



United Nations Population Fund
Iraq Country Office

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



*Delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted,
every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled.*



Foreword

The COVID-19 pandemic showed us the gaps in the systems aiming to protect women and girls from violence, deliver quality reproductive services and empower youth.

With the rise in gender-based violence and the decline in the quality and access to health services, the vulnerability of women and girls increased tremendously during the pandemic.

In 2021, UNFPA explored new and innovative approaches in the prevention of and response to gender-based violence, empowerment of youth and in the service delivery of reproductive health in Iraq.

We established new partnerships to ensure women and girls receive much-needed services.

We forged new paths to confirm the government's accountability to the most vulnerable.

This year, not only did we scale up our advocacy efforts at the central and the regional levels, but we also worked closely with local authorities across the country and directly with women and young people.

Despite the challenges, UNFPA initiatives helped create opportunities and choices for women and youth in Iraq, whether in camps for refugees or internally displaced persons or across communities.

This annual report shows how funds entrusted to UNFPA have enabled us to protect and promote the health and rights of thousands of women and young people across Iraq and enable them to realize their full potential.

Now more than ever, we must ensure that the marginalized, and left behind people—can exercise their fundamental human right to decide, free of coercion and violence, when to have children, when to get married and form a family, be empowered, be educated and have opportunities for further personal and professional development.

The pandemic did not bring us or our partners down but pushed us to find alternative solutions to leave no one behind. This year, we reiterate our commitment to helping Iraq achieve the three transformative results, the commitments made at the Nairobi Summit in 2019 and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in this Decade of Action.

UNFPA Representative to Iraq
Dr Rita Columbia



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15

TABLE OF

CONTENTS

Responding to COVID -19 & humanitarian needs	04
Ensuring reproductive rights for all	07
Ending gender-based violence	11
Empowering youth	15
Promoting data & evidence-based programming	19
Best practices & innovation	21

The 6 + 6 framework for acceleration

**BY
2025**

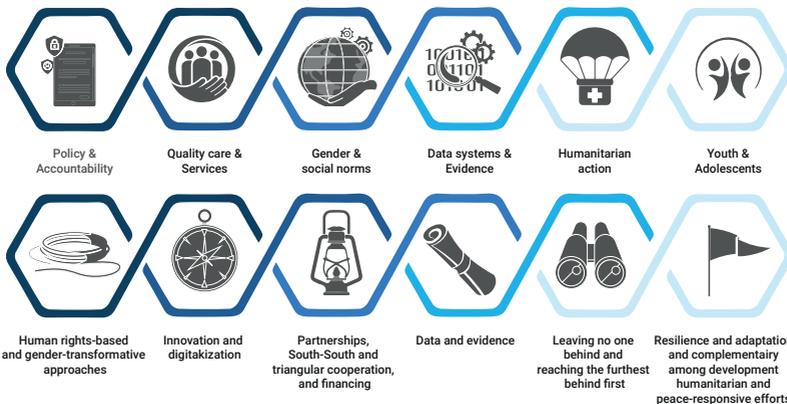
The reduction in the unmet need for family planning has accelerated

**BY
2025**

The reduction of preventable maternal deaths has accelerated

**BY
2025**

The reduction in Gender-based violence & harmful practices has accelerated



UNFPA Iraq commitment to the 3 transformative zeros

45% use of modern contraception (W = 15/49)

10% reduction in adolescents birth rate

10% reduction in gender-based violence (W/G>15)

Responding to the Humanitarian Crisis & COVID -19



182 facilities in **ten** governorates



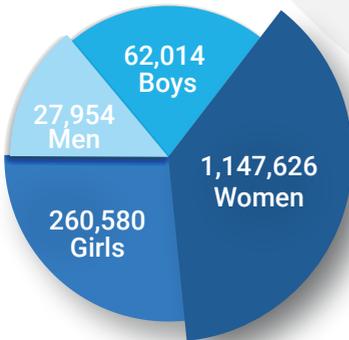
1,460,362 persons

COVID-19 response:

US\$ 300,700 worth of PPE

1,730 assisted deliveries

4 isolation units for pregnant women in Sulimnayah, Raparin, Soran and Zakho.



Humanitarian response per gender pie chart



Reproductive health programme

94%

Target: **1,000,000**
Reach: **943,652**



Gender-based violence programme

110%

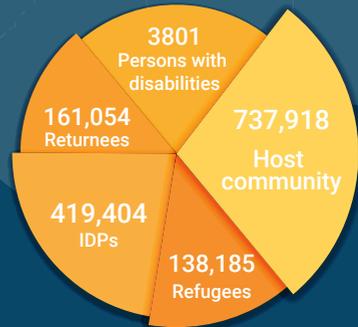
Target: **350,000**
Reach: **386,973**



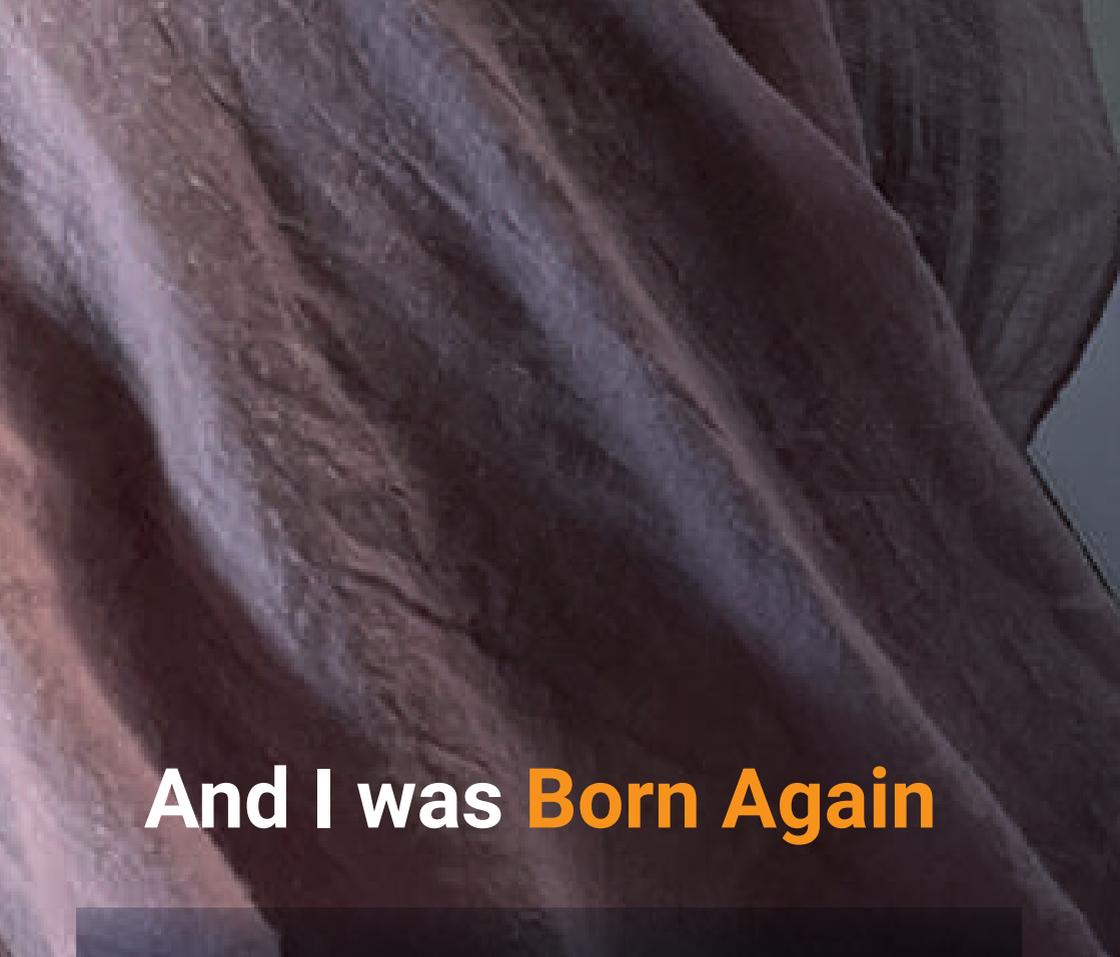
Youth Programme

102%

Target: **90,000**
Reach: **91,925**



Humanitarian response per population type pie chart



And I was **Born Again**

Noora was only 12 years old when her family fled Al Hassakah, Syria, looking for shelter in the Duhok governorate of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The living conditions at the camp were difficult and her father could barely make ends meet. He took Noora out of school and sent her younger brother to work to support the family. Three years later, the situation worsened as her father became unemployed.

One day, he received an offer he thought he could not refuse: marry off his daughter to a man 25-years her senior in exchange for a given fee. She was only 15 at the time. Luckily, Noora was a regular at the UNFPA-supported Adolescent Toolkit Programme and was aware of the dangers of child marriage. She begged her father not to give her away to man she knew was not going to be kind to me. He cried and told her he had no other choice.



"I was desperate, so I decided to get the social worker at the women's centre to help me", she explained.

The next day, the social worker conducted a home visit to Noora's family and discussed the dangers and risks of child marriage. She told Noora's father of her daughter's immense potential and the fact that she was a gifted artist whose work has amazed plenty at the centre. She told him that if he helps nurture her talent, she would be able to sell her paintings and help him with some income. Towards the end of the conversation, he reluctantly acquiesced, making the choice to invest in his daughter's future and wellbeing.

Today, Noora takes art classes at the youth centre and, when opportunities arise, she displays and sells her art at various exhibitions.

“

Had I been married, my life would have ended but now, I am able to see a bright future and dream big
— Noora.

”

Ensuring Reproductive Rights For All



Advocacy and Policy:

The action plan for the Family Planning and Birth Spacing strategy adopted

Facilities and Services:

- **83** reproductive health static facilities:
 - **12** BEmONC
 - **2** CEmONC
 - **1** delivery room
 - **68** clinics, including **10** persons with disabilities health care centres in Duhok, Erbil, Halabja, Kalar, Nineveh, Raparin, Soran and Sulaymaniyah
- **4** mobile teams
- **4** isolation units for pregnant women with COVID-19 in Raparin, Soran, Sulaymaniyah, and Zakho
- **3** centres of excellence for family planning in Basra Erbil and Kirkuk



Services provided by the SRH facilities included:



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

326

health service providers trained on the decision making tool for family planning clients and providers (DMT)

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

Superhero Midwife Meet Hawrin

Hawrin is 27-year-old. Five years ago, she decided to become a midwife.

We had a chat with Hawrin about her work as a midwife at the UNFPA-supported reproductive health facility in Khazir camp.

“Being a midwife is my calling. I always knew I wanted to help women and girls understand their reproductive rights and help them receive proper reproductive health care, starting with menstruation, pregnancy and reaching menopause,” she said.

“In 2020, a 35-year old pregnant woman comes to our clinic with abdominal pain. After conducting a medical check-up, I understood that she was going through early labour for the last 5 hours and urgently needed to be taken to the maternity hospital in Erbil for an emergency delivery”, she explained.

Hawrin accompanied the mother while she was being transported in the ambulance. On the way, the pain got worse and to save the mother and child’s lives, she needed to conduct a natural delivery inside the ambulance.

“My heart was beating fast. I knew that these lives were at risk and I had no option but to save them. I was working against the clock, so I used the equipment available with me and I conducted the delivery,” she continued.

“The mother was so scared and she kept begging me to bring her baby to life safely: Don’t let him die - don’t let my baby die, please. This could have gone wrong but I knew that woman was counting on me and I could not disappoint her,” she added.

Hawrin safely delivered the newborn baby and the ambulance continued its way to the Erbil maternity hospital where mother and son received proper health care.



“

“I was thrilled and overwhelmed by the feeling of accomplishment. I saved two lives who were in critical condition that day.. A day I will forever remember,” she concluded.

— Hawrin.

”

Ending gender-based violence



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
- A high-level conference "**Let's Talk: ending GBV in Iraq**" emphasized the importance of the stronger national leadership to reduce GBV

Facilities and services:

- **65** women community centres supported in camps and host communities
- Newly-established **2** one-stop assistance centres (OSAC) in Duhok and Kirkuk
- Newly established **2** Women Protection Centres in Anbar and Diwaniyah
- **5** shelters supported in in Duhok, Erbil, Garmian, Sulaymaniyah and Baghdad
- **35** districts reached with anti-harmful practice campaigns
- GBV helpline supported in KRI
- Launched mobile application "**SafeYou**" to report and text for help for women and girls at risk of GBV established



Services provided by the SRH facilities included:



Case management



Health referrals



Distribution of dignity kits



Mental health and psychosocial support



Life skills activities

People benefited:

10

national governmental institutions supported

389,427

individuals received holistic GBV service provision

24

GBV actors from national and international organisations supported to use GBV data management systems

216

health services providers trained on mental health and psychosocial support

“My Disability Is Not A Burden. In Fact, It Is a Source of **Strength**”

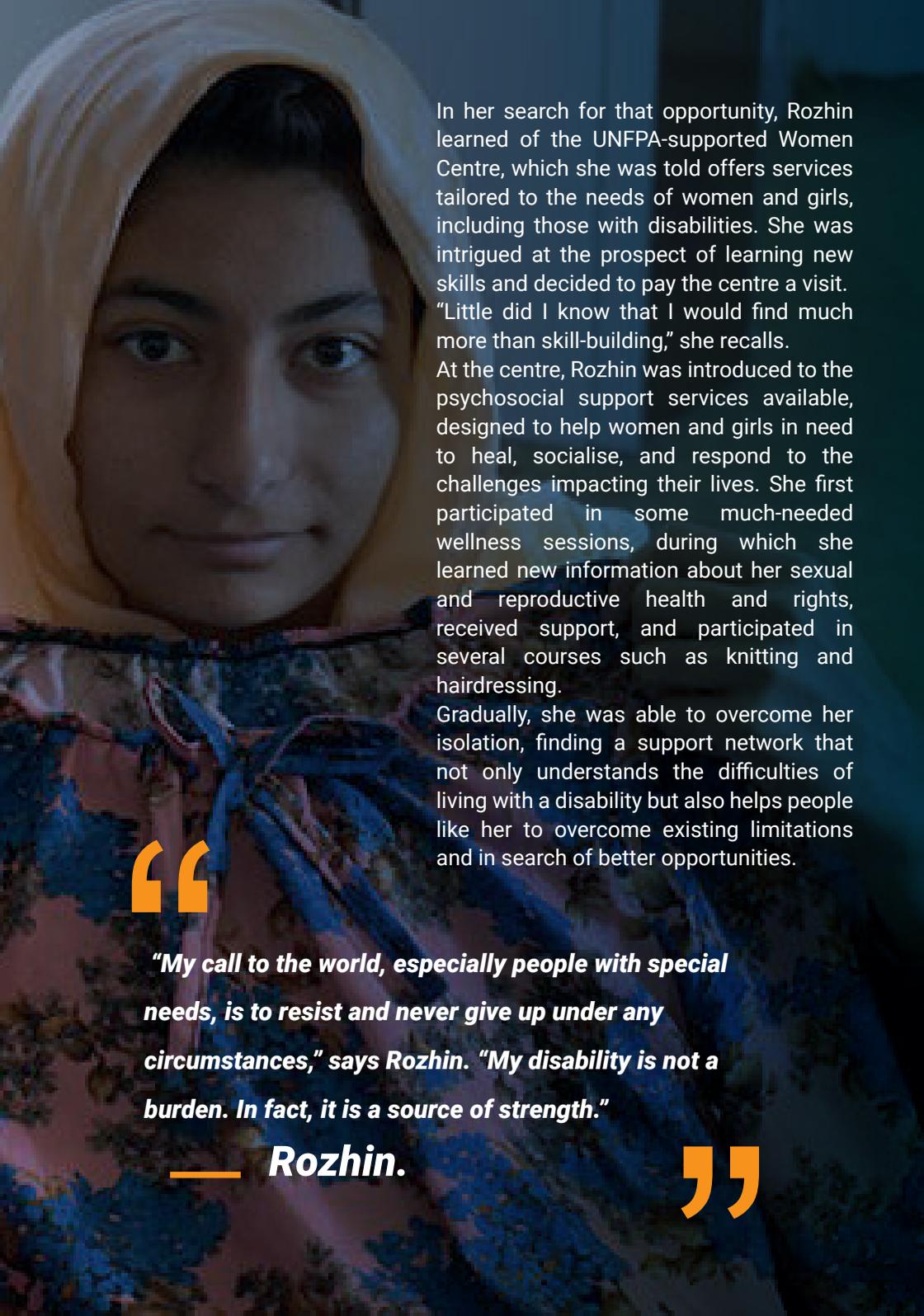
Born with a congenital disability, Rozhin was reliant on her family to facilitate her routine tasks.

Following the death of her mother, she found herself alone, living with a stepmother who seldom showed her any empathy or understanding. Her life prospects seemed grimmer than ever.

“It was a rough journey and a sad discovery to realise the prejudices my own family harboured about my disabilities,” recalls Rozhin.

But Rozhin, 15, is no stranger to prejudice and discrimination. As a woman with a disability, she is considered among the most vulnerable population segments to a wide array of risks, including gender-based violence. She is also painfully aware of the pre-existing biases that continually impact people with disabilities, particularly in crisis settings.

“The puzzled gazes and looks of pity when people stare at me are discouraging, I have to admit,” she explains. “But I never allowed that to stand in my way. I have always wanted to see what life has hidden for me.”



In her search for that opportunity, Rozhin learned of the UNFPA-supported Women Centre, which she was told offers services tailored to the needs of women and girls, including those with disabilities. She was intrigued at the prospect of learning new skills and decided to pay the centre a visit. “Little did I know that I would find much more than skill-building,” she recalls.

At the centre, Rozhin was introduced to the psychosocial support services available, designed to help women and girls in need to heal, socialise, and respond to the challenges impacting their lives. She first participated in some much-needed wellness sessions, during which she learned new information about her sexual and reproductive health and rights, received support, and participated in several courses such as knitting and hairdressing.

Gradually, she was able to overcome her isolation, finding a support network that not only understands the difficulties of living with a disability but also helps people like her to overcome existing limitations and in search of better opportunities.

“

“My call to the world, especially people with special needs, is to resist and never give up under any circumstances,” says Rozhin. “My disability is not a burden. In fact, it is a source of strength.”

— Rozhin.

”

Empowering adolescents and youth



Advocacy and Policy:

- 2030 National Youth Vision endorsed by the Government of Iraq
- Costed action plan for the 2030 Youth Vision developed

Facilities and services:

- **34** youth centres in **10** governorates supported to promote youth engagement
- **33** youth centres in **10** governorates refurbished
- Youth Safe Space in Ramadi, Anbar, rehabilitated
- **3** youth centres in Nineveh Governorate to provide educational programme for adolescent and youth with disabilities



Services provided by the SRH facilities included:



life skills activities



leadership -and peace building training



counselling



awareness



employability skills

People benefited:

37,854

youth access information on adolescents' sexual reproductive health through social media

5,000

adolescents and youth accessed counselling services via hotline

42

youth advisory members trained on Youth Advisory Boards core functions

40

youth trained on volunteerism principles and actions

30

Iraqi Youth Peace Security Coalition members trained on leadership skills

407

youth centres managers trained on life skills and peace building

14,700

youth educated on life-skills and

12,770

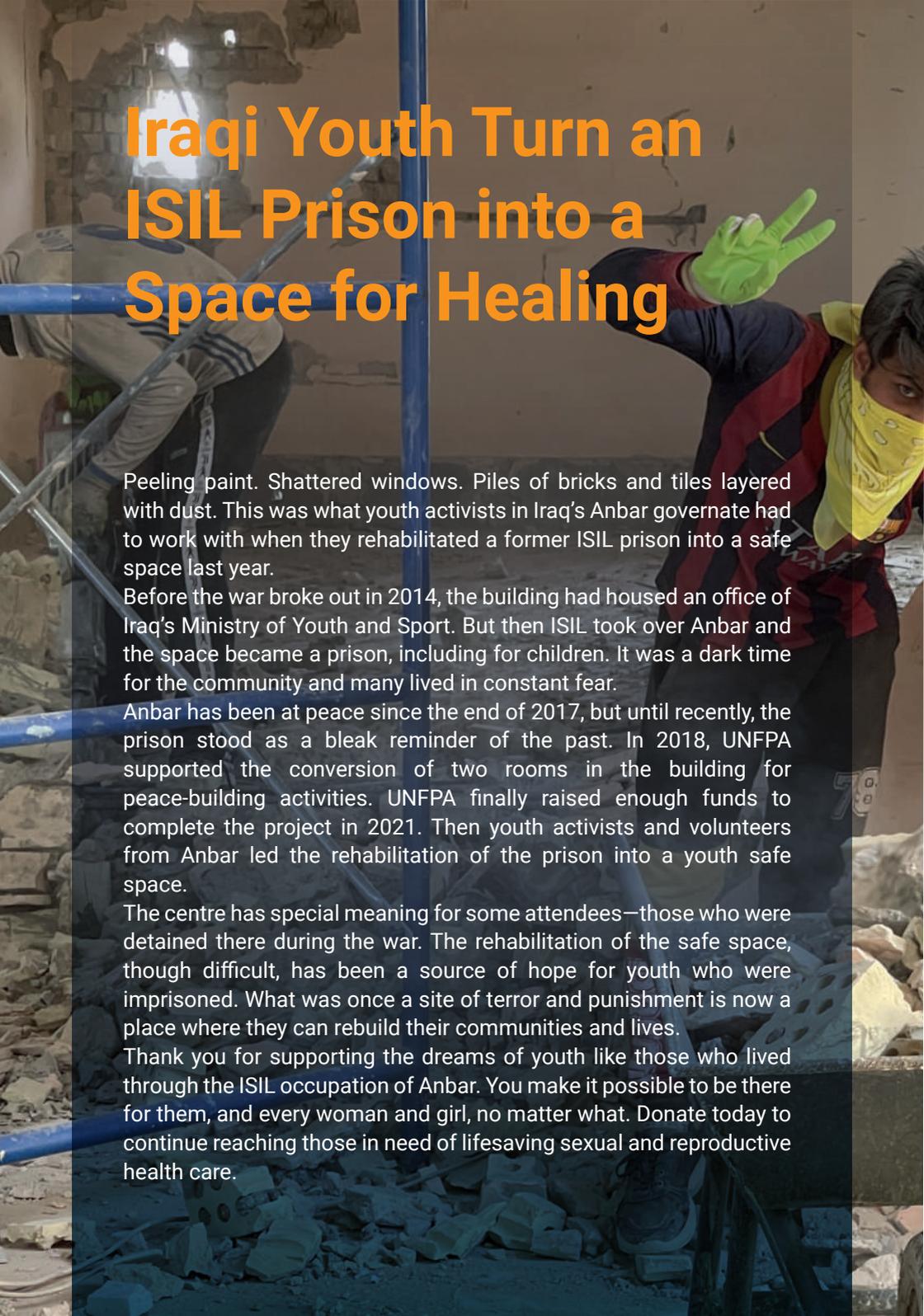
learnt about peace building

20

young people trained on employability skills

35

staff members of the Ministry of Youth & Sports trained on results based management and monitoring and evaluation

A young man in a red and black jacket and a yellow headscarf makes a peace sign with a green glove in a rubble-filled room. The background shows a damaged interior with blue metal bars and debris.

Iraqi Youth Turn an ISIL Prison into a Space for Healing

Peeling paint. Shattered windows. Piles of bricks and tiles layered with dust. This was what youth activists in Iraq's Anbar governate had to work with when they rehabilitated a former ISIL prison into a safe space last year.

Before the war broke out in 2014, the building had housed an office of Iraq's Ministry of Youth and Sport. But then ISIL took over Anbar and the space became a prison, including for children. It was a dark time for the community and many lived in constant fear.

Anbar has been at peace since the end of 2017, but until recently, the prison stood as a bleak reminder of the past. In 2018, UNFPA supported the conversion of two rooms in the building for peace-building activities. UNFPA finally raised enough funds to complete the project in 2021. Then youth activists and volunteers from Anbar led the rehabilitation of the prison into a youth safe space.

The centre has special meaning for some attendees—those who were detained there during the war. The rehabilitation of the safe space, though difficult, has been a source of hope for youth who were imprisoned. What was once a site of terror and punishment is now a place where they can rebuild their communities and lives.

Thank you for supporting the dreams of youth like those who lived through the ISIL occupation of Anbar. You make it possible to be there for them, and every woman and girl, no matter what. Donate today to continue reaching those in need of lifesaving sexual and reproductive health care.



Promoting data & evidence based programming



Advocacy and Policy:

- Government officials received **2** workshops on integration of population indicators within governmental plans
- A Policy dialogue meeting on using population policies for sustainable development was held with the Minister of Planning and senior government officials
- UNFPA conducted **2** consultative workshops on development of population policy

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:

- Completed study on the impact of COVID-19 on reproductive health services
- Knowledge Attitude and Practice (KAP) on gender-based violence and family planning conducted and report produced
- Population analysis report for central and regional levels developed.
- Iraq Women Integrated Social and Health second survey (IWISH-II) conducted
- Four studies and assessments conducted on social norms in Iraq, women community centres transitions from humanitarian to development, internal women community centre assessment, and the role of women in the Kurdistan Regional Government institutions

Best practices & Innovation



In 2021, UNFPA organised high-level advocacy conferences on ending gender-based violence, bringing in decision-makers, diplomats, influencers, activists and civil society to share stories, initiatives and lessons learned. The **“Let’s Talk: Ending gender-based violence in Iraq”** was conducted within the 16 Days of Activism Violence against women, creating an opportunity to bring the voices from Iraq into the global stream of conversations about rights, choices and women empowerment.



UNFPA relied on innovation to help women to ask for help in case they were at risk or undergoing any kind of violence. The mobile application **SafeYou** was brought to Iraq following south-south cooperation with UNFPA in Armenia. The application offers a Help button, which, when clicked, sends the user’s location to the trained police as well as the people who they trust and can turn to for help. This service is free of charge and all information received through the app is confidential to secure the privacy of users. The application also educates them about their rights, health and life skills.



Best practices & Innovation

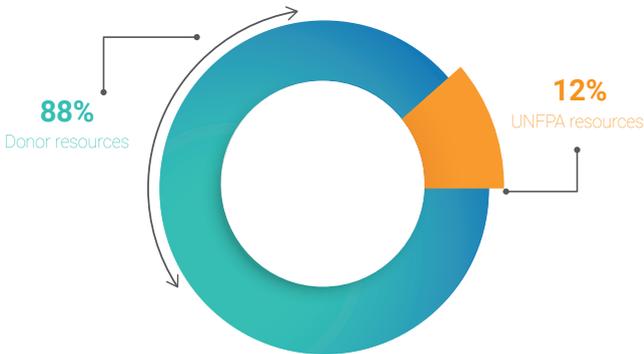
- UNFPA also collaborated with governorates to ensure women have protection when looking for refuge from violence. We supported the governors' offices to commit and to open **women protection centres** to play the role of shelters. These centres offer psychosocial and legal assistance, medical counselling and protection for survivors of gender-based violence. Women and girls will be able to benefit from special programmes on empowerment, life skills and livelihood education.

- To combine theory and practice, UNFPA established **three centres of excellence for family planning** in cooperation with the Ministry of Health. These centres will constitute a capacity development platform for health providers in governorates, an innovative lab on family planning and a place where women can receive an integrated package of health services including high-quality family planning services.

2021 resources

Total budget:

US\$ **27,851,563.74**



UNFPA resources

US\$ **3,255,065**

DONOR resources

US\$ **24,596,498.74**

2021 donors



Ministry for Foreign
Affairs of Finland



World Health
Organization

Canada



Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs



OCHA



ITALIAN AGENCY
FOR DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION



Missioni degli Affari Esteri
e della Cooperazione Internazionale



A heartfelt thank you

For your generous support

2021 partners



- Governorate of Diwaniyah
- Governorate of Anbar
- Folke Bernadotte Academy
- Central Statistical Organization (CSO)
- General Directorate for Combatting Violence Against Women (GDCVAW)
- 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
- Women Empowerment Department (WED)

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
- Un Ponte Per
- American University of Iraq Sulaymaniyah
- The Swedish Development Aid Organization
- Together Organization
- People Development Organization
- United Iraq Medical Society
- DARY
- Al Amal
- Cordaid

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