



The Forgotten Ones

Captives on the Frontline: Yezidi former child soldiers who survived the Islamic State is a short documentary by Amnesty International and Fat Rat Films about a neglected aspect of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes perpetrated by the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) against the Yezidi community – the abduction of Yezidi boys who were forced to fight as child soldiers.



These boys, typically captured between the ages of 7 and 13, witnessed the killing of their older male relatives, including their fathers and teenage brothers. Once the IS forced them to become child soldiers, they suffered further horrors: violent indoctrination methods, beatings, mock suicide bombings, combat and execution training, and fighting on the battlefield. Many did not survive. Those who did suffered long-lasting harm, and now require sustained humanitarian and psychological support.

The film explores the friendship between two former child soldiers, Vian and Barzan, who eventually escaped to Northern Iraq. Former child soldiers are routinely stigmatized, and many of them have not received support of any kind since they returned to their communities. They live with serious physical and mental health issues, including depression and PTSD. Their families are separated or gone, they lack education and work, and it is unlikely that they will ever receive justice for what they have suffered and lost. The film is a powerful reminder that the trauma of genocide affects the whole community and that the young men forced to fight with the IS have fallen through the cracks.

The film is due to be released in February 2023.

Our vision is to become the leading resettlement organization supporting victims of persecution, empowering them to create a future for themselves and their children as fully integrated Canadian citizens.

Donations are gratefully accepted: [projectabraham/donate](https://projectabraham.com/donate)

Thriving in the YES! Program

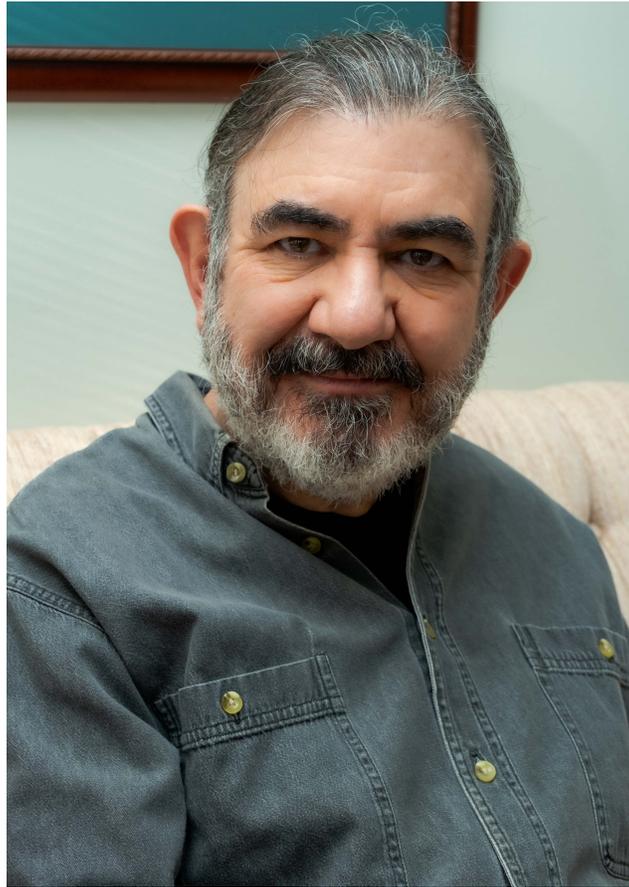
Every student has the chance to shine at Project Abraham, but sometimes we come across an exceptional story that is worth sharing. One of our YES! program students is a 23-year-old who came to Canada from Iran only eight months ago.



When he arrived, he could read only a few words in English, and he had difficulty with verbal communication. He has cerebral palsy, which causes problems with movement and coordination, requiring him to use a wheelchair. His teacher assessed his learning strengths and weaknesses and created a program tailored to his specific needs. Although he lacked confidence at first, with care and attention from his mother and teachers, he began to flourish. In only six weeks, he progressed from beginner-level English to intermediate. When he started in the program, he couldn't understand the most basic expressions or conversations. Now he can speak and create text messages to communicate his thoughts and feelings. His confidence has led to an even greater interest in learning English, and he is now seeking reading materials from the library to further his skills. His English has progressed to the point where he is planning to enroll in professional education courses so that he can pursue his goal of earning a meaningful living here in Canada. His progress shows us that with the right learning plan and support, a newcomer learning English can develop the confidence to thrive and excel.

Get to Know the Team at Project Abraham

BOARD MEMBER – GARY ROSE



Gary is the husband of our Executive Director, Debbie Rose, and is a founding member of Project Abraham. He also has been a board member since its incorporation in 2017. In the early days, Gary took on the responsibility of creating the Project Abraham website, handling communications, fundraising, helping with community events and supporting families in the Yezidi community. A retired technical project manager and financial advisor, he now focuses on providing support for all Project Abraham's IT needs, including ensuring data privacy and security. He also sources purchases, and sets up all the Chromebooks we provide to our YES! program students.

For Gary, the plight of the Yezidis was made very real at a meeting with members of the Yezidi community and the Mozuud Freedom Foundation in January 2016. During the meeting, one of the Yezidis in attendance received a call in which he learned that eight members of his family had drowned in an attempt to escape to Greece. Realizing that the fledgling project to help the Yezidi community was going to need organizational support, he and Debbie quickly became involved as volunteers to help then Executive Director, Geoffrey Clarfield raise the needed funds to bring three Yezidi families to Canada for family reunification. Later, in 2019, Gary and Debbie applied to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) for a grant to set up the YES! program. Gary recalls, "The application form was horrendous. It took us two months to complete." They had no expectation of success and were grateful several months later when the grant was approved.

Gary is deeply interested in the moral, ethical, and philosophical issues involved in our work: "It's easy not to have boundaries when it comes to wanting to help people who are suffering. The compassionate thing is to teach people to become self-reliant. The best thing that can happen for Project Abraham is that our clients learn from us the skills they need to thrive, so they no longer require us."

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