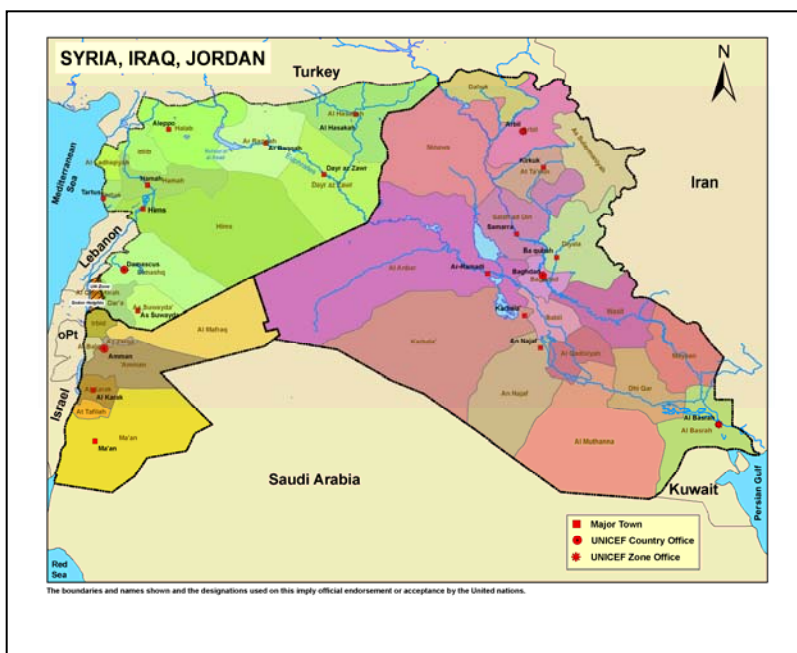


For every child  
Health, Education, Equality, Protection  
ADVANCE HUMANITY



# UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION IRAQ IN 2008



## CORE COUNTRY DATA

Child population (thousands)	14782
U5 mortality rate	41
Infant mortality rate	34
Maternal mortality ratio (1980-99)	193
Primary school enrolment ratio	83
Primary school enrolment ratio for girls	79
% U1 fully immunized (DPT)	55
% population using improved drinking water sources	79
HIV/AIDS prevalence (thousands)	0.2
% U5 suffering moderate and severe malnutrition	8

Source: Iraq Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2006

The ongoing conflict in Iraq continues to have a devastating impact on Iraqi children. Over 1 million internally displaced persons have fled their homes since February 2006, of which 70 per cent are children and women. Insecurity has closed schools, eroded access to quality health care and safe water, and left many children without caregivers. Meanwhile, communities hosting displaced families are being overwhelmed, their coping mechanisms close to breaking point. In 2008, UNICEF will reach up to 358,650 acutely vulnerable and war-affected children.

## Summary of UNICEF financial needs for 2008

Sector	US\$
Health and nutrition	10,519,579
Water, sanitation and hygiene	16,295,290
Education	10,964,147
Child protection (includes mine action)	5,503,844
<b>Total*</b>	<b>43,282,860</b>

\* The total includes a maximum recovery rate of 7 per cent. The actual recovery rate on contributions will be calculated in accordance with UNICEF Executive Board Decision 2006/7 dated 9 June 2006

### 1. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

Nearly five years after start of the 2003 conflict, Iraq's children are facing an enormous challenge. Hope for a normal childhood is being rapidly swept away by violence and displacement. Every day, more and more children are losing family members, friends and neighbours, and even their lives. Since 2003, nearly 15 per cent of Iraq's total population has fled their homes. Since early 2006, over 1 million Iraqis – 47 per cent of them children – have sought refuge in towns and villages that are not their own. Iraq's children, already casualties of a quarter of a century of conflict and deprivation, are being caught up in a worsening humanitarian tragedy. Despite a strong response from the international community, the urgent needs of Iraq's vulnerable young citizens are quickly exceeding available humanitarian resources.

Conditions for displaced children and the communities hosting them are worsening. Most displaced families are living in communities that are already poor and often also badly affected by violence and insecurity. Approximately 45 per cent cannot afford their own homes, and have no choice but to move in with extended families or even occupy public buildings, adding to the strain on local resources. In Iraq's most volatile areas, insecurity has closed schools and eroded access to quality care in health facilities and hospitals – particularly in Baghdad, which has the highest number of displaced people. Violence is creating widows and orphans on a daily basis, many of whom are left to struggle for survival. Many women are scared to walk in the street while parents are afraid to let their children attend school or play outside.

The 'spill-over' effects of insecurity are widespread and damaging. In Iraq's more secure districts, the influx of new families is creating an overwhelming demand for education, health care, water and sanitation and other basic services. Meanwhile, Iraq's already fragile basic services infrastructure is faltering. Attempts to repair damaged water and sanitation networks have been crippled by serious electricity shortages and sabotage (current estimates indicate that only 30 per cent of Iraqis have a reliable, safe water source near their home). Immunization rates are falling as insecurity pushes preventative health care down the list of family priorities.

Education is reaching a particularly critical point. Many schools suffer from overcrowding and are now forced to hold multiple shifts. Displaced children are less likely to commence or complete the school year. As a result, more Iraqi children are seeing their chance to learn slip away. Few safety nets are available to children who drop out of the education system altogether. Increasing numbers of children are separated from their families or on the streets, where they are extremely vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Most children have experienced stress at various levels, and fear and anxiety have become a major psychosocial concern, while few receive the specialized psychosocial care and support they need to help them cope with so much chaos and loss.

An emerging issue that is requiring serious and urgent attention is the reported engagement of children in insurgency/terrorist activities, and the subsequent advocacy and support needed for children held in detention. The continuing levels of violence and instability strongly suggest that this aspect of UNICEF's work will need increased financial and technical resources to be adequately addressed.

### 2. KEY ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2007

Despite enormous challenges on the ground, UNICEF maintains a strong capacity to respond to emergencies affecting Iraqi children and women nationwide. UNICEF's emergency response in 2007 comprised two key approaches: the urgent delivery of essential humanitarian relief to areas of greatest need, and the delivery of a substantial national programme boosting Iraq's capacity to deliver health, education, water and sanitation services, as well as protection for the most vulnerable. UNICEF Iraq partners with the Government of Iraq and its various line ministries, and has significant ongoing agreements with the Iraqi Red Crescent Society and several NGOs to deliver humanitarian assistance, supported by a network of national staff and facilitators based inside Iraq.

UNICEF Iraq is an active participant in the UN cluster approach for Iraq, and has leadership responsibilities in two clusters (education and culture and infrastructure and rehabilitation), with deputy leadership status for the health and nutrition cluster. The other key clusters in which UNICEF actively participates are IDP, refugee and durable solutions, and governance.

## UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION REPORT 2008

UNICEF continued to deliver humanitarian assistance in 2007, reaching over 150,000 people caught up in displacement, disease outbreaks, military action, severe deprivation or natural disaster. Major actions included response to displacement (particularly in Baghdad, Anbar, Najaf, Wassit, Basra, Mosul and the Kurdistan Region), delivery of emergency supplies to Anbar and Samarra, response to the catastrophic bombings in Sinjar and support to contain a major cholera outbreak. Support delivered included oral rehydration salts (ORS), basic health kits, emergency surgical supplies, cannulas, intravenous fluids, therapeutic feeds, vitamin A capsules, zinc tablets, water and hygiene kits, recreational kits, water tankering and education support.

Across Iraq, UNICEF works to protect Iraqi children's right to survive and grow up healthy. UNICEF's health and nutrition programmes provide lifesaving basic care to children from before birth through to adolescence, and promote the survival and health of Iraq's women. International donors provide critical support to UNICEF's work on health and nutrition for children and women.

As the coordinating agency of the UN education and culture cluster for Iraq, UNICEF has been intensifying its efforts to address key factors contributing to decline in Iraq's education rates and learning standards. UNICEF focused its interventions on restoring Iraq's learning environment to help children continue their education despite the ongoing violence and insecurity.

In the wake of widespread damage to national water supply and sanitation facilities, UNICEF has helped to restore families' access to these critical services and manage large-scale outbreaks of dangerous waterborne diseases, like cholera. As coordinator of the UN infrastructure and rehabilitation cluster, UNICEF leads the UN effort in rebuilding and expanding water and sanitation facilities, improving hygiene and sanitation in schools and providing emergency water, sanitation and hygiene assistance to families in crisis.

UNICEF works to ensure that Iraqi children living in an uncertain and sometimes dangerous environment are protected from harm, exploitation and abuse, supporting reintegration into family and community, and enhancing opportunities for participation in decision-making. UNICEF's programmes help to build partnerships for children, support local projects to improve children's lives and promote discussions and analysis of children's rights within the Iraqi Constitution amongst all Iraq's stakeholders.

### 3. PLANNED HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR 2008

#### **Coordination and partnership**

UNICEF Iraq is reinforcing its humanitarian programming through an integrated operational framework designed to reach a greater number of affected Iraqi families with a needs-based and holistic assistance package. This mechanism will link into existing coordination structures such as the UN cluster approach, in which UNICEF Iraq has been designated leader for the infrastructure and rehabilitation and education and culture clusters. UNICEF is also deputy cluster leader for the health and nutrition cluster. UNICEF works in close collaboration with the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and UN agencies via the UN Country Team (UNCT) and, bilaterally, coordinates closely with the newly established Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Amman. UNICEF Iraq has long-lasting partnerships with several NGOs, and established strategies and priorities with the Government of Iraq.

#### **Regular programme**

UNICEF Iraq is in the second year of its current Country Programme of Cooperation 2007-2010. The programme addresses the rights of the child through activities in early childhood development, and primary education, maternal/child health and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, and legal and social protection of the child throughout the country. UNICEF's emergency activities are integrated into the programme structure and are designed and implemented by experts.

#### **Health and nutrition (US\$ 10,519,579)**

Up to 360,000 displaced persons, host communities and other extremely vulnerable persons will benefit from the following key activities:

- Provide required vaccines (measles and polio), vitamin A and required cold-chain equipment, auto-destruct syringes and safety boxes;

## UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION REPORT 2008

- Provide transportation and food allowance for outreach mobile health teams to vaccinate internally displaced under-five children;
- Support social mobilization activities for measles and polio vaccination;
- Assure availability of ORS and zinc at all health facilities for the treatment of diarrhoeal cases;
- Provide basic new emergency health kits, midwife kits, and first aid kits;
- Assure availability of surgical materials for the treatment of casualties;
- Distribute non-food items to affected populations;
- Provide nutritional supplies, including therapeutic milk and Plumpy'nut, for the management of severely and moderately malnourished under-five children;
- Undertake capacity-building of the Ministry of Health and NGO staff through training of nutrition rehabilitation centres and primary health-care centres' staff on the proper management of malnutrition (severe and moderate);
- Promote breastfeeding and appropriate infant and child feeding practices among IDP communities;
- Support mobile health teams to provide outreach services to remote communities.

### **Water, sanitation and hygiene (US\$ 16,295,290)**

Up to 720,000 vulnerable persons, focusing particularly on children and women, will be reached through the following key activities:

- Supply tankered water to affected populations, install mobile water treatment plants, and repair existing water supply networks and sewage lines;
- Distribute water purification tablets/chemicals and hygiene materials (soap, sanitary napkins, hygiene kits etc.) at household and community level;
- Undertake awareness campaigns on hygiene and waste/excreta disposal;
- Construct latrines and provide garbage collection and disposal at community and household levels;
- Undertake capacity-building of Ministry and NGO staff in technical aspects of assessment, response and evaluation in emergency settings.

### **Education (US\$ 10,964,147)**

A total of 149,000 displaced and war-affected children and up to 2,300 teachers will benefit from the following key activities:

- Supply basic scholastic materials, including notebooks, pencils, erasers, recreational and early childhood development kits, for preschool and primary schoolchildren;
- Undertake capacity-building of primary schoolteachers through provision of teacher training, with particular attention to HIV/AIDS, gender and peace education;
- Provide tents and/or support construction of temporary learning spaces to accommodate preschool and primary schoolchildren;
- Build capacity of NGO staff in assessment and response standards in emergency settings.

### **Child protection, includes mine action (US\$ 5,503,844)**

Orphans and unaccompanied children, children being recruited by militia/insurgency groups as well as those in detention, and survivors of gender-based violence, are targeted through the following key activities:

- Strengthen operational monitoring mechanisms at community level;
- Reinforce community-based rapid response mechanisms for the prevention of/response to sexual violence;
- Identify and provide an appropriate response, including medical and psychosocial, to support the reintegration of women and children subjected to sexual violence;
- Explore ways to advocate for and facilitate the release and reintegration of children who remain associated with armed groups or detained by military forces;
- Increase support to separated and unaccompanied children and orphans by developing/strengthening community-based protection mechanisms;
- Ensure mine-risk education (MRE) to affected communities in the provinces via schools and other community structures designing and disseminating MRE materials (T-shirts, leaflets, posters etc) and providing direct MRE sessions to affected communities.