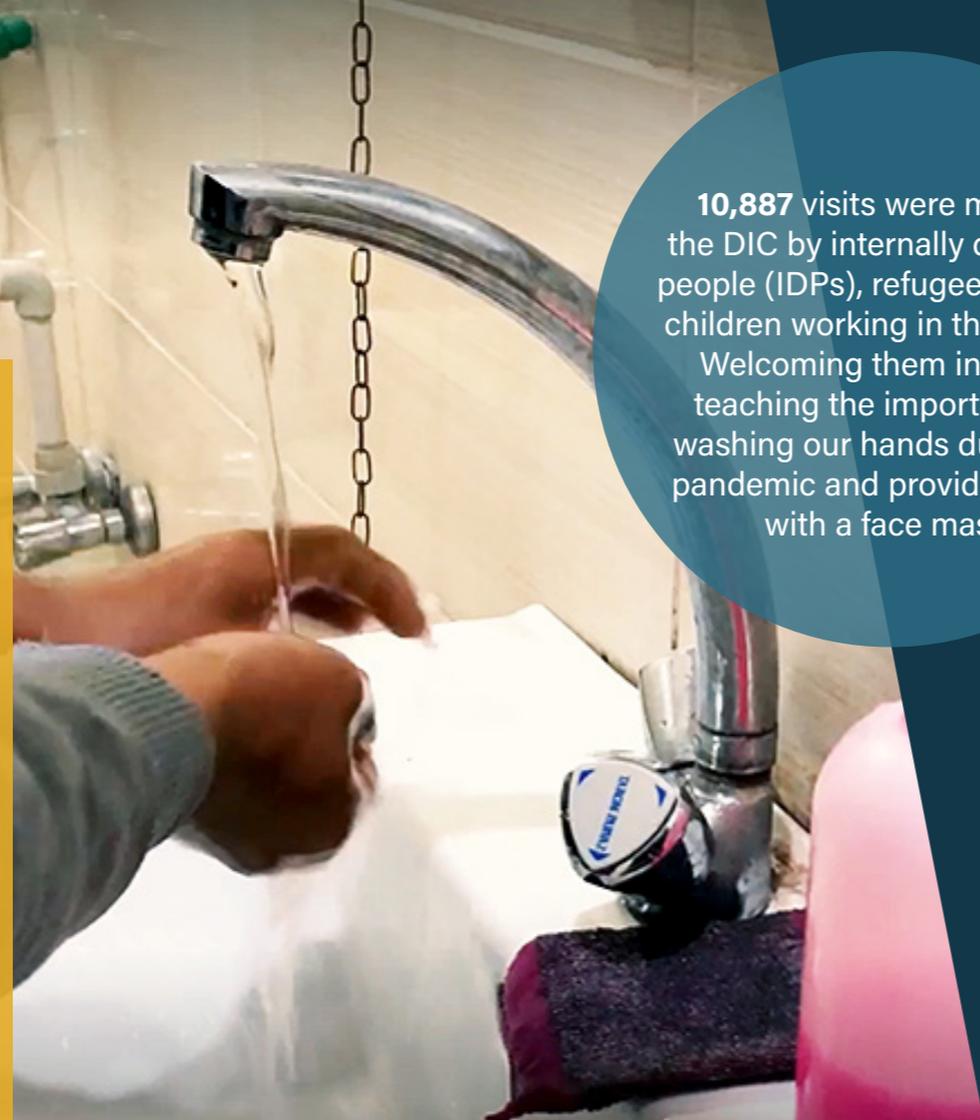




# Impact Report for 2021

STEP seeks to protect some of the most vulnerable children in Iraq in ways that become locally sustainable.





**10,887** visits were made to the DIC by internally displaced people (IDPs), refugee and local children working in the market. Welcoming them included teaching the importance of washing our hands during the pandemic and providing them with a face mask.

**The Drop In Centre (DIC)** is STEP's first project; a child friendly space in the heart of the Sulaymaniyah bazar. It first opened its doors to working children in January 2002.

Puppet shows are just one of the ways children are supported, with awareness sessions covering topics such as puberty, children's rights and health.

**166** children attended puppet shows

**58** children attended art sessions

**134** children received group therapy

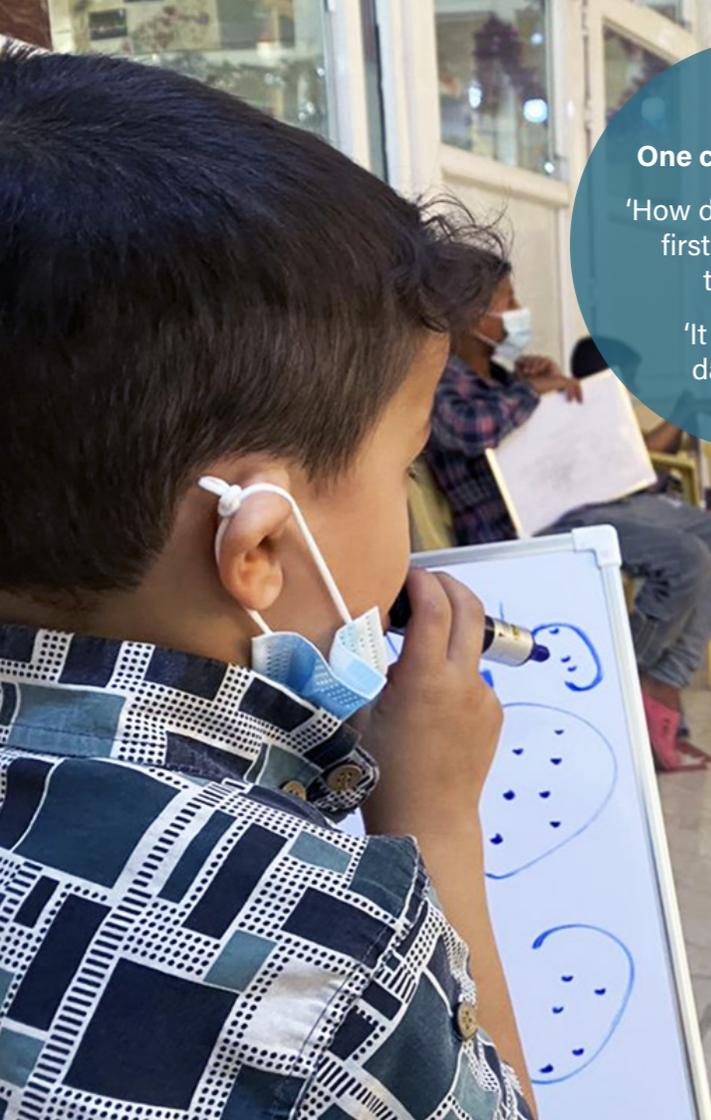
**159** children received art therapy

**Case management of vulnerable children:**

**103** home visits

**77** Telephone follow-up sessions





**One child was asked:**

'How did you feel on the first day we visited the school?'

'It was the best day of my life.'

**The DIC provides a safe place for:**

- Play and relaxation
- Informal small-group education
- Psychosocial activities
- Peacebuilding activities
- Medical support

**8,404** attendances to literacy sessions

**32** children were provided with books and school equipment

**11** children were helped to return to school



**DISTRIBUTION**

Food packages were distributed to **67** homes

**221** children received other items such as hats, gloves, socks etc.

**220** children received clothes/shoes

**53** children received teddy bears/toys



# ARBAT

## REFUGEE CAMP

The Arbat refugee camp is home to over 9,000 Syrian refugees. Over half of these are children. **1,518** children attended STEP's child friendly spaces in the Arbat refugee camp. A total of **11,280** visits were made and case management follow-up was provided for **165** different vulnerable and at-risk children.

STEP's Child Protection Unit (CPU) is located in the camp. Here social workers identify the most vulnerable children, make sure that they have the protection they need and address anything that puts them at greater risk. In 2021, the CPU managed **233** child protection cases and followed up **867** cases, with an impressive **1,824** attendances at art therapy sessions.

We were able to fund an extra support worker for STEP's Special Needs Unit. **13** special needs cases received support through **88** sessions in November and December. A further **5** other special needs cases received **60** educational support sessions.



One of the ways STEP supports vulnerable children and their families in the camp is education.

**85** children attended a Kurdish course

**77** children attended an English course

**35** children accessed a computer course

**450** children attended homework support sessions (pictured above).



### Climbing training sessions were attended by:

- 144 children from the Arbat Refugee Camp (ARC)
- 25 children from the Drop-in Centre (DIC)
- 55 children who are supported by Mobile Teams
- 9 visually impaired adults and 15 staff members

### Outdoor rock climbing activities were provided in different sites:

- 5 day trips for children from the ARC
- 5 day trips for children from the DIC
- 1 day for visually impaired adults
- 1 staff day

We are privileged to be able to offer climbing sessions, run by a qualified climbing instructor.

These are:

- Empowering
- Increase confidence
- Build resilience

## MOBILE TEAMS

In partnership with UNHCR, STEP operated five mobile child protection teams to identify and provide support to at risk internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugee children living across the Sulaymaniyah governorate. They operated across five child support centres.

58 Best Interest Assessments were conducted by social workers for vulnerable children

Over 300 children participated in a structured psychosocial support programmes I-DEAL, Little Fellow, and Win Win, conducted in the child support centres

264 children provided with child protection case management services:  
103 IDP children  
144 Syrian refugee children  
17 non-Syrian refugee children



## EMPOWERING YOUTH

The mobile teams established youth committees from a mix of local, internally displaced and refugee youth. They were encouraged and supported to provide activities and facilitate youth-led initiatives. For example:

The Hwana Child Support Center Youth Committee coordinated an activity for 12th grade Syrian refugee students. **48** Syrian refugee students participated. The aim was to raise student awareness of the right of education.



## TRAINING / EQUIPPING

**15** parenting sessions were delivered to **153** mothers/caregivers (**132** Syrian refugees and **21** IDPs), which included understanding children's psychological needs and strategies for recovering from tension.

**10** sessions were provided for **89** parents/caregivers (**55** Syrian refugees, **5** non-Syrian refugees and **29** IDPs) on depression, punishment alternatives etc.

**12** child protection training sessions were provided to **130+** government employees and child protection staff on topics including Child Marriage, Child Labour, Child Protection from Sexual Harassment and Exploitation.

**150** children received distribution of dignity kits, toilet seats, stationary, school back-packs, clothes, diapers, shoes, wool and knitting tools, anti-lice shampoo, juice and biscuits.

**180+** children were referred to medical services and other NGOs for more services.

Across 5 centres:

**1,900+** beneficiaries attended sessions on Children Rights and protection from COVID

**900+** children participated in general recreational or educational activities such as drawing, sport, handcrafts, English/ Kurdish/ Arabic sessions

**2,350** children participated in awareness sessions on other topics: personal hygiene, respect, homework, time management, negative impacts of fast food

Group and individual support sessions provided for **150+** children and youth and **240+** parents and caregivers





Matt & Rahem trained all STEP staff on peace building in 2021, providing one day of face-to-face training for each group.

255 children from the DIC attended peace building sessions. In one of these regular sessions children are asked to guess the ethnicity of other children from looking at their feet!

On the International Day of Living Together in Peace, the Mobile Teams ran a football match in Barika local stadium, which aimed to promote social cohesion and peace building among young people. 30+ young people from different communities participated.



# FOSTER CARE

This project is vital to STEP's mission of protecting vulnerable children. In 2015 STEP started work with the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) to develop a foster care system. The piloting phase finished late 2020 and we are at the stage of reviewing the work, writing up policy, and amending the training before we can roll-out. STEP is providing technical support (training/advice) whilst the KRG implements the work.

As part of a pilot project in 2016 a government Foster Care Section was established. The Section, called the Foster Family Section (FFS) is part of the Social Care Directorate structure. It's been functioning for four years, and is staffed by a Manager, six social workers and an administrator. Covid and economic factors have limited the work of the Section in 2020. Funding within the Government System and clearer legislation is now needed to run the service; support the foster families, children and social workers so that the service continues to be safe for the children.

3 meetings with the Government on new child law & how foster care relates to that  
12 meetings with the High Committee from the Ministry  
3 meetings about the Operational Manual detailing the FFS procedures, forms, etc.  
1 legal meeting with a judge about a child

Currently 21 foster families have been approved. 16 foster families have children placed with them and there are 18 children in a safe, caring foster family.

4 training workshops with the FFS social workers to prepare for roll-out  
9 practice support sessions with FFS social workers



Before

### Javed\* is 11 years old.

His family was internally displaced within Iraq 7 years ago. He works in the market near the DIC - his family depends on his income. Javed has a stutter and suffers neglect from his family.

He loves to attend the DIC, especially the art therapy sessions. At first Javed was drawing planes, bombs and danger symbols, because the war was affecting his mindset. After visiting the DIC, he has started to imagine more positive things which can be seen in his drawing.

His family are being supported to get him back into school.



After

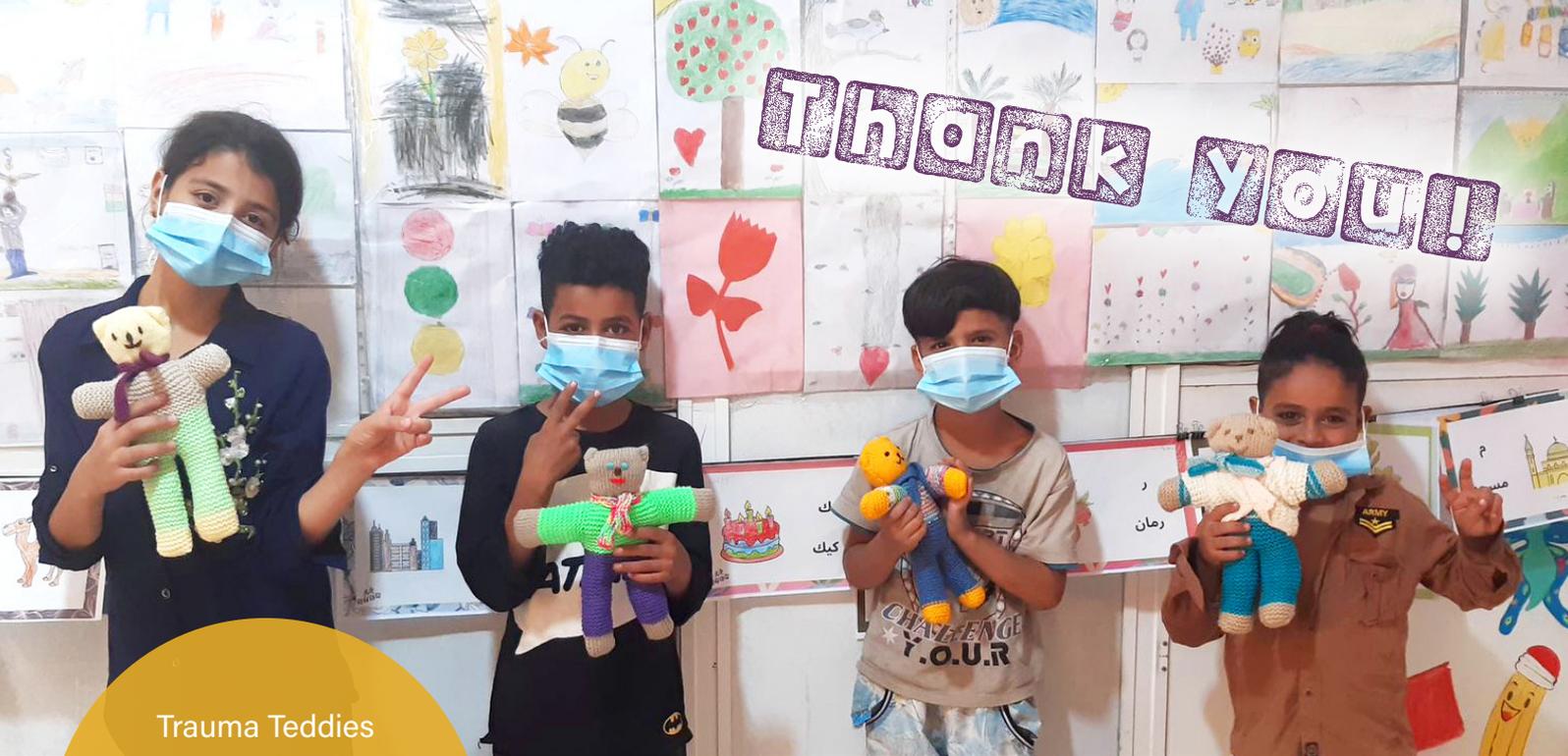
### Meet Aaida\*. She is 5 years old. (left)

Aaida's family fled from Syria to Iraq. At first Aaida was very shy and cried a lot. When she started to attend STEP's activities in the little friendly space, she became more confident and cried less.

"I do not want anything, because I know the center is taking care of our children when they come [to the ARC], and they get useful activities, I just want my daughter to be more confident." Her mother said.

Aaida's favourite part of the center is playing with the tools in the toy kitchen. She likes drawing and always tries to write and learn. Aaida overcame her shyness, making friends and sharing her toys with them.

\*All children's names have been changed for confidentiality



Thank YOU!

Trauma Teddies and blankets are very important to the children. We are especially grateful to everyone who knitted them in 2021.

Thank you so much for standing with STEP to say that these children are important. Your support has provided them with education, play, space to process their emotions, and hope.

Our Annual Report is available on the Charity Commission website, or find out more at:

Website: [step-uk.org](http://step-uk.org)

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