Ensuring rights & choices for all
Foreword

It is with great pleasure that I present to you UNFPA Iraq’s annual report for 2022. This report highlights our ongoing commitment to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment and to provide high-quality reproductive health services throughout Iraq.

Throughout the past year, UNFPA Iraq worked closely with our partners nationwide to expand access to essential reproductive health services, including maternal and newborn care, family planning, and comprehensive reproductive health education. In addition, we prioritised initiatives aimed at strengthening the leadership and participation of women in all aspects of Iraqi society, from livelihood opportunities to education, employment, and beyond.

As you read through this report, you will observe the significant progress that we have made in advancing gender equality and promoting women’s health and well-being. From increasing access to maternal and newborn care to reducing risks of gender-based violence and promoting gender equality, and from increasing avenues for youth empowerment to increasing availability of population data for improved planning and policy formulation, we are working to build a brighter future for all Iraqis.

As we look to the future, we remain committed to building a more equitable and just Iraq, where all individuals can thrive and reach their full potential. We are grateful for the ongoing support of our donors, government, and other partners, and we look forward to continuing this important work together.

Nestor Owomuhangi
UNFPA Representative to Iraq
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The UNFPA Country Programme for Iraq for 2020-2024 is fully aligned with national priorities and supports the Government to achieve the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action commitments and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Three major Results of the year

- **Sexual and reproductive health Programme**
  - Target: 1,218,004
  - Reach: 1,644,012
  - %134

- **Gender-Based Violence Programme**
  - Target: 189,080
  - Reach: 218,427
  - %115

- **Adolescents & Youth Programme**
  - Target: 195,455
  - Reach: 208,902
  - %106

UNFPA focuses its assistance on 10 governorates in Iraq:

- BAGHDAD
- AL ANBAR
- SALAH AL-DIN
- NINEWA
- DOHUK
- ERBIL
- KIRKUK
- SULAYMANIYAH
- QADISSIYA
- BASRA

**ANNUAL REPORT 2022**
UNFPA Main Results for 2022

842,546 women and girls received SRH services

3,098 Vulnerable Women and Girls received Dignity kit

68 SDPs providing multi-sectoral GBV services

9 SDPs with access to Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

4 Covid Isolation Units

3,153 Men & Women with disability received RH services

3 Youth Center Rehabilitated for PWD

30,439 youth received life-skills education

7,022 youth in peace-building platforms

7 Women Shelters

Centers of excellence for RH/FP
The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the Council of Ministers Secretariat (COMSEC), in partnership with the Women Empowerment Department (WED), and support from the United Kingdom, Sweden, France and Canada, organised the first National Conference to Address Early Marriage in Iraq.

"TRIBAL COMMUNITIES AND YOUNG PEOPLE AFFECTED BY EARLY MARRIAGE HAVE ASKED US TO RAISE OUR VOICE AND ADVOCATE MORE FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS’ RIGHTS AND EMPOWERMENT AND TAKE A STEP FORWARD IN ADDRESSING EARLY MARRIAGE IN IRAQ, INCLUDING THE KURDISTAN REGION. THIS EVENT SHOWS THE CRITICALITY OF REDUCING EARLY MARRIAGE TO FULFILL THE RIGHTS OF GIRLS AND WOMEN, AND ACCELERATE ACHIEVEMENT OF SDGs IN IRAQ."

Dr Rita Columbia
UNFPA Representative of Iraq
200 senior scholars and high-level officials participated in the conference.

18 government recommendations were made based on the conference.

180,132 women, girls, men, and boys participated in sensitization workshops and awareness-raising campaigns in UNFPA priority governorates.
ADVOCACY AND POLICY:

A national action plan was developed for the National Birth Spacing Family Planning Strategy, with sub-national plans for each governorate to follow.

UNFPA has supported the integration of family planning into sexual and reproductive health services at all levels of healthcare in Iraq.

UNFPA supported Ministry of Health (MOH) in developing a nationwide Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) strategy and an action plan for the BCC strategy with the goal of creating demand for family planning services.

UNFPA supported the MOH in conducting a national supply chain assessment to identify and prioritize poor-performing areas in the public health supply chain and monitor the impact of specific supply chain improvement activities and/or investments.

FACILITY AND SERVICES:

43 Healthcare Facilities

33 RH clinics
15 RH facilities renovated to be PWD friendly
7 delivery rooms
3 mobile clinics operating

10 priority governorates of Iraq
Services provided by the SRH facilities include:

- Delivery assistance, antenatal & postnatal care
- Gynaecological services
- Family planning services

**People benefited:**

- **480,796** women of reproductive age received services, including 2,483 women and girls with disabilities
- **2702** pregnant women with COVID-19 admitted to one of the four isolation units
- **270** medical service providers trained on EmONC deliveries in maternity hospitals the Kurdistan Region
- **343** pregnant women with COVID-19 gave birth safely in one of the four isolation units
I am Maya, a Syrian refugee from Al-Hasakah. I have been living in Domiz 1 refugee camp in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq for about 8 years. I did not complete my education, only primary school, and I am currently jobless. My story began with my marriage, in which I never truly felt like I had a life partner. Even though he was the provider, he never gave me enough money to cover my personal needs. I was constantly neglected. This worsened when I was pregnant with my youngest daughter, which is when he started hitting me and insulting me. I was dying inside, but I had no choice but to stay for the sake of my children. After several sessions with the case manager at the UNFPA-supported Safe Space, I began to feel better. I learned breathing exercises and relaxation techniques and applied them myself. These helped me, especially since there was not much I could do at that point and I did not want to pursue any legal measures, despite the abuse. More importantly, he had stopped hitting me after he got married again. My participation in the women’s committee, gymnastics, and hairdressing helped me feel empowered. I was able to ask my husband about my needs, in addition to becoming more social and having friends, and I had information about service providers in the camp if I needed them. Now I want to develop myself in the field of make-up artistry and, if I get the chance, I will open my own salon. This is my plan for the future. Seek help if you are experiencing any kind of harm. Don’t succumb to the circumstances that destroy you.

A MESSAGE OF HOPE
Maya’s story
I learned to make decisions, and to dare to claim my rights. I also chose gymnastics and hairdressing, which really worked for me, as I got to know other women and learn a variety of skills and techniques that boosted my self-confidence.

Maya
Gender Equality & Women Empowerment Programme

ADVOCACY AND POLICY:

- Endorsed Inter-Ministerial Framework and National Action Plan on the GBV strategy
- 2 joint cooperation frameworks focused on women's protection were signed with Anbar and Diwaniyah Governorates
- Signed MOU with the Office of the Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers to coordinate and strengthen efforts to end gender-based violence and early marriage
- A high-level conference “Let’s Talk: ending GBV in Iraq” emphasized the importance of the stronger national leadership to reduce GBV

FACILITY AND SERVICES:

- 7 women shelters and protection centers
- 37 women community centers
- 11 national governmental institutions supported
- 3 One-Stop Assistance Centers
- 18 mobile teams
- GBV helpline supported in KRI
- Roll-out of the “SafeYou” application, training Ministry of Interior staff to respond to GBV survivors
Services provided under the Gender Programme, include:

- Mental health and psychosocial support
- Legal referrals
- Case management
- Health referrals
- Distribution of dignity kits
- Life skills activities
- Livelihood activities

PEOPLE BENEFITED:

- 2702 health services providers trained on mental health and psychosocial support
- 149 Contact worker were trained by Two clinic management of rape training
- 23 GBV actors from national and international organisations supported to use GBV data management systems
- 92 health services providers trained on mental health and psychosocial support
Including and empowering persons with disabilities:
Equal rights and a life free of violence

Now I believe that there is nothing impossible; disability will not stop me from going ahead in my life
Ahmed started telling us his story.
"I was encouraged to get out of the house and engage in learning and voluntary work. My health, psychological and physical conditions tremendously improved. My body responded better by moving my fingers and walking around. I got to know wonderful people who became like my family" said Ahmed enthusiastically.

Ahmed lived in Mosul with his family when the war with ISIS started. He was 15 years old when ISIS destroyed a neighbour's house. Living through this nightmare, Ahmed developed a psychological trauma. Later it developed into Wilson's neurological disease that caused loss of movement and speaking.

Ahmed is one out of 4,800 youths with disability of 22,995 registered people with disabilities who live in Ninewa Governorate. His story is not unique; many other adolescents and youth with disabilities go through the same experience and lose hope for the future.

These positive changes in Ahmed's life became possible thanks to a special initiative for adolescents and youth with disability launched by UNFPA with support from Finland and in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, and the governor of Ninevah. The project covers three youth centres in Mosul and helps young people with disabilities to study, receive the necessary support and become engaged with peers in a friendly environment. In eleven months, about 450 young people have benefited from the disability-friendly classes and services, and about a thousand adolescents with disabilities have received mental and psychosocial support.
ADVOCA CY AND POLICY:

Developed Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) for educational programmes addressing adolescent and youth with disabilities in youth centres for the Ministry of Youth and Sports at the Federal Government.

Conducted Need Assessment of educational programmes for adolescents with disability accessing UNFPA-supported youth centres.

FACILITY AND SERVICES:

3 youth centres in Ninewa Governorate

17 youth centres were provided with equipment’s

- 10 computer labs
- 10 mobile maintenance training halls
- 10 hairdressing training halls

34 youth centres in 10 governorates supported to promote youth engagement

• 10 computer labs
• 10 mobile maintenance training halls
• 10 hairdressing training halls

3 youth centers were rehabilitated for adolescents and youth with disabilities

Youth Safe Space in Ramadi, Anbar, rehabilitated

10 priority governorates of Iraq
Services provided under the Youth Programme, include:

- **leadership -and peace building training**
- **counselling**
- **Life skills activities**
- **vocational/technical skills**
- **awareness**

**PEOPLE BENEFITED:**

- **23,448** young people reached with life-skills education integrated with family planning/reproductive health and rights and gender-based violence prevention (including awareness on early marriage).
- **21,898** adolescents received family planning counseling within primary healthcare facilities.
- **3,496** young people received psychosocial support and mental health counseling.
- **12,471** young people were sensitised on the needs and rights of adolescents and youth with disabilities.
- **4,056** young people reached with peace-building and Prevention of Violence Extremism (PVE) programme.
- **8,160** adolescents and youth benefited from counseling services in public facilities, schools, youth centres and through hotline.
- **8,112** adolescent girls gained knowledge that enabled them to make informed choices about their reproductive health through capacity-building training.
Population &
Development
Programme

ADVOCACY AND POLICY:
Built capacity of CSO and KRSO to conduct the 2024 Population and housing census, national surveys and gather all relevant data on the UNFPA prioritized SDG indicators

Supported the Ministry of Planning to finalise the National Population Policy document.

Built capacity of Ministry of Planning to integrate demographic dynamics into national, regional and sub-national development policies and Programmes and revise the population policy at the national & regional level.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT:
Technical assistance was provided to CSO & KRSO to produce, utilise and analyse population data

Strengthened technical capacity of government institutions and relevant stakeholders to analyse and report on critical population and development issues

UNFPA increased knowledge and skills on the integration of population dynamics into development planning among planning officials from central south and the Kurdistan region

STUDIES AND RESEARCH:
- The Impact of Covid-19 on Reproductive Health Services
- Knowledge Attitude and Practice (KAP) on gender-based violence and family planning
- In-depth analysis report on the second Iraqi Women Integrated Social and Health Survey (I-WISH-II).
- Social norms in Iraq.
- Women community centres transitions from humanitarian to development
- Internal women community centre assessment
- The role of women in the Kurdistan Regional Government institutions

ANNUAL REPORT 2022
Iraqi Women Integrated Social & Health Survey (I-WISH-II):

The purpose of the survey was to collect data on women of different age groups to be able to assess their conditions about access to education, health care, decent work, and good political representation.

- **The total fertility rate for women aged 15-49**
  - 2011: 5.3 born
  - 2021: 3.3 born

- **The average age at first marriage in Iraq**
  - 2011: 22.4 y/o
  - 2021: 20.5 y/o

- **The percentage of women who received regular pregnancy care from a trained service provider**
  - 2011: 64%
  - 2021: 77.5%

- **Births attended by health personnel have increased over the past decade to 94%**

- **Iraq is one of the countries characterized by low participation of women in the labor market**
  - 2011: 6.1% Member
  - 2021: 5.7% Member

- **However, up to 25% are willing to work if there is a job available.**

- **Women aged 15 years and over have experienced controlling behaviors by their husbands,**
  - 2011: 20.6%
  - 2021: 70%

- **Psychological violence is the most prevalent among the types of violence by the spouse.**

- **The rate of caesarean section has increased by 35.8%**
  - 2011: 81.1% in private hospitals
  - 2021: 29.0% in government hospitals

- **Overall, 35.3% of women in the survey believe that women in Iraq are marginalized, and that society plays a major role in marginalizing women.**

- **Illiteracy in Iraq**
  - 17% Female
  - 7.6% Male

- **Percentage of current use of family planning methods for married women aged (15-49) years by method, Iraq 2021.**

- **The average family size**
  - 2011: 5.7
  - 2021: 5.7

- **The percentage of illiterate women aged 15 years and over in Iraq**
  - 2011: 17% Female
  - 2021: 7.6% Male

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CHALLENGES & LESSONS LEARNED:

Iraq faced a challenging hurdle in early 2022 with prolonged government formation, leading to delays in decision-making and cooperation.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Invest in capacity building of MoH and local NGO to improve national ownership and intervention quality.
- Increase investment and coordination with high-level governmental entities.
- Collaborate with local and international NGOs to access insecure areas.
- Donors’ engagement in advocacy crucial for mobilizing support and coordination over UNFPA mandate.
- Involve government in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating interventions for ownership and stewardship.
- Increase investment and coordination with high-level governmental entities.
- Lack of availability of government entities for capacity development and advocacy.
- Lack of baseline data for demand creation intervention.
- Damaged health facilities limiting service delivery.
- Social norms obstructing progress.
- Lack of resources to increase interventions.
- Staff shortage in some areas.
- Weakness in synergy among program thematic areas.
UNFPA's annual "Let's Talk" conference in 2022 was jointly hosted with UN Women, UNHCR, WFP, and SEED Foundation, in coordination with the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers of the Iraqi Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government together with Humanitarian and Governmental partners.

### Outcome:

- The Conference engaged the private sector community – Korek Telecom, talabat, Careem, Al-Marmouka, and Click Iraq - to pledge their commitment to empowering women and girls from across Iraq and the Kurdistan Region and supporting efforts to end GBV.

- Korek Telecom pledged to build the capacity of 10 women from each of the 19 governorates of Iraq to develop their personal and career skills.

- Talabat is committed to giving young people livelihood opportunities across Iraq from displaced communities.

- Careem pledged to support safe travel for women needing critical protection services by providing discounts to survivors and those at risk of violence.

- Al-Marmouka – Iraq Al-Hadeeth Company, the distributor of Always menstruation pads across Iraq, pledged to raise awareness on menstruation hygiene and provide six months’ worth of sanitary pads to 200 girls.

- Click Iraq pledged to train ten young women in social media marketing to develop their skills and will support the trainees through their Job Studio portal to find jobs.

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**Spring Girl**

For the tenth anniversary of the International Day of the Girl Child, UNFPA published the "Spring Girls" book.

The Book is a collection of adolescent girls’ stories expressing their hopes, fears, loves and losses as they endure a challenging present and uncertain future with determination and grace.

The "Spring Girls" initiative aimed to raise awareness among adolescent girls on their rights and provide them with advanced communication and writing skills.
In 2022, UNFPA Iraq CO utilised a total of 17,522,038.04 US dollars for its Programmes. Budget Allocation and Expenses for January - December 2022

UNFPA RESOURCES $2,447,170
DONOR RESOURCES $15,074,868
TOTAL $17,522,038
YOUR GENEROSITY FUELS OUR MISSION. THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE!
Governorate of Diwaniyah
Governorate of Anbar
Folke Bernadotte Academy
Central Statistical Organization (CSO)
General Directorate for Combatting Violence Against Women (GDCVAW)
Women Empowerment Department (WED)
Kurdistan High Council for Women Affairs (KHCWA)
Kurdistan Region Statistics Office (KRSO)
Ministry of Culture & Youth at the Kurdistan Regional Government
Ministry of Health & Environment at the Federal Government
Ministry of Health at the Kurdistan Regional Government
Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs at the Federal Government.
Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs at the Kurdistan Regional Government
Ministry of Planning at the Federal Government
Ministry of Planning at the Kurdistan Regional Government
Ministry of Youth & Sports at the Federal Government

Implementing Partners - INGOS, NGOS and Academic Institutes:

- Tajdid- Iraq for development
- Al-Mesalla organization for development
- Zhian Health Organization
- Harikar NGO
- Dary human organization
- Iraq Health Access Organization
- Organization Together Organization
- People Development Organization
- United Iraq Medical Society
- Al Amal
- Cordaid