In Iraq, intermittent conflict and impact of climate change continue to affect the lives of people. There are currently 1.2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 4.1 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. Insecurity, lack of livelihoods, and destroyed or damaged housing hamper people’s ability to return home. WFP Iraq’s assistance focuses on saving lives, changing lives: supporting the Government of Iraq’s social protection work towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2: Zero Hunger. Iraq’s progress on the SDGs has been hindered by the challenges of rebuilding infrastructure in areas affected by conflict with ISIL, economic shocks caused by COVID-19, weak institutions and governance, climate change, delayed implementation of reforms and inadequate opportunities for youth.

WFP Iraq is currently shifting its role from emergency response to resilience building and long-term sustainable development. This paradigm shift is critical as Iraq is currently experiencing adverse effects of climate change (5th most affected country globally) especially in southern Iraq, which is reflected in reduced rainfall and decreased water levels in the country’s two rivers (Tigris and Euphrates) which results in increased salinity that, in turn, heavily affects agriculture.

Operational Updates

- In October, as part of targeting the most vulnerable people for cash assistance, WFP provided cash distribution to the reduced number of beneficiaries reaching 127,941 IDPs and 32,989 refugees in camps.
- The complaint and feedback mechanism (CFM) in the camps was available and ready to collect and respond to beneficiary complaints with regards to the targeting process.
- WFP provided immediate ration response (IRR) to 158 Iraqi households (659 individuals) who arrived at Jeddah 1 camp following the closure of Al-Hol camp.
- Due to funding shortfall, the school feeding (SF) distribution will be halted for the 2022-2023 school year as informed by Ministry of Education (MoE). The programme though will be focusing on capacity building of the Ministry of Education personnel to manage the SF programme. An updated plan, which was developed in full consultation with MoE last year, was finalized and discussions are currently underway with MoE to agree on the timeline to start the implementation.
- With the support of WFP Regional Bureau in Cairo, an international consultant has been identified to carry out a Cost Benefit Analysis for the SF case in Iraq. The exercise is part of necessary evidence generation of the benefits of the school feeding programme in Iraq. The planned study is endorsed by MoE.
- The SF Team is working with a new Social Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) expert at WFP Regional Bureau in Cairo to conduct a 2nd SBCC workshop planned to take place by the end of 2022. The workshop aims to continue a work initiated last year under the area of health, hygiene, and nutrition.
- Based on multi-stakeholder discussions that comprise several government entities and UN agencies, the Social Protection Programme has finalized a draft single registry strategy. The draft strategy is currently under review by the government. A technical committee of the two parties has been established to validate and endorse the strategy following the review process.
Monitoring

- In October, WFP conducted 58 monitoring visits, including 47 cash-out point for internally displaced people (IDPs) and Syrian refugees, 1 Livelihood and resilience, 6 e-voucher points, and 4 shops. In addition, 26 monitoring interviews were carried out with people assisted.
- EMPACT data collection for the end of the cycle, was completed for 2021 graduates.
- Food Security Outcome Monitoring was launched in the IDP and Syrian refugee camps in the Kurdistan Region and Ninawa (Jedaa 1 and 5) to explore the impact of WFP cash assistance on food security of beneficiary households.

Challenges

- Funding shortfalls remain the largest challenge to WFP Iraq's activities in 2022, as the programme is only funded up to 17 percent of the total required.

Donors

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As part of the efforts to reform the public distribution system (PDS), WFP in cooperation with Ministry of Trade (MOT) started the digital PDS registration in Najaf governorate. The registration process will support the evidence-based targeting criteria that was recommended to the Government. In October, around 30,000 e-PDS cards were printed, out of 340,000 cards, the total target in Najaf Governorate. A Total of 19,729 e-cards were distributed and 1,891 e-cards were activated.