

EXPECTED FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

- Increase technical support to the State Ministry of Women's Affairs and the High Council of Women to develop policies and legislation to promote gender mainstreaming across line ministries.
- Empower young women and girls to become economically and politically informed members of society.
- Enhance the capacity of government and civil society to create the space for women to effectively participate in decision-making and integrate at the individual, local, regional and federal levels.
- Improve women's analytical and mediating skills at the community and government levels to be active participants in the peace building process.

GOVERNMENT OF IRAQ COUNTERPARTS

State Ministry of Women's Affairs, Ministry of Planning, Central Statistics Office, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Environment (General Directorate for Mine Action), Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Human Rights, Ministry of Electricity and the Independent High Electoral Commission.

In the Kurdistan Region: High Commission for Women's Issues, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Planning and Kurdistan Regional Statistic Office, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Electricity and the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Authority.

At the Governorate levels: Provincial Councils and Governors.

THESE PROJECTS WERE MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE IRAQ TRUST FUND AND THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF

The governments of Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United States and the European Union.

OUR MANDATE

UNDP is the United Nations global development network, an organization advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. We are on the ground in 177 countries and territories, working with governments and people to find solutions to global and national development challenges. As they develop local capacity, they draw on the people of UNDP and our wide range of partners. UNDP helps developing countries attract and use aid effectively. In all our activities, we encourage the protection of human rights, and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. We are committed to facilitating south-south cooperation and building national capacities for sustainable human development.

UNDP has been present in Iraq for more than 35 years with its main office in Baghdad and continuous presence in both Erbil in the Kurdistan Region and Basra in the south. UNDP focuses on supporting and developing institutions and processes that respond to the needs of Iraqi citizens, in particular the poor.

UNDP continues to build and expand partnerships with the Government of Iraq at the Federal and Regional levels in the Kurdistan Region, parliament, civil society, media, academia, the private sector, religious and community organizations, the United Nations and international development partners.

CONTACT Us

For more information visit the Gender section on our website:

www.iq.undp.org

press.iraq@undp.org

(+9626) 560-83-30



GENDER

IN FOCUS



OUR WORK

Despite the Government of Iraq's best efforts to address gender inequality, the situation for Iraqi women has declined steadily since 2003. Statistics point to worsening conditions due to economic, social and political marginalization, decades of war, conflict and sanctions. Iraqi women comprise half of the total population of 31 million and are the head of one in 10 Iraqi households, 80% of whom are widows.

Violence, lack of security and stability and increased religious conservatism constrain Iraqi women to traditional roles, such as homemakers, limiting their access to education and paid employment. Illiteracy rates are twice as high among Iraqi women compared with men, irrespective of the age group. 82% of Iraqi women are outside the labour force compared with 19% of men, as a result women are at a particular risk of poverty.

An overview of the Government of Iraq's achievements in gender mainstreaming indicates low rates of progress. While the necessary framework is in place, women's equality is an issue that lacks visibility, impetus and operationalization at the local, regional and national levels. Iraq's National Development Plan (2011-2014) and the Poverty Reduction Strategy include explicit references to human rights, the rule of law and achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Despite initial gains, Iraq is now lagging behind in achieving gender parity in primary education enrolment. The police and judicial system are making progress in addressing women's access to justice however violence against women remains a serious concern with traditional attitudes within the formal and informal sectors perpetuating a culture of impunity. Iraqi duty bearers require further support to address the complex needs of female rights holders within the legal and policy frameworks and their implementation.



Based on the framework provided under the international treaties, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in collaboration with the Government of Iraq, carefully designs its programmes to be gender-sensitive. In line with UNDP's corporate Gender Equality Strategy and the eight point-agenda which articulates a strong corporate commitment to improving the situation of women affected by conflicts and disasters, UNDP programmes:

1. Incorporate gender outputs from the early stages of project development
2. Actively encourage female participation in programme and project development and implementation
3. Ensure gender-responsive recovery processes that promote equal opportunities and choices for women
4. Develop capacities for social transformation.

To support the Government of Iraq and civil society in their commitment to address gender disparity in Iraq, UNDP Iraq has undertaken a two pronged approach:

A. *Ensure all programmes and projects are informed by UNDP's global mandate for gender equality as stipulated in the Country Programme in Democratic Governance, Rule of Law, Poverty Alleviation and Crisis Prevention.* A multi-disciplinary team, which includes a gender advisor, undertakes a substantial review at the onset of the development of a programme to ensure the integration of high level gender outputs.

B. *Develop programmes that instigate special measures to address gender priority issues.* The Gender Programme reinforces the work of UNDP Iraq by pioneering sustainable, catalytic programmes in partnership with Iraqi stakeholders. These programmes are targeted with training designed to build capacity and bolster the expertise of Iraqi counterparts on gender issues and spread best practices to UNDP Iraq programmes.



ACHIEVEMENTS

Enhanced access to justice for women and children through the **Family Support, Justice and Security and Rule of Law** projects. These projects contributed to the development of key policies and legal frameworks (draft regional shelter policy, draft unified intake form needed for the development of a National Violence against Women database, a regional domestic violence bill, strategy and a four year plan of action for the Family Protection Units for technical support to social workers and police staff).

Increased the number and capacity of women who can participate in the government planning and monitoring process through the **Local Area Development Programme**. The government, as a result addresses gender disparities for men and women to participate in the development of their communities. With the pilot project now complete, a full scale roll-out of the project has been extended nationwide.

Ensured that responsive budgeting becomes an integral part of gender informed project implementation while addressing the number of women placed at decision making levels through the **Iraqi Public Sector Modernization and Support to the Independent High Electoral Commission** projects. The signatories of the United Nations Global Compact have accepted gender equality as one of the corner stones of their commitment to improve human rights, labour standards, environmental sustainability and transparency in business corporations.

Provided 1,000 women with loans for micro and small businesses through the Private Sector Development Programme in Iraq.

Strengthened local capacities for conflict prevention and peace building, creating and training a network of experts through the Conflict-related Development Analysis and Peace Building projects. This project allowed women to play a proactive role in the identification of sources of community conflict in the Disputed Internal Boundaries and their eventual resolution.

UNDP Iraq's work, through strengthened partnerships, is informed from inputs of the civil society. An evaluation on women's economic empowerment and peace building activities, supported by NGOs was finalized to inform the development of projects focusing on women's economic empowerment and peace building.

UNDP Iraq's gender experts continue to provide ongoing technical support to Iraqi women leaders and advocates to pave the way for empowerment and participation at all levels of governance and community life. UNDP facilitated the participation of women at the national, regional and global levels in activities on political participation and peace building.



Photos by UNDP Iraq