

Iraq

Executive Summary

The socio-economic and political climate of Iraq remains unstable following the establishment of the transitional government in 2007. Though significant milestones have been achieved – including national elections, gaining status as an upper-middle income country and important constitutional and human rights reforms – the country remains fragile. Structural poverty, regional inequities and delays in decentralization and public sector modernization has contributed to a tense and fractured political environment which worsened significantly prior to the 2014 election. Social instability and escalation of violence beginning with protest movements in 2012 and 2013 contributed to the belief that Iraq was not meeting the needs of all citizens, particularly vulnerable children, youth and women.

Communities and leaders voiced discontent on issues of access to services, social inclusion and addressed a narrative of disenfranchisement, especially among youth. Over the years, studies on deprivations and poverty have pointed to significant disparities in some governorates. The Iraq UNDAF 2015-2019 outlines strategies to address social cohesion, vulnerability and inequity, and social protection for the vulnerable amongst other issues, with the engagement of children and youth as a key focus.

In addition, the humanitarian crisis in Iraq remains acute- some 8.2 million people remain in need of assistance including some 4 million children. Of these, it is estimated that some 4.6 million people are living in areas controlled by armed opposition groups of which 2.3 million, half of which are children, are at high risk and in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. The children are exposed to risks of death or injury, abduction, forced recruitment into armed groups, sexual and physical violence, separation from caregivers, and the death of family members. Poor nutritional status, inadequate health care, psychological trauma and the education and water, hygiene and sanitation sectors being stretched to breaking point all impact the long-term development of children caught up in this crisis.

Within the changing country context, UNICEF and its partners are working to continue providing services. High staff turnover and the changing physical location of the office due to security have slowed progress and created challenges in terms of communication, coordination and relationship building with partners. Many donors are experiencing similar challenges. Many are not able to maintain offices in-country leading to challenging coordination with their funding partners, including UNICEF. There are also limited centralized donor coordination mechanisms to facilitate interagency discussion and collaboration, and to prevent overlap or inefficiencies caused by multiple actors with potentially competing priorities.

External funding to the country remains a challenge and has also waned in general, in part because of 'donor fatigue', due to the long years of support already provided, frustration with the lack of progress and continued instability, and competing international priorities. This shift of focus away from the needs within Iraq has created a scarcity of funding leading to intense and often counterproductive competition for resources within the humanitarian and development community. Real progress toward greater resiliency and development have been hindered by

the almost exclusive provision of humanitarian/emergency funding instead of longer-term development support.

Humanitarian Assistance

Since 2014, Iraq has been host to one of the largest groupings of refugee and internally displaced persons in the world. As of the end of 2015, the Government of Iraq has confirmed more than 3 million IDPs, some of which have been displaced multiple times across numerous locations. Currently, Iraq has 49 IDP camps, with an additional ten under construction.

Today, more than eight million people in Iraq are in need of immediate humanitarian life-saving assistance, of which more than three million are children. In 2015 UNICEF, through its work with humanitarian actors, implementing partners and cluster engagement, delivered time sensitive assistance to more than four million people through its Rapid Response Mechanism. More than 400,000 people were reported as returnees, exacerbating not only the declining infrastructure in host communities, but also fueling additional challenges.

A cholera crisis in late 2015 led to more than 2,800 confirmed cases across the country. UNICEF's emergency response focused on emergency supplies for the rapid treatment of dehydration; water testing and purifying; and health promotion activities. Lack of investment and the ongoing violence and armed conflict, has meant further deterioration of infrastructure, with water and sanitation most affected.

Iraq faces extreme weather conditions with very high temperatures in summer, and heavy rains with seasonal flooding in the winter, further compounding the population's vulnerability. The weather not only affects IDPs in camps, but also the over stretched non-camp IDPs living in host-communities and informal settlements. In 2015 UNICEF responded to the needs of children in the winter through the provision of temporary WASH facilities and winterization interventions, including provision of winter clothing and blankets to over 600,000 children.

Summary Notes and Acronyms

ALP - Accelerated Learning Programme
AOG - Armed Opposition Groups
ASK - Action Supported by Knowledge
AWP - Annual Work Plan
PBR - Programme and Budget Review
BYOD - Bring Your Own Device
CDC - Communicable Diseases Center
CFS - Child Friendly Space
CMT - Country Management Team
CPD - Country Programme Document
CPiE - Child Protection in Emergencies
CP - Child Protection
CP - Country Programme
CRB - Central Review Body
DCT - Direct Cash Transfer
DoE - Directorate of Education
DFAM - Division of Financial and Administrative Management
DoH - Directorates of Health
DoLSA - Directorate of Labour and Social Affairs
DSS - Department of Safety and Security

ED - Executive Director
EPI - Expanded Program on Immunization
FGM - Female Genital Mutilation
GOI - Government of Iraq
HRBA - Human Rights Based Approach
HPM - Humanitarian Performance Monitoring
HRP- Humanitarian Response Plan
ICT- Information and Communication Technology
IDPs- Internally Displaced Persons
IMEP - Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
IMNCH - Integrated Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health
IPV - Inactivated Polio Vaccine
IP - Implementing Partner
ISIS - Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
IT - Information Technology
IYCF - Infant and Young Child Feeding
JCC - Joint Consultative Committee
KRG - Kurdistan Regional Government
KRI - Kurdistan Region of Iraq
LoU - Letter of Understanding
LTA - Long Term Agreement
MICS - Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoE - Ministry of Education
MoHE - Ministry of Higher Education
MoH - Ministry of Health
MoLSA - Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MoP - Ministry of Planning
MORSS - Minimum Operational Residential Security Standards
MOSS - Minimum Operating Security Standards
MoU -Memorandum of Understanding
MRM - Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism
MSCR - Mission Security Clearance Request
MTR - Mid Term Review
NGO - Non-Governmental Organization
NVS - National Vaccines Cold Storage Facility
OCHA - Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODK - Open Data Kit
OIP - Office Improvement Plan
ORE - Other Resources-Emergency
OR - Other Resources
PBR - Programme Budget Review
PCA - Programme Cooperation Agreements
PHC - Primary Health Care
PHCC - Primary Health Care Centre
PME - Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
PPP - Programme Policy and Procedure
PRS - Poverty Reduction Strategy
PSB - Procurement Services Branch
PTA - Parent Teacher Association
RED - Reach Every District
RMT - Regional Management Team

RRM - Rapid Response Mechanism
RR - Regular Resources
SAFE - Safe and Secure Approaches in Field Environments

Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy

In 2015 UNICEF continued to make efforts to gather and disseminate quality data to enhance decision making with an evidence-base. UNICEF assisted in conducting a study on conflict dynamics in northern Iraq, which identified drivers of conflicts amongst IDPs, host communities, and refugees in camp and non-camp settings. The data helped form the basis of risk-informed programming in selected camps.

A rapid assessment on the Worst Forms of Child Labour conducted in central and south Iraq with UNICEF support, showed an increase in IDP children working in hazardous conditions, including in jobs with insufficient access to food, where they were exposed to physical violence, and other hazards.

UNICEF, in cooperation with the Government of Iraq, assisted in the facilitation of the first large scale national survey assessing public health facilities providing maternal and neonatal care services. Results of the survey assisted in identifying bottlenecks around neonatal components, and will guide the Ministry of Health to develop actions to reduce maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality.

Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation

UNICEF continues to analyze inequalities which are at the heart of development issues and redress discriminatory practices that impede development progress. In 2015 UNICEF Iraq made progress towards further institutionalizing a human rights based approach to programming by supporting the drafting and endorsement of the National Child Protection Policy (NCP), which is child rights based . The policy aims to address gaps in existing legislation, service delivery and child protection issues affecting marginalized and disadvantaged children in host, IDP and refugee communities. The policy recommends child rights based system approach to address gaps related to legislation, prevention, and provision of child protection service delivery with a specific focus on equity based approach.

In the effort to ensure inclusion of those most marginalized, UNICEF supported children's right to quality education and has provided access to education opportunities to Syrian refugee children paying attention to classroom instructions provided in different languages based on the child's place of origin. UNICEF continues to strengthen its monitoring and reporting of grave violations of child rights in the country.

Gender Mainstreaming and Equality

UNICEF Iraq continues to be committed to promoting gender equality across all programming and policies in humanitarian and non-humanitarian interventions. In 2015, humanitarian partners operating in northern Iraq conducted a Rapid Gender Analysis (RGA) and Child Protection Assessment to determine the different needs, capacities and coping strategies of women, men, boys and girls in the displacement crisis among IDPs.

UNICEF has increased efforts to mainstream gender in all WASH activities by planning and designing facilities in coordination with beneficiaries in order to generate equitable access, and careful attention be given to men and women, girls and boys. Programming in all sectors

allowed for gender sensitive issues to be addressed, including through the provision of gender-friendly latrine facilities in Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) and schools. Programme design took into account gender differential needs, safety, and mitigation of gender based violence risks to encourage girls' attendance at CFS and schools.

UNICEF Iraq has an identified gender-focal point and a full time staff dedicated to gender-based violence programming.

Environmental Sustainability

In 2015 UNICEF Iraq utilized data from the environmental assessment of 2014 WASH operations to enhance programme adjustments, specifically in the largest refugee camps in Iraq. Water and sanitation systems infrastructure was safeguarded through environmental requirements. UNICEF and partners worked further on waste management systems, to adhere to global standards of disposal.

Effective Leadership

The office prepared an accountability framework in early 2015, highlighting roles, responsibilities and key functional elements of staff and management accountability at various levels. The framework describes mechanisms and processes to monitor, assess, report and improve performance of UNICEF's office in Iraq.

In an effort to streamline work processes, the office established several standard operating practice procedures (SOPs) in the areas of supply procurement, cash management, grants management and contributions. Key performance indicators were developed through the use of tools such as the global dashboard, with indicator progress being monitored regularly during regular management meetings. A risk control self-assessment was completed in early 2015, which led to the revision of the Office Risk Library. The Business Continuity Plan continued to fill an important role in risk management for UNICEF, and was revised regularly to adjust it to the current operational context.

UNICEF Iraq went through an internal audit towards the end of 2015. In preparation for this the office took several measures to ensure the scheduled audit was completed within the allotted one month timeframe, including through the establishment of an Audit Preparation Task Force, two peer review exercises for documentation, and a Programme Management support team.

Financial Resources Management

In 2015 the Iraq Country Office worked towards improving its internal contributions management, budget control, and liquidation of cash assistance. UNICEF Iraq's total allotment in 2015 was US\$221.2 million, of which US\$182.2 million was utilized. Of the resources allotted, 2.7 per cent were Regular Resources, 9.3 per cent were Other Resources Regular, and 88 per cent Other Resources Emergency.

In 2015 UNICEF Iraq began the implementation of HACT in the country office. Risk assessments began for all implementing partners and will continue in to 2016. Assurance activities were carried out by both programme and operations staff including programme monitoring, spot checks, and scheduled audits, in order to provide reasonable assurance that funds were utilized for the intended purpose.

Challenges remained high in the area of financial management due to Iraq's uncertain security

environment which has severely undermined the functioning of the country's financial system. The national banking sector suffered from lack of liquidity. UNICEF Iraq had to mitigate the risk of lack of liquidity through executing payments from alternate bank accounts, minimizing check payments, keeping replenishment at a minimum, and transferring accounts to new banks.

Fund-raising and Donor Relations

2015 saw a steep reduction in humanitarian funding for Iraq, including for UNICEF. While the funding requirement as per the humanitarian appeal was US\$160 million, only US\$67 million (42 per cent) was received, compared to US\$146 million in 2014.

UNICEF WASH, which accounted for the largest component of the humanitarian needs budget in 2015, received 67 per cent of their planned amount. The humanitarian funding decline continues to be attributed to donor fatigue in response to the protracted crisis in Iraq which is now in its fifth year. The poor funding situation continued with UNICEF's ongoing programming, which was severely underfunded, receiving only US\$5 million (13 per cent) resulting in programmes not reaching a quarter of their required budget.

UNICEF continues to engage closely with donors through donor meetings and field visits. In 2015 the office finalized its new Resource Mobilization Strategy for the next country programme cycle 2016-2019.

Evaluation

Due to the ongoing insecurity and mass displacement throughout Iraq, national level data collection has not been gathered since the last MICS study in 2011. In 2015 UNICEF Iraq, in partnership with the Ministry of Planning began to develop an exercise for the sampling approach to use for gathering 'big data' in insecure environments. Findings will be finalized early 2016 and used in carrying out the MICS 2017.

A total of nine studies were initiated by UNICEF Iraq in 2015, of which four were completed. These studies were on WASH, Health, Education, FGM and child protection related issues, which informed programme planning national policies and advocacy. Due to the ongoing crisis, no evaluations were carried out in 2015.

Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

Efficiency gains and costs savings were achieved through pursuing inter-agency joint ventures. UNICEF joined nine other UN agencies in cost sharing modalities of staff accommodation, office space, warehouses and field office locations. In 2015 as a result of shared premises and cost sharing modalities, UNICEF Iraq saved approximately US\$1.5 million. Joint MOU and LTA-type modalities on transport and travel further assisted in gains and savings.

Supply Management

UNICEF continued to carry out the ongoing uninterrupted supply of programme delivery in 2015, through the establishment of 31 local long-term agreements, reducing lead time and custom clearance complications. Total procurement in 2015 was US\$56.8 million (US\$33.6m for goods and US\$23.2m for services) out of which US\$28.8m was local procurement. In view of the security challenges for in-country logistics in Iraq, UNICEF continued to manage three warehouses strategically located across the country to support programme implementation;

US\$17.4 million in supplies were received in UNICEF warehouses, with US\$7 million of that directly delivered to implementing partners.

In relation to emergency response, UNICEF procured 84,388 sets of winter clothing, and further supported the management of 550,000 sets to be distributed to over 600,000 children. Through close collaboration with the Government of Iraq, UNICEF constructed 40 schools at US\$5.7 million, for approximately 36,000 children.

Challenges in 2015 centered on the logistics operations of customs clearance and vaccine shipment. To address this UNICEF made efforts to reduce dependency on imports by expanding the supplier database to cover all non-controlled supplies to enable local procurement. Standard Operating Procedures for goods and services were developed in an effort to streamline supply processes.

Security for Staff and Premises

Iraq remains volatile as a state, resulting in a very narrow programming environment for UNICEF and the UN as a whole. UNICEF operations in Iraq continued in 2015, despite the ongoing crisis and political instability. Staff continue to work under difficult circumstances across the country, with limited mobility to several districts with vulnerable populations. Due to heavy security risks, 2015 saw an increase in third party implementation partners, allowing UNICEF to continue its programme delivery in 'hotspots' while still prioritizing the safety and security of staff. UNICEF continues to abide by UNDSS MOSS and MORSS standards for all locations with staff, including residential, country level, field level and outputs offices in Iraq. Efforts to increase safety and security of staff and enhance programme delivery continued throughout the year, with security efforts being made through the procurement of additional armored vehicles, radios and personal protection equipment.

Human Resources

Surge recruitments for the ongoing Level 3 emergency in Iraq drove human resource activities in 2015. Staffing mix and profile continued to take into account gender parity, national and international positions, and origin from a programme country priority.

Performance evaluations continue to be used as a tool for monitoring and reviewing staff's goals and accountability. As part of its oversight, management ensures that staff meet the deadlines set for each phase of the e-PAS. Based on the findings of the recent global staff survey, UNICEF Iraq developed an Office Improvement Plan (OIP) in consultation with the Staff Association. Since staff working in Iraq have no access to face-to-face UN Cares learning sessions on HIV in the workplace, staff members have been guided on how to take the self-paced UN Cares e-course which provides the latest information on HIV in the work place. Efforts continue to be made to assess staffing gaps based on EPR to ensure effective humanitarian/early recovery in line with CCCs. New and incoming staff are trained on emergency risk management and response and security training.

A mail-poll PBR was finalized in November 2015 which agreed to the transfer of eighteen international staff to re-establish the Iraq Country Office in Baghdad.

Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology

Increased use of communication technology, including video and VOIP conferencing enhanced programme implementation in 2015. UNICEF utilized numerous forms of technology to allow

programmes to be 'more mobile', and respond to emergency situations in a streamlined manner. Social/digital media was utilized to influence and expand UNICEF's audience, enabling the office to reach a larger population than ever before. UNICEF has further reduced its ICT footprint by streamlining IT operational services, including through the implementation of a universal wireless structure which not only reduced dependency on hardware systems, but also provided additional features including an enhanced work-from-home experience for staff to utilize office laptops, without compromising IT security. Upgrading existing hardware applications, including increased bandwidth in Baghdad and across field offices contributed to timely information sharing, and real-time knowledge management across programmes.

Programme Components from RAM

ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

OUTCOME 1 Iraqi State has improved capacity to develop and implement policies and programmes for the protection of boys and girls in line with international conventions, the Iraqi Constitution and Legislation.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

The scale of the humanitarian crisis in Iraq is unprecedented. Over eight million people, half of whom are children, need humanitarian assistance. The extreme and extended violence and internal movement of people that started in June 2014 have compounded existing needs for Syrian Refugees and the existing Iraqi population and added substantial new child protection needs, especially for girls. Since the situation significantly deteriorated in 2014, children have been killed and maimed, abducted, exposed to rape and sexual violence, as well as recruited and used for different purposes by armed forces and groups involved in the conflict. Schools and hospitals have been damaged and used for military purposes, seriously hampering children's access to medical attention and safe learning spaces.

Due to active hostilities and insecurity, access to humanitarian assistance and services is very limited. Conflict and violence force families to flee - often separating children from their loved ones - and destroy social fabric and structures, putting children at further risk of being abused, exploited and exposed to grave violations.

UNICEF has also increased its capacity to monitor grave violations of children's rights and to develop age appropriate responses to Gender Based Violence (GBV) for children in conflict. Ongoing open conflict and weak government control in many areas has limited UNICEF's access to affected communities and seriously constrained UNICEF's ability to monitor the situation of children in need and to respond to those needs. Lack of funding for the response also limited UNICEF's ability to respond. Significant economic difficulties in the country resulting from the conflict and from a major drop in oil prices also limited both the central and regional governments' abilities to adequately respond to the crisis.

OUTPUT 1 Policy and Law - the National Child Protection Policy and Child Rights Laws at the federal and regional levels are finalized and support is provided to the Government, both at federal and regional levels, for their implementation.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Relevant ministries from both the central and regional governments finalized and validated the National Child Protection Policy. The Prime Minister will present the final document to council of ministers in early 2016. The policy addresses gaps in existing legislation, service delivery, and child protection responses for issues affecting marginalized and disadvantaged children in Iraq, including in IDP and refugee communities. The policy recommends a child rights based system approach to address gaps related to legislation, prevention and provision of child protection service delivery with a specific focus on equity. The NCPP was informed by a country-wide child protection situation analysis, feedback from policy makers, implementers, children and communities.

UNICEF provided technical child protection expertise on the drafting Child Protection Law (CPL) for Central and Regional government. The draft CPL has been presented at the Shura Council in the Central Government and at the Council of Ministers in Kurdistan Regional Government review and final enactment. However, the process was delayed due to the absence of feedback from both governments.

UNICEF financed a *Worst Forms of Child Labor* Assessment in five governorates of Central and South of Iraq in partnership with the Child Welfare Commission and Al-Amal Association NGO. The report showed that children, especially IDP children, work under very difficult conditions including working at night; have insufficient access to food and water; face physical, verbal and sexual violence and wide range of other hazards.

OUTPUT 2 Capacity for Monitoring partners have the capacity to monitor, report on and respond for the realisation of the rights of boys and girls in line with the CRC and CEDAW

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Children continue to bear a heavy brunt in the long-lasting and violent conflict in Iraq. Since the situation significantly deteriorated in 2014, children have been killed and maimed, abducted, exposed to sexual violence, as well as recruited and used for different purposes by armed forces and groups. Schools and hospitals have been damaged and used for military purposes, seriously hampering children's access to medical attention, and safe learning spaces. Due to active hostilities access to humanitarian assistance is very limited. 278 grave violations have been reported (verified and not verified) affecting 943 children, constituting serious violations of international human rights law, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and International Humanitarian Law. Of these, the Iraq Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism has verified 159 violations, affecting 478 children.

UNICEF trained 71 new monitors from the UN and NGOs working in Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Dohuk, Erbil, Kerbala, Kirkuk, Sulimaniyah and Wassit governorates on monitoring and reporting on grave child rights violations in armed conflict which increased timely reporting of these violations. UNICEF conducted periodic MRM network refresher trainings which addressed challenges faced by monitors in their respective locations. 30 network members from Baghdad, Diyala, Kerbala, Wassit, and KRI, attended network meetings in Baghdad and Erbil. Participants had an increased motivation to report and verify violations. Due to insecurity, sensitivity of information, and lack of partners and appropriate services in affected areas, certain grave child rights violations remain significantly under-reported, particularly recruitment and use of children by armed forces and group, and sexual violence.

In an effort to strengthen national capacity on child rights monitoring and advocacy, UNICEF identified 6 national human rights organizations and worked with the Independent Human Rights Commission in KRI to build their capacity to identify and verify instances of grave violations of child rights, and to strengthen coordination and collaboration on child rights issues.

UNICEF worked with the relevant clusters and coordination structures, including the protection cluster, CP sub-cluster, GBV sub-cluster, education cluster, health cluster and the OCHA humanitarian unit (HAU), to ensure cross-sectoral and coordinated responses to children affected by grave child rights violations.

Document Center

Evaluation and Research

Title	Sequence Number	Type of Report
Education, Conflict and Displacement in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: Peacebuilding Education Conflict Analysis	2015/001	SitAn