

Iranian Association's WW1 Project

The project has already produced a detailed report of the tour of the Imperial War Museum; therefore, this report only focuses on other activities of the project. The activities provided a useful and educational experience for the participants who were volunteers or members of the staff who contributed voluntarily to the project. Although it was a very short project of around 3 months, the Iranian Association managed to raise awareness of the volunteers and members of the association about the WW1 in Iran by providing an opportunity to learn about a balanced and impartial perspective of the war in Iran and its consequences. The achievement of the project has been great considering the association had to deal with the extra burden of operating the project without any funding. The project activities included publicising the project, recruiting volunteers, attending meetings, in-house training of the volunteers, conducting research, producing a timeline of WW1 in Iran and visiting the Imperial War Museum. The project also raised awareness of mainstream organisations in this field such as the "Away From The Western Front" about the WW1 in Iran; the involvement of Iranian Association even at this limited scale was achieved as a result of the awareness raising activity of the association's staff. For the purpose of this report, meetings were held with some of the project volunteers who were still available to talk about their experience of the project. A project volunteer said that when he was learning about the impact of the WW1 in Iran, he could not help crying for the first time in his life when studying history. The summaries of the volunteer feedback is provided below.

Leila

"The project provided an opportunity for me to learn about the consequences of the war in Iran economically and politically. The WW1 was a disaster for Iranian people. The development of parliamentary political system was aborted and the economy was ruined. I didn't have any knowledge of the impact of the WW1 in Iran before joining the project. Even the history text books taught in Iran didn't provide sufficient and accurate information about the WW1 in Iran and its consequences for Iranian people. Most people in the Western countries are not aware of the sufferings of Iranian people during the WW1 probably because Iran is not located in Europe and was a neutral country in the war. I think I now understand why the history repeats itself. I believe teaching history of the WW1 must be improved in Iran and Britain to provide a more comprehensive and impartial picture of the war in Iran and other countries."

Reza

"I was involved in the project research that helped me gain a better understanding of the events starting from the Iranian Constitutional revolution to the end of the WW1. I come from Tabriz in North Western Iran. My grandparents talked to me a little about the famine and diseases in Iran during the WW1. Unfortunately, there are not many oral history records about the WW1 in Iran. I learned a great deal from the Iranian

Association's WW1 project. The research leading to the production of a timeline was an effective way of learning about the history and understanding the big picture. It's a pity that the project was too short. We were in the process of providing an interpretation of the WW1 in Iran that could provide a unique and balanced perspective of the impact of the war on Iranian people."

Yasi

"I had some idea about the dimensions of the WW1 in the West, but did not have any idea about how much Iranian people suffered in the war. This short project enabled me to learn about the famine in Iran and have an idea about Iranians who died during the WW1 as a result of the famine and disease. I improved my knowledge of the war through the IWM guided tour and involvement in producing a timeline of the WW1 in Iran. I was shocked to learn that a neutral country like Iran that played no part in starting the war had probably suffered more than most countries which were fighting each other. I saw a shocking photo of a pile of bodies of dead Iranians in the WW1 that made me extremely sad. I hate war even more now after learning about the sufferings in the WW1. I feel really sorry that so many people, whose countries were directly involved in the war, have little or no awareness of the impact of the WW1 in countries like Iran. The project helped me understand how the destinies of different nations are tied to each other."

Sadieh

"I didn't know much about the WW1 in Iran before joining the Iranian Association's project. I participated in the research, the guided tour of the IWM and producing the timeline. I have been sharing the stories with my family and friends. I personally also watched a film made about the WW1 in Iran showing the famine and foreign interventions. My research has indicated that the great powers interference in Iran did not contribute to the humanitarian welfare of Iranian people and that the stories about providing relief during the WW1 in Iran were probably public relation exercises. The ordinary Iranians paid a high cost in the WW1. There are still many untold stories about the WW1 in Iran. I wish there will be no war. Unfortunately, only the ordinary people suffer during the war. My research has shown that the stories about the WW1 in Iran have not been recorded properly. It's a pity that it was a short project. We come from a country that does not value awareness about history and we must do a lot more to raise awareness of the community about the WW1. I am grateful to Iranian Association for providing an opportunity for me to increase my research skills, knowledge and awareness about the WW1."