



Heevie



Prof. Alessandro Frigiola
Founder of Bambini Cardiopatici nel
Mondo Association , Director of
Pediatric and Adult Congenital Cardiac
Surgery at the IRCCS Policlinico San
Donato in Milan

Dr Halkawt Ali Nuri
The first Iraqi Kurdish surgeon
specialized in pediatric heart diseases in
Milan-Italy

Background

Due to the policies of the central Iraqi governments perpetrated during the 1900s and the persecutions carried out against the Kurdish population during the 1970s-1990s, the Kurdistan region has suffered greatly in all aspects of life and in the sectors of basic service provision, including health, education and the economy. The continuous wars and the prolonged use of chemical bombings during the 80s and 90s have caused serious pathologies and long-term effects on the exposed population and increased the onset of genetic diseases which are generally rare but unfortunately very widespread in the Kurdistan region, where There remains a lack of skills and healthcare infrastructure needed to provide adequate care.

The internal conflict in Iraq which broke out in June 2014 with the conquest of Mosul by the armed groups of opposition to the Iraqi regime and the army of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISIS) has caused one of the largest internal exoduses of the population to which has never been witnessed in the history of humanity: at the moment official sources report 1.8 million internal refugees in Iraq. In the area of the Duhok governorate (Iraqi Kurdistan Region) there are over five hundred thousand internal refugees out of a resident population of approximately seven hundred thousand inhabitants. 65% of the population is under 30 years old.

The area of the Duhok governorate, which includes in addition to the city of Duhok also the provinces of Zakho, Semel and Amediye, on the borders with Syria and Turkey, hosts the largest number of internal refugees, over five hundred thousand, out of a resident population of approximately one million seven hundred thousand inhabitants. This is because this is the geographical area on the borders with Syria and Turkey, where the religious minorities reside, made up of Christians and Yazidis, persecuted by the Islamic army, or refugees from nearby Mosul, Nineveh, Kirkuk and Syria, opponents of ISIS. Official data reported by the United Nations.

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) highlight the persistence of a serious humanitarian crisis in the region, which is expected to show no signs of improvement in 2023, due to the ongoing crises in the areas neighboring Iranian, Turkish and Syrian Kurdistan, and due to the impossibility of internal refugees already present in the area to return to their territories of origin: most of the villages of origin were destroyed by ISIS and many territories are still mined . Furthermore, in many areas of Iraq, security is not guaranteed for the ethnic groups that have been subject to persecution by ISIS.

Fig. 1 Severity of the humanitarian crisis in Iraq and number of people in need by district (from UN-OCHA 2022)

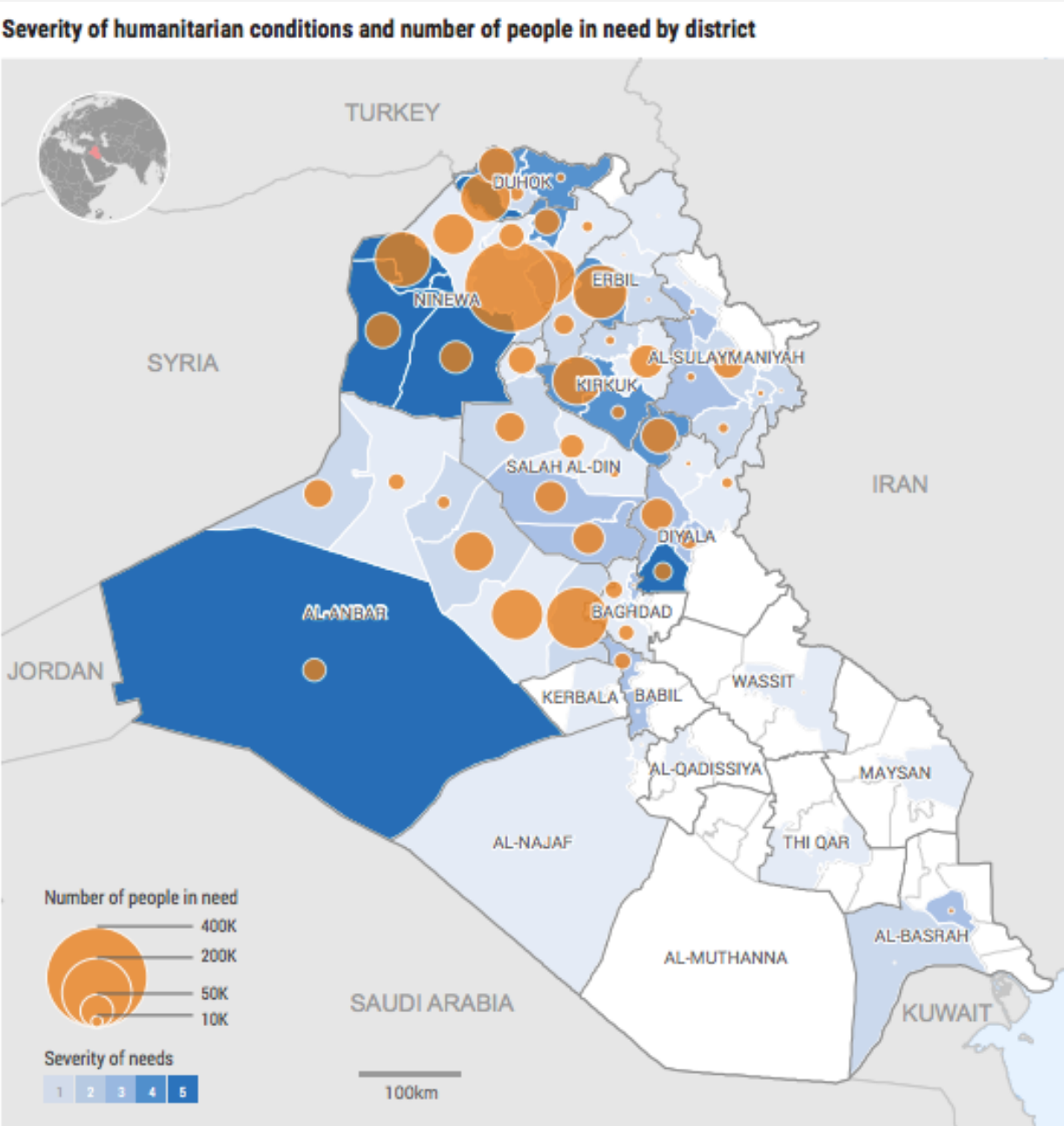
In such crisis conditions, the presence of disabilities, even if slight, can have serious and devastating repercussions on the entire community, from a human, psychological and social perspective. Since 2005, the Heevie Organization, in collaboration and with the support of several international organizations and agencies such as the World Health Organization and Italian, German, Spanish and American organizations, has implemented a series of activities at different levels of healthcare, and in particular the care of patients suffering from congenital diseases, the construction and rehabilitation of health facilities, the training and development of the skills of health personnel, the provision of primary health care to internally displaced persons and refugees, the provision of mental health and psychosocial support, providing physiotherapy and medical rehabilitation services, supporting health facilities, health centers and public hospitals with medicines, devices and medical supplies.

The area subject to the intervention is shown schematically in figure 1

During 2022-23, the activity continued in the public health, social and humanitarian aid sectors for refugees, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health of the Autonomous Region of Kurdistan and the international organizations present in the area: UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO.

The HEEVIE organization has in particular guaranteed free, fair and indiscriminate access to care for over ten thousand people - among the most vulnerable groups of the population, regardless of gender, religious, ethnic and social differences.

The users of the services provided are mostly displaced, refugees, indigent and vulnerable people. In particular, free basic healthcare was provided, free medicines, psychiatric support services, rehabilitation and physiotherapy services were provided in fifteen IDPs camps in the areas of Nineveh, Erbil, Duhok as part of the ad hoc coordination table established by UN - United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) in the Iraqi Autonomous Region.



The Story

The story of the friendship between an Italian and a Kurdish woman from Iraq is one that has led to a remarkable project that has helped the people of Kurdistan. It all began in 1997, in the city of Siena, in the center of Italy, where Bakshan, a journalist from the Kurdish radio station in Baghdad, and Iole Pinto, a physicist working on the environment, met by chance. Little did they know that this chance encounter would lead to a lifelong friendship and a project that would make a difference in the lives of many.

Bakshan, a political refugee from Iraq came to Italy in 1991 after the Second Gulf War to liberate Kuwait from the Iraqi occupation, under which it was imposed economic sanctions on Iraq to 2003. She was selling watercolors to foreign tourists. She too was a foreigner, but from a land that at the time had no possibility of return: Kurdistan. As they got to know each other, Bakshan began to share the stories of her homeland with Iole. She spoke of the struggles and hardships that the people of Iraqi Kurdistan were facing, particularly the children who were dying in orphanages due to hunger, cold, and neglect.

Moved by these stories, Iole and Bakshan felt the need to do something, even if it was just a small gesture of solidarity towards the people of Kurdistan. They sought the help of a friend, Vittorio Meoni, who had been a partisan during the Second World War and was loved and respected in the city of Siena. With his support, and that of other friends and family members from both sides, they founded a voluntary association called 'Solidarity Initiatives' in 1997.

Led by Dr. Iole Pinto and Ms. Bakshan Ali, the association aimed to help the Kurdistan region, which was suffering from the effects of the Second Gulf War and the economic blockade imposed by the central government of Iraq. The project was born out of a deep sense of empathy and a desire to make a difference in the lives of those who were suffering.

The association's first project was to provide aid to children in Iraqi Kurdistan. They collected donations and organized fundraising events to purchase food, clothing, and medicine for the children in orphanages. They also collaborated with local organizations in Kurdistan to provide educational and recreational activities for the children. In 1998 they entered Iraqi Kurdistan territory for the first time from Qamishli, a Kurdish town in northern Syria, the only possible route for volunteers like them. The passage across the Syrian border was carried out by illegal immigrants on a small motor boat they carried the money they had laboriously collected in Italy tightly around.

In addition to the embargo and international bureaucracy, crossing the border on the Tigris also made the transport of bulky goods and humanitarian aid practically impossible. Hundreds of children died from simple untreated infections, because there were no doctors and health facilities, thousands of sick children that they met everywhere, in orphanages, on the streets, who asked to do something for them, children with blue lips, shortness of breath, born with malformed hearts, with faces deformed by harelips, children crippled and ankylosed, blind from mines or infections. There were no hospitals in Kurdistan, There were no doctors, The Kurds could not leave Kurdistan. Reading the pain on the faces of the mothers, a lot of them widows, the pain of helplessly witnessing the suffering of their sick children, after years of persecution, of escape under gas, of mines, of endless wars.

Since then they continued bringing aids to Social care centers for orphans of Duhok, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah and the refugee camps and villages...just drops in the ocean, they knew that, but these drops were badly needed.

The project has also helped to break the silence and raise awareness about the suffering of the Kurdish people, It has shown that even in the darkest of times the power of friendship and solidarity can bring about positive change. It stands as a testament to the power of empathy and the impact that a small group of dedicated individuals can have in creating a better world and bring about positive change in the world.

Then in 2003 the borders opened... Bakshan managed to organize treatment in Baghdad for some children with heart disease. The first interventions succeed.... But the journey to Baghdad is increasingly risky and difficult.



Dr Iole Pinto and Miss Bakshan Aziz



They begin the search in Italy for doctors willing to help us treat these children...at the beginning it wasn't easy. Finally, in 2005 they met organization IME (Dr. Ilja Gardi) and brave doctors from prestigious Italian pediatric hospitals and from the "Cardiopathic Children in the World" Association willing to help us treat our children that Bakshan had continued to include in an ever-longer list.

From that moment on, initiatives to improve the care of children began and have never stopped, in collaboration with a network of Italian institutions and associations willing to collaborate on our projects: thanks to this network, thousands of children have been operated on in Kurdistan, and as many, which would not have been possible to operate in Kurdistan, were transferred and treated in Italy and this was the reason for establishing the local organization Heevie in 2005 , and in cooperation with SIA NGO took the initiative to build up the first a data base for Congenital Heart Diseases patients in Kurdistan, the process of collecting all the necessary data has taken lot of time, following up with patients and contacting their doctors and parents to update information on their current conditions to help out the patient and to set up plans for treatment.

- The database was then presented to the Italian organizations IME and MED CHILD to support a project to treat pediatric patients and train local staff. Heevie succeeded in signing the 2006-2007 pilot project agreement with the Italian organization IME, SIA and MED CHILD to treat congenital heart diseases patients in addition to other diseases such as blood disorders. (Thalassemia) and (Leukemia) - and many cancer diseases, pediatric surgery, Urological diseases, and congenital malformations in Italy and Kurdistan, in addition to training local medical staff.
- The general management of the project has been entrusted by IME, MedChild to the Government Commissioner Dr. Ilja Gardi - the Solidarity Initiatives (SIA) and Heevie are committed to implementing the project within the region.
- The resident representative of the project in Kurdistan is the Director of Heevie Org. Ms. Bakhshan Ali Aziz, who coordinates all operational aspects of the project in close cooperation with the IME, SIA and Med Child Rome office.

Actions undertaken and results



Kurdistan Regional Government President Nechirvan Barzani , prof. Ilja Gardi , Dr Iole Pinto and Miss Bakshan Aziz

- On the 5th of April 2006 IME (Dr. Ilja Gardi) and Kurdistan Regional Government President (Nechirvan Barzani) signed and ratified a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishing the terms and conditions of the Cooperation activities to be implemented to achieve an effective and efficient healthcare services provision in Kurdistan whose main beneficiaries are the patients and their families who will have access to the highest quality services and innovative treatments; healthcare personnel who will receive training to better fulfill their specialist tasks; The healthcare system in general will potentially benefit from the improved technologies and upgrading of healthcare structures.
- The Italian teams visited Kurdistan several times to examine the patients, choosing the groups to be treated in Italy and selected the doctors to be trained in Italian hospitals. Several workshops and meetings have been held with KRG Government Prime Minister His Excellency Nechirvan Barzani, Ministry of Health, Ministry High Education, General Directors of Health of Duhok, Sulaymaniyah, Erbil, Kirkuk discussing the potential ways of improving the horizons of coordination and cooperation.

The pilot project aims to improve local access to medical treatment for major childhood diseases across Iraq, starting in the Kurdistan Region. This initiative is placed within the general framework of international cooperation relations with Italian NGOs established with Kurdistan, and proposes the establishment of an integrated network of healthcare centers in Kurdistan, linked to highly specialized Italian hospitals, capable of providing high-quality healthcare services.

The main challenges of healthcare planning can be summarized as:

- Promote excellence and rehabilitate healthcare structures
- Re-qualify human resources through continued high-level training in medical sciences and healthcare management
- Promote the development and use of new technologies
- Guarantee and monitor the quality of healthcare services provided

The first stage of the project 2006-2007



2007 one of the groups sent to Italy by special airplane



Prof. Ilja Gardi and Dr. Abdulrahman Younis Minister of Health

As the first step for 2006 was decided to start with the treatment of cases afflicted by congenital heart diseases and haemato-oncology diseases which, following the physician's selection clinical criteria, needed to receive urgent treatment in Italy. The main objective of the cure activities carried out was to transfer to Italy the more urgent and complicated cases, properly selected, and simultaneously start up activities of clinical know-how transfer through training, in Italian centers of excellence, of teams of healthcare professionals such as doctors, neuroses and technicians, to set up as quickly as possible on-site diagnostic and therapeutic activities.

During the meeting held in April 2006 in Erbil between the heads of paediatric cardiology departments in Duhok, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Kirkuk, and the IME cardiology and heart surgery project leader – Prof. Alessandro Frigiola - common criteria were established to select the urgent cases of children affected with congenital heart diseases to be transferred to Italy for heart surgery. As to thalassemia and onco-hematological diseases, identical meetings were held in Italy between Kurdish and Italian head physicians from IME to define the selection criteria of patients and establish the grounds for a joint protocol for certain Onco –Hematological pathologies. The HLA typing for thalassemic children started in March 2006. Blood samples from families have been sent to IME laboratories in Italy to find compatible donors for patients requiring bone marrow transplantation.

Heevie, as local ONG has provided a decisive contribute to the implementation of the whole project by making available its personnel, already active and with large experience in the region for the fulfillment of other humanitarian programs, to assure the organization of all patient group's departure to Italy. Acting in synergy with SIA for all local logistic matters and sustaining traveling's costs and expenses for patients' families, Heevie has also been committed to the support of families while in Italy. Collaboration took place with many hospitals in Italy, as shown below:

- San Donato Hospital
- Torino Hospital
- Siena Hospital
- San Vincenzo Hospital
- Meyer Hospital
- Sant'Orsola Hospital
- Policlinico San Donato Hospital
- San Raffaele Hospital
- Riuniti Hospital
- S. Orsola Hospital
- Apuano Pasquinucci Hospital
- Bambino Gesù Hospital
- Policlinico Umberto Hospital
- Policlinico Tor Vergata Hospital

Clinical assessment activity and treatment of urgent cases in 2006-2007



Between June 2006 and December 2007, six special flights were organized, and over 4300 sick children were clinically evaluated, while 281 children with severe heart, oncological and Hematological diseases were sent to Italy to be cured.

From June 2006 to March 2007 many Italian professionals Medical Teams visited Kurdistan. The clinical assessment activities have been carried out in cooperation with local doctors who attended the training on the job programs in Italian centers of reference linked in Med Child Network.

1-Missions, 2006:

- Congenital Heart Disease
- Onco Haematological Diseases (Leukemia & Thalassemia Disease)
- Clinical Diagnostically Laboratory
- Ophthalmological

2-Missions, 2007:

- Congenital Heart Disease
- Onco Haematological (Leukemia & Thalassemia Disease)
- Paediatric Surgical Diseases
- Clinical Diagnostically Laboratory



The second stage of the project 2008-2014



On the other hand, upgrading of local healthcare structures to allow surgical operations to be performed inside Kurdistan region through regular visits by specialized Italian medical teams and such missions will only be possible if a suitable location for the performance of pediatric surgeries is implemented, pursuant to the IME-Med child experts' preliminary indications as to equipment, personnel and infrastructure i.e. includes an operating theater, an Intensive care unit and hemodynamic room.

A preliminary feasibility plan for building a new hospital specializing in pediatrics was presented. This hospital should be built within 3 to 4 years. During the construction period the physicians and other personnel should benefit from the training on the job in Italy and in Kurdistan remaining an essential step in the activation of the heart surgery proviso unit at al Amal Hospital in Erbil.

As to this aspect, IME- Med child experts in 2006 conducted five visits to the works site and provided consultancy services as to the inclusion of a dedicated operating theater for children and required infrastructure and structure adjustments to assure functionality of said heart surgery unit according to the best international standards.

It is worth noticing that the project included the organizational support of Italian experts for the conclusion of the restructuring works on the new cardio surgery unit at Erbil – Al Amal hospital which will allow as soon as possible the Italian team to perform in Kurdistan surgery for children suffering from CHD and the starting of the training in loco of surgeons, nurses and other healthcare personnel, being this a vital step to prepare the Kurdish human resources for the future.

In addition to al Amal Hospital in Erbil, Heevie Organization invited a delegation of the Italian organizations SIA and MED CHILD on February 20, 2009, headed by Dr. Ilja Gardi and expert hospital designers Gabriele Zingaretti and Andrea Ragazzini, who provided important guidance to the Director General of Duhok Health, Dr. Abdullah Saeed, in designing and planning the stages of construction of the Azadi Heart Center in Duhok, which was under the supervision of Ministry of Health in Duhok. Those new centers allowed to conduct a pediatric cardiology diagnosis program treatment and provide high level health services to children afflicted by heart diseases covering the whole region in cooperation with the Italian network of Hospitals.

Since the year 2008 till 2023, the Italian teams conducted nearly 45 missions in Kurdistan region. Those missions were an opportunity to build the capacity of the local staff through training them on preparing the patients for surgeries, post-operative follow-up and care, intensive care unit work, managing complications and performing different medical and surgical operation, in addition to training doctors on echocardiogram in the Italian hospitals. Worth to mention that all the visiting Italian medical delegations since 2006 by Heevie are volunteers and provide free health care and treatment services to the local patients who are receiving such services in both Kurdistan and Italy.

The Italian Missions from 2008-2023

- 1- Missions,15 March 2008:

 - Congenital Heart Disease
 - Heamatological (Leukemia & Thalassemia Disease)
 - Neurosurgery
 - Clinical Diagnostically Laboratory
- 2-Missions,17 November 2008:

 - Congenital Heart Disease
 - Heamatological (Leukemia & Thalassemia Disease)
 - Neurosurgery
 - Pediatric Surgery
 - Clinical Diagnostically Laboratory
- 3-Mission,20 February 2009:

 - Congenital Heart Disease
- 4- Mission,1 May 2009:

 - Congenital Heart Disease
- 5- Mission,24 June 2009:

 - Congenital Heart Disease
- 6- Mission,22 January 2010:

 - Congenital Heart Disease
- 7- Missions,16 April 2010:

 - Congenital Heart Disease
 - Diagnostic Analysis Laboratory Team
 - Prenatal Diagnosis
 - Gynecologist Team
- 8- Mission,22 May 2010:

 - Congenital Heart Disease
- 9- Missions,24 September 2010:

 - Microbiologist
 - Chemical Clinical Analysis
 - Paediatric Neurological
 - Clinical Diagnostically Laboratory
- 10- Mission,21 October 2010:

 - Congenital Heart Disease
- 11- Mission,20 November 2010:

 - Pediatric Surgery
- 12- Missions,14 May 2011:

 - Microbiology
 - Prenatal Diagnosis
 - Gynecological and Obstetric
 - Prenatal Diagnosis
- 13- Mission,8 June 2011:

 - Congenital Heart Disease
- 14- Mission,1 June 2011:

 - Orthopedic
- 15- Mission,16 October 2011:

 - Congenital Heart Disease
- 16- Missions,14 November 2011:

 - Pediatric Surgery
 - Plastic & Reconstructive Surgical
- 17- Mission,11 February 2012:

 - Congenital Heart Disease
- 18- Mission,17 March 2012:

 - Congenital Heart Disease
- 19- Mission,18 November 2012:

 - Pediatric Surgery
- 20- Mission,12 January 2012:

 - Congenital Heart Disease
- 21- Mission,11 May 2012:

 - Congenital Heart Disease
- 22- Mission,26 November 2013:

 - Congenital Heart Disease
- 23- Mission,25 November 2013:

 - Pediatric Surgery
- 24- Mission,15 February 2014:

 - Congenital Heart Disease
- 25- Mission,2 May 2014:

 - Congenital Heart Disease
- 26- Mission,17 May 2014:

 - Congenital Heart Disease
- 27- Mission,4 November 2022:

 - Congenital Heart Disease
- 28- Mission,10 March 2023:

 - Congenital Heart Disease

The results Achievements of the project from 2006 - 2023

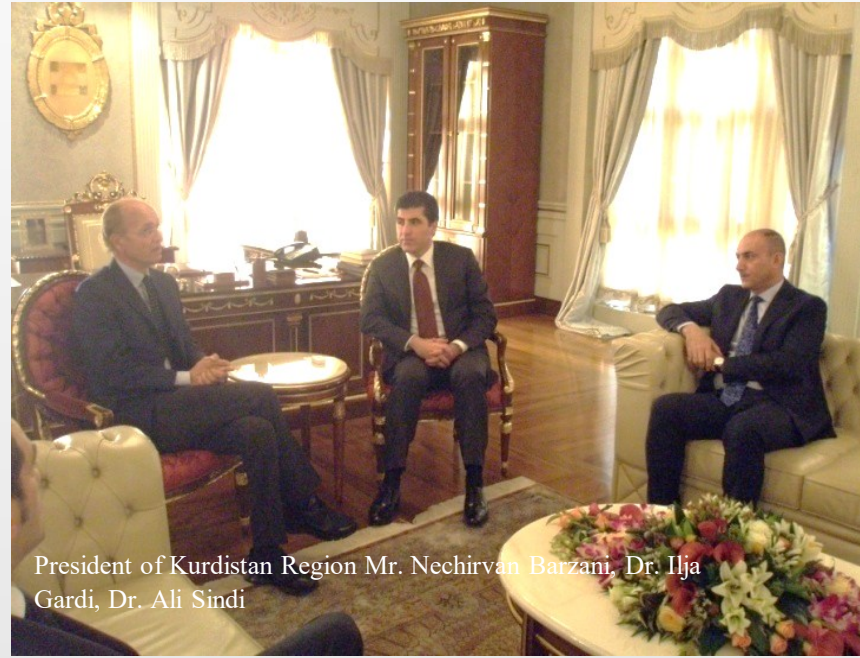
- What he accomplished during these years can be summarized in the following points:
- 540 Patients have been sent to Italy in cooperation with Italian Organizations.
- 835 Patients operated by Italian Medical Teams in Kurdistan.
- 20,157 Patients have been examined in Kurdistan by Italian Medical Teams and Local trainee Doctors.
- 90 local medical Doctors trained in Italy in cooperation with Italian Organizations.
- 809 local medical staff and Doctors trained on the job in Kurdistan by Italian Medical Teams.
- 353 Professional medical Italian work in Kurdistan several times.



Partnership Co-operation



Speaker of the Kurdistan Parliament Mr. Adnan Al-Mufti, Dr. Iole Pinto, Miss. Bakshan Ali



President of Kurdistan Region Mr. Nechirvan Barzani, Dr. Ilja Gardi, Dr. Ali Sindi



President of Iraq Dr. Barham Salih, Dr. Ilja Gardi, Dr. Iole Pinto, Mr. Sardar Ali Aziz

Since the organization's founding in 2006, many cooperation and partnership agreements were concluded between Heevie and the government, ministries of health, general directorates of health and international organizations to treat patients and develop the health sector in the region, as well as to complete many projects and they became partners with Heevie such as:

- Bambini Cardiopatici nel Mondo A.I.C.I. ONLUS - (San Donato Hospital-Milan) – Italy
- Cuore Fratello Onlus – Italy
- University Medical Cardiovascular Center Hamburg
- San Vincenzo Cardiac Hospital, Taormina – Sicily –Italy
- IME Foundation - Mediterranean Institute of Haematology – Italy
- Med Child Institute Fondazione – Italy
- Italian Embassy – Baghdad
- Italian Consulate – Erbil
- American Embassy – Baghdad
- Kurdistan Regional Government – Erbil
- Kurdistan Regional Government / Ministry of Health – Erbil
- Directorate General of Health – Duhok
- Associazione Culturale Italia Kurdistan (A.C.I.K) – Italy
- Associazione Iniziative di Solidarietà (SIA) – Italy
- Emergency Hospitals volunteers - Italy-Tuscany
- Tuscany Region - Siena Municipality – Italy
- World Health Organization –WHO
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs –OCHA
- Farmacéuticos Mundi – Spain
- The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)



Italian Medical Mission Erbil - Kurdistan



KRG Minister of Health Dr. Saman Barzanji, Dr. Bewar Tahir Heevie General Manager



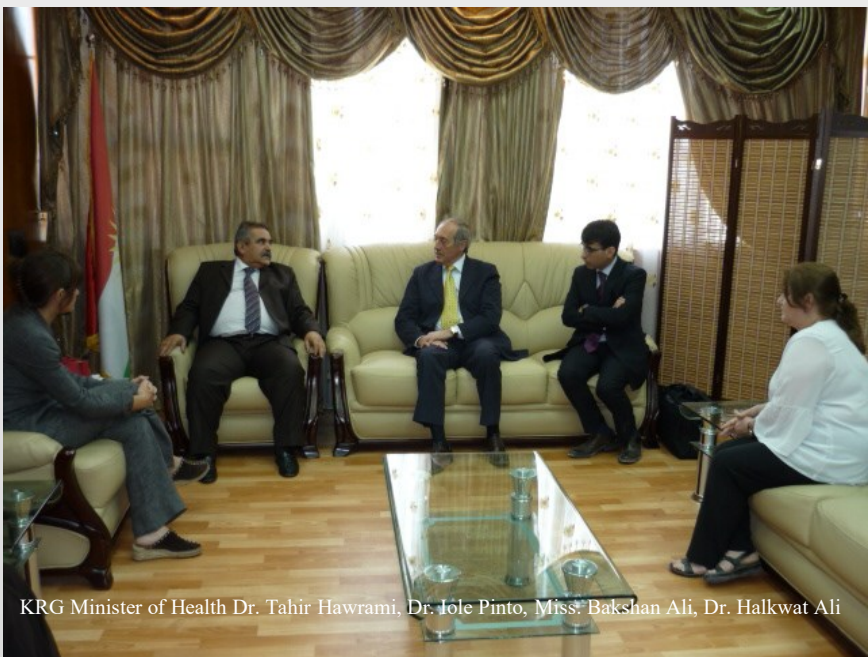
Iraqi Minister of Health Dr. Hamad Al-Jabbar, KRG Minister of Health, Dr. Tahir Hawrami



Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Ali Saeed Mohammed, KRG Minister of Health Dr. Rekawt Hama Rasheed, Dr. Ilja Gardi, Miss Bakshan Ali



KRG Minister of Health Dr. Abdulrahman Younes with the Italian Delegation in Workshop 2008 Erbil



KRG Minister of Health Dr. Tahir Hawrami, Dr. Iole Pinto, Miss Bakshan Ali, Dr. Halkwat Ali



KRG Minister of Health Dr. Abdulrahman Younes, Dr. Ali Sindi with the Italian Delegation in Press conference 2008 Erbil

The Heevie organization has signed cooperation agreements and memorandums of understanding with various international organizations and agencies such as the Italian SIA, IME, MEDCHILD, Bambini Cardiopatici nel Mondo A.I.C.I. ONLUS, Cuore Fratello Onlus, University Medical Cardiovascular Center Hamburg Germany, The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), World Health Organization, Farmacéuticos Mundi - Spain, and American Embassy support, government agencies and various ministries.

Through this, Heevie has implemented a set of activities at different levels of health care, which include establishing and renewing health care facilities, training health service providers and building their capacities, providing primary health care for displaced persons and refugees, providing mental health services and psychosocial support, providing physical therapy and medical rehabilitation services, and supporting health facilities, health centers and hospitals with medicines, devices and medical supplies. Heevie signing cooperation agreements and memorandums of understanding with various ministries.



Mr. Michele Camerota Italian Consul in Erbil, Miss. Bakshan Ali - Duhok – Heevie Office



Mr. Simone Di Santi, Italian Consul in Erbil, Miss. Bakshan Ali - Duhok – Heevie Office



Mr. Gerardo Carante Ambassador of Italy in Iraq, Mr. Simone Di Santi, Italian Consul in Erbil, Miss. Bakshan Ali - Duhok – Heevie Office

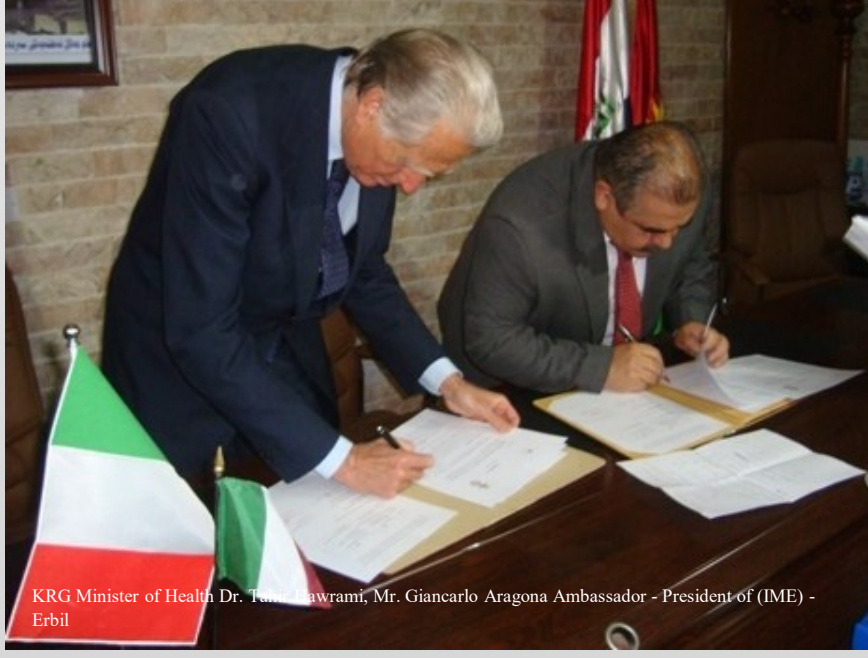
Italian diplomatic agencies at the level of the Italian Embassy in Baghdad and also the Consulate General in Erbil participated in supporting the projects of the Heevie Organization, and this support contributed to bringing Italian expertise to Kurdistan, and training local employees, especially in the field of treating congenital heart diseases.



Dr. Carmelo Ficarra the Italian Consul in Erbil , Miss. Bakshan Ali - Duhok – Heevie Office



KRG Minister of Health Dr. Tahir Hawrami, Mr. Giancarlo Aragona President of (IME), Mr. Gerardo Carante Ambassador of Italy in Iraq, Governor of Erbil Mr. Nawzad Hadi



KRG Minister of Health Dr. Tahir Hawrami, Mr. Giancarlo Aragona Ambassador - President of (IME) - Erbil



Minister of Health Dr. Abdulrahman Younis, Representative of the Office of Provincial Affairs U.S Embassy Mr. Jim Heller, Dr. Ilja Gardi, Miss Bakshan Ali



Mr. Felix Varela Fortuna from GIZ, Miss Bakshan Ali, signed Cooperation agreement



Mr. Stephen Barne by Duhok Governorate action office- Regional Construction Team RRT, and Mr. Madison Conolly, Public diplomacy officer, DOH Duhok Dr. Abdullah Saeed, Miss Bakshan Ali

The American Embassy directly supported many of the Health projects of the Heevie Organization in the years from 2006 to 2010 as well as German humanitarian actors such as the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (giz), as this agency has supported many projects of the Heevie organization during the previous years. The cooperation between Heevie and Cuore Fratello Italian association since 2006 led to performing surgeries for many children affected by congenital heart disease with the support of Cuore Fratello.



Cuore Fratello Onlus – Milan -Italy receives the patients from Kurdistan



American Minister of Health Mr. Secretary Michael with patient sent to Italy for treatment



Mr. Felix Varela Fortuna from GIZ, Miss Bakshan Ali, signed Cooperation agreement



Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Ali Saeed Mohammed, Ministry of Health Dr. Rekawt Hama Rasheed, Governor of Erbil Mr. Nawzad Hadi, Dr. Ilja Gardi, Mr. Hushyar Ali Aziz, Miss Bakshan Ali



Governor of Erbil Mr. Nawzad Hadi, Dr. Ilja Gardi, Mr. Sardar Ali Aziz



Governor of Duhok Dr. Ali Tatar, Miss Bakshan lay the foundation stone for Galavezh Center



Governor of Duhok Mr. Tamer Ramadan, DOH Duhok Dr. Abdullah Saeed, Dr. Ilja Gardi



Governor of Duhok Mr. Tamer Ramadan, DOH Duhok Dr. Abdullah Saeed, Italian Medical Mission - Duhok



Governor of Duhok Mr. Tamer Ramadan, DOH Duhok Dr. Abdullah Saeed, Dr. Innocenzo Bianca

Heevie has always shown great interest in signing agreements and MoUs with local government agencies represented by the governorates, as they are main responsible for providing services the aim of those agreements was to strengthen and improve health services in Kurdistan and Iraq.

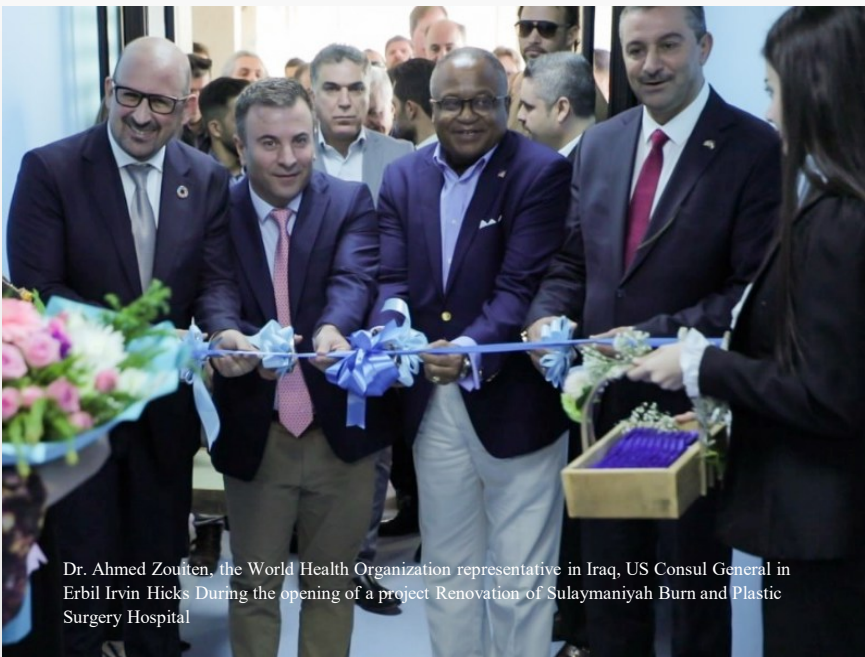
Governors of the Kurdistan Region: The governors of Duhok, Erbil participated in Heevie Health activities and supported their projects.



Dr. Adham Rashad Ismail presence of the World Health Organization representative in Iraq, Miss Bakshan Ali Visiting Physical Rehabilitation Center - Dohuk



Dr. Ahmed Zouiten, the World Health Organization representative in Iraq, Miss Bakshan Ali, signed an agreement - Duhok



Dr. Ahmed Zouiten, the World Health Organization representative in Iraq, US Consul General in Erbil Irvin Hicks During the opening of a project Renovation of Sulaymaniyah Burn and Plastic Surgery Hospital



Dr. Ahmed Zouiten, the World Health Organization representative in Iraq, KRG Health Minister Dr. Saman Barzanji, Governor of Erbil Mr. Omid Abdel Rahman During the opening of a project Renovation of East Erbil Emergency Hospital



Dr. Ahmed Zouiten, the World Health Organization representative in Iraq, Miss Bakshan Ali Visiting Physical Rehabilitation Center - Dohuk



Dr. Ahmed Zouiten, the World Health Organization representative in Iraq, Dr. Afrasiab Musa, DOH Duhok, Dr. Mohammed Mahmood A representative of Heevie Visiting Shariya IDP camp

Heevie signed agreements with the international health actors such as World health organization, and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the aim of those agreements was to strengthen and improve health services in Duhok, Erbil, Ninawa and Sulaymaniyah governorates. The agreements covered Providing physiotherapy, medical rehabilitation services, primary health care services, providing specialized mental health care services and the renovation of many Hospital Units in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah. Heevie became the main partner of the World Health Organization in managing health centers in eleven camps.



Dr. Adham Rashad Ismail World Health Organization representative in Iraq, Dr. Mohammed Mahmood A representative of Heevie During the opening of a project Renovation of the neonatal intensive care unit and operation theatre in Erbil Maternity Hospital



Dr. Wael Hatahit World Health Organization representative in Iraq, Dr. Yade Hadi Public Health Officer Erbil Area coordinator, Dr. Mohammed Mahmood A representative of Heevie, Eng. Farhad Maml Head Heevie Engineering Department They meet with the Erbil Health Directorate to discuss the organization's projects



Dr Ahmed Zouiten with WHO Team Visiting Physical Rehabilitation Center - Dohuk



UNOCHA Team Meeting with Heevie Staff - Dohuk



Farmamundi Team Meeting with Heevie Staff - Dohuk

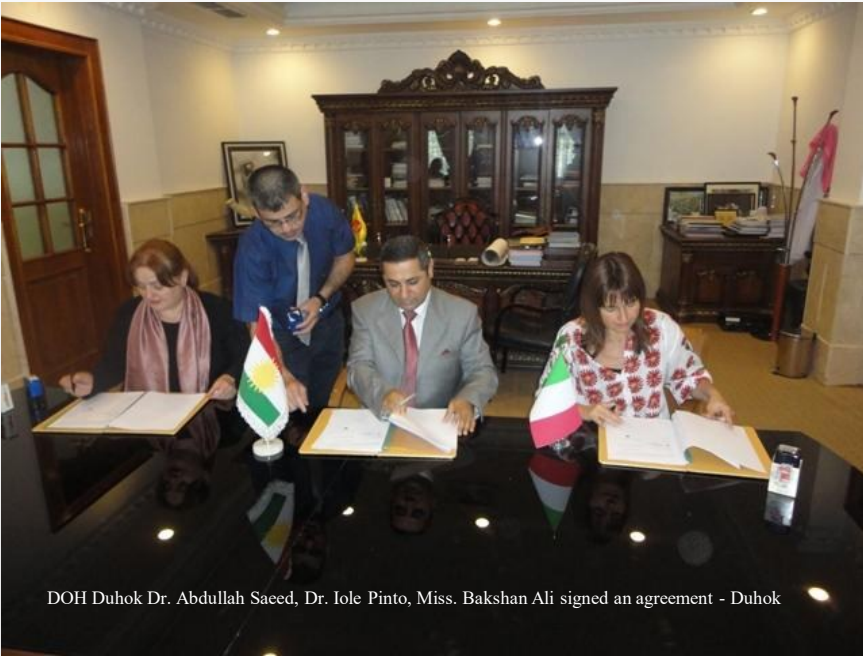


Farmamundi Team Meeting with Dr. Afrasiab Musa, DOH Dohuk

Heevie signed agreement with the Farmamundi (Spanish organization),to support in Chameshku camp in Zakho and Bouzan town in TelKaif district, Farmamundi representatives visited the General Directorate of Health in Dohuk Governorate, where they were received by Dr. Afrasiab Musa, the General Manager during the visit, the parties discussed the health service provision in IDPs camps, as well as the projects and activities that Heevie and Farmamundi are currently implementing .



Dr. Afrasiab Musa, DOH Duhok, Prof. Alessandro Frigiola, Dr. Alessandro Varrica in Press conference



DOH Duhok Dr. Abdullah Saeed, Dr. Iole Pinto, Miss. Bakshan Ali signed an agreement - Duhok



DOH Duhok Dr. Abdullah Saeed, Dr. Ilja Gardi, Miss. Bakshan Ali at the construction site of Cardiac Center in Duhok



DOH Duhok Dr. Abdullah Saeed, Prof. Alessandro Frigiola, Miss. Bakshan Ali



DOH Duhok Dr. Abdullah Saeed, Prof. Alessandro Frigiola, Dr. Halkwat Ali, Miss. Bakshan Ali at the construction site of Cardiac Center in Duhok



DOH Duhok Dr. Abdullah Saeed, Prof. Alessandro Frigiola, Dr. Iole Pinto, Miss. Bakshan Ali at the construction site of Cardiac Center in Duhok

The Relations with the General Directorate of Health of Duhok continue due to the governorate’s situation as it suffers from the presence of the largest number of displaced people in it, in addition to joint cooperation with Italian teams for cardiology, pediatric surgery, and other diseases.

The project outcomes and evaluation for 2023

The project succeeded in developing the main medical departments in the Kurdistan region and upgrading the Local Healthcare services but has not been completed because it was halted in 2014 due to the ISIS attack and its threat to the region, then the emergence of the Covid-19 virus and the unstable political and the economic situation.

Therefore, the training to establishment a local specialized medical staff to conduct operations for congenital heart disease was interrupted the effect more than 500 children with congenital heart disease died from 2014 to 2023 due to the difficulties and problems faced the project and Since 2006, 1,560 children have died, out of 11,060 registered children from the database.

As for the Heart Center in Duhok Governorate which was built in 2010, and we used to perform operations for the children ,due to the large number of adult heart patients, it is necessary to expand and create a special department for children and separate it from the adult department with a specialist a medical team. Point out until now, there is no Pediatric Cardiology Center in the region.

for the Onco –Hematological (Leukemia & Thalassemia Disease) The Medical staff has developed well after the training thanks to the cooperation with the IME organization for all hospitals in the region.

As for the bone marrow transplantation process for thalassemia and leukemia patients, many hospitals were built, but it lacks experienced medical staff, so the staff needs a training program in order to treat patients.

Because of the high number of patients are in need for a specialized center to provide the necessary medical management on a scientific basis

Heevie built Galavezh specialized Center for Pediatrics Haemato-oncological diseases (oncological Leukemia & Thalassemia) in Duhok Government Where it was no dedicated building for this purpose, and does not yield important medical services like specialized laboratory and radiology tests and also lacks the wards for the overnight care and stay of the patients.

The Department of Pediatric Surgery and Urology has developed a lot thanks to continuous training programs by the team of Prof. Mario Messina the Head of Pediatric Surgery Dpt. Teaching Hospital of Siena during the operations in Duhok, as well as training the local staff in Siena, but they need Continuing updating and training.

Many Donors halted their funds All aid has been directed to displacement camps, and due to the political conditions in the region and the financial difficulties facing the government, the support has been limited and almost stopped for the project.

HEEVIE OUTLINE OF ACTIVITIES 2006-2023:

In addition to the pilot project, Heevie has provided medical services for many years through its various projects to various segments of society, including host communities, refugees, and internally displaced persons. Among these projects is the mobile medical clinics project, where Heevie has provided health services through mobile clinics to serve vulnerable groups since 2008. For the past 15 years, Heevie Mobile Clinics have been covering villages and remote areas that lack health facilities.

After 2014 crises and the subsequent wars in the region, Heevie became a partner with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to assist displaced persons and the German Society for International Cooperation (giz) in providing primary health care services to vulnerable groups of displaced persons, returnees and host communities in the affected areas from conflict. This included the provision of primary health care services to various camp and non-camp sites in coordination with the health directorates in Duhok, Nineveh and Erbil as well as health sub-clusters in the corresponding governorates and humanitarian actors.

The services provided through these projects included:

1. Specialized medical consultations
2. Treatment of infectious and non-communicable diseases
3. Reproductive health services (antenatal care, postnatal care, family planning counselling).
4. Mental health services and psychosocial support
5. Health education and awareness
6. Medical laboratory services
7. Referral services to advanced health centers.
8. Immunization and vaccine services for children under the age of five
9. Nutrition and growth monitoring services
10. Ultrasound and oral health services (in specific locations within the projects)

After the liberation of areas in northern Nineveh Governorate, including the cities of Sinjar, Zummar and Rabia, many people displaced by the war returned to their areas, and others moved near the front lines to the newly liberated, safer areas. These returnees and displaced people were in dire need of health and medical services. The centers of major cities were provided with good health support, but many sub-areas and villages were left without services. Heevie took it upon itself to provide health services to these areas by establishing and rehabilitating community health homes and secondary health clinics in these villages and providing them with expert health staff and a sufficient amount of Medicines to allow easier access to health services for its population. In continuation of its efforts to support the medical infrastructure, Heevie Organization, with the support of the World Health Organization and other humanitarian agencies, implemented projects to carry out the renovation and rehabilitation of dilapidated medical facilities as a result of the enormous pressures resulting from the increasing numbers of residents and beneficiaries. In addition to the host community, these facilities provide health services to large numbers of the displaced and refugees as well, in addition to the major financial crises in the Kurdistan Region and Iraq as a whole, which limit the ability of these health institutions to adapt to these needs and to respond to them, Heavy has restored and rehabilitated the health institutions below:

1. Sulaymaniyah Hospital for Burns and Plastic Surgery
2. East Erbil Emergency Hospital, Erbil Governorate
3. Establishment of a (Coronavirus isolation center) for displaced people in Khabat District in Erbil Governorate
4. Renovation of the neonatal intensive care unit and operating room in the maternity hospital in Erbil
5. Renovation of East Erbil Emergency Hospital
6. Establishment of the Galavezh Center for Hemato-oncological diseases
7. Renovation of the delivery room, postpartum department and high-risk unit in the maternity hospital in Erbil
8. Restoration and rehabilitation of Sulaymaniyah Hospital for Burns and Plastic Surgery in Sulaymaniyah Governorate
9. In addition to primary care services, Heevie provided higher and more specialized health services to the affected population, such as those services provided to people with disabilities, as well as people and people with special needs. In this field, Heevie provides physical therapy and medical rehabilitation services through the specialized Heevie Center for Physical Therapy and Medical Rehabilitation in Duhok Governorate. The center is equipped with a specialized team of doctors, physical therapists, nurses and other employees and includes sections for patient registration, data entry and analysis, medical consultations, physical rehabilitation halls, massage and laser therapy. In addition to this, the Heavy Organization has started a special project to support the blind and visually impaired. The project includes providing courses on the use of computers and other programs for the blind and those with critical visual impairment, providing the blind with the necessary supplies and materials, and providing training on the use of these materials, such as canes for the blind and other devices. The project activities are implemented at Heevie Physiotherapy Center by well-trained staff who are dedicated to the project activities.