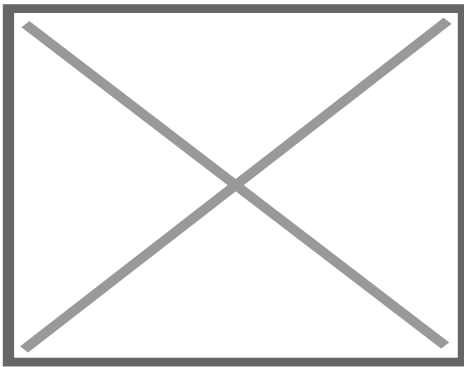


Hope for newborns in Iraq

The Army births a program to ensure safe deliveries.

by Buffy Lincoln –



Students practice taking blood pressure. [Photo courtesy of International Headquarters]



The Salvation Army and The Iraqi Salvation Humanitarian Organization (ISHO) partnered together to develop a plan to guarantee Iraqi women’s access to appropriate medical assistance during and after their pregnancies and ensure that babies receive vital nursing assistance to survive childbirth.

The mortality rate of newborns in some parts of Iraq is staggeringly high, especially in remote areas. Many pregnant mothers must face their entire nine-month pregnancy period without medical assistance because hospitals are scarce and difficult to reach. Women are sometimes barred from receiving help—even when hospitals are accessible—from male doctors due to religious and cultural objections.

The end result of the two organizations’ brainstorming was the establishment of a 12-week birthing certification program in Wassit, Iraq. The course is designed for women between the ages of 18 and 40 to study, train in, and practice skills necessary to effectively aid in the conception-to-birth process. With access to a trained midwife, expectant Iraqi mothers have no need for expensive and inaccessible medical centers. Trained females also provide support when male care is prohibited.

A graduation “celebration” is held for those students who successfully complete the training course and pass an academic exam. The program certificate is recognized by the Iraq Ministry of Health and qualifies the recipient to legally practice as a midwife or a traditional birth attendant in any area of Iraq.

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Please pray for these Iraqi needs:

1. For the graduates as they assume their new responsibilities
2. For the continual shortage of employment opportunities for women in Wassit
3. For a pro-active Iraqi government in re-establishing freedom for Iraqi women

ISHO was set up by The Salvation Army to assume the work in Iraq when its emergency relief team left. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) provided funding for this course.

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