



General Assembly

Distr.: General
30 August 2024

English only

Human Rights Council

Fifty-seventh session

9 September–9 October 2024

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Al-Ayn Social Care Foundation, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[9 August 2024]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Al-Ayn Social Care Foundation's Continued Commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Al-Ayn Social Care Foundation is an organisation committed to helping orphaned children and widowed mothers. We currently sponsor 93,686 orphaned children in Iraq, 598 orphaned children in Afghanistan and 280 orphaned children in Ghana. In total, since our inception in 2006, we have supported over 184,000 orphaned children, providing financial aid, psychological rehabilitation, medical care, educational support, vocational training and more.

Our organisation's work is motivated by the notion that the vulnerable groups we support are often trapped in a generational cycle of poverty. For that reason, our projects and campaigns focus on providing these groups with holistic care.

In Iraq, one of our innovative solutions to eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises is the launch of an initiative called 'Hikayati', meaning 'My Story'. 'Hikayati' is a purpose-built child-centred building located in the Adala district of Najaf. The objective of the 'Hikayati' programme is to provide orphaned children, between the ages of 8 and 14, with programmes to enhance their well-being, mental health and life opportunities through a combination of education, play, leisure activities, mentoring, therapy and spiritual guidance. Every child receives a programme that is personalised to their needs, with specially designed workshops and long-term mentoring.

The core programme includes a structured timetable of workshops, along with therapeutic and leisure activities. Each workshop teaches the relevant skills through a holistic learning approach and allows the children to practice these learned skills with interactive and hands-on activities. The workshop topics include teamwork and collaboration, confidence and resilience, leadership skills, art-based therapeutic activities, coping skills and emotional intelligence, communication and presentation skills, career aspirations and goal setting, school retention, problem solving skills and etiquette skills.

Through 'Hikayati', we wish to educate, empower and equip orphaned youth with skills, knowledge and confidence, all whilst nurturing their emotional well-being. Our hope is that this will enable them to perform well in school and in the future, go on to secure vocations that allow them to lift themselves out of conditions of poverty. The project seeks to uphold many of the rights enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, including Article 28 - the right to education, Article 29 - that the goal of education should be to develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full, Article 31 - that every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities and Article 24, that every child has the right to the best possible health, which we consider includes mental health.

Our efforts in Ghana and Afghanistan also demonstrate our commitment to key tenets of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, primarily Article 24 on the right to health which includes the right to clean water. In Ghana, in July 2024, we initiated our first 'WASH' project, which involved successfully pumping clean, safe water to a small village on the outskirts of Accra. After the initial 3-month observation of this pilot WASH project, we hope to develop a more comprehensive plan for routine maintenance and preventative measures, and continue with the building of further wells in the region to ensure clean water for all.

As part of our objective of ensuring orphaned children and widowed mothers are able to break the cycle of poverty, we have sought to find ways of overcoming some of the barriers they face to accessing vital services. Through our fieldwork, we identified that many orphaned families lack the legal documentation and biometric certification required to access education, healthcare services, secure formal employment and ensure eligibility for government programmes. We have therefore worked to facilitate the acquisition of these documents for those individuals, as a starting point to assist them in becoming independent members of society.

In both Ghana and Afghanistan, we have continued our efforts to provide medical support to the orphaned youth and widowed mothers registered with us. For example, in Ghana we have paid for various treatments including dialysis; and in Afghanistan, we have paid for the treatment of various treatments including blood cancer.

We believe it is vital to focus on orphaned children and widowed mothers as they are so often neglected in society. Our goal is to provide them with tools and spaces that restore their dignity, sustainably empowering them to lift themselves out of poverty in the long-run.
