



“Psychological Intervention in War-Torn Societies”

IOM Introduces Psycho-Social Course with the University of Tripoli to Aid Victims of War

On 26th September, 2012, an opening ceremony inaugurating the beginning of the academic programme “High Studies Diploma in Psychosocial Responses in War-Torn Societies” took place at the University of Tripoli. A group of 35 Libyan health, education and social experts have become the first intake of a six-month IOM psycho-social course offered at the University of Tripoli.

Participants on the Italian-funded diploma course: “*Psychological Intervention in War-Torn Societies*” will be taught to devise emergency psychological programmes to tackle the long term emotional and social effects of the Libyan crisis. The course, which has been designed specifically for the Libyan context, is part of a wider IOM psycho-social response to the Libyan crisis, which started with the provision of psycho-social assistance at transit centres for thousands of migrants fleeing Libya.

The 35 participants will be taught the first modules of the training by experts from IOM, the University of Tripoli and the UK’s Essex University.

This builds on a similar course organized by the IOM in 2007 in Lebanese universities in the aftermath of the war there. Other similar IOM courses have been held elsewhere in the Middle East.

As in all major crises, the events in Libya have had a considerable psycho-social impact on people. Those who witnessed atrocities have suffered emotional



From bottom left-clockwise: the Italian Ambassador, the Dean of the Tripoli University, IOM Programme Manager, the Head of Faculty of Arts, IOM Psychosocial Team, the Students © IOM 2012

problems including stress, depression and feelings of insecurity. Without psycho-social assistance, individuals may develop long term complications, negatively impacting Libyan society.

“When an open crisis ends, the inner crisis starts. Often, aid agencies leave the victims behind at the end of the open crisis. We are here to help people cope better with the inner crisis; because war victims can either become energetic war instigators, or energetic peace builders,” says Guglielmo Schinina, Head of IOM’s Psycho-social Response Section.

The Italian government’s donation of EUR 1.5 million has also enabled IOM, in coordination with the Libyan Ministry of Social Affairs and other government bod-

ies, to provide psycho-social counseling to families in Tripoli, Misurata and Benghazi, and to build three recreation centres in those cities.

IOM is also implementing a number of other psycho-social programmes targeting people affected by the war, including the internally displaced.

According to IOM’s recently-concluded *Assessment of the Psycho-social Needs of Families and Children Affected by the 2011-12 Libyan Crisis*, which was carried out in Tripoli, Benghazi and Misrata, half of the 3,300 people who took part in the assessment said that they needed psychological assistance and over 60% said that their social lives had worsened because of the crisis.

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