



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP Iraq Country Brief March 2024

Operational Context

In Iraq, intermittent conflict as well as the impact of climate change continue to affect the lives of people. There are currently 1.2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 2.5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. Insecurity, lack of livelihoods, and destroyed or damaged housing hamper people's abilities to return home. WFP Iraq's assistance focuses on changing lives, saving lives, and supporting the Government of Iraq with social protection reform, youth empowerment, and combatting climate change towards achieving 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, weak institutions and governance, climate change, delayed implementation of reforms and inadequate opportunities for youth.

In a strategic move, WFP Iraq is transitioning its role from emergency response to resilience building and enabling long-term sustainable development. This shift is paramount given Iraq's susceptibility to climate change, especially evident in the southern region of the country. In conjunction with this shift, WFP is aligning the targeting of beneficiaries across the national Jousour programme for skills development, Youth Empowerment (YEMP), and Climate Agriculture Practices (CAP) activities in line with its strategic objectives and to broaden outreach to previously underserved areas.



Population: **44 million**
(UNFPA 2023)

2021 Human Development Index:
121 out of 191 (lowest)

Poverty rate: **24.8%** (Ministry
of Planning, World Bank,
2021)

1.15 million IDPs (IOM)
262,218 Syrian refugees in Iraq
(UNHCR)

In Numbers



51,400 people assisted in March 2024

USD 0.7 million cash-based transfers made in
March 2024

USD 37.9 million six months (April - September
2024) net funding requirements

Operational Updates

General Food Assistance

- In March 2024, 2,986 internally displaced persons (IDPs) (762 households) received e-voucher food assistance at Jada'a 1 camp in Ninewa Governorate. WFP also carried out in-kind food distributions to 36,751 Syrian refugees (7,115 households) in ten camps across the Kurdistan region of Iraq (KRI), distributing 14,507 food baskets.
- Further, WFP provided multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) to 8,107 individuals (1,656 households) lacking civil documentation in Baghdad, Kirkuk, Ninawa, Wasit, Diyala, Anbar, Babil, and Salahuddin Governorates.

Economic Empowerment, Livelihoods Support and Climate

- WFP is building a digital e-farming system to support the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) streamline farmers' data management. In March, MoA approved the latest version of the platform and assumed system ownership. WFP has since procured the necessary equipment to be handed over to MoA. Implementation of the e-farming system project will be piloted in Karbala Governorate.
- In March, 1,060 young Iraqi participants from the national Jousour (Bridges) programme reached the second learning phase focused on entrepreneurship, financial inclusion and life skills across six universities in Baghdad, Anbar, Maysan, Thi-Qar, Basra, and Mosul Governorates. The Jousour programme is an initiative providing youth with digital and English skills to boost their employability and livelihoods.
- WFP continued renovating Malta Tree Nursery to raise its growing capacity from 300,000 to 1.5 million saplings annually in Duhok Governorate. A key aim is to capacitate the nursery to produce varieties of trees resistant to climate change shocks. This renovation is being conducted by turning 4,100 m² of unusable land in the nursery into 10 multi-span houses and supporting the tissue culture lab of the Malta nursery through the provision of equipment, reagents, and solvents.
- In Sulaymaniyah Governorate, WFP established 50 donums of forest and supported 40 beekeepers through technical skills trainings and beekeeping kits.
- In Erbil Governorate, WFP provided a 60-day tree nursery business and technical job training for 60 young people, equipping them with greenhouses and nursery tools to support greening campaigns across KRI. Following a 3-week beekeeping training in February for 105 participants in rural communities, WFP procured tool kits in March to be distributed to participants for honey production and to enhance pollination in forests.
- Thirty rural women in Erbil Governorate underwent a one-week business mentorship programme under livelihoods initiatives and received an average of USD 2,000 each in seed capital for their entrepreneurial ventures.

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Photo Capture: WFP Iraq builds the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture in Salahuddin, Anbar and Diyala by the installation of barley hydroponics units to promote sustainable food production through climate-smart agriculture. ©WFP

Country Strategic Plan (January 2020 – December 2024)		
Total Requirements (In USD)	Total Received (In USD)	Percentage Funded
701 million	361 million	30%
2024 Requirements (In USD)		Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) (April – September 2024)
131 million		37.9 million

Strategic Outcome 1: Crisis-affected people in Iraq, including IDPs and refugees, can meet basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crises throughout the year.
Focus area: Crisis Response

- Activities:
- Provide unconditional food assistance to IDPs, refugees and other crisis-affected people.

Strategic Outcome 2: Targeted communities, including farmers, have enhanced livelihoods and increased resilience to shocks by 2024.
Focus area: Resilience Building

- Activities:
- Provide livelihood support, asset creation and climate adaptation activities, including capacity strengthening to targeted farmers and communities.
 - Implement climate resilience projects for targeted individuals and communities for and on behalf of the Government and other actors.

Strategic Outcome 3: National and subnational institutions have strengthened capacities and systems for targeting and assisting food-insecure vulnerable people by 2024.
Focus area: Resilience Building

- Activities:
- Provide institutional capacity strengthening to Government officials and partners.
 - Provide support to Government officials and partners in enhancing information technology for managing PDS modernization and in strengthening the safety net component of the Government social protection system.

- WFP Iraq has received funding under the umbrella of the Changing Lives Transformation Fund (CLTF), an internal corporate fund, to support programmes that aim to strengthen support to the Government of Iraq's social protection system and improve livelihoods for vulnerable populations. WFP Iraq met with key actors and donors and conducted a comprehensive stakeholder mapping exercise to identify relevant partners for cooperation under the CLTF programme. In addition, a field visit was conducted to the Vocational Training Centre in Wassit Governorate to explore partnership opportunities.

School Feeding

- In collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ministry of Planning (MoP), WFP conducted additional consultations on the draft national school feeding policy through an induction session that was organized in March. The finalisation of the policy is currently projected in mid-April.

Social Protection

- WFP continued supporting Iraq's national statistical organizations, the Authority of Statistics and Geographic Information Systems (ASGIS) and the Kurdistan Region Statistics Office (KRSO), to establish a Food Security Monitoring System (FSMS). This support included deploying a data collection system utilizing tablets and smartphones (MODA), providing hardware and software, and conducting capacity-building trainings for government officials. Building on capacities developed at ASGIS and KRSO through the FSMS, WFP and the Government are conducting a food security assessment in areas of return for the integration of IDPs who were former camp residents.
- The Graduation Pathway project, which focuses on linking social protection with economic empowerment to enhance self-reliance, entered its final design phase in March. WFP has been closely liaising with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) to sign a Letter of Cooperation (LoC) that will enable the project's kick-start. The implementation is anticipated to start in May, following the expected signature of the LoC in mid-May.

Monitoring

- Preliminary findings from a follow-up study among Jousour graduates conducted in 2023 revealed (1) high levels of satisfaction regarding the training content, delivery, and relevance to market demands, (2) the provision of laptops and access to internet significantly facilitated job attainment, and (3) more than 20 percent of graduates secured jobs after completing the Jousour programme, with 83 percent reporting an increase in income. Further, over 46 percent of all graduates experienced positive change in their income after participating in WFP's Jousour programme.
- In March, WFP conducted 37 monitoring visits, encompassing 9 cash-out distribution points for IDPs and Syrian refugees, 4 Jousour locations, 23 Rural Livelihood initiatives, and one shop. Additionally, they conducted 82 monitoring in-person interviews with beneficiaries.

Story from March 2024: Adaptation to climate change

Ahmed Ghanim, a farmer from Mosul Governorate, faced challenges with traditional irrigation methods in his crop production. Thanks to WFP, he received a sprinkler system and training in utilizing the tools back in September 2023. With the new irrigation method, Ahmed saw considerable progress in March 2024 with his production. The efficient water distribution of the system led to a significant increase and improved quality in crop yield, providing diverse and nutritious food. Now, Ahmed can cultivate more land efficiently, ensuring a stable income and food security for his family.



Challenges

Funding shortfalls remain the largest challenge to WFP Iraq's activities in 2024, as only 30 percent of funding requirements for the next six months (April - September) is currently covered. WFP Iraq's strategic transition from humanitarian to development assistance requires consistent, sufficient, multi-year, and flexible funding.

Donors

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