



# UNFPA IRAQ

## QUARTERLY UPDATE

**ISSUE # 8**

JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH 2021



# REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

## COVID-19 isolation wards for pregnant women

With funding from the Government of Sweden, through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, UNFPA opened two isolation units in February for pregnant women with COVID-19 in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

The isolation units, located in Soran Maternity Hospital in Erbil and Zakho Maternity hospital in Duhok, have the capacity to support 13 women at once. They are equipped with medical supplies, Personal Protective Equipment, examination beds and delivery beds worth US\$ 150,000.

The facilities offer daily around-the-clock care by staff trained on the national guidelines on the management of pregnancy and childbirth during COVID-19.

# POPULATION & DEVELOPMENT

## Assessment identifies gaps at reproductive health facilities in Iraq amid COVID-19

The Central Statistical Organization (CSO) and the Kurdistan Region Statistics Office (KRSO), launched, on 10 February, the results of the rapid assessment of the COVID-19 impact on the reproductive health services and facilities across Iraq.

The assessment, conducted in collaboration with the Iraqi Statistical Association, with technical support from UNFPA and financial support from the Swedish Government, provides qualitative and quantitative data on the services provided to women and girls, analyses the impact of the pandemic on the quality of reproductive health services and the health system in the country.

It also showed gaps in service provision and the capacity of health providers, information and awareness related to COVID-19 protection measures, highlighted shortages in the main reproductive health medications, triage measures, as well as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in targeted health facilities.



## Youth Employability Survey: increased frustration, need for private sector investments

The Ministry of Youth and Sports launched on 24 March the results of youth the employability survey, conducted in collaboration with the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) and support from UNFPA and ILO with funding from the Swedish Government.

Building on the National Adolescents and Youth Survey 2019, the employability survey, sampling the three governorates of Qadisiyah, Muthanna, and Thi Qar, emphasises the challenges young people in Iraq face trying to enter the labour market. Using the data to tailor to young peoples' needs and aspirations, allows the work towards more youth-centred policies and approaches.

The survey shows youth frustration with the lack of livelihood and employment opportunities, lack of cohesion in offer and demand for employment, lack of women participation in the labour market and lack of private-sector job opportunities.

# GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

## Supporting vulnerable communities through mobile outreach

UNFPA mobile teams continued in January to conduct outreach visits to the returnees in Al-Saadiya in Diyala and Al-Seenia, and Al-Ishaqi in Salahuddin. Each team, which included one doctor and one social worker offer free of charge medical and psychosocial support services and distribute hygiene kits to families in need.

A total of 105 families received GBV services in Al-Romana in Al-Qaim, 12 families in Al-Rutba centre in Anbar, and 3,894 individuals were reached by the Tel-Abta mobile team in Nineveh. In addition to GBV services, these mobile teams provided mental health services to families residing in these areas.



# Celebrating International Women's Day

On the occasion of the International Women's Day, UNFPA and partners organised multiple events and activities across Iraq celebrating women achievements and highlighting the importance of women's rights. In a plea to spread peace and call to end violence, women survivors of gender-based violence planted trees transforming empty spaces in women shelters in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah into gardens.

In Basra, an event was organised to shed light on the means to support women and girls' role within the development phase of Iraq through strengthening the national system to respond to their rights, needs and increase their participation at community level.

Under the theme "Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world", the High Council with UN women and UNFPA rewarded successful women activists and leaders working in the health, social, education and cultural sectors for their efforts in supporting their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Celebrate women leaders on the frontlines of the COVID19- response and beyond

*All over the world, women lead. They lead peace processes, run businesses, establish hospitals and schools. They are presidents of countries and corporate boards. They head international and grassroots organizations, faith-based groups and sports teams, labour and environmental movements, often while caring for their families and communities.*

*On this International Women's Day, we celebrate all women, and particularly those leading the charge for equality. I encourage women and girls who dream of leadership to take it up. Do not wait. It is your right, and the world needs you now more than ever.*

**Dr Natalia Kanem**  
**UNFPA Executive Director**

**"Let's work towards a future where women and men are equal partners"**  
*UN Country Team in Iraq.*



## CALL 119 - Hotline for GBV survivors



## Roundtable discussion on child marriage research in humanitarian settings

UNFPA in Iraq organised a virtual round table to discuss the outcome of the report on Child Marriage in Humanitarian Settings in the Arab States Region published by UNFPA Arab states, the Women's Refugee Commission and John Hopkins University Center for Humanitarian Health.

The discussion which included representatives from different ministries involved in women and girls protection brought to together expert analyses and inputs on contextualizing strategies and finding a consensus on how to better approach and address child marriage in humanitarian settings.

Participants agreed on the need for further lobbying for the introduction of laws in the Central and South of Iraq, on par with the enactment of laws in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, as well as the implementation of articles of the penal code for the punishment of child marriage cases.



# Silence and inaction are not an option; FGM continues to risk the lives of girls and women

*Silence and lack of action are not an option. Girls and women must be protected. Men, youth and boys must be the voice of change and support local and regional initiatives. Their obligation is to reject female genital mutilation. FGM is of nothing of any religion; FGM is a threat to health women and girls' health and harms survivors, their families, their surroundings and their societies.*

risk of undergoing female  
genital mutilation each year.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ZERO TOLERANCE FOR  
FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION: UNITE. FUND. ACT.



## ADOLESCENTS & YOUTH

### Youth advocacy at the highest levels

To advocate for youth-oriented policies and programming, UNFPA Deputy Representative, Mr Himyar Abdulmoghni, and representatives from the Ministry of Culture and Youth in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq met on 25 January the Speaker of the Kurdish Parliament, Ms Rewas Fayaq. The meeting was opportunity to discuss the results of the National Adolescents and Youth survey.

To shed light on the youth-centres Representative Dr Rita Special Representative and and Humanitarian Ms Irena Vojacková-January the UNFPA-centre in Basra and Advisory Board people talked about their city should look can contribute to development.

The YAB asked the them be heard and so that their ideas Governorate and country. discussions on youth and projects, gender equality, environment, good governance



in the central south region, UNFPA Columbia the UNAMI Deputy the UN Resident Coordinator Coordinator in Iraq, Sollorano visited on 26 supported youth met with the Youth (YAB). The young their vision of what like and how they its socio-economic

UN officials to help raise their voices reach officials in the The meeting also included women empowerment climate change and and social responsibilities.

# Capacity assessment of youth centres in Iraq

The Ministry of Youths and Sports and the Ministry of Culture and Youth, with technical support from UNFPA and funding from Sweden, conducted an assessment of 223 youth centres across Iraq, including 46 in the Kurdistan Region.

The assessment aimed at identifying the capacity of the youth centres and identifying the gaps to enhance the conduction of the centres to improve youth-related interventions and activities.

The assessment would provide field data on the status of youth centres with the aim of addressing the shortcomings, and data and information as well as policy recommendations to the government and UNFPA for enhanced programming.

The assessment Tool consisted of nine thematic areas: Infrastructure, Management, Human Resources, Programmes, Financial Management, Community Involvement, Knowledge Management and Engagement, and Partnerships and Monitoring and Evaluation.



- Creating a conducive environment for the young people to engage and mutual activities to portray develop their hobbies, interests, and creative activities that develop their personalities and excel in various aspects of arts, sports and overall potentials;
- Developing adolescent and youth capacity for interaction and building healthy social relations, prevent social isolation, promote conscious knowledge and skills on reproductive health, gender based violence, youth peace and security, life skills etc.;
- Improving the quality of and access to education to adequately respond to labour market needs;
- Committing to prioritizing the creation of jobs and skilled work force by increased investment that foster youth entrepreneurship and provide capacity building to young people;
- Actively involving young people in policies at national and local programs;
- Enabling effective participation of young people as volunteers and leaders of social change without being subjected to exploitation, violence or deprivation of rights.

# ADVOCACY & POLICY DIALOGUE

## UNFPA Representative visits Duhok and Nineveh



UNFPA Representative to Iraq, Dr Rita Columbia, visited Duhok and Nineveh Governorates from 13 to 19 February.

The Representative met with the Governorate officials in Mosul with whom she discussed UNFPA interventions in their respective areas. The visit led to a commitment from the Governor of Nineveh to establish in Mosul a women shelter for survivors of GBV.

In Duhok, Dr Columbia shared with the Governor, UNFPA plans to strengthen male engagement to prevent gender-based violence in communities, including in IDP & refugee camps. The governor expressed full commitment to support this initiative and mobilise partners in his governorate for this purpose.

It is important to prepare and equip adolescent girls with necessary knowledge and skills to respond to life situations, including gender-based violence.

UNFPA organises sessions on life skills and offers young girls the tools to take charge and build the lives they aspire to while accessing information that can help them make informed choices.



# QUARTERLY RESULTS

**10,778** women delivered safely

**61** RH facilities supported

**39,355** individuals received family planning counselling and services

**135,737** women received gynaecological consultations

**62** GBV facilities supported

**4,512** GBV survivors received services

**2,664** individuals referred through the hotline

**25** policy makers sensitised on gender and GBV issues

**36** individuals trained on SGBV case management

**4,163** individuals referred through multi-sectoral response

**4,478** youth reached through social media on ASRH & hotline services



**52,102** individuals attended GBV awareness raising sessions

**627** women received dignity kits

**25** service providers trained on MHPSS response

**161** youth participated in sport activities for SRHR promotion and girls empowerment



## Ten years on, Syrian refugees' lives in Iraq are growing tougher, and past gains might be lost

Ten years on, since the advent of the Syrian crisis, life for Syrian refugee women, men, girls, and boys doesn't get easier. In fact, with every passing year, it gets more difficult.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) renew their commitment to support the refugee and host communities in Iraq and urge the international community to do the same.

By renewing our commitment, we pledge to continue to support refugees in Iraq to have a meaningful and dignified future through access to education, formal employment, and medical care.

Almost a quarter of a million Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers are still living in Iraq under tough living conditions since the beginning of the Syrian humanitarian crisis.

Protection risks, including child labour and early marriage, are becoming more acute, especially with the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Past gains in building self-reliance of refugees are at risk of being lost.

Meanwhile, the resources available to support them have been stretched past the breaking point.

In Iraq, 60 percent of refugee households said they have reduced their overall food consumption and have taken on debt. Nearly a third of households rely on humanitarian cash assistance.

Access to primary health care has decreased, especially reproductive health care for women and girls, while food insecurity is on the rise. The risk of children not receiving a proper education is particularly high. Distance learning has been challenging for refugee children. Less than half of refugee boys and girls in Iraq enrolled in formal primary and secondary school prior to COVID-19 continued schooling at home after physical school closures. (...)

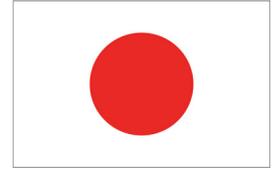
**UNHCR Representative to Iraq, Ms Philippa Candler**  
**WFP Representative to Iraq, Mr Abdirahman Meygag**  
**UNICEF OiC Representative to Iraq, Mr Paul Edwards**  
**UNFPA Representative to Iraq, Dr Rita Columbia**



# THANK YOU DONORS



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# THANK YOU PARTNERS



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