



IRAQ

PROGRAMME PORTFOLIO

COUNTRY	BUDGET 2017-18	TITLE
IRAQ		
IPr1	8,000,000	Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP)
TOTAL	8,000,000	

UNDP Response in Iraq

The humanitarian, security and development crisis in Iraq is amongst the most volatile and severe in the region.

Since the onset of the Syrian crisis in 2011, over 240,000 Syrians have fled into Iraq, and since the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in January 2014 over 3.2 million Iraqis have been forced to flee their homes. At least ten million Iraqis currently require some form of humanitarian assistance, and by the end of 2016, twelve to thirteen million Iraqis are likely to be in trouble.

As dramatic as the situation is for displaced families, the condition of host communities is also deteriorating rapidly. Families which have generously opened their homes and shared resources with displaced relatives and neighbors are plunging into poverty.

Unable to sustain their families, worried if they can return safely to their homes, and faced with limited employment options, people throughout the country are making.

The life-changing decision to embark on dangerous journeys to leave Iraq. The number of Iraqis who see emigration as their best option is increasing in direct proportion to the number who see little hope in their future. In this context, as part of its overall work across Iraq, UNDP has two major programmes that are helping to promote emergency livelihoods and community dialogue in areas impacted by the humanitarian crisis, and stabilize newly liberated areas through restoration of services and rebooting of local economies and livelihoods. Both programmes will continue as part of UNDP's new country programme for the period 2016-2019, which also includes public institutional reform and effective devolution of administrative and fiscal powers.

PROJECT BRIEF

2017-18



TIMELINE

\$8 million



COST

PROJECT TITLE:**Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP)****RESILIENCE/STABILIZATION RESULTS ACHIEVED:**

At the onset of large influx of Syrian refugees into the Kurdistan Region of Iraq in 2013, UNDP developed the Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP), undertaking a multi-sectoral, integrated strategy to build resilience of the refugees and the host communities. The programme later expanded to provide resilience-building support for the internally displaced people (IDPs) fleeing from the violence caused by ISIL and complements the primarily life-saving and short-term humanitarian activities carried out by the other partners.

UNDP has been playing the leading role in advancing the resilience agenda for refugees and the affected host communities as well as IDPs and returnees. With UNDP's technical and financial support through ICRRP, government capacity to provide sustainable and robust basic services to the Syrian refugee population was strengthened. Sustainable livelihood was enhanced, expanding the access to income-opportunities for Syrian refugees and host communities. Social cohesion was nurtured between local and refugee populations in the host communities and areas.

ICRRP supported the Government of Iraq (GoI) and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in strengthening the newly established Joint Crisis Coordination and Monitoring Centre (JCMC) in Baghdad and the Joint Crisis Center (JCC) in Erbil. These institutions operate as coordination hubs of two crisis response networks and jointly constitute the national crisis management system addressing the needs of Syrian refugees and IDPs. ICRRP's institutional and capacity building efforts targeted the two institutions to consolidate policies and legislation, harmonize the approach to planning, prioritization and resource mobilization to manage the large-scale crisis, and enhance the operational capacity with improved effectiveness and efficiency in the actual response across governorates.

Many studies suggest that livelihood support is one of the key drivers to enhance resilience of Syrian refugees. ICRRP has been focusing on the enhancement of livelihood and employment opportunities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), where over 97% of Syrian refugees have been staying for the last 5 years. Micro-business start-up support was provided to Syrian refugees and local entrepreneurs who were already skilled and had business ideas to fill the market niche or meet unmet service demands. The project also targeted vulnerable groups, women and youth (both refugees and host communities) strengthening their access to financial services, including through micro/small grants for innovative local-level livelihoods and economic development initiatives. In total, 90 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) received business promotion support, out of which 20% were headed by female and/or youth. Furthermore, a Job Seeker Support Centre was established by ICRRP in Kasnazan, which is one of the impoverished communities with the highest concentration of Syrian refugees and non-camp IDPs in Erbil. A total of 100 people were placed in jobs following a successful completion of a vocational training programme, over 400 people increased their employability skills through basic language skills trainings and 800 individuals benefitted from the services of the Job Centre on a monthly basis.

To enhance self-reliance of Syrian refugees in the camps, ICRRP in collaboration with UNHCR has been implementing greenhouse agro-business project in Gawilan, Darashakran, and Arbat camps as a flagship project for "Humanitarian-Development Nexus" in KRI. In Gawilan camp, installation of 10 greenhouses was completed in addition to 15 existing greenhouses in Arbat camp with upgraded water system. The field research with the KRG Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources identified the suitable varieties of plants and cucumber that would grow in harsh climate in the areas. To date, a total of 32,760 seedlings of cucumber were distributed in these camps for greenhouse cultivation.

To foster social cohesion between the local and refugee populations the project identified pilot communities in the governorates of Duhok, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah and mobilized over 70 community volunteers and women representatives from both host communities and Syrian refugee groups to mitigate the risk of escalation of tensions between local and displaced populations in these communities. The volunteers received extensive training in dispute management, communication, facilitation, mediation, peace promotion and community programming, monitoring and evaluation.

Furthermore, inclusive dialogue among IDPs, host community and Syrian refugees was conducted in 11 communities and community activities were conducted with the volunteers. In one of these communities, Kurani Ainkawa in Erbil, 22 awareness sessions were held at the Multipurpose Centre established by UNDP. Awareness sessions were focused on peaceful coexistence and sexual and gender-based violence with approximately 400 participants. A total of 75 women attended a sewing course, out of which 13 started their businesses at home, considerably increasing their income.

THE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE:

At the time of project initiation, the number of refugees from Syria residing in KRI exceeded 210,000. By November 2016 the number of Syrian refugees registered in the KRI had reached 228,894⁴. Most of the refugees hosted in the KRI are Kurds and a small minority are of Arab origin. Approximately one third of the population affected by Syria crisis are young people between the ages of 10 and 24 with limited access to quality education, protection and basic services, restricted livelihood and income generating opportunities⁵. Although the absolute number of the Syrian refugees in the KRI is smaller compared to other neighbouring countries such as Jordan and Lebanon, the influx increased the population density in the KRI by 28 percent has been causing a huge strain on the already fragile socio-economic fabrics. In the KRI, a high proportion of Syrian refugees reside outside formally established refugee camps. Furthermore, the Iraqi government and the international community are overwhelmed by yet another humanitarian crisis derived from the military operation against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Mosul, which overshadows the greater needs of Syrian refugees and the host communities in the declining local economy. Urgent attention is therefore required to enhance host communities' resilience and develop their capacities to respond to the refugee crisis.

Despite the protracted Syrian refugee crisis and the need for sustainable responses for both on- and off-camp refugees, no clear longer-term strategy existed on the government side to respond to the refugee situation. Furthermore, the coordination mechanism for refugee response in different sectors at different levels (i.e. regional, governorate, and municipal) was relatively weak. As a result, there was an urgent need for capacity building for crisis coordination, information management and strategic planning.

Competition over job opportunities and basic services between Syrian refugees and IDPs increased in some of the host communities, and there was an immediate danger that tensions and disputes between host communities and refugee populations would escalate. Furthermore, there is a risk that the security situation in some areas close to the areas occupied by ISIL can be deteriorated significantly as the fighting between the Iraqi forces and ISIL is intensified.

THE DEVELOPMENT SOLUTION:

UNDP developed the ICRRP in response to the KRG's concerns about the increasing pressure on its basic services and host communities and the need for developing a longer-term response strategy in coordination with local and international partners. The programme is implemented in the KRI with a specific geographic focus on the Governorates of Dohuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah as these communities face a specifically high concentration of Syrian refugees.

As UNDP is a key government counterpart for longer-term planning, the ICRRP aims to enhance resilience and strengthen capacities of local and refugee populations for a sustainable and robust response to the Syrian refugee crisis in KRI focusing on three interlinked areas: (1) institutional strengthening for improved basic service delivery; (2) economic empowerment and livelihoods enhancement; and (3) social inclusion and cohesion. ICRRP's interventions in these focused areas are strategically combined to effectively address the

multi-sectoral social and economic needs of the most affected communities by the protracted stay of Syrian refugees.

OUR APPROACH:

ICRRP's support is designed to equally benefit the host communities and refugee populations. It seeks to provide opportunities for Syrian refugees to contribute to the host communities' social and economic needs while utilizing assets, capacities and resources that the refugees have (e.g. labour, technical skills, knowledge/networks, services). ICRRP's approach builds on the assumption that contributing to the realization of the KRI's economic development plan through skilled labour and professional skills is key not only to expanding refugees' access to job opportunities, but also to achieving greater economic progress in the KRI. From the viewpoint that refugees can bring an opportunity instead of a burden for the KRI's development and prosperity of local community, ICRRP strategically crafts its interventions for resilience building aiming to unleash the potential to overcome the challenges.

THE IMPACT:

With technical and financial support from ICRRP, the JCMC of the GoI and the JCC of the KRG have significantly improved their institutional and technical capacities to serve as government focal institution for crisis response in coordination with other UN agencies and international partners. Communication and coordination between JCMC and JCC have strengthened. As a result, a joint government humanitarian contingency plan for Mosul military operation has been developed. Furthermore, the JCC is providing up-to-date situational reports on the crisis that serve as a basis for sectoral decision-making or higher-level policy development.

ICRRP has also been closely working with the governorates in the KRI to improve basic infrastructures, such as roads and sewage networks connecting host communities and the refugee camps, which benefit over 55,000 refugee and local population. Moreover, the governorates of Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah have organized the resilience planning workshops supported by UNDP, which were the first ever meeting of this kind organized in Iraq, strengthening their capacity to prioritize the projects for refugees and IDPs.

ICRRP's interventions enhanced sustainable income opportunities for the most vulnerable people through expanded partnership with the private sector, directly impacting close to 800 refugees. Impact assessments showed that 70 per cent of beneficiaries were still employed with the private sector companies six months after initial placement.

Community-based dialogue was promoted among refugees, IDPs, and host communities in the KRI, preventing escalation of tensions between refugees and host communities and promoting peaceful coexistence.

STORY FROM IRAQ

Kasnazan is one of the communities with the highest concentration of Syrian refugees and non-camp displaced people (one every six residents) in Erbil Governorate in Iraq.

UNDP's Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICCRP) brought together volunteers from the host community, displaced people and Syrian refugees to plant 180 trees in the main park in Kasnazan which has been abandoned over the past three years.

Planting trees in Kasnazan park is not only good for the environment; it helped members of the Syrian community and residents of Kasnazan understand that they are part of the same family. Engaging in volunteer work to rehabilitate the park is a way to build a sense of community and strengthen social cohesion.

"Now that the park has been given a new life, I can spend my spare time with my children here. This is not only a playground for my children, it is a space where we feel welcomed." Yasmen, 29, Syrian refugee

"I am happy that refugees and displaced people, who have gone through unspeakable trauma, can now benefit from a green space where they can interact with the host community in Kasnazan. We are part of the same family." Shad, 22, member of host community



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