

Gender Meets Tech: Young Iraqi startups develop digital solutions to end gender-based violence

The GIZ Projects

- **Strengthening the Participation of Women in the Peace and Rehabilitation Process in Iraq (SPW)**

The project aims at:

- supporting and enhancing the capacities of government actors to support the participation of women
- Improving the gender competency of selected implementing partners in German development cooperation
- **Supporting the development of innovative (digital) approaches to strengthen the participation of women**
- Facilitating dialogue and promoting campaigns for transforming patriarchal gender relations and stereotypes.

- **ICT – Job Prospects for a modern Youth in Iraq**

- The project aims at **building a tech ecosystem** and a sustainable infrastructure for technology applications and entrepreneurship in Iraq
- **Innovation Hubs** are set up and offer trainings, coworking and makerspaces to Iraqi youth and support them in **developing their business ideas**.
- The trainings focus on **practice-oriented skills in ICT, entrepreneurship and soft skills**, and improve the overall employability of young Iraqis in the digital economy.
 - **6 innovation hubs** were set up and expanded in Baghdad, Basra, Mosul, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah
 - **3.500** young Iraqis participated in the trainings, **38% were women**

Motives for the Cooperation: Creating a win-win situation

- COVID-19 and related movement restrictions led to **increased need for digital solutions** to end and prevent Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) and support survivors
 - restricted access to target group
 - high numbers of VAWG
- GIZ ICT Project built up a network of Innovation Hubs with a broad tech community in Iraq
 - Pool of Trainers, Mentors, Programmers and Tech-Entrepreneurs
 - Connect other GIZ Project with local programmers and digital startups in order to support them in developing digital solutions during the lockdown



Approach of a joint Hackathon

Idea of a joint Hackathon

Our Approach

What is a Hackathon?

- **Hackathon = "Hacking" + "Marathon"**
- "Hacking" = Solving a problem with an innovative tech related approach
- "Marathon" = Intensive performance over a limited period of time (usually 48h)
- A hackathon is similar to an idea competition
- Tech-enthusiasts come together to jointly and creatively develop **technology-based solutions for a previously defined social challenge**
- Participants work in teams
- By the end of the event the participating teams present their developed products in front of a jury
- Jury decides based on predefined criteria which idea is the most convincing
- Winning teams are rewarded with prizes and/or seed funds to further develop their solution
- ICT Project implemented an Iraq wide Hackathon in 2019 with more than 750 participants



Idea of a joint Hackathon

Our Approach



Hackathon as an operational tool:

- SPW project and partner define a selection of **challenges/problems for women in Iraq** that could be solved by introducing a tech-based solution (app, website, online platform etc.)
- One of these **challenges is placed in a Hackathon** format implemented by ICT project and partners – several tech solutions will be developed and presented in the event.
- SPW and partner **support with necessary gender related inputs** during the hackathon and therefore transmit valuable background knowledge to the hackathon participants
- SPW and partners are part of the hackathon jury and define the three most promising solutions
- The top 3 solutions **qualify for a tender participation** (hackathon award).
- After the hackathon event, the teams work on a detailed concept and price offer, submit for the tender and **one team will be commissioned** (and payed) for developing and handing over a prototype/ or final product to the partner.
- Perceptively: The developed solution will be integrated and implemented by SPW partner Women for Women in their regular operational activities

Idea of a joint Hackathon

Our Approach



Benefits:

- The **challenge is real** and given by experts from the field – a locally active women's rights organization that has access to the target group of women
- Often solutions from a hackathon keep being ideas. This approach by contrast enables the most promising team to **turn their idea into an actual prototype/product**.
- The tech **solution is applied in the field** by the women's rights organization and used in its purpose to support and benefit women in Iraq.
- ***From Iraqis for Iraqis*** – the solution is completely community-based (problem, idea, implementation). Local communities know best what they need (women and tech).
- The winning **team is payed for the development** of the solution (income generation) and is committed to deliver, since they attended a tender and signed a service contract.



First Steps

How to align an activity between two GIZ Projects

First Steps – How to align an activity between two GIZ Projects

- Coordination between GIZ projects: Alignment of objectives, identification of synergies
- Expertise and partner structure of the programs, discuss resources
- Discuss the form of cooperation with partners
- Identify coordination mechanisms between different actors with different working methods, expertise, etc.

مراحل التفكير التصميمي

التعاطف
EMPATHIZE
↓

توليد الافكار
IDEATE
↓

الاختبار
TEST
↓

The Women's Rights Hackathon

The Event – 12th and 13th Feb 2021

↑
DEFINE
التعريف

↑
PROTOTYPE
بناء النموذج

Women's Rights Hackathon

The Event – 12th and 13th Feb 2021

- 45 Teams applied – 12 Teams were selected to participate
- 28 female and 20 male participants
- 2-day fully online event – Open Iraq wide
- Implemented by local Partner Mosul Space (Innovation Hub)
- **Two Challenges:**
 1. Violence against women at home and in the community
 2. The lack of livelihoods opportunities for women especially marginalized and conflict affected women
- Day 1
 - Focus on understanding the challenges and their background (presented by Women's rights organization)
 - Ideation and Prototyping (Mentored by Innovation Hubs)
- Day 2
 - Prototyping (Mentored by Innovation Hubs)
 - Action Plan and Budgeting (Mentored by Innovation Hubs)
 - Pitch Mentoring and Preparation (Mentored by Innovation Hubs)

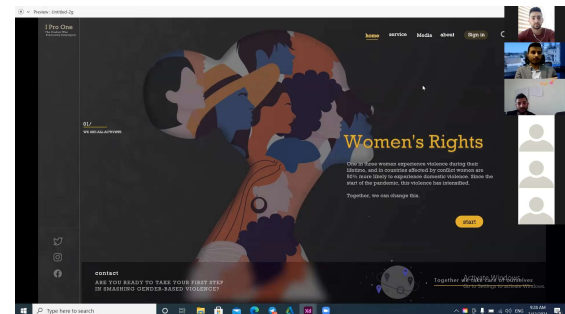
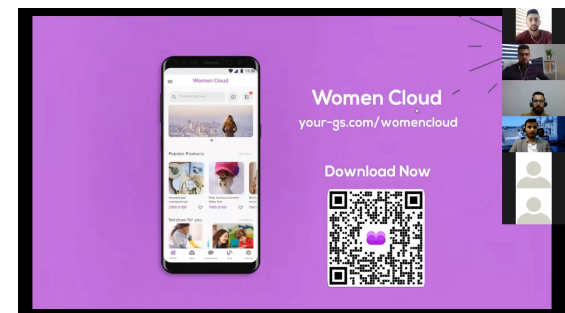
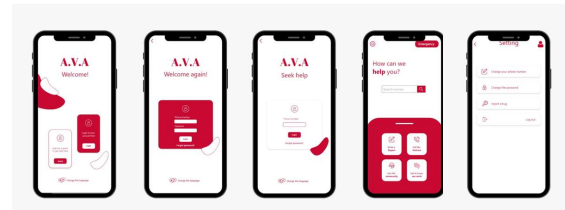


Women's Rights Hackathon

The Event – 12th and 13th Feb 2021

- Jury was formed by:
 - Women's Rights Organization
 - GIZ & BMZ
 - Telecommunication Company Zain
 - UNDP Accelerator Lab
- Jury Selection Criteria
 - Does the Solution address the challenge
 - Sustainability of the Solution
 - Budget and timeline
- Total scoring was matched by 50% Jury and 50% Mentors
- Top 3 Solutions qualifying for the tender:
 - **A.V.A. Anti Violence Association (App)**
 - **Women Cloud (App)**
 - **Be Strong (online platform)**

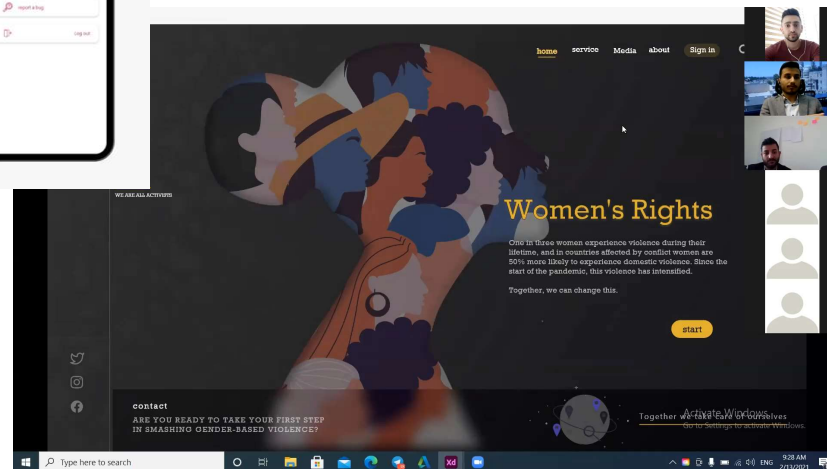
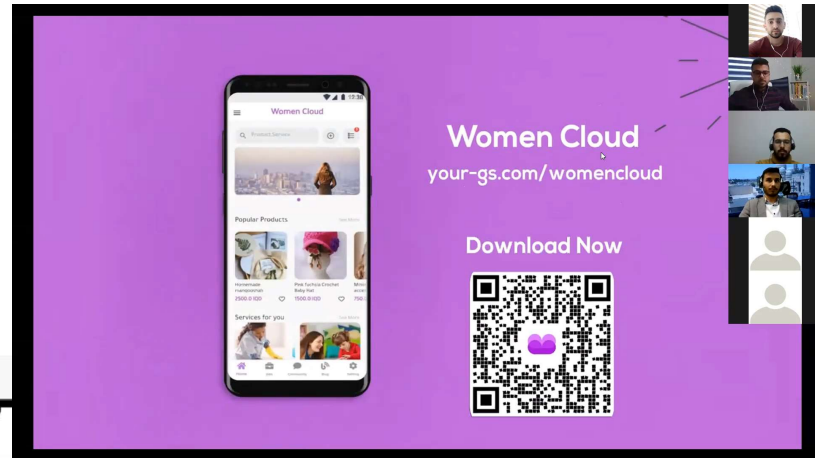
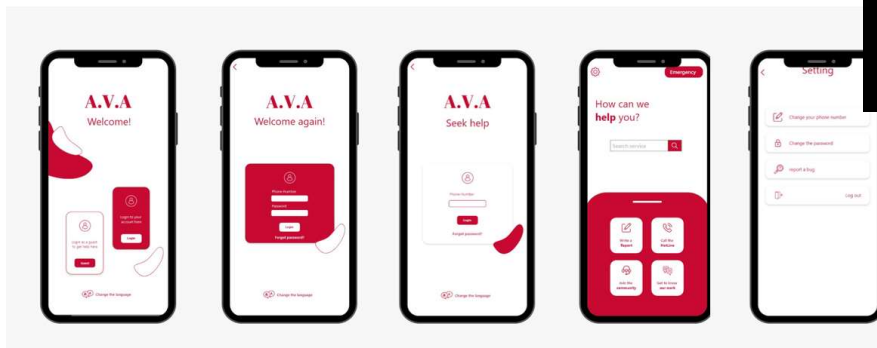
App



Women's Rights Hackathon

The Event – 12th and 13th Feb 2021

App





Timeline of Implementation

Next Steps

Timeline/Steps

- Coordination between GIZ projects: alignment of objectives, identification of synergies
 - June 2020
- Search for suitable implementing partners/Call for proposals: who do we need to enhance sustainability of the solution
 - July– August 2020
- Set up/accompany coordination meetings between all actors: Clarification of roles, responsibilities, work methods
 - November-December
- Preparation for Hackathon: Application, Selection and Organization
 - December (end) – January (end) 2020
- Hackathon
 - February (mid) 2021

Timeline/Steps

- Tender Phase after Hackathon
 - February (mid) – March (mid) 2021 (4 weeks)

- Development of Prototype
 - March (mid) – May (end) (2,5 months)

- Submitting Prototype
 - End of May



Lesson Learnt

Lessons learnt

- Create a common knowledge base right from the start: knowledge transfer between different stakeholders involved
- Even if each stakeholder has responsibility for specific task, all stakeholders need to develop ownership for whole process and outcome
- Focus group discussions with relevant stakeholders in the region to define challenges
- Selection procedure to raise the quality and diversity of participants
- Selection of different challenges should be available but equally accessible
 - Domestic Violence vs. Livelihood
- Expectation Management:
 - Involved Partners: What can/cannot be delivered? What are minimum standards for the solution?
 - Hackathon Participants: What is the procedure and their reward?
 - This Hackathon format does not aim for founding startups, it aims to find professional and innovative service providers that handover a product to a customer (women's rights organization)

Contact Details



Anne von Au

Senior Advisor, Erbil

anne.von.au@giz.de

Strengthening the Participation of Women in the Rehabilitation and Peace Process in Iraq



Buse Ayşen Çubuk

Project Advisor, Baghdad

buse.cubuk@giz.de

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) – Job Prospects for a Modern Youth in Iraq



www.giz.de



https://twitter.com/giz_gmbh



<https://www.facebook.com/gizprofile/>