

## Four Month WFWPI Fellowships With IREX's Community Solutions Program

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Being selected for the Community Solutions Program (CSP) funded by the U.S. Department of State and implemented by IREX was an incredible opportunity. Out of 11,000 applicants, I was chosen to represent Iraq for the 2024 fellowship. This experience, particularly my placement with the Women's Federation for World Peace International (WFWPI) Office for UN Relations in New York, has been life-changing. It helped me grow as a leader and provided the skills and confidence to develop and implement the Young Global Women Peace Ambassadors (YGWPA) program in Iraq.



### Building Leadership Through Mentorship

At WFWPI, I felt welcomed and supported, as if I were part of a big family. The mentorship I received was not only helpful but also inspiring. My host collaborator and the director went beyond just guiding me - they showed me how to lead with empathy, purpose, and vision. They were always there to encourage me, share their experiences, and provide advice. This gave me the confidence to take on a leadership role within the organization and helped me to grow both personally and professionally.

As the project lead designer for the YGWPA program, I applied my experience in monitoring and evaluation. I worked on creating frameworks, designing project indicators, and developing strategies to make the program impactful. This was an invaluable learning experience that helped me develop skills in program design and implementation, which will be essential for bringing the YGWPA program to Iraq.

### Global Exposure and Inspiration

One of the highlights of my fellowship was attending the Summit of the Future and its side events at the United Nations. Meeting leaders from around the world, all focused on creating a better world, was incredibly inspiring. It showed me that no matter where we are from, we all share a

common goal: building a world of peace, justice, and understanding. Despite our differences, we are united in our mission.

These experiences broadened my understanding of peacebuilding and leadership. I realized that even though we face different challenges in Iraq and the Middle East, the key to peace is rooted in collaboration, empathy, and shared humanity. This global exposure reinforced my belief that by working together, we can create solutions to even the most complex problems.



### **Designing Peace Education for Iraq**

Working on the YGWPA program deepened my understanding of how peace education can change communities. The program uses Track 2 diplomacy - building trust and understanding through forgiveness, empathy, and shared prosperity. These values are essential for Iraq, where decades of conflict have caused deep divisions.

For me, the YGWPA program is like my second child. It represents my vision for a peaceful, united Iraq where young women have the tools to lead and rebuild their communities. I believe that the program can create a ripple effect, inspiring women to take on leadership roles and work together for peace.

### **Challenges That Built Resilience**

Not every day was easy. One particularly challenging day involved balancing multiple responsibilities while navigating cultural and professional differences. It was stressful, but it taught me valuable lessons in patience,

adaptability, and problem-solving. Challenges like these helped me grow as a leader, strengthening my ability to stay calm under pressure and find solutions when faced with obstacles.



### **A Shared Philosophy of Peace**

One of the leadership philosophies at WFWPI that resonated deeply with me is the idea of serving with empathy and purpose. This aligns with my own belief that leadership is about lifting others up and helping them succeed.

WFWPI's focus on "peace through heart-centered reconciliation" is another philosophy that stands out in the YGWPA program. It emphasizes the power of forgiveness, healing, and trust-building in creating long-lasting peace. I believe that by adopting this approach, we can begin to heal divisions, build stronger relationships, and create a world of peace, starting in our own communities.

### **A Vision for the Future**

As I prepare to bring the YGWPA program to Iraq, I feel equipped and inspired to make a difference. My goal is to empower young women with leadership skills and encourage a culture of understanding, empathy, and reconciliation. I plan to organize workshops, mentor the next generation of leaders, and build networks that will help create lasting change in my community.

These four months have been a journey of learning, growth, and transformation. They've reinforced my belief that change begins with individuals who are willing to take action and work for a better world. With the knowledge and experiences I've gained, I

am ready to lead initiatives that will inspire others to create a more peaceful, just, and empowered world.