from Anbar Governorate.



**15-Training workshops for volunteer teams to implement initiatives to promote the rights of children with disabilities and integrate them into basic education:**

SHAO conducted training workshops for volunteer teams in Anbar Governorate to promote the rights of children with disabilities, integrate them into basic schools, and implement initiatives led by volunteer teams in Anbar Governorate.



**16- Legal awareness sessions for parents of children with disabilities:**

SHAO conducted legal awareness sessions, including awareness sessions on amended Article 38, Article 11 of the Law on Persons with Disabilities, their right to basic education, and their integration into primary schools.



## 17-Training workshops on peacebuilding and promoting a culture of community tolerance:

SHAO conducted training workshops for library directors in Baghdad to implement initiatives to promote values of tolerance and reject violent extremism using library textbooks.



## 18-Training workshops on how to convert waste into organic fertilizer:

SHAO conducted training workshops for women interested in the environmental field on how to convert organic waste into organic fertilizers, which can be used as a profession to increase women's income and preserve the environment.



## 19-Dialogue sessions to identify gaps and shortcomings impeding the implementation of the National Plan for Resolution 1325:

SHAO conducted dialogue sessions to identify gaps and shortcomings impeding the implementation of the National Plan for Resolution 1325 in Salah al-Din Governorate, develop a plan for implementing the national plan, and monitor indicators related to its implementation.



## 20-Training workshops on capacity building in the areas of women's rights and leadership for the Women, Peace, and Security agenda:

As part of its ongoing efforts to empower women and enhance their active participation in peacebuilding and decision-making, the organization conducted training workshops in Salah al-Din Governorate. This comes as part of its efforts to raise awareness and build capacity in the areas of women's rights and leadership.



## 21-Training workshops on women's participation in decision-making:

As part of ongoing efforts to support women and enhance their active participation in peacebuilding and decision-making, an initiative titled "Women's Participation in Decision-Making" was implemented in Tikrit, in cooperation with the Salah al-Din Youth and Sports Directorate. This initiative falls within the framework of the project "Women's Leadership for Environmental Justice, Security, and Peace in Salah al-Din Governorate.



## 22-Legal Awareness Sessions:

SHAO held legal awareness sessions as part of the "Strengthening Women's Leadership for Environmental Justice, Security, and Peace" project in Salah al-Din Governorate for marginalized women, displaced persons, returnees, and host women. These sessions aimed to raise women's legal awareness and provide them with basic information to help them understand and defend their rights in various areas of life.



## 23-Electoral Awareness Forum for Political Parties:

SHAO organized a workshop titled "Electoral Awareness Forum for Political Parties," in cooperation with the Shams Network, the Ain Network for Electoral Monitoring, the Organization for Community Development (TOSD), the Norwegian Refugee Council (NPA), and the Independent High Electoral Commission, with support from the European Union. The workshop aimed to enhance political parties' and local community awareness of electoral procedures and ensure broader and more effective participation of women and youth, thus contributing to the consolidation of the principles of democracy and transparency. The workshop included representatives of political parties, activists from civil society organizations, young men and women interested in public affairs, and local media professionals.



## 24-Women's Participation in Climate Change Mitigation and Environmental Policy Promotion:

Within the framework of the project "Promoting Women's Leadership for Environmental Justice, Security, and Peace in Salah al-Din Governorate" for women activists and representatives of local government agencies.



## 25-A training workshop (TOT) on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda:

As part of the project to promote women's leadership for environmental justice, peace, and security in Salah al-Din Governorate, the workshop targeted female activists and community leaders in Salah al-Din Governorate. It focused on building their capacity in the concepts of Resolution 1325 and empowering them with planning and advocacy tools to effectively participate in peace processes and decision-making.



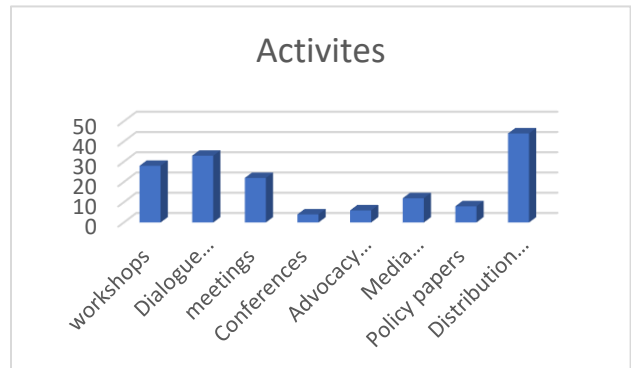
## 26-Social Media Campaigns:

SHAO has implemented numerous media campaigns targeting the local community in Iraq, including women, men, youth, and children, on topics such as peacebuilding and community integration, Resolution 1325, youth involvement in decision-making, combating violence against women, combating violent extremism, and the rights of children with disabilities in education to promoting a culture of tolerance among community members.



## Type of activities:

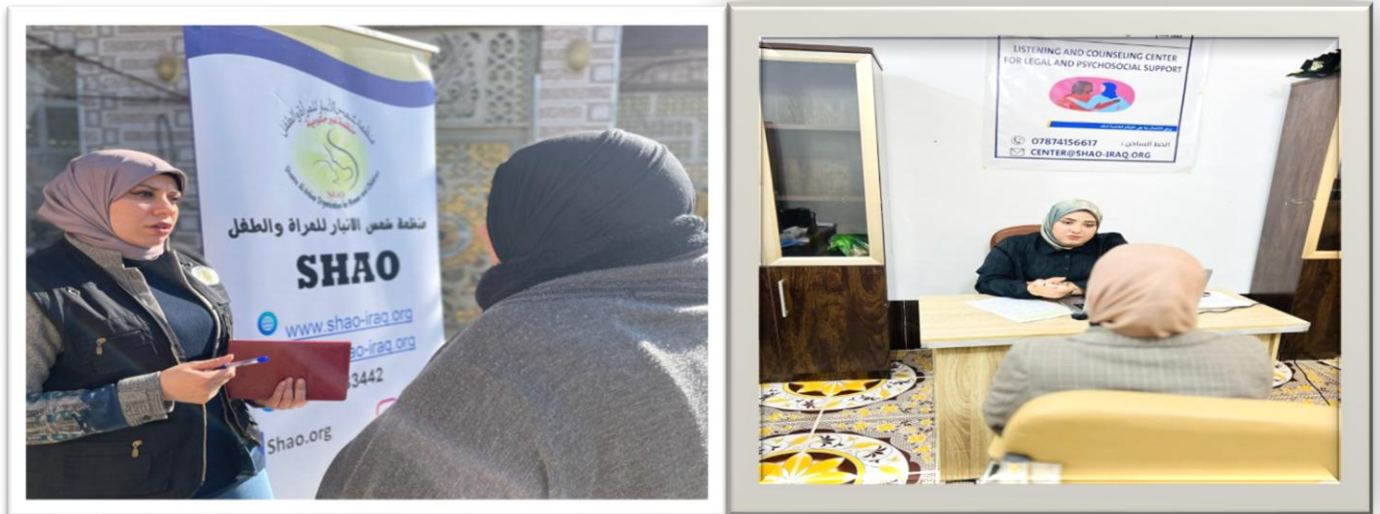
- 1- workshops
- 2- Dialogue sessions
- 3- meetings
- 4- Conferences
- 5- Advocacy campaigns
- 6- Media campaigns
- 7- Policy papers
- 8- Distribution of moral and relief materials



## Our partners

- 1- GIZ
- 2- MICT
- 3- Save The Children
- 4- IOM
- 5- SFG
- 6- UNDP
- 7- NPA
- 8- WFWI

## Guidance Center for Legal and Psychosocial Support



SHAO's Listening and Guidance Center provides legal and psychosocial support services to women facing various challenges in their lives. The center aims to empower women to understand their legal rights by providing specialized legal guidance. It also provides a safe and supportive environment for hearing legal concerns, offering practical solutions that contribute to resolving disputes or taking appropriate legal action. In addition, the center provides psychological support services to individuals facing psychological distress or social problems that impact their daily lives. Psychological sessions are provided in complete confidentiality, with a focus on promoting the mental health of beneficiaries and helping them effectively cope with the challenges they face.

### Specialized Legal Consultations: Legal consultations on various issues.

- Providing a safe and confidential environment for beneficiaries: Providing a safe space that respects individual privacy and confidentiality of information.
- Providing Psychological Support: Providing psychological counseling through a specialized social researcher, helping women overcome crises.
- Promoting legal and psychological awareness.



The center adopts an approach that combines professionalism and compassion, treating each case individually to ensure the most appropriate solutions are provided for each woman based on her unique circumstances. It also seeks to build a relationship of trust with its beneficiaries, contributing to a supportive environment that helps them overcome the obstacles they face.

## Impact

### **SHAO's interventions in 2023–2024 generated significant and lasting impact at the community level:**

1. Strengthening women's participation in decision-making: Regular WPS Sub-Network meetings and youth dialogue trainings increased women's engagement in peace dialogues and enabled their recommendations to be reflected in local policies.
2. Improving access to services for returnee families: Community hearings and follow-up with local authorities helped women secure civil documentation for their children, enabling school enrollment and access to social welfare.
3. Raising awareness on GBV and prevention: The "You Are the Foundation" campaign (26 posts and 18 videos) and other digital campaigns reached thousands with messages on prevention of gender-based violence, tolerance, and inclusion.
4. Creating alternative economic pathways: Handicraft and vocational training programs supported women-headed households to launch small home-based businesses, generating income and improving family resilience.
5. Integrating climate and environment into the WPS agenda: Environmental campaigns, including school-based tree planting and climate policy dialogues, engaged women and youth in promoting sustainability and resilience.

## Success Story

### **Fatima (24), a returnee widow from Anbar:**

After returning from displacement, Fatima struggled to provide for her two children. She joined SHAO's handicraft training program, where she learned production, pricing, and basic marketing. Within two months, she started selling small items in her neighborhood. Six months later, she expanded her product line, participated in a local community exhibition organized by SHAO, and increased her household income significantly. Today, Fatima not only supports her family but also

trains two younger women in her community on the same skills, proving how economic empowerment can multiply its effect and inspire others.

## Lessons Learned

1. Institutional partnerships accelerate impact: Collaboration with government departments, schools, and universities improved legitimacy and responsiveness to community needs.
2. Linking economic empowerment with peacebuilding ensures sustainability: Combining livelihood opportunities with leadership and dialogue training enhanced women's resilience and community participation.
3. Targeted digital campaigns are highly effective: Clear messaging supported by multimedia content (videos, infographics) generated more engagement than text-based outreach alone.
4. Learning-by-doing builds youth confidence: Involving youth directly in decision-making simulations and dialogue with authorities increased their practical leadership skills.
5. Evidence-based advocacy drives change: Documenting needs and presenting data-backed cases encouraged faster administrative responses and service delivery.

## Challenges, Risks, and Mitigation

### 1- Funding fluctuations and delays:

Risk: Project timelines and outreach may be disrupted.

Mitigation: Diversify donor base, adopt flexible budget scenarios, and design scalable activities with phased funding.

### 2- Sensitive security context:

Risk: Restricted access to target areas or postponement of activities.

Mitigation: Apply strict safety protocols, identify alternative locations, adopt hybrid (online/offline) approaches, and update risk assessments weekly.

### 3- Social stigma affecting survivors:

Risk: Survivors of GBV may avoid seeking help or participating publicly.

Mitigation: Ensure confidentiality, use discreet referral pathways, involve trusted community women leaders, and offer remote/individual support options.

### 4- Administrative barriers in service delivery:

Risk: Delays in issuing documents or accessing social welfare programs.

Mitigation: Track individual cases through follow-up lists, establish MoUs with relevant departments, and organize joint “one-stop service” days.

### 5- Digital divide in vulnerable groups:

Risk: Limited access to online campaigns among rural and marginalized groups.

Mitigation: Use mixed outreach channels (community radio, posters, in-person sessions), mobile awareness teams, and provide basic digital literacy training through community centers.

## Monitoring & Evaluation (M\&E)

**SHAO applies a results-based M\&E framework to measure progress, capture learning, and demonstrate accountability to donors and communities:**

- 1- Data Collection:** Tools include field surveys, pre/post activity questionnaires, key informant interviews, focus groups, and community feedback sessions. Data is disaggregated by age, gender, and vulnerability status (e.g., returnees, persons with disabilities).
- 2- Baselines and Targets:** Each project establishes a baseline to measure progress against defined targets, ensuring accurate assessment of improvements.
- 3- Verification Mechanisms:** Site visits, partner observations, photo documentation, and activity reports are used to validate results.
- 4- Community Participation:** Feedback from beneficiaries is incorporated through satisfaction surveys and reflection sessions, ensuring programs remain relevant.
- 5- Learning and Adaptation:** Periodic review meetings allow staff to analyze data, identify lessons, and adjust programs in real time.

**6- Reporting:** SHAO produces interim and final reports that present indicators achieved, success stories, challenges, and recommendations for future programming.

This system ensures that SHAO not only delivers on its commitments but also continuously improves program quality, enhances transparency, and strengthens evidence-based advocacy.

## Conclusion & Future Plans

The year 2023–2024 marked an important milestone for SHAO in expanding its programs, strengthening its partnerships, and amplifying the voices of women, youth, and children across Iraq. Through holistic interventions that combined protection, empowerment, advocacy, and community engagement, the organization not only delivered tangible results but also built long-term foundations for peace and social cohesion.

## Looking ahead, SHAO aims to:

- 1- Expand programs on climate change and environmental justice, linking them with the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda.
- 2- Strengthen institutional capacity in monitoring, evaluation, and digital reporting to enhance transparency and accountability.
- 3- Scale up economic empowerment initiatives for widows, returnee women, and women-headed households to ensure sustainable livelihoods.
- 4- Develop innovative youth-led projects, including digital storytelling, media advocacy, and civic engagement.
- 5- Deepen advocacy with government institutions and decision-makers, ensuring women's and children's rights remain at the center of local and national policies.
- 6- Broaden partnerships with UN agencies, international NGOs, and local networks, to secure more resources and multiply impact.