ANNUAL GENDER REPORT 2020

IRAQ





LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

CfW Cash-for-work
CO Country Office

CPD Country Programme Document

CSIP Community Security Integration Pilot

CSO Civil Society Organisations

FFS Funding Facility for Stabilization

GII Gender Inequality Index
GBV Gender-based violence

GRCC Gender Responsive Crisis Chamber

Gol Government of Iraq

HDI Human Development Index

ICRRP Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme

IDP Internally Displaced Person
IPV Intimate Partner Violence

MoH&E Ministry of Health and Environment

Mol Ministry of Interior

MSME Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
ONSA Office of the National Security Advisor

PPE Personal Protective Equipment

PSEA Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Authority

SGBV Sexual & Gender Based Violence SDG Sustainable Development Goals

SSR Security Sector Reform
ToT Training of Trainers

UNDP United Nations Development Programme
UNSCR United Nations Security Council Resolution

UNFPA United Nations Population Fund

UNICEF United Nations International Children's Education Fund

WEC-COMSEC Women's Empowerment Council in the General Secretariat of the

Council of Ministers

WfSGI Women for Safe and Green Iraq
WHH Women-Headed Households
WHO World Health Organization

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FOREWORD

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development puts gender equality and women's empowerment at the center of our blueprint for a better world. Equality for women and girls is not only a fundamental human right, but also an essential pillar of building global peace, prosperity and sustainability. For many years we have seen firsthand how empowering women and girls is integral to achieving sustainable development. Equal opportunities in education, healthcare and decent labor, representation in the political and economic processes and decision-making promote sustainable economies which lead to prosperous and more inclusive communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic – which upended global plans in 2020 – was a stark reminder of exactly how women and girls consistently bear the brunt of the difficulties that people everywhere endure. Not only did women continue to face discrimination at every turn, they also contended with the shadow pandemic of rising violence, which is gender inequality at its most extreme.

To combat the mounting challenges presented by COVID-19 in 2020, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq scaled up its activities, reach and impact, embedding gender transformative approaches into its activities – from supporting policies, to facilitating critical policy dialogue, to implementing programmes, to paving the way for institutional culture shifts. And despite the difficult operating context relating to lockdowns, movement restrictions and the need to keep staff and the people we serve safe, we used creative and innovative working modalities to ensure we got the job done.

Recently, Iraq entered a new political, social and economic context with an ambitious reform agenda. This requires a comprehensive overview of the progress, challenges, and potential opportunities to advance gender equality and significantly focus on the important needs of women and girls. UNDP Iraq in partnership with a number of stakeholders including the Government of Iraq, Civil Society Organizations, women's groups and UN sister agencies, will continue to implement initiatives that a global continue to make significant inroads toward achieving gender equality in Iraq, especially for the most vulnerable, and adopting innovative solutions to mitigate the economic losses and adverse impacts on livelihoods both during the crisis and in its aftermath.

COVID-19 was a global wake-up call we all needed. The social norms, attitudes, and beliefs that lie at the heart of gender inequalities and impede women's empowerment must urgently be addressed – particularly those that were exacerbated by the pandemic. This report provides a snapshot of our efforts to do so.

Zena Ali Ahmad Resident Representative, UNDP Iraq

OVERVIEW

The year 2020 marked the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the first global initiative and commitment to improve the status of women, to achieve gender equality and to safeguard their basic human rights. The year also marked the 20th Anniversary of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on the role of Women in Peace and Security.

Yet, more than two decades later, an estimated 32 million girls of primary school age still lack the opportunity to attend school, one in five girls is a child bride, and men hold three of every four parliamentary seats worldwide¹.

The situation for women and girls in Iraq is no different, and arguably, it is far worse than the norm.

According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap 2020 report, Iraq ranks 152 of 153 countries surveyed overall and last on the basis of women's access to economic opportunities². The report further notes that there are no women in the role of ministers in Iraq³ and only 22.7 percent of women have access to economic opportunities⁴.

These rankings underscore the need to continue to mainstream Gender Equality consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) as agreed with the Government of Iraq (GoI), and more specifically, SDG 5, the UNDP Global Equality Strategy (2018 -21), and the UNDP Iraq Country Office (CO) Country Programme Document (CPD) (2020-24).

UNDP Iraq managed to report modest Gender Equality Results⁵ despite a year fraught with continuing conflict, an economic downturn attributable to declining oil prices, job loss and unemployment, nationwide protests and deadly civil unrest, complicated by COVID-19-related restrictions and weak or non-existent services, the cumulative effect of which was felt disproportionately by women and girls.

Nonetheless, UNDP Iraq programmes created employment opportunities; provided entry to, and participation in the political process; improved protection and prevention of violence against women; support for women led, community-based initiatives to mitigate conflict, curb violence, and respond to disasters; and continuing reform of the security and justice sector consistent with recognition of women's civil rights.

Although modest in contrast to task remaining, the numbers of Iraqi women and girls helped by UNDP Iraq programmes count toward the goal of Gender Equality and reset the bar for a better 2021. Similarly, pending institutional reforms intended to make gains lasting consistent with SDG 5 remain UNDP Iraq's top Gender Equality priority.

¹ UN Women (2020). Gender equality: Women's rights in review 25 years after Beijing, at p. 2: un.women/eDNK50yyBhA; last accessed on 20 January 2021.

² World Economic Forum: Global Gender Gap Report 2020. Available at: https://www.weforum.org/reports/gender-gap-2020-report-100-years-pay-equality; last accessed on 22 February 2021, at pp. 23 – 24 and 151.

³ Ibid, at p. 10.

⁴ Ibid, at pp. 11 – 12

⁵ As detailed below in this report.

2020 HIGHLIGHTS: GENDER EQUALITY RESULTS



1500 women benefitted from cash-for-work opportunities, small business grants and vocational training



314,278 women and girls benefitted from improved access to healthcare, through gender sensitive stabilisation and infrastructure development programmes



19,788 girls and women benefited from rehabilitation of educational facilities



12, 922 women benefited from gender responsive housing rehabilitation



347,933 women benefited from rehabilitation of municipal and other FFS infrastructure projects



Innovative integrated approaches for the prevention and protection of women from Sexual & Gender Based Violence (SGBV), including Domestic Violence



Women-led, community-based initiatives focused on:

- Reducing corruption Women's Anti-Corruption Forum: (WACF)
- Responding to crises Gender Responsive Crisis Chamber (GRCC)
- Peacebuilding and state building initiatives
- Strengthening intelligence driven policing



Gol and UNDP Iraq subcontractors capacities improved :

- Gender analysis
- Prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace
- Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of authority



Multiple programmes and extensive support to GoI mainstreaming Gender Equality at the national level

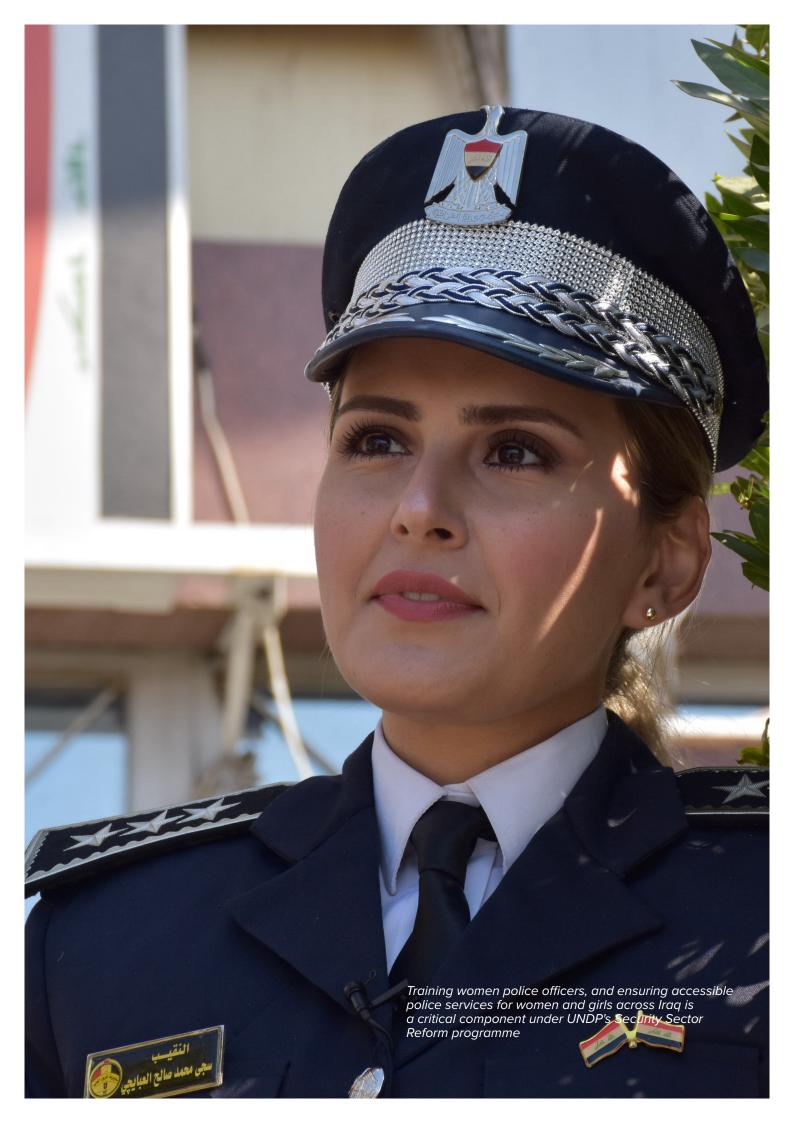


Comprehensive gender sensitive COVID -19 response-based support to Gol, including:

- Management of related higher incidence of SGBV cases
- Online psychosocial support systems for the most vulnerable groups
- Women-led awareness programmes led to prevent and mitigate the rapid spread and control of COVID-19 infections
- Procurement and dissemination of COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Knowledge Products

- Gender Analysis for improving Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Sector
- Gender Assessment of Police Stations to establish co-gender Model Police Stations
- Survey of the effects of COVID-19 on Women and Girls
- Book compiling the experiences of Iraqi women during COVID-19 pandemic



PROGRAMMING AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING APPROACH

The UNDP Gender Equality Strategy $(2018 - 21)^6$ complements the UNDP Strategic Plan⁷, specifically in its support of gender mainstreaming methodology across all development initiatives in accordance with the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action⁸ as well as the Economic and Social Council's conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming gender perspectives⁹ into all UN policies and programmes.

The UNDP Country Office (CO) in Iraq continues to treat socio-economic and political effects of decades of conflict¹⁰ on public institutions and essential services on the average citizen especially the disproportionate impact on women and youth as validated global human development indicators. AS of 2019, Iraq ranked 146 of 162 countries according to the Gender Inequality Index (GII)¹¹.

Women hold only 25.2 percent of parliamentary seats, and only 39.5 percent of adult women have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 56.5 percent of men¹². For every 100,000 live births, 79 women die from pregnancy related causes; and the adolescent birth rate of 71.7 births per 1,000 women aged 15-19, reflect child marriage and early child birth among young girls¹³.

Meanwhile, only 11.6 percent of women compared to 74.2 for men participate in the labour market¹⁴. Amongst youth, approximately 65 percent of young women were unemployed compared to 32 percent of young men in 2018¹⁵. Similarly, the 2019 Gender Development Index for Iraq, the female HDI value is 0.566 in contrast with 0.731 for males¹⁶ placing the country in Group 5, i.e. countries with low equality in HDI achievements between women and men (absolute deviation from gender parity of more than 10 percent).

UNDP's global efforts for gender mainstreaming strategy focus on three broad development initiatives¹⁷: (1) eradicating poverty; (2) structural transformation; and (3) building resilience. Consistent with these initiatives, the UNDP Iraq CO has identified six thematic areas of development interventions in support of the Gol, along with 10 programme outputs to address underlying causes contributing to widespread gender inequality its Country Programme Document 2020-24 (CPD)¹⁸, namely:

- · Economic diversification
- Stabilization and infrastructure development
- Strengthening governance
- Improving social cohesion
- Environment energy and climate change initiatives
- Innovative solutions for accelerating sustainable development (accelerator labs)

- 8 UNDP Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2021)
- 9 Ibid.

- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2018. At p. 43.
- 16 Supra, n. 11.
- 17 In accordance with the UNDP Strategic Plan (2018 21) and the UNDP Gender Strategy (2018 21).
- 18 United Nations, Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations

Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services, Country Programme Document for Iraq (2020-2024), DP/DCP/IRQ/3 (02 December 2019), available from https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3841332?ln=en; last accessed on 15 January 2021.

⁶ Available at: https Starting with the Iran – Iraq War (1980 – 88), First Gulf War (1991) and the US Led invasion of 2003 which continued to fight the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) in 2014 & until the liberation of all of Iraq from ISIL in 2017.://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/womens-empowerment/undp-gender-equality-strategy-2018-2021.html; last accessed on 18 January 2021.

⁷ UNDP Strategic Plan (2018 – 21), Signature Solution 6: Strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

¹⁰ Starting with the Iran – Iraq War (1980 – 88), First Gulf War (1991) and the US Led invasion of 2003 which continued to fight the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) in 2014 & until the liberation of all of Iraq from ISIL in 2017.

¹¹ UNDP: Human Development Report (2020). "The Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene" Briefing note for countries on the 2020 Human Development Report: Iraq. Available at: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/IRQ.pdf; last accessed on 22 February 2021, at p. 5.

The CPD provides for monitoring based on gender and age-disaggregated data¹⁹ to measure progress vis a vis UNDP gender marker guidelines and country programme expenditures²⁰. As a result, the UNDP Iraq CO can report a number of key milestones in gender mainstreaming across the CO programme as implemented, namely:

- Mobilisation and participation of women-led civil society organisations in decisions influencing Gol development initiatives
- Development of a CO annual workplan for Gender Equality initiatives as a basis for a comprehensive and coherent approach to gender mainstreaming across CO programming
- Launch of pilot initiatives focused on women's participation, role and direct engagement in political, economic, social, governance and stabilization, environment and climate change
- Stronger representation of women recruited for professional level positions within the UNDP Iraq CO
- Efforts to ensure gender equality and empowerment UNDP Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS) programme produced socio-economic benefits for a total of 701,645 women and girls in 2020

¹⁹ Ibid, at para 17

²⁰ Ibid, at para 37

GENDER EQUALITY RESULTS

In 2020, UNDP Iraq achieved specific Gender Equality results throughout the six thematic areas of development interventions recognised by the Country Office. Specific interventions were also designed to support women and girls from more vulnerable groups such as fringe communities, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and refugees.

A Economic Diversification

Contributes to:	
SDGs	1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12, 16,17
UNDP Strategic Plan	Outcome 1: Eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions.
UNDP Gender Equality Strategy	Outcome 1: Eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions.
Iraq CPD Outputs:	Outputs 2.1, 2.2

UNDP Iraq economic interventions foster conditions conducive to growth and stability that is inclusive, sustainable and promote employment, create jobs and improve living standards as a permanent solution for reducing and, in the long run, eradicating poverty.

Iraq's Human Development Index (HDI) value of 0.674 in 2019 ranked 123 out of 189 countries and territories evaluated²¹ up from 0.560 in 1990, an increase of 20.4 percent. Although positive overall, this gain masks chronic problems of a "fragile context"²² as a consequence of an underperforming economy overly dependent on oil, a failing public sector, widespread corruption, and a weak job market. It is estimated that in 2020 and as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic in Iraq, the country will witness an increased national poverty rate (estimated to increase by 9% - 14.4% jumping from 20% in 2018-19)²³. The ongoing pandemic is also expected to push more female headed households into poverty, from an estimated 9% to 13%²⁴ due to challenges faced by Iraqi women mainly in the form of cultural norms which inhibit women's employment outside the home, higher rate of illiteracy and the lack of training/skills and opportunities for women in the formal labour market /employment sector.

Results and Achievements

Contributing Projects: ²⁵		
Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP)		
Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS)		
Support to implement and monitor the SDGs		
Supporting Recovery and Stability in Iraq through local development		

Programmes made a difference at the individual level

• Cash-for-work (CfW) opportunities. In 2020, more than 1,400 women secured gainful employment

²¹ Supra, n. 11

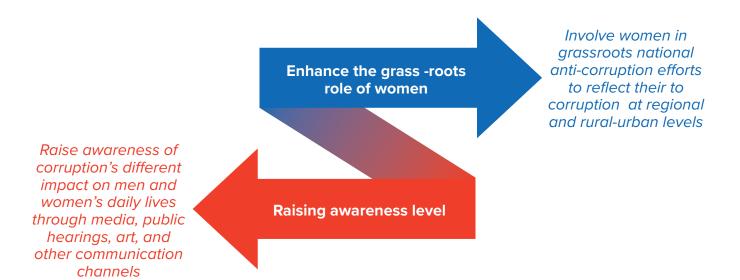
²² Iraq Country Profile. United Nations Iraq. Available at

http://www.uniraq.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=941&Itemid=472&lang=en; last accessed on 22 February 2021.

The World Bank, IRAQ ECONOMIC MONITOR: Protecting Vulnerable Iraqis in the Time of a Pandemic, the Case for Urgent Stimulus and Economic Reforms - With a Special Focus on Impacts of COVID-19 and weak oil prices on household poverty in Iraq, World Bank Middle East and North Africa Region (Fall 2020), at pp. 20, 22. Available at https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/34749/154260.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y; last accessed on 19 April 2021.

²⁴ Ibid, at p. 27

²⁵ Please see summary of the project details, annexed at the end of this report for more information on project details.



in public sector institutions including maintaining universities, hospitals, parks²⁶. These opportunities were particularly important to address the absence of gainful economic opportunities for women in Nineveh and culturally conservative areas of western Anbar. UNDP Iraq trained another 330 women in Nineveh to cultivate kitchen farms²⁷ and another 117 women learned vocational skills and received help with job placements. An additional 263 women business owners received training or other forms of assistance including asset replacement and/or small grants²⁸. The UNDP Iraq FFS Livelihoods CfW programme employed another 580 women on various CfW projects especially repairing, cleaning, and painting of selected schools, hospitals, and PHCs. Participation in CfW for women is was met with challenges as it is typically perceived as in the male domain. FFS has developed a solid base through such job openings so women can equally work in these roles.

- **Gender-based violence (GBV) prevention** UNDP Iraq has adapted the principles of Rwanda's Indashyikirwa Programme²⁹ to reduce intimate partner violence (IVP) through GBV community prevention and response to improve sustainable livelihoods and economic recovery in Diyala and Sulaymaniyah Governorates.
- Women's Anti-Corruption Forum (WACF) According to a national survey on corruption in Iraq³⁰, 71 percent of respondents believe women and girls to are more vulnerable to bargaining and extortion than are men suggesting to UNDP Iraq that women could become agents on their own behalf to address their vulnerability. The question was, "How?" In response, UNDP Iraq invited women activists, academics, as well as representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and public institutions to join the Women's Anti-Corruption Forum to publicly expose and oppose corruption inhibiting economic recovery and efficient public services in Iraq.

Of 559 respondents to the survey, 74 percent were women, and 41 percent were young women aged 20-30 years old.

64 percent of respondents said that women were more affected by corruption in various forms than men and 51.3 percent agreed corruption impedes women's economic development, empowerment and participation in politics

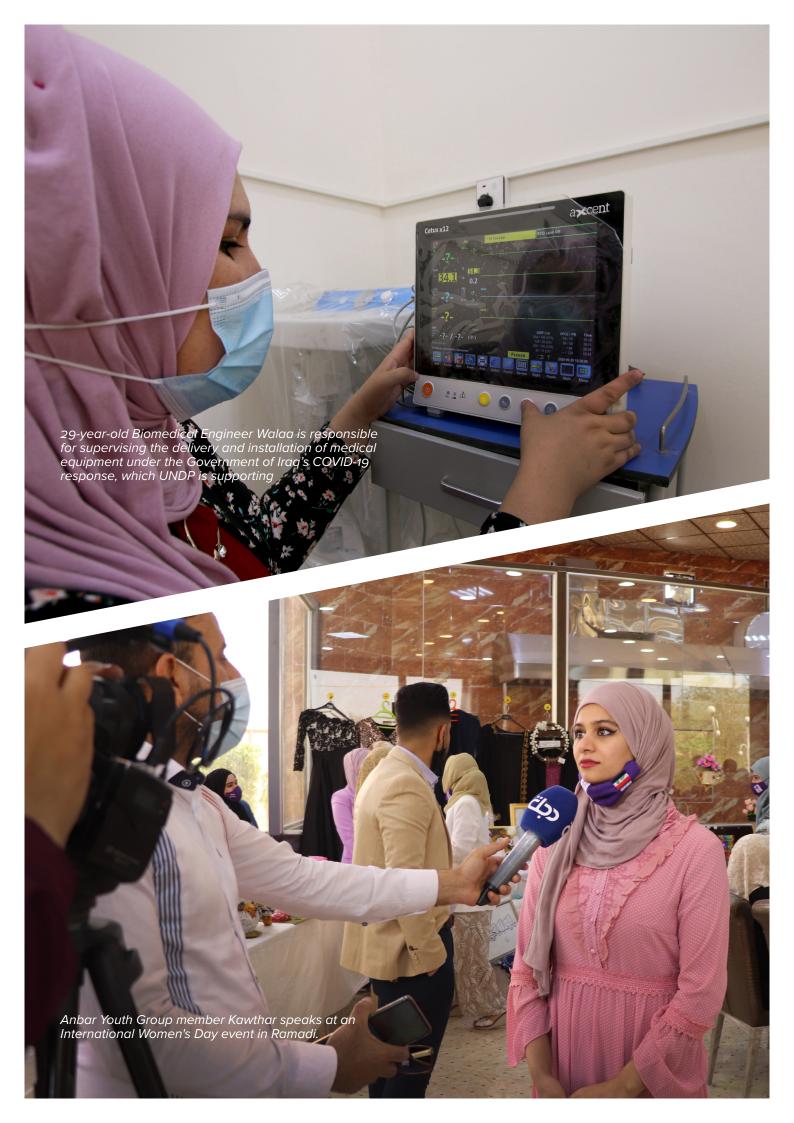
²⁶ Under this project, students' desks and chairs were repaired. Therefore, in our internal communications, it is called 'desk repairing project'

²⁷ UNDP ROAR 2020

²⁸ UNDP ROAR 2020

²⁹ Meaning "agents of change" in Kinyarwanda. After CARE implemented Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) to support women's economic empowerment in Rwanda, an assessment found that many women were not fully benefiting from the program due to household gender inequalities. In some cases, men controlled the functioning of the VSLA groups even without membership. In others, women VSLA members suffered backlash – sometimes violent – from their husbands as they were seen to be challenging gender norms by engaging in income-generating activities outside the home. CARE followed up the assessment with a four-part intervention programme which reduced IVP incidents by 55 percent and 47 of incidents as self-reported by men. https://www.care.org/our-work/health/fighting-gender-based-violence/indashyikirwa/ Accessed 09 April 2021

³⁰ Available at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eyJi-2r9a-UsJINV9i_By0wBkz2VFp0z/view?usp=sharing



- Technical and Advisory Support to promote Economic Reforms and Diversification UNDP lraq's technical and advisory support to Gol included promoting economic reforms and diversification, adoption of gender mainstreaming approaches and formulation of all strategy, advisory, policy documents related to economic reform and diversification
- Gender analysis for improving Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Sector A
 UNDP Iraq survey currently underway (2020-2021) will provide a basis for UNDP Iraq initiatives
 to further develop and strengthen the MSME sector. In addition, the survey design includes
 a gender disaggregated data collection methodology to benchmark women's participation in
 the sector as a basis for planned follow-on programmes to address barriers to their entry and
 to generate economic opportunities in the sector
- Improving Gender Engagement for Local Development Small business grants made to 56 Kurdistan Region businesses through UNDP Iraq's Headway project resulted in jobs for 237 women in Duhok, Erbil, Halabja and Sulaymaniyah governorates. Another 50 women trainees learned entrepreneurship and business development skills during a four-week course at Koya University in Erbil. After receiving certificates, the women began drafting their business plans for submission to a technical committee who will decide the best 20 to receive US \$2,000 grant to implement their ideas.

B Stabilisation and Infrastructure Development

Contributes to:	
SDGs	3, 5, 6, 9, 11 and 16
UNDP Strategic Plan	Outcome 2: Structural transformations for sustainable development
UNDP Gender Equality Strategy	Outcome 2: Structural transformations for sustainable development
Iraq CPD Outputs:	Outputs 1.1

From 2014 until late 2017, ISIL controlled approximately one-third of Iraq during which time conflict led to widespread destruction. After liberation, UNDP Iraq became the lead agency to support Iraq's post conflict recovery, stabilisation and rehabilitation efforts.

The Funding Facility for Stabilisation (FFS) supports empowerment of women and girls both (1) specifically, through gender-specific interventions such as cash grants for poor and womenheaded households (WHH), rehabilitation of girls' schools and more; (2) generally, by ensuring FFS project priorities reflect women's needs and their participation; and (3) by monitoring and tracking outputs indicative of gender responsive planning and implementation. Such assessments helped staff and partners to respond with tools supportive of each FFS initiative. As a result, 701,645 women and girls benefited from the stabilisation programme.

FFS and ICRRP projects have developed gender strategies focusing on meeting stabilization needs and the participation of both women and men in the prioritization, planning, implementation and monitoring of projects. This approach covers gender mainstreaming in all 4 Windows of stabilization programme: Infrastructure, Livelihoods, Municipal Support and Social Cohesion. As a result, 701,645 women and girls benefitted from the Stabilization programme in 2020.

Results and Achievements

Contributing Projects: ³¹		
Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP)		
Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS)		

³¹ Please see summary of the project details, annexed at the end of this report for more information on project details.

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Women benefit from infrastructure rehabilitation UNDP Iraq rehabilitated 12 health care
facilities including hospitals and health centres leading to improved access to care for 314,278
women and girls in the five liberated areas. Many women were also provided the opportunity
to work as engineers, monitors, technicians, and supervising workers within these projects,
jobs typically reserved for men.

A total of 19,788 girls and women benefitted from improved access to primary and higher education as a result of rehabilitation of 54 buildings and dormitories at girls' schools, universities and other educational faculties in the liberated areas. In addition, 360,855 women and girls benefited from improved access to municipal services as a result of building rehabilitation in those same governorates.

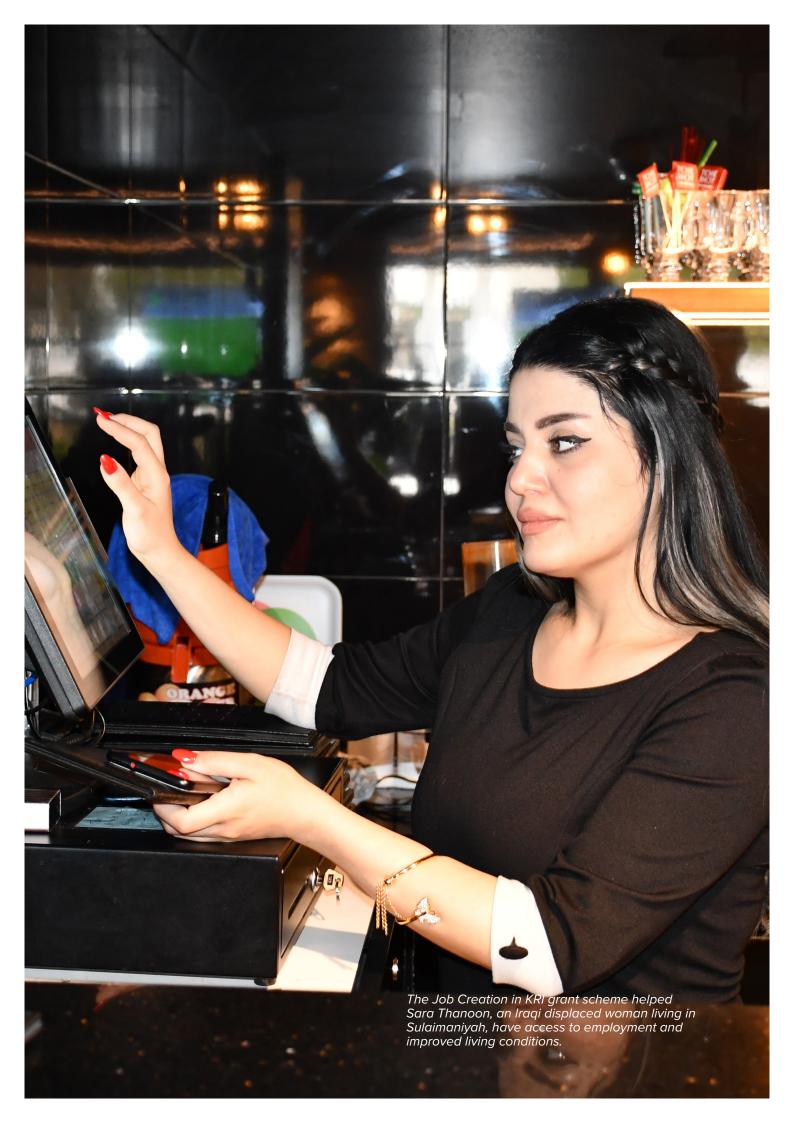
- Housing rehabilitation programme The UNDP Iraq housing rehabilitation programme benefitted a total of 12,922 women in Anbar and Ninewa governorates. Special efforts were made to include rehabilitation of houses occupied by those representing vulnerable and at-risk groups and women-headed households. Women engineers and mobilisers from the communities constituted one-third of the rehabilitation work force
- Introduction to Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) for FFS sub-contractors Consistent with its PSEA zero tolerance policy, UNDP Iraq's FFS gender unit launched online PSEA training for all staff hired by third party as part of the UNDP Iraq commitment to a safe work environment. The online training included 230 engineers, liaison officers, field monitors, municipal advisors, and project staff based in central and west Anbar, Saladin, Kirkuk, Diyala, East and West Mosul and Nineveh plain and Erbil. The staff learned UNDP Iraq policy, protocols, reporting requirements, skills, code of conduct, and accountability, as related to their individual responsibility to prevent and address SEA in the workplace
- Campaigns to end Gender-based Violence (GBV) UNDP Iraq's FFS gender team participated in the global 16 Days of Activism initiative, conducting campaigns in Ramadi and Erbil linked with ongoing CfW projects and implemented in coordination with local government. This campaign helped vulnerable women to generate income during the COVID-19 crisis and, once again, cited women's rights as a basis to end gender-based violence. The campaign took creative advantage of the COVID-19 guidelines by distributing orange face masks to those working on the project as part of UNDP Iraq commitment to "orange the world." Similarly, in East Mosul, two GBV awareness sessions were conducted with CfW workers projects including 66 women participants, many of whom shared their stories related to difficulties in dealing with cultural norms in post ISIS era.

C Strengthening Governance

Contributes to:	
SDGs	5, 10 and 16
UNDP Strategic Plan	Outcome 2: Structural transformations for sustainable development
UNDP Gender Equality Strategy	Outcome 2: Structural transformations for sustainable development
Iraq CPD Outputs:	Outputs 3.1, 3.3, 3.4

A government's legitimacy depends upon meeting its obligations with citizens as part of a social contract. State Institutions that are accountable, transparent and efficient promote equal opportunities for all citizens to achieve their full potential and protect their human rights and, thereby, earn the public's trust.

The Government of Iraq continues to struggle with these goals as a consequence of widespread corruption, weak public institutions, inequitable access to public services, and an absence of policies



and programmes adequate to promote good governance. As evidenced by the low HDI and GII ranking for Iraq, these weaknesses affect women disproportionately as a result of continuing widespread gender bias which deprives women of social, economic and political opportunities equal to men. UNDP Iraq therefore mainstreams Gender Equality initiatives throughout its projects aimed at strengthening good governance by supporting adoption of legal, policy, regulatory and institutional reforms so as to:

- Eliminate gender-based discrimination in national policies and laws
- Permit women's full participation in, and access to public service delivery
- Improve women's parliamentary and other electoral opportunities
- Improve women's access to education, healthcare, and basic services
- · Improve women's access to justice; and
- Reduce all forms of violence against women and girls

Results and Achievements

Contributing Projects:³² Integrated Reconciliation Project Support to Security and Justice Sector Governance Supporting Recovery and Stability through Local Development Supporting monitoring and implementing SDGs

- **Gender Analysis Capacity Building** UNDP Iraq, along with the Women's Empowerment Council in the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers (WEC-COMSEC) developed a guideline incorporating global best practices as a basis to conduct gender analysis among Gol ministries and public institutions. UNDP Iraq then trained 75 representatives responsible for conducting the gender analysis at their respective institutions
- Gender Responsive Crisis Chamber UNDP Iraq, along with WEC-COMSEC, launched a Gender Responsive Crisis Chamber (GRCC) as an assurance measure to protect rights of women and girls in the time of crises and recovery. GRCC is composed of 11 representatives from public institutions, academia, women activist groups, women rights defenders, representatives from minority groups and persons living with disabilities. GRCC currently monitors the adequacy of Gol measures for the safe return of IDPs and, in particular, the attention given to specific needs of returning women and girls, and those with disabilities
- Prevention of sexual harassment in public sector institutions UNDP Iraq supported WEC-COMSEC
 to adopt a policy to Prevent Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority (PSEA) in the workplace filling
 a previous legal void. The policy incorporates comments from public sector institutions participating
 in consultative meetings organized by WEC-COMSEC and two discussion sessions with gender
 focal points representing the same institutions. With the adoption of the policy, the Gol now has a
 basis to deal with sexual harassment and exploitation in the public sector with the expectation that
 the same policy will be used as a de facto standard in the private sector workplace
- Improving women's access to security and justice UNDP Iraq continued to support security
 reforms so as to protect women particularly those vulnerable to sexual abuse and other forms
 of harassment and exploitation, and access to justice for those with documented cases wishing
 to file complaints.

Accordingly, UNDP Iraq launched a number of related, preventive initiatives to improve women's awareness of their rights, including actions they might take when their rights were violated, protections afforded them under the law, as well as conducting gender assessments of services

³² Please see summary of the project details annexed at the end of this report for a brief description of the project

offered by protective agencies and training sessions with officers related to their obligations and standards for gender neutral delivery of services. More specifically, these initiatives included:

- Safer communities UNDP Iraq grants to 12 Civil Society Organisations (CSO) helped to introduce women seeking protection to available security services in their communities while improving community-police relationships, Through the program, CSOs reached 1,580 community members, including 283 women, living in Anbar, Basra, Nineveh, Salah al-Din, Baghdad, and Karbala governorates. As a result of this initiative, women were informed of their rights and access to security services and the latter of their obligations to respect and support all those seeking support on an equal basis under law
- Model police stations UNDP will engage with the Ministry of Interior (Mol) in 2021 to
 establish co-gender model police stations as pilots following a gender assessment
 of 28 local police stations in Anbar, Baghdad, Basra, and Nineveh governorates. The
 gender assessment focused on access to local police stations and their services for
 women, girls and youth from minority groups. Among the findings were the need
 for an increased presence of female police officers, improving basic infrastructure
 for women and girls to access services and the requirement for standard operating
 procedures for handling sensitive cases such as GBV
- Training UNDP Iraq extended a series of specialized trainings to mid-ranking local police officers, including 13 female officers, on modern crime prevention techniques, criminal investigations and police management
- Former combatants UNDP Iraq's Community Security Integration Pilot (CSIP), implemented in Qurna, Basra, trained family members of former volunteer fighters, 25 percent of whom were female, in business development skills. The new skills led to opportunities to start small scale businesses, fostering a new sense of individual self-worth, independence, economic stability, and social cohesion between host communities and surviving family members of former combatants
- Security Sector Reform (SSR) Women in SSR, a sub working group of the Office of the National Security Advisor (ONSA), was established to review existing national policies, institutional frameworks to improve the role of women in the security and justice institutions with technical and advisory support from UNDP Iraq. The working group will continue regular reviews in 2021
- Addressing Gender Based Violence (GBV) through security sector response UNDP Iraq and
 its implementing partner Seoul Policy Centre launched a project to build the police capacity for
 providing GBV survivor-centred services through protocol development, training and deployment
 of police officers. The programme includes Training of Trainers (ToT) to begin in January 2021 for
 Erbil-based security personnel to improve their GBV prevention knowledge base

D Improving Social Cohesion

Contributes to:	
SDGs	5, 8, 10, 16 and 17
UNDP Strategic Plan	Outcome 3: Build resilience to shocks and crisis
UNDP Gender Equality Strategy	Outcome 3: Build resilience to shocks and crisis
Iraq CPD Outputs:	Outputs 1.2, 3.2

UNDP Iraq's Social Cohesion Programme initiatives in 2020 reached more than 11,000 beneficiaries, of whom more than 4,000 were women. UNDP Iraq

- Implemented programmes providing psychosocial support and livelihood development opportunities for thousands of families returning to their communities, of whom 70 percent were women and children
- Implemented two key studies related to women and girls and trained social workers in psychosocial outreach to more than 18,000 women in Iraq. Their struggles during COVID-19 were documented, including lack of access to resources
- Completed, together with UN Women, a review of national Sexual and Gender-Based Violence policies in Iraq to be released in early 2021
- Supported 10 women-led community initiatives addressing limited skill development opportunities as well as providing 1,024 women a safe space to share their collective stories and experiences

Results and Achievements

Contributing Projects:³³ Integrated Reconciliation Project

- Women and Youth for Peace Groups: UNDP Iraq organised Youth for Peace groups in Anbar, Nineveh, Salah al-Din and Diyala governorates, recruiting 90 young people with the aim of introducing youth-led conflict analysis and introduction of related social innovation and entrepreneurship principles to deal with post conflict conditions within their communities. Similarly, UNDP Iraq established Women for Peace groups in Anbar, Diyala and Nineveh governorates recruiting 72 members. Initiatives in 2020 also included production of two web series on communal peace and social cohesion, launch of a Women's Book Club, distribution of Personal Protective Equipment, and more
- Youth Campaign to Discourage Domestic Violence: The Diyala Youth for Peace Group created and launched the #tolerance instead of violence campaign in May 2020, thereafter shared by more than 60 social media platforms in Iraq, including local news agencies, government officials, social media influencers, and non-governmental organizations. The campaign included a video, stories of survivors of domestic violence, and a live discussion on Facebook with community police units to provide advice to women affected by domestic violence. A consensus of young women members expressed the hope that the campaign would "encourage women to speak out and discuss their problems" and that in itself being "a positive development in moving from submission to speaking with courage." 34

E Environment Energy and Climate Change Initiatives for Sustainable Development

Contributes to:	
SDGs	5, 7, 10, 12, 13, 15, and 17
UNDP Strategic Plan	Outcome 3: Build resilience to shocks and crisis
UNDP Gender Equality Strategy	Outcome 3: Build resilience to shocks and crisis
Iraq CPD Outputs:	Outputs 4.1, 4.2

³³ Please see summary of the project details annexed at the end of this report for a brief description of the project

³⁴ Mariam, Diyala Youth Group Member. SOCIAL COHESION PROGRAMME: 2020 IN REVIEW, published by UNDP Iraq.

UNDP in Iraq works with the Gol to promote environmental rehabilitation and development efforts by providing technical assistance and building local capacity to address root causes, assessing risks and recommending mitigation measures associated with environmental degradation, climate change and disaster shocks and, thereby, enables the government to enact policy and to update regulatory requirements essential to environmental protection.

Environmental degradation, climate change and related natural disasters have economic, social, health, and environmental consequences beginning with decreased household food supply and little-to-no crop surplus for sale. In Iraq, there is a further need to improve water conservation efforts in the attempts to prevent risks of drought and flood.

In Iraq, both flood and drought conditions have emerged as very critical issues. The risk of the Al-Mosul dam collapse threatens Nineveh and nearby areas. Meanwhile, other areas have experienced widespread drought conditions. Although these two issues influence the whole society, they have a disproportionate effect on women in Iraq both in their roles in households and as subsistence farmers.

Results and Achievements

Contributing Projects:35

Environment Energy and Climate Change (EECC)

Mosul Dam Emergency Preparedness Project

UNDP-GEF Project Promoting Carbon Reduction Through

- Enhancing Capacities of Women for Safe and Green Iraq (WfSGI) UNDP Iraq, with Ministry of Health and Environment (MoH&E), continues to strengthen women's participation in national environment protection, disaster risk preparedness and response to climate change through Women for Safe and Green Iraq (WfSGI). WfGSI serves as a forum for technical discussions, collective inputs consensus leading to gender responsive policies, strategies and plans for a greener and safer Iraq. In 2019, UNDP supported MoH&E in establishing an WfSGI website (http://moen.gov.iq/wfsgi) as a resource for the WfSGI community, followed in with two workshops focused on awareness of chemical pollution risks, disaster preparedness and community response
- Development of gender inclusive Disaster Risk Preparedness Plans UNDP Iraq worked with
 governorates to assure Disaster Risk Preparedness Plans include at-risk communities such
 as IDPs and other vulnerable groups who require special attention and support in the event
 of natural disasters. UNDP trained 25 female and male community volunteers in disaster risk
 preparedness and mitigation, and trained another 70 male and female paramedics and nurses
 69 doctors on how to treat flood victims for water borne communicable diseases

F Accelerator Lab

UNDP Iraq's Accelerator Lab, established in 2019 to respond to complex challenges and emergencies at a local level such as the COVID-19 health pandemic in 2020, continues to serve as a focal point for community involvement and consensus when resolving continuing and new issues.

Results and Achievements

Women and the Raa'idat Competition in Iraq UNDP Iraq supported the Raa'idat Competition in partnership with the French Embassy, Zain Iraq's entrepreneurship programme and Ashur Bank. In 2020, the competition introduced 20 women entrepreneurs to financial budgeting techniques essential to competing effectively in their respective markets.

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³⁵ Please see summary of the project details annexed at the end of this report for a brief description of the project



THE SDG INITIATIVE

UNDP Iraq is the primary UN agency responsible for supporting Iraq's adoption and achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) at the national level³⁶ including mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment across all national planning and monitoring frameworks through the Support to implement and monitor the SDGs Project.

Results and Achievements

- Gender Mainstreaming in the Implementation of SDGs: UNDP Iraq in cooperation with a local NGO network sponsored a discussion series at local and national levels on the role of civil society assurance of social protection and gender responsive policies consistent with Iraq's 2030 agenda. A total of 145 participants discussed, and the Gol has agreed to implement the following SDG 5 initiatives:
 - Gender units established in ministries and agencies as focal points to support gender mainstreaming
 - Gol initiatives monitored by Iraqi CSOs for consistency regarding gender mainstreaming standards
 - Social protection department established in the Ministry of Labor & Social Affairs to develop and implement new social protection policies and initiatives for women
 - Gol commitment in principle and in practice to respond to any and all forms
 of violence against women and girls and forms of bias that hinder women and
 girls from achieving their potential and
 - Gol commitment to review, revise national plans, policies and strategies so as to protect women's rights and their empowerment
- Integrating rights of Disabled Persons in the implementation of SDGs UNDP Iraq, in cooperation with the Iraqi Alliance for Disability, hosted a virtual conference to discuss integrating the needs and demands of disabled persons within the 2030 Agenda in accordance with the Iraqi Constitution of 2005. The assistance from UNDP Iraq is aligned with Recommendations 34 (e) and 38 (a)³⁷ of the CEDAW Committee's Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Iraq

³⁶ UNDP is the global repository and the primary development agency mandated by the UNDG to support all 193 UN members states and other territories to achieve the SDG goals and targets by 2030.

³⁷ Recommendation 34 (e): "Fully implement Law No. 38 of 2013 to ensure that all women and girls with disabilities have access to quality health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, and are provided with reasonable accommodation." Recommendation 38 (a): "Take effective measures to mainstream a disability perspective into all gender-specific policies and legislation and to mainstream a gender perspective in all disability-specific policies and legislation."

UNDP IRAQ RESPONDS TO COVID-19

UNDP Iraq quickly adapted its CO programming in 2020 to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and its socio-economic impact in general, but also with a specific content supportive of women and girls across Gol's six thematic areas of development intervention.

UNDP Iraq conducted a COVID-19 impact analysis in August 2020 and concluded that COVID-19 will "weaken but not completely destabilize Iraqi society and the Government" but that violence against women and girls showed a significant increase following the onset of the pandemic, particularly incidences domestic violence which was already prevalent in Iraq³⁹. Other findings include:⁴⁰

- Women and girls experienced pandemic induced increased levels of household stress
- Women and girls were at higher risk of infection due to lack of access to information, higher rates of illiteracy, as well lack of purchasing power/financial independence to buy preventive items such as masks and sanitisers
- Women experienced higher instances of income loss and reduced livelihood opportunities than men, especially among female headed households
- Women and girls experienced higher than normal mortality rates due to lack of access to reproductive and healthcare facilities

UNDP Iraq also organised health care committees at the governorate level as focal points for COVID-19 response, including distribution of information and PPE, as well as an online platform to provide health related information for all those with restricted mobility due to lockdown, pregnancy and/or cultural norms

UNDP Iraq, UN Women, UNFPA and the UNAMI Human Rights Office developed content for text messages to promote the safety of women against domestic violence during the COVID-19 lockdown thereafter distributed through various social media platforms.

Results and Achievements

- Effects of COVID-19 induced violence against women and girls addressed UNDP lraq supported WEC-COMSEC discussion sessions for CSOs, women human rights defenders, and gender equality advocates to identify measures address to higher incidence of violence against women and girls due to the impact of COVID-19. On recommendation of this discussion, the Gol carried out extensive social media campaigns and awareness sessions on the social and economic impact COVID-19 and the need to reduce violence against women and girls. The participants noted that, despite the challenges of the COVID-19 lockdown measures, some young lraqi women were actively engaged in a range of initiatives to improve their social and economic status
- Gender Responsive Crisis Cell UNDP Iraq supported the establishment of the Gender Responsive Crisis Cell (GRCC)⁴¹ to add a necessary balance to managing the Gol response to the pandemic given that Iraqi National Crisis Cell lacked any female members or representatives from civil society

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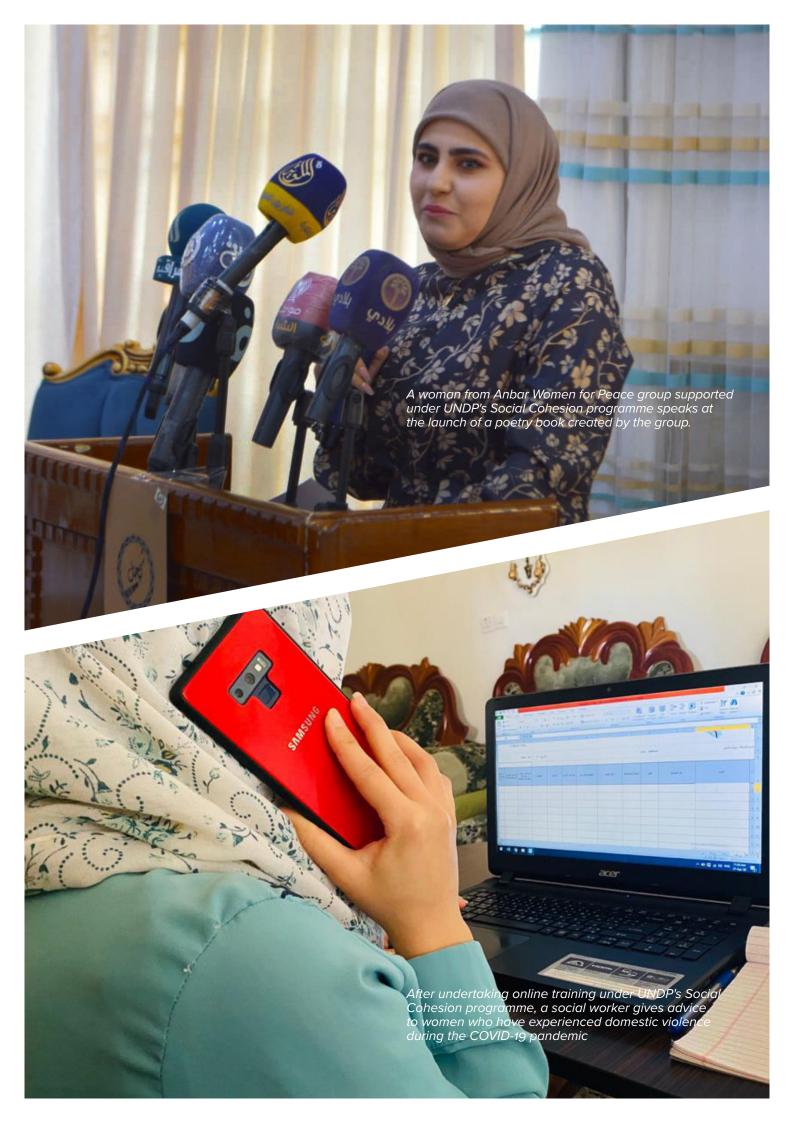
³⁸ UNDP, Iraq: Fragility Analysis for Iraq (August 2020). Available at: https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/impact-oil-crisis-and-covid-19-iraq-s-fragility-enarku; last accessed on 22 February 2021.

³⁹ Ibid, at p. 17

⁴⁰ Oxfam, Gender Analysis of the Covid-19 pandemic in Iraq: Conducted in Kirkuk, Diyala and Sulaymaniyah Governorates, Oxfam Research Reports (June 2020). Available at:

https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/621007/rr-gender-analysis-covid-19-iraq-220620-en. pdf;jsessionid=E672A6C3E4E23DCBDC802CDAF8B0BB70?sequence=4; last accessed on 22 February 2021.

Detailed above under the Gender Equality Results for (c) Strengthening Governance, as the initiate also supports other gender inclusive efforts for the government's response to all crises in the country, beyond the COVID – 19 crisis.



- Training social workers to mitigate gender-based violence: UNDP Iraq trained 255 social workers from the GoI and NGOs on providing psychosocial support related to Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) in times of conflict and during COVID-related restrictions. The social workers assisted 18,300 women and girls in various stages of SGBV distress as well as from the adverse effects of isolation measures due to lockdowns and movement restrictions during the pandemic
- Survey on the effects of COVID-19 on women and girls in Iraq UNDP Iraq, in partnership with the Women Leadership Institute, conducted a telephone survey of 2,500 women in Baghdad, Nineveh, Anbar, Kirkuk, and Salah al-Din Governorates as a follow-up to the aforesaid initiative training of another 75 social workers in psychosocial support to respond to SGBV crimes associated with COVID-19. The survey found that the COVID-19 pandemic curfew and limitations on movement in Iraq to be detrimental to the safety and security of women and girls. It revealed that 52 percent of women who have faced violence did not know where to go for help. 71 percent of women confirmed that men in the family were demanding and sometimes violent.
- Book on experiences of Iraqi women during Covid-19 The Anbar Women for Peace Group, with UNDP Iraq support, released a collection of stories titled Kohl or Eyeliner written by young women from Anbar Governorate describing their efforts to overcome COVID-19 induced difficulties in an effort to achieve their personal goals
- COVID-19 awareness through Women for Safe and Green Iraq (WfSGI) UNDP Iraq, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Environment (MoH&E) and facilitated by a team from WfSGI including gender focal points from relevant line ministries, supported the #ForMe social media campaign to encourage women in their roles as mothers, sisters and daughters to adopt preventive measures for the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The campaign included videos and collateral materials as well as online training to conduct post-campaign analysis across all WfSGI initiatives
- Let's Beat Corona Campaign UNDP Iraq's campaign for the prevention of spread and transmission of the COVID-19 virus in Iraq reached an estimated 31.7 million people between June and September 2020. The campaign featuring WHO messages ran on- and offline. An estimated 26 percent of the audience reached were women and girls

GENDER PARITY: A SNAPSHOT

A parity review of UNDP Iraq CO positions between 2017 and 2020 shows a modest gain in gender parity⁴², as the overall percentage of female staff increased 3.33 percent from 30 percent to 33.3 percent overall. The slight increase masks significant growth among international staff appointed to mid-range professional grades, however. As of 2020, women held 80 percent of P2 and 61 percent P3 jobs, respectively, but parity still proves elusive in the higher grades: only 27 percent of P4 and 38 percent P5 jobs, respectively, are held by women. Men still predominate among those holding UNDP national contracts.

GENDER EQUALITY: PARTNERSHIPS

UNDP in Iraq is committed to work jointly with UN Women, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF), the UN Country Team and other UN entities at the country level to achieve gender equality while addressing Iraq's development and humanitarian challenges⁴³.

- Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) national policies in Iraq⁴⁴ An assessment report developed in partnership with UN Women helped (1) to identify challenges and gaps in Iraq's national policy framework on SGBV; (2) to ensure efficient and effective implementation of SGBV policies through standardized reporting of SGBV cases and their prosecution; and (3) to identify the need for comprehensive prevention and protection mechanisms for inclusion in Iraq's SGBV national framework
- Domestic Violence Law UNDP Iraq and UN Women through the UNCT assisted WEC-COMSEC with the final draft of the Domestic Violence Law for parliamentary review
- **16 Days of Activism against GBV** UNDP and UN Women jointly led the local version of the global campaign and the international women's day celebration in collaboration with other UN AFPs
- Building resilience to shocks and crisis UNDP Iraq and UNCT supported the UN Womenled UNDP Gender Equality Strategy efforts to implement UNSCR 1325 with Gol's adoption of the Second National Action Plan for Iraq. The plan establishes programmes to protect rights activists and to improve the role of women to advance peace and security, facilitate the participation of women in decision-making forums related to conflict mediation, negotiations, peacebuilding and dialogue key to building national consensus and reducing social tension

⁴² United Nations system-wide Strategy on Gender Parity (2017), Available at https://www.un.org/gender/sites/www.un.org.gender/files/gender_parity_strategy_october_2017.pdf; last accessed on 22 Feb 2021.

⁴³ UNDP Gender Equality Strategy (2018 - 21), at pp. 6 - 7.

⁴⁴ Web Story

GENDER EQUALITY: A REVERSAL

Gender equality in Iraq largely stagnated in 2020 as the country continued to experience political instability and nationwide public unrest due to lack of economic opportunities, poor economic policies, widespread corruption, breakdown of public institutions, lack of equal access to basic services and continuing security threats from extremist and rogue armed groups. The COVID-19 pandemic added yet one more factor to an economy already hammered by the effects plunging oil prices, with predictable setbacks regarding recovery, stability and development.

These factors not only led to disproportionate job loss and reduced income among women but exposed women already vulnerable to SGBV, and with little-to-no access to protection, to increased incidences of SGBV attributable stress induced by COVID-19 restrictions and uncertainty along with an unequitable burden of managing households⁴⁵.

UNDP Iraq's monitoring of gender equality related developments confirmed not only high levels of SGBV abuse induced by the factors already mentioned as reported by victims, but also a lack of progress in key legislative and other initiatives key to improving conditions for women, particularly those supporting decision-making, empowerment and protection of civil rights:

- Effects of increased instability and insurgency As of 2020, one in five Iraqi women (21 percent) aged 15-49 had suffered physical violence by the partner, 33 percent had suffered emotional violence, and 62 percent of women and girls reported increased trauma, stress and anxiety levels directly as a result of COVID-19 related restrictions and uncertainty⁴⁶. Similarly, conflict continued to exact devastating toll in terms of numbers of women widowed, to cause increased incidence of women and girls migrating with greater risk of exposure to all forms of violence, and to expose women headed households to extreme poverty
- Continued resistance to full gender equality through legislation and policy As of 2020, the
 Domestic Violence Law, and other national frameworks to provide women equal socioeconomic and political rights, access to and protection from all forms of violence and prevention
 of all forms of violence against women had still yet to be promulgated
- Women in the decision-making positions UNDP Iraq continues to monitor women's progress
 in terms of participation and appointments to decision-making roles in ministries and state
 institutions and other important areas indicative of gender quality and women's empowerment.
 In general, women remain underrepresented in ministries and state institutions as well as the
 public budget; and key legislation intended to promote to women's empowerment still awaits
 passage

⁴⁵ Supra, n. 40

⁴⁶ IRAQ I Survey on impact and long-term needs of women's actors in the context of covid-19.

WAY FORWARD: PRIORITIES FOR 2021

UNDP Iraq remains committed to recovering lost momentum in 2020, and as a way forward, has established as priorities to achieving Gender Equality in 2021:

a. Coordination

- Creation of a Gender Focal Team in accordance with the UNDP Global Gender Strategy (2018-2021) to more effectively mainstream gender priorities across all UNDP Iraq CO Programmes
- · Participation and certification through the Gender Equality Seal Exercise
- Ensure the UNDP Iraq's CO programming and gender mainstreaming is aligned to achieve the priorities of the Gol's Second National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325
- Coordination with UN Women, UNFPA, ILO, UNICEF and UNAMI and other agencies to ensure that all women and girls remain front-and-centre of all socio-economic recovery programmes⁴⁷

b. Advocacy

- Support passage of the Domestic Violence Bill into a law in 2021-2022
- Ensure participation of women, including those from the minority groups, throughout the Iraqi election process of 2021 as political party representatives and as voters exercising their civil rights
- Ensure equal participation of women in decision-making roles related to ongoing anticorruption initiatives
- Renew efforts and strengthen partnership ties with civil society organisations to address prevailing social and behavioural norms and gender bias inhibiting gender equality

c. Support

UNDP Iraq will continue to provide support to women and girls in Iraq's liberated areas including:

- Job creation, cash-for-work opportunities and business grants
- Psychosocial support to victims of GBV and other kinds of violence
- · Rehabilitation of girls' primary and secondary educational facilities
- Rehabilitation of women's health care facilities especially maternity centres
- Training of police and other service providers to better manage GBV cases
- Educational content to assist partners with behavioural change as a prerequisite to end gender and sexual based harassment and abuse

d. Outreach

• Improve CO gender parity ratios through outreach to diverse communities so as to identify, recruit and hire of qualified female staff

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⁴⁷ See: https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/news-centre/news/2020/UN_sets_out_COVID_social_and_economic_recovery_plan.html; last accessed 22 February 2021.



United Nations Development ProgrammeBaghdad, Iraq

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