



**Walk for Iraq UK 2011** is fundraising for the **Help the Needy Charitable Trust's**

***'Empowering the widows of Mesopotamia'*** project

### **Project Background**

Over the past few decades, time and time again, the scale of the economical and social challenges facing Iraqi women, especially the unprivileged and vulnerable widows who were highly affected by the failed national food and social-security system; has often been highlighted by the international humanitarian community, local Iraqi charities and the media. However, little has been achieved and delivered in order to bring real change to the lives of Iraqi women to stop their suffering because of the prolonged economical sanctions, a failed educational system, war conditions, displacement and unequal opportunities which contributed towards the lack of job related skills and knowledge.

To address the development issues for Iraqi women, Dr. Lamees Ibrahim, a regular participant in our Walk for Iraq events, is collaborating with Help the Needy and are jointly initiating a project to develop the capacity and skills of Iraqi widows, to empower and provide them with the essential skills in order to compete in the labour market and start earning money to provide the basic needs of their families and children.

### **Charity Background**

Help the Needy Charitable Trust is a UK - registered international relief charity, with its core specialist focus on Orphans and Widows in its widest context. The aim is to serve the needy with a holistic approach and the general needs of women and children (orphans and widows) to enable them to maintain both strong and long-term self-reliance and development. This will include areas of supplying means for food, primary healthcare and education. Help the Needy is very particular about serving the broad needs of the affected people.

### **Project Rational**

The uniqueness of the training programme is that the course will be designed according to the demand and requirements of the local job market and aim to help the widows acquire necessary skills and to develop existing skills to start earning money as soon as the training is completed. The objective is to reach out to widows in rural as well as poor and underdeveloped urban neighbourhoods. All women are treated equally regardless of their background and religion.

This project is particularly important because of its multi-dimension nature, on one hand the training will empower widows economically to become self reliant, self-sufficient and productive, furthermore, it will enable them to the means of providing daily life essentials for their families, enrol and keep their children in schools, this will

contribute towards achieving higher school attendance stated in Goal 2 of the UN's MDGs on Achieving Universal Primary Education.

In addition, the project aims to support self-employed women with a loan to start their small business with minimal capital; loans will be repaid by beneficiaries according to agreed monthly instalments which are manageable by the beneficiary. The charity centre in Baghdad conducted a very similar project two years ago with huge success and they will manage the whole program from start to end, including loan and repayments etc.

### **Project Beneficiaries**

The project aims to serve widows with two types of educational background:

1. Women with no education
2. Women with basic education

### **Selection Criteria**

Widows will be selected based on the following:

1. Widows living on low or limited monthly income
2. Widows with children under the age of 15
3. Widows providing for other dependents such as parents
4. Widows caring for dependents with permanent illness or with special needs

### **Course design**

Beneficiaries will participate in training courses covering the following topics:

- Basic Information technology and office administration skills
- Sewing, embroidery and rug weaving
- Baking and cake decoration
- Basic Sales and Marketing techniques

Specialised trainers will be hired throughout the project to deliver the appropriate training.

Qualified widows have volunteered to help in supporting and training and we will use their help whenever possible.

### **Contact names**

Dr Lamees Ibrahim who will be conducting the project at [lamees.ibrahim@gmail.com](mailto:lamees.ibrahim@gmail.com)

Halah Al- Janabi, International Projects Manager at Help the Needy Charitable Trust  
[iint.projects@helphtheneedy.org.uk](mailto:iint.projects@helphtheneedy.org.uk)

### **Websites**

Help the Needy Charitable Trust: [www.helphtheneedy.org.uk](http://www.helphtheneedy.org.uk)

Walk for Iraq: [www.walkforiraq.com](http://www.walkforiraq.com)