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THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN  
IN IRAQ

COUNTRY FACTSHEET: DECEMBER 2024

# Factsheet on the situation of Children in Iraq

Data Factsheet – December 2024

Prepared by UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office

This country factsheet provides a snapshot of the situation of children, adolescents and youth in Iraq, aligned with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and relevant child-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The factsheet gives an overview of the most recent child-related statistics, drawing on internationally comparable indicators available through global databases. Indicators have been chosen based on the availability of historical data from 2010 and geographic coverage, with priority to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Contents:

- (1) Demographic and Economic Overview
- (2) Right to health and healthcare
- (3) Right to proper nutrition
- (4) Right to education
- (5) Right to be protected
- (6) Right to an equitable chance in life
- (7) Right to a clean and safe environment

- Iraq is an **upper-middle income** economy. The GDP per capita experienced a significant shift, dropping from 5% in 2022 to -5% in 2023.
- Children represented **44% of the population** in 2023. Internally displaced persons represented about **3%** of the total population in 2023.
- About **one in five children** (2-17) years had functional difficulties in at least one domain in 2018.
- The country has made considerable progress in terms of reducing child mortality, achieving **nearly a 50% reduction** between 2000 and 2022.
- The percentage of **zero-dose children** who had not received any doses of the DTP vaccine dropped remarkably from **29% in 2016 to 3% in 2023**.
- Almost **three-quarters of children** had completed primary school in 2018 whereas the completion rate **decreases to 44%** at upper secondary school.
- **More than one-third** of youth aged 15 to 24 in the labor market were unemployed in 2021, with **two-thirds** of unemployed youth being female.
- Violent child discipline was prevalent with **81% of children** aged 1-14 years experiencing violent discipline in 2018.
- About **42% of the Iraqi population** was covered by at least one social protection benefit in 2022.
- The level of water stress was **high** and the children's climate risk index was classified as **medium-high** in 2020.

## Disclaimer

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# Demography and Economy

## Demography

% of the population		2023
Children (0-4 years)		12.3
Children (0-17 years)		43.5
Adolescents (10-19 years)		22.6

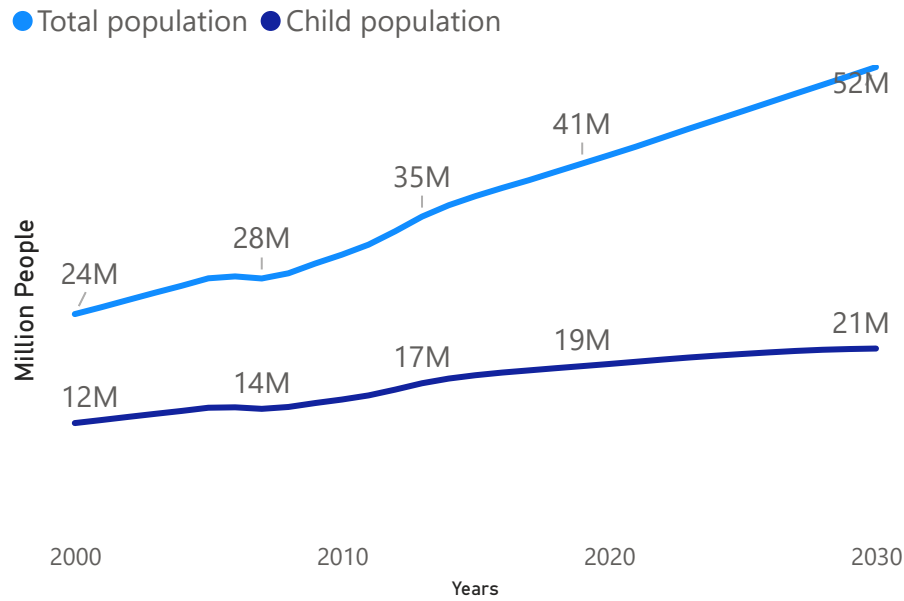
  

Number of births per year (in thousands)		2023
Number of births		1160

Average number of children per woman over the childbearing years		2023
Total fertility rate		3.2

### Population Trends and Projections (2000-2030)



Total population  
2023

45M

Child population  
2023

20M

Population growth rate  
(annual % change)  
2023

2.1

Urban population (%)  
2023

71.6

Refugees & asylum seekers (% of total population)  
2023

0.6

Internal Displaced Populations (% of total population)  
2023

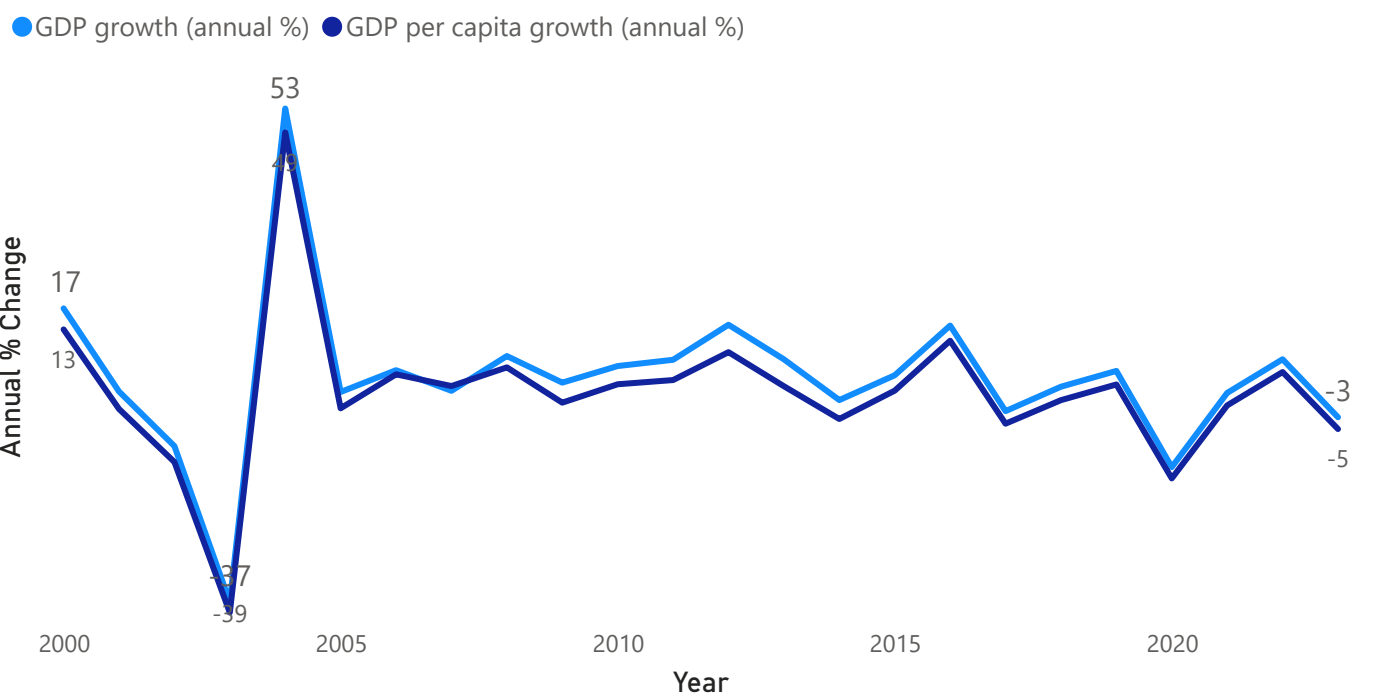
2.8

% of children (2-17 years with functional difficulties)  
2018

18.5

## Economy

### Annual GDP and GDP per Capita Growth (2000-2023)



World Bank 2023/2024 Income classification

Upper-middle income country

Indicator		2023
GDP per capita (current US\$)		5512.5

Indicator		2022
Inflation, consumer prices (annual %)		5.0



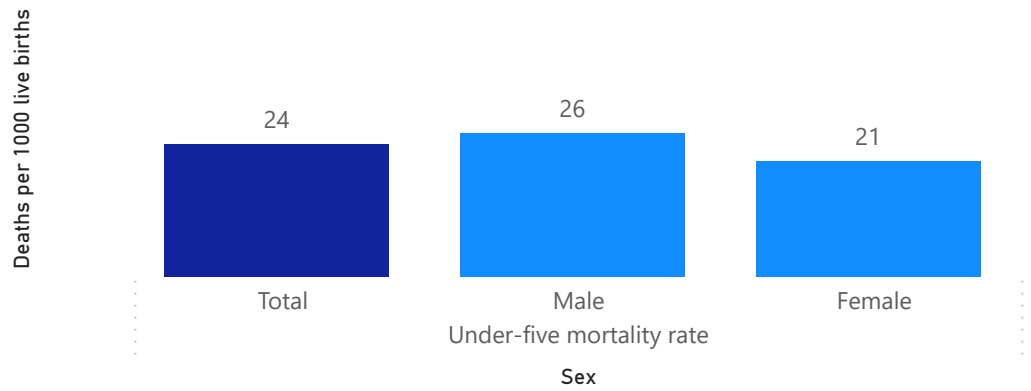
## Child Mortality

Mortality rates (deaths per 1,000 live births)	2000	2022
Neonatal mortality rate	24	13
Infant mortality rate	36	20
Under-five mortality rate	44	24

Under-five deaths  
2022

28K

### Inequalities in Under 5 Mortality Rate 2022

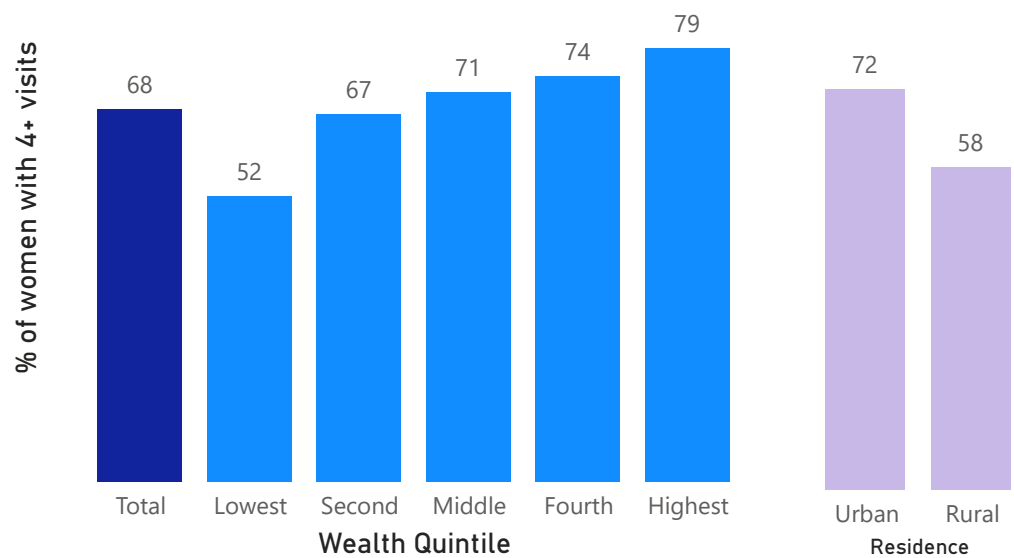


## Maternal and Child Health

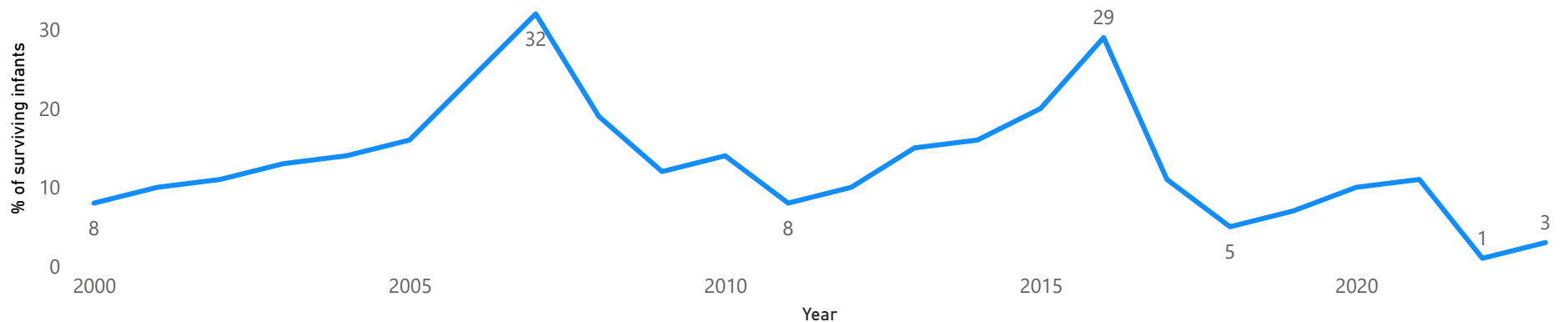
Health care and services (% of women, 15-49 years, with a live birth in the last 2 years)	2018
Antenatal care 4+ visits	68
Institutional deliveries	87
Skilled birth attendant	96

Immunization (% of children, 0-2 years)	2023
Received 1st dose of DTP	97
Received 2 doses of measles vaccine	83
Received 3 doses of DTP	91

### Inequalities in Access to Antenatal Care 2018



### Zero-dose Children (No Vaccination for DTP1)





# Right to proper nutrition

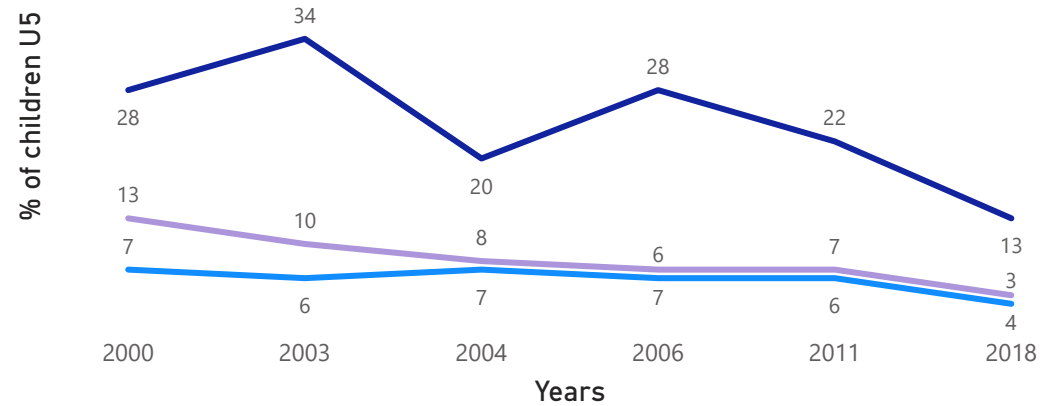
## Nutrition

Infant and young child feeding (% of children)	2018
Exclusive breastfeeding (0-5 months)	26
Minimum diet diversity (6 to 23 months)	45

Malnutrition (% of children, under 5 years)	2018
Overweight	6
Stunting	13
Underweight	4
Wasting	3

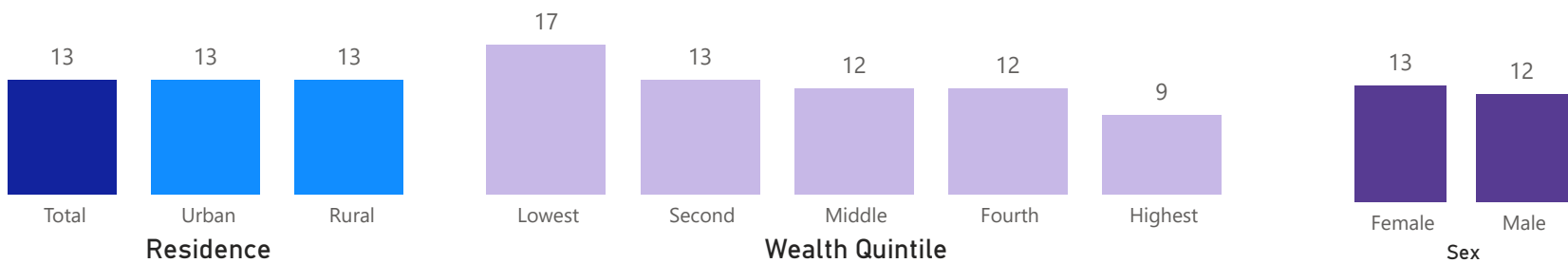
### Malnutrition Trend

Indicator ● Stunting ● Underweight ● Wasting



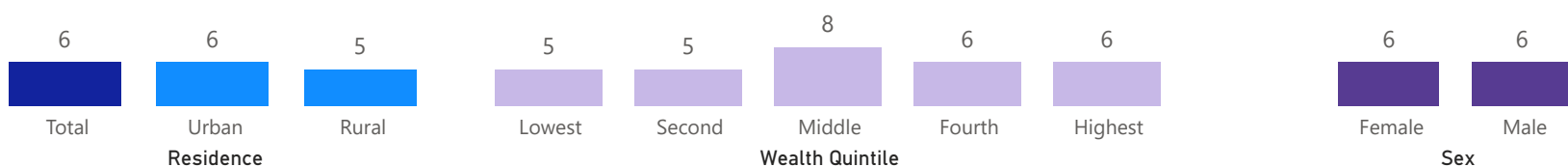
### Inequalities in Stunting 2018

% of children under 5 years



### Overweight Inequalities 2018

% of children under 5 years





## Education, Training and Employment

School net attendance by education level (% of children of the relevant age group)	2018
Pre-Primary	32
Primary	92
Lower Secondary	58
Upper Secondary	33

School completion by education level (% of children of the relevant age groups)	2018
Primary	76
Lower Secondary	46
Upper Secondary	44

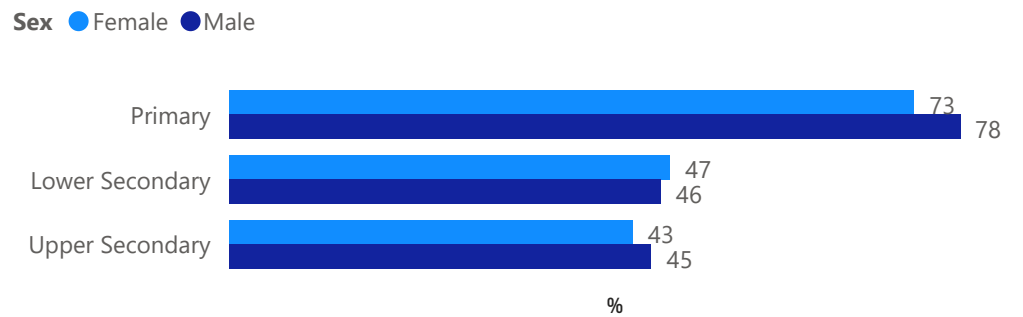
Out-of-school children by educational level (% of children of the relevant age groups)	2018
Primary	8
Lower Secondary	21
Upper Secondary	40

Reading/ Math proficiency	Year
Proportion of students at the end of primary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in mathematics	No Data
Proportion of students at the end of primary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading	No Data

Share of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) by sex	2021
Total	37
Male	22
Female	53

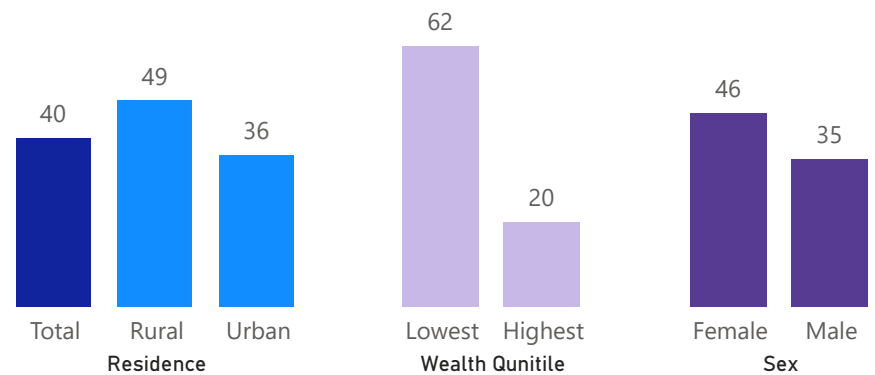
### School Completion Rates by sex

2018



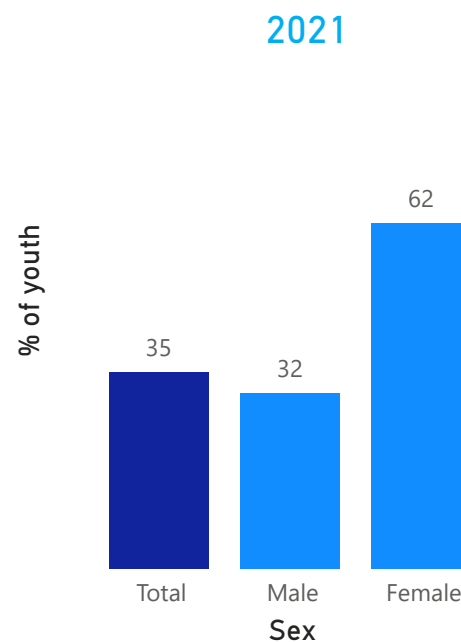
### Inequalities in Out of School Children of Upper-Secondary School Aged Children

2021



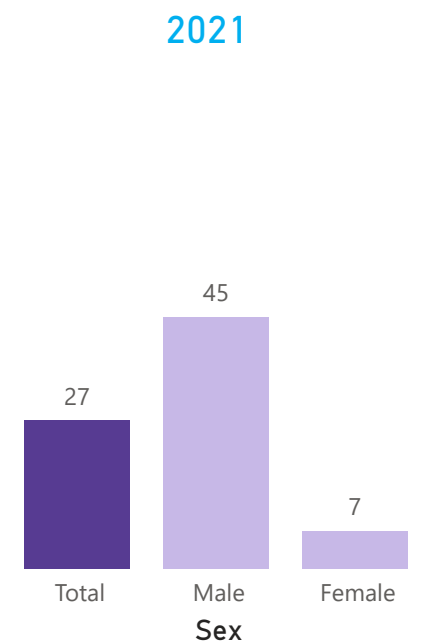
### Unemployment rates in Youth (15-24 years)

2021



### Labor Force Participation in Youth (15-24 years)

2021





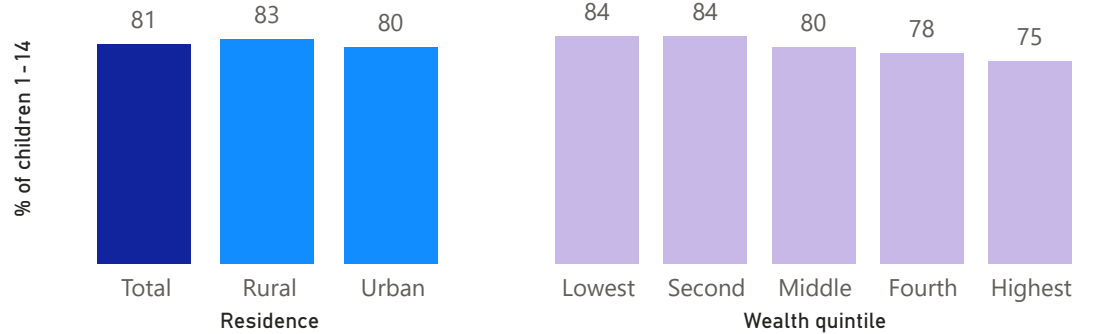
## Violence

### Inequalities in Violent Child Discipline

2018

Violent child discipline (% of children aged 1-14 years) 2018

Violent Child Discipline	
Total	81
Male	82
Female	80



Child marriage (% of women aged 20-24 years) 2018

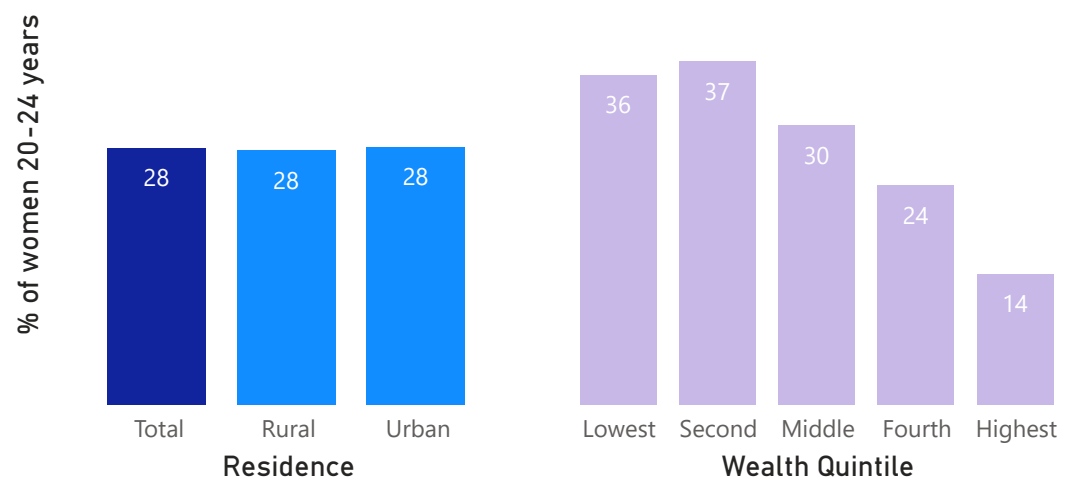
Married before 15	7
Married before 18	28

### Inequalities in Child Marriage before 18

2018

Child labour (% of children aged 5-17 years) 2018

Child labour	
Female	4
Male	5
Total	4



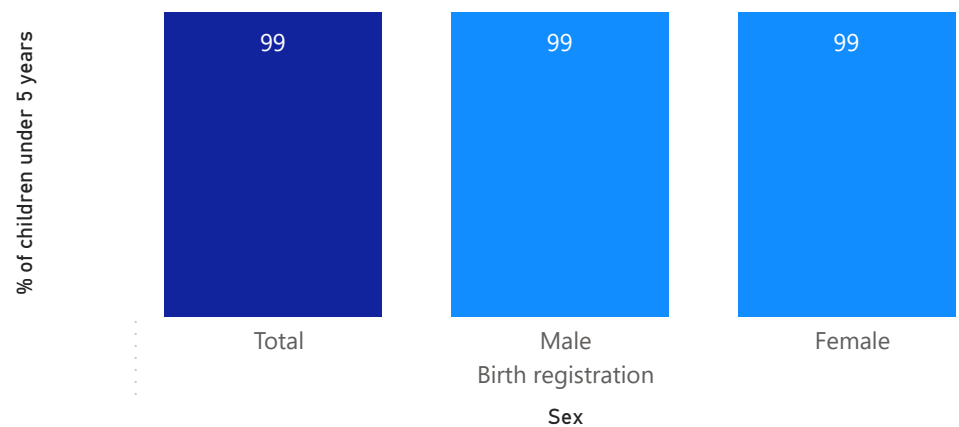
## Birth Registration

### Inequalities in Birth Registration

2018

Birth registration (% of children under 5 years) 2018

Birth registration	
Total	99
Rural	99
Urban	99





# Right to equitable chance in life

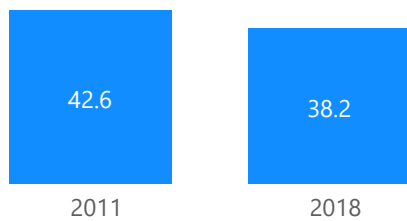
## Poverty

### Monetary poverty 2020

Children (0-17) living in households with income below the national poverty line (% of all children) 23.2

Children (0-17) living below \$2.15 poverty line (extreme poverty) (% of all children)	Children (0-17) living below \$3.65 poverty line (% of all children)	Children (0-17) living below \$6.85 poverty line (% of all children)
No Data	1.9	24.0

### Child multidimensional poverty headcount ratio

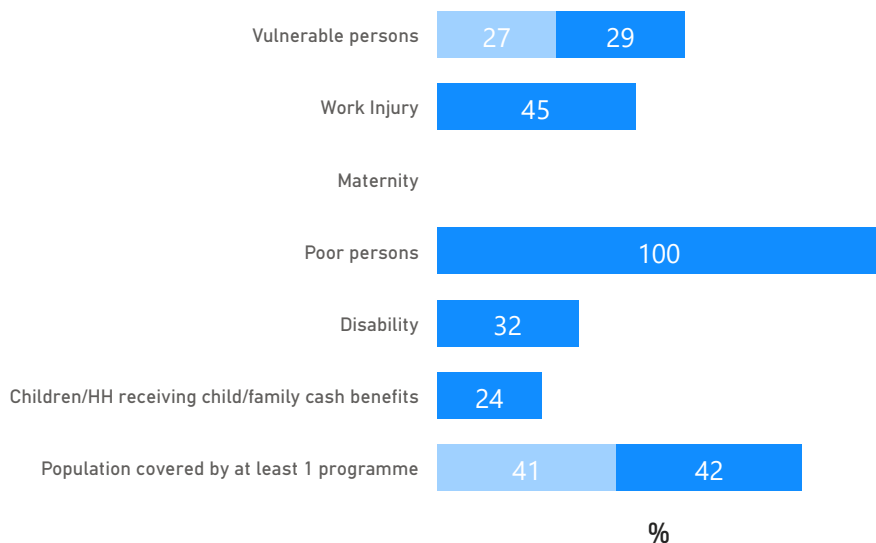


Dimensions of Multidimensional Poverty	Water	Household does not have piped water into dwelling or yard
	Sanitation	Unimproved toilet facility Shared toilet
	Housing	Primitive floor/Type of Household Overcrowding (more than 3 people per room)
	Health	Unskilled birth assistance (0-23 months) Not fully immunized (12-59 months) No antenatal care (0-23 months)
	Nutrition	Infant and Young Child Feeding (0-23 months)
		Wasting (0-4 years)
		Stunting (24 <months) Obesity (24 <months)
	Education	Not enrolled in school Two or more grades behind school/did not
	Information	No access to any information or communication device

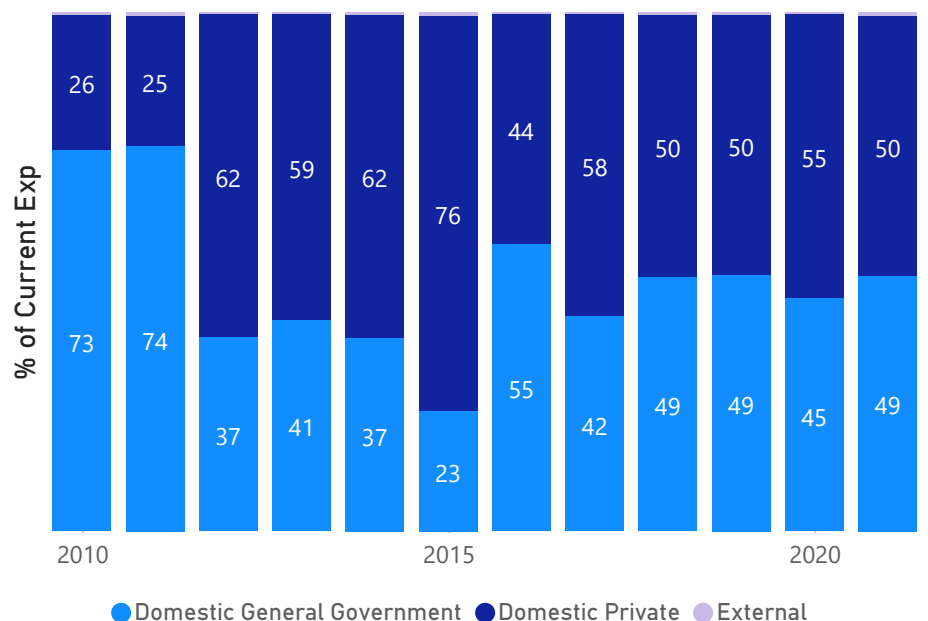
## Public Expenditure on Essential services

### Social Protection Coverage by Function

Time period ● 2019 ● 2022



### Changes in the Composition of Domestic Health Expenditure



Government expenditure on health % of GDP  
2018

2.0

Government expenditure on education % of GDP  
2016

4.7

Government expenditure on social protection % of GDP  
2016

7.6



## Right to a clean and safe environment

### Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

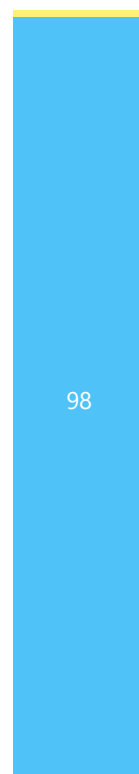
#### Household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene

2022

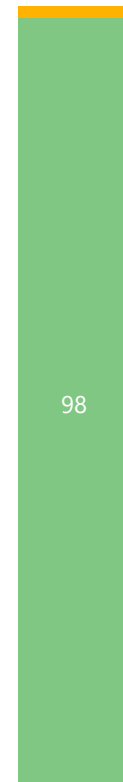
Household coverage (%)	2022
At least basic drinking water	98
At least basic sanitation	98
Basic hygiene (availability of water and soap)	97

School coverage (%)	2023
Basic drinking water	60
Basic hygiene (availability of water and soap)	66
Basic sanitation	57

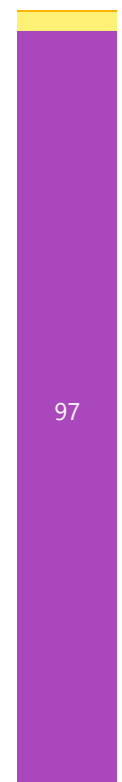
#### Household Drinking



#### Sanitation



#### Hygiene

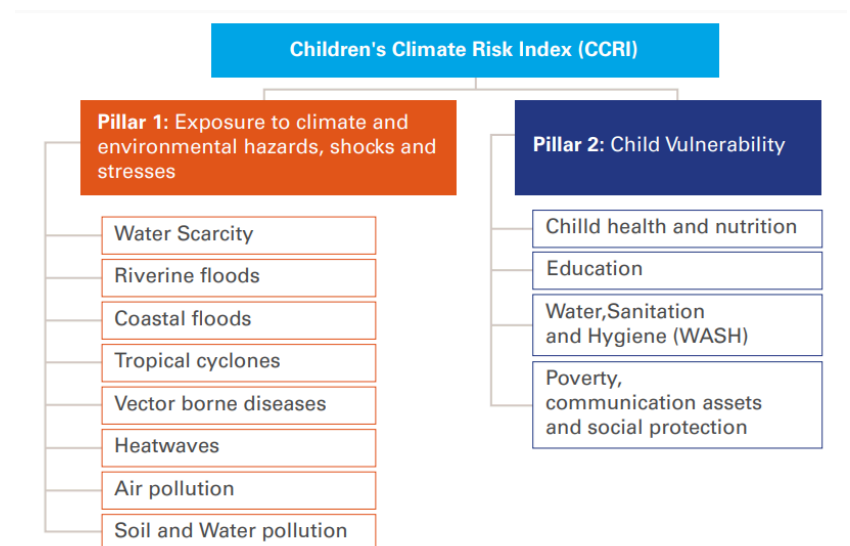


● At least Basic ... ● Limited water ● Unimprov ● At least basic ● Limited ● Unimproved ● Basic ● Limited ● No Facility

### Water Vulnerability and Climate

Indicator	2020
Water Stress	High

Indicator	2020
Children's Climate and Environment Risk Index	Medium-High
Child vulnerability	Low-Medium
Climate and environmental shocks	High



\*The CCRI is a composite index which brings together geographical data by analyzing: 1) exposure to climate and environmental hazards, shocks and stresses; and 2) child vulnerability.

## Child-related SDG indicators

The 2030 Agenda includes 17 Global Goals addressing the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. To chart and track how ambitious and how realistic country targets are, UNICEF created quantifiable country-level brief benchmarks for child-related indicators for which data are available to measure and monitor child rights on a common scale.

These country briefs leverage UNICEF's extensive analysis of 48 child-related Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators, structured around five fundamental domains of child well-being: Survive and Thrive, Learning, Protection from Harm, Safe and Clean Environment, and Life Free from Poverty. The analysis offers a detailed, multifaceted perspective on the state of children's rights and experiences across the globe.

**Availability of data on child wellbeing monitoring:** Iraq has data on 36 of the 48 child related SDGs (75% availability).

For further information on the countries' benchmarking briefs, please visit [Progress on Children's Well-being: Country Briefs - UNICEF DATA](#)

## Data Sources

### Demography

- UN Population Division, [World Population Prospects 2024](#).
- UNHCR [Refugee Population Statistics database](#)
- Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), [Global Internal Displacement Database \(GIDD\)](#)

**Economy:** The World Bank Data Portal, [World Development Indicators](#).

**Mortality:** UN Inter-agency group for child mortality estimations ([UN IGME](#)).

**Maternal and Child Health:** WHO/UNICEF [estimates of national immunization coverage](#).

**Nutrition:** UNICEF/WHO/The World Bank [Joint Malnutrition Estimates \(JME\)](#). Country survey estimates.

### Education, Training and Employment :

- National Household Surveys estimates for education data. [UNICEF MENA data warehouse](#)
- International Labor Organization (ILO). [ILOSTAT](#)
- UNESCO Institute for Statistics ([UIS](#)) and National Household Surveys estimates.

**Violence:** [UNICEF data warehouse](#), based on household surveys.

### Poverty

- The World Bank & UNICEF (2023). [Global Trends in Child Monetary Poverty According to International Poverty Lines](#).
- ESCWA, UNICEF, UNDP and OPHI. (2023). [Second Arab Multidimensional Poverty Report](#).

### Public expenditure on essential services

- [ILOSTAT](#) for social protection data
- [WHO Global Health Expenditure Database](#)
- The UNESCO Institute for Statistics ([UIS](#)) for education expenditure data

### Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- WHO/UNICEF [Joint Monitoring Programme for Water, Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene \(2000-2022\)](#).
- Water Stress Data: [AQUASTAT](#)
- UNICEF [Children's Climate Risk Index](#)

Most of the indicators are available at [UNICEF MENA data warehouse](#)

For more information please visit  
UNICEF data ([data.unicef.org](https://data.unicef.org)) or contact:

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