



ACTED IRAQ COUNTRY STRATEGY

2020-2021



FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES

03



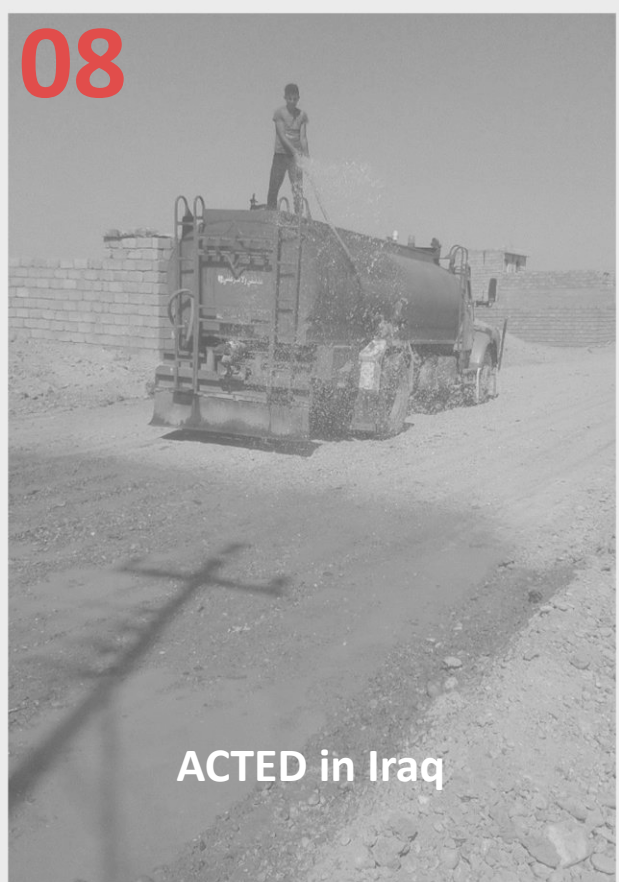
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Programmatic
Strategy
2020-2021

Iraq: Country Profile



Key Trends

Camp departures, consolidation
and closures

Increased Returns

Secondary
displacement

Influx of Syrian refugees from
North East Syria

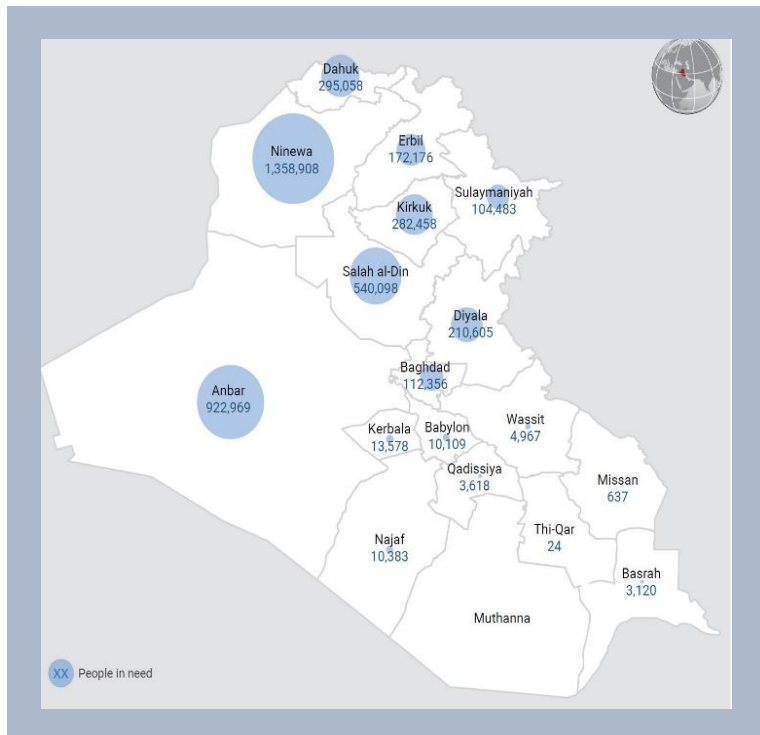
Demonstrations around
the country against political corruption

Even if the humanitarian situation and access have improved and around 4,5 million people have returned home, the number of people in acute need remains significant. In August 2019, the Iraqi government announced and launched the closure and consolidation of many camps with the aim of all the IDPs returning to their areas of origin in 2020. Following this decision, the humanitarian community has been advocating for voluntary, dignified and well-informed returns that will lead to durable solutions for the people that have been living in protracted displacement.

In 2020 and 2021, ACTED will focus on assisting people in acute need, while ensuring durable and more sustainable solutions to the populations in Iraq. Priorities will be Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and refugees, returnees living in areas of high severity of needs, host communities and people with protection needs. This strategy is guided by the main assumption that the number of IDPs in formal camps will continue decreasing, while the caseload of IDPs out of camp, as well as returnees living in critical conditions, will persist or increase. ACTED, as part of the Durable Solutions Network*, will ensure coordination with all the relevant actors to achieve multi-sectoral and sustainable solutions to displacement.

*In partnership with the Government of Iraq (GOI), a network of humanitarian, stabilisation and development actors (the "Iraq Durable Solutions Network") has initiated the development of an operational strategy to facilitate safe and dignified access to sustainable returns for IDPs in situations of protracted displacement, while also seeking to promote initial steps in support of other durable solutions for people unable to return.

Despite the fact that the number of people in need of humanitarian aid has decreased by 40% in 2020, according to the 2020 HNO, there are still more than 4million people in need, among which more than 1,7million in acute need, most of them being in Ninewa and Anbar governorates, as shown in the map below.



IMPACT OF THE CRISIS

Approximately 370,000 displaced individuals remain in camps across the country. The rapid roll-out of camp closure and consolidation has made many IDPs return prematurely, leading in many cases to secondary displacement, with at least 120,000 people being secondary displaced in 2019 and the number expected to rise significantly in 2020. Failure to return is mostly result of lack of livelihoods and income generating assets, lack of shelter rehabilitation, reconstruction and compensation, as well as lack of basic services, such as electricity, roads, water and sanitation, schools etc. Lack of social cohesion is also one of the main barriers for returns and creation of unrest between IDPs, refugees and host communities, given that Iraq is subject to social, ethnic, religious and sectarian tensions. Families with perceived affiliations to extremist groups, as well as Syrian refugees and other minority groups are often unwelcomed by the host communities and are prone to isolation and discrimination.



The economic situation in the country has mostly been dependent on oil and this has led to high unemployment, while the public sector is being considered, as the main employer. The World Bank states that Iraq has one of the lowest labour force participation rates in the world, especially among women, youth (60 per cent of Iraq is under 25 years), and IDPs. Lack of employment coupled with low coverage of social protection compounds the vulnerability of the affected populations. According to the 2020 HNO, barriers to much needed employment remain high with the top reported issue being lack of employment opportunities (78 % among households with at least one adult looking for employment). This group is also more likely to report child labour to support the household as one of the main barriers for attending school.

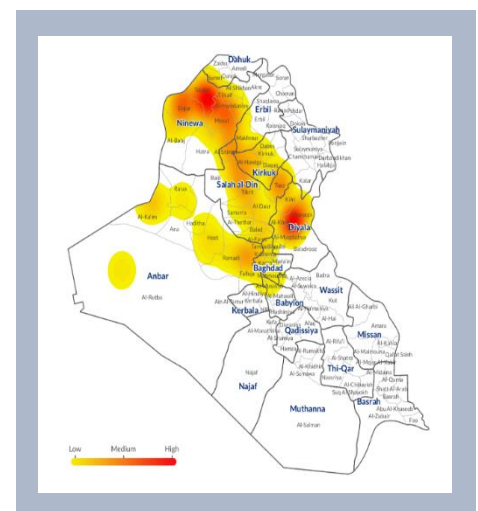
SECTORAL NEEDS

Many of the IDPs will still be unable or unwilling to return to their areas of origin, for various reasons mentioned above. Therefore, a large IDP population remains displaced in camps which are under increasing pressure for closure. Recently, this has led to involuntary returns, which in turn has led to an increase in informal settlements and secondary displacement in difficult conditions. Therefore, to adapt to this constant movement, mobile Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) interventions, monitoring and maintenance of sites are needed. For the IDPs wishing to return, support is needed to ensure a dignified and well-informed transition from displacement. The current post-conflict and returns

context has also led to an increase to Livelihood needs, with 2,39 million people in need of support (an increase of 100,000 people compared to 2019). Due to the lack of livelihoods, the households rely on negative coping mechanisms, while the lack of income is also related to inability to afford costs for education, leading to drop-outs. The 2019 Multi- Cluster Needs Assessment (MCNA) has identified the lack of livelihoods as the main driver of high severity of needs that requires to be addressed to avoid any further tensions, while the shift continues from emergency to post-emergency interventions. The promotion of resilience and social environmental sustainability to conflict affected areas should be encouraged in order to re-establish essential assets and gain access to livelihoods through a participatory approach that will facilitate the recovery from the negative consequences of the conflict.

Moreover, basic shelter needs compromise the living conditions of around 2million people, with 1,3million requiring urgent repairs. Secondary displacement, following the camp closure and consolidation has increased the shelter needs, as IDPs move from the camp to cheap and sub-standard structures within informal settlements, lacking basic infrastructure. On the other hand, longer terms shelter solutions, through rehabilitation and reconstruction are needed as the housing sector has been severely damaged from the conflict, while scaling up investment and advocacy towards the government in order to activate the compensation scheme.

Around 1,7million people across the country lack access to potable water, while 723,123 people lack access to soap and handwashing facilities, and 195,913 people lack access to a functioning improved sanitation facility. The need to improve and provide WASH services and facilities remains high, especially for the hotspots of returns in 2020, as shown in the below map. Apart from the aging water infrastructure, Iraq's southern provinces suffer acute water shortages due to a confluence of factors including major dam infrastructure projects in Turkey and Iran, and drought-like conditions attributed to climate change. Lack of current agreements with Syria, Iran and Turkey on the sharing and distribution of river water, and war-damaged urban water treatment and distribution systems are also factors. All the above show the essential need for water provision and conservation interventions.



Map: Areas of IDP returns

About ACTED Global

Since 1993, ACTED has been committed to immediate humanitarian relief to support those in urgent need and protect people's dignity, while co-creating longer term opportunities for sustainable growth and fulfilling people's potential.

Independent, private and nonprofit, ACTED respects a strict political and religious impartiality.

ACTED's mission is to save lives and support people in meeting their needs in hard to reach areas. ACTED develops and implements programmes that target the most vulnerable amongst populations that have suffered from conflict, natural disaster or socio-economic hardship.

ACTED endeavors to respond to humanitarian crises and build resilience; promote inclusive and sustainable growth; co-construct effective governance and support the building of civil society worldwide by investing in people and their potential.

Key Figures

Active in **37** countries worldwide

295 million € estimated budget in 2019,
95% of which is dedicated to operations

6,300 dedicated staff

Over **17 million** beneficiaries reached

Over **413** projects a year

With its experience working closely with vulnerable communities at the heart of situations they live in, ACTED contributes to reaching the Sustainable Development Goals, advocating for an integrated approach, co-construction and global partnership.



ACTED in Iraq

ACTED has been working in Iraq since 2003, providing humanitarian assistance to those affected by the Syrian Refugee Crisis and the Iraqi mass displacement. For the past few years the main focus of ACTED's interventions was the provision of emergency assistance through CCCM, WASH, Food and Non-Food Items (NFIs), shelter and protection in emergencies. With the crisis in Iraq entering a new phase, ACTED's areas of intervention are increasingly shifting towards rehabilitation, recovery and stabilization.

ACTED provides assistance and plays a vital role in the management of IDP and refugee camps across the country, while supporting Iraqi populations returning to their areas of origin. The reconstruction of war-damaged shelters and infrastructure, the access to services and strengthening of civil society actors, as well as the support in rebuilding livelihood opportunities have been at the core of ACTED's 2019 programming. Through a multi-sectoral approach, ACTED is planning to continue to respond to the changing context and related needs of vulnerable IDPs, refugees, host communities and returnees. Furthermore, ACTED, through REACH, a joint initiative of ACTED, IMPACT Initiatives, and the United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT), enriches its programming with assessments and service mapping across all governorates in Iraq.

Throughout the years, ACTED has implemented projects covering 15 of the 18 Governorates of Iraq, creating strong links with the communities and other local stakeholders, including local authorities, enabling interventions in the hardest to reach areas. Within the next two years ACTED will continue with programmes adapted to the political context of Iraq, shifting from emergency response for the waves of refugees fleeing Syria and massive internal displacement to recovery and resilience programming.



Over **15 years** presence in-country



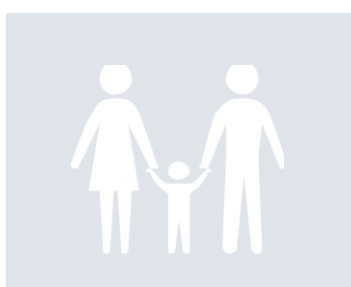
18.1 million € budget (2019)



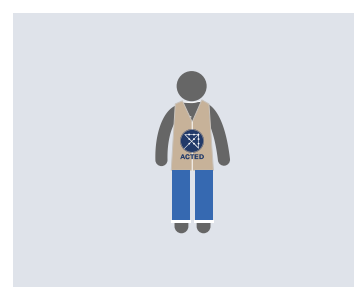
6 operational bases across the country (Erbil, Baghdad, Dohuk, Mosul, Telafar, Salamiyah camp)



24 projects in 2019



Over **2,000,000** beneficiaries (2019)



368 staff



Programmatic Strategy 2020-2021

The NEXUS approach: Linking humanitarian aid with stabilisation and resilience

At the global level, in 2020, ACTED launched its new five-year 3Zero programming strategy (Zero Exclusion, Zero Carbon, Zero Poverty), with relevant thematic areas ranging from humanitarian aid, access to basic services and inclusive economic opportunities (Zero Poverty) to sustainable infrastructure and citizen-driven climate action (Zero Carbon), as well as strengthening of institutions/civil society and peace, stability, justice (Zero Exclusion), together with the cross-cutting areas of circular economy and collaborative management of ecosystems. In this framework, ACTED's programming in Iraq for the next two years has been adapted to balance the humanitarian needs with early recovery efforts and resilient development. Interventions will continue targeting the different population groups, IDPs and refugees at in and out of camp locations, as well as host communities with special focus on returnees, to support them in the transition from displacement. This will be achieved in the framework of the following thematic areas with cross-cutting protection mainstreaming: Humanitarian aid; Access to basic services; Inclusive economic opportunities; Circular economy; Sustainable infrastructure; Strengthening institutions and civil society.

Through continuous **humanitarian aid**, ACTED will continue its CCCM and protection activities, where no intentions of camp closure or return have been observed so far. In other areas, a mobile CCCM approach is adopted, given the increasing number of informal settlements.

With support for **access to basic services**, ACTED aims to support voluntary returns of IDPs and address

the constraints that do not allow them to return to their areas of origin, including damaged shelters, lack of WASH services and infrastructure, protection concerns, lack of income generating activities and inputs, as well as social cohesion concerns.

For longer- term sustainability, **inclusive economic opportunities** and **sustainable infrastructure** are necessary at this stage to ensure durable solutions. ACTED has started creating links and continuity among the different sectors to operationalise the education- employment nexus, through (vocational) trainings that are then followed by networking and economic opportunities, as well as the agriculture-water nexus to promote green economy, sustainable job creation and responsible use of resources that will allow local producers and businesses to gain a competitive advantage. Introducing the concepts of **circular economy** and resource recovery will create a more collaborative and sustainable economic model and ease the lack of and competition of resources among the different community groups. This way, not only economic development but also social cohesion will be strengthened.

ACTED will continue working and coordinating with local organisations and local authorities. **Strengthening institutions and civil society** is in the core of ACTED's programming, through a tailored needs-based approach to ensure that project results are maintained and reinforced in the longer term.

Humanitarian Aid and Access to Basic Services

CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT

ACTED will continue its engagement as camp manager and involvement in care and maintenance activities in the existing IDP camps across the country, especially in Ninewa and Dohuk, for as long as they remain open in the coming years. The activities of camp coordination, communication and information sharing will continue and be adapted to the returns' context. More specifically, as camp manager in Salamiyah camp, ACTED, that is part of the Durable Solutions Network, will organize, among other, know before you go campaigns and participate to go-and-see visits to the areas of origin to provide the needed information to IDPs willing to return, in order to take an informed decision. These efforts will be reinforced through Area Bases Assessments, conducted by REACH, at the areas of return. To strengthen information sharing within the camp, ACTED will be using the Community Resource Centers, including the two that it manages in Mosul and Telafar, to inform the IDPs regarding the available services and actors present at their areas of origin. Given that one of the main challenges for the displaced populations is the lack of civil documentation, ACTED will refer cases to its specialised partners and advocate to the local authorities to find solutions that will facilitate the provision of needed documents to the IDPs.

Given the increasing number of informal settlements and people in secondary displacement, ACTED has adapted its CCCM interventions, using the mobile teams' modality. In order to avoid duplication of efforts, in the catchment areas of ACTED's CRC (Mosul and Telafar), the mobile teams will be part of the CRC team, to do service mapping, coordination and information management within the informal settlements. For other areas, ACTED will scale up its CCCM team, in order to reach the districts that host a high number of informal sites with the highest vulnerability. The abovementioned strategy of returns facilitation will be also used within the informal settlements to ensure more durable solutions for the beneficiaries in the longer-term.

Where possible, IDPs who are able to return and wish to do so can be supported; in other cases, clear evidence of the non- viability of return as durable solution (e.g perceived affiliations with extremist groups) can be used for advocacy purposes in order to support other IDPs in pursuing alternative solutions that are not included in current government plans, in line with the IASC Framework. This strategy builds on the Protracted Displacement Framework produced by the Returns Working Group (RWG) and its partners, and approved by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT). Moreover, this strategy recognizes that the Government bears primary responsibility for the resolution of internal displacement and therefore builds on the Government's own engagement in advancing durable solutions, while the international community plays a supporting role.

Apart from CCCM services, ACTED will continue providing emergency assistance at in camp (especially in Dohuk) and out of camp locations within different sectors, on a needs basis, such as maintenance and repairing of WASH and other basic infrastructures, distribution of emergency WASH and SNFI kits, distribution and replacement of tents, cash assistance etc.

SUPPORT FOR RETURNEES AND HOST COMMUNITIES

To further support recovery and durable solutions, ACTED will work intensively in areas of return through multi-sectoral interventions to improve shelter conditions and community infrastructures, as well as social cohesion.

In terms of Shelter, ACTED will rehabilitate houses with damages of categories I to IV. The preferred modality to be used is cash for shelter for the beneficiaries to be involved in the development of the Bills of Quantities (BoQs) and gain ownership of the works. ACTED's shelter teams and the beneficiaries will be trained on safety and protection issues in the framework of the shelter interventions.

Given the different Housing and Legal Property (HLP) issues that can be raised, as well as potential lack of IDs and civil documentation, ACTED will provide legal advice to the beneficiaries and refer them to HLP partners for further support for the more complicated cases. ACTED will take into account any special vulnerability of the household, including beneficiaries with disabilities, in order to adapt the shelter modality and make referrals to specialized protection actors, where needed.

For shelters of category III and above, temporary solutions will be provided for the duration of the rehabilitation, such as Refugee Housing Units, cash for rent or shelter kits. Some of these options are also relevant for emergency shelter support to secondary displaced populations in informal settlements.

Regarding WASH interventions, ACTED will be focusing on rehabilitation and construction of water supply infrastructures in the hotspot areas of return to accommodate the needs of the increasing population. This will be accompanied with hygiene promotion within the catchment area, using a two-way dialogue approach and adapting the messaging to the different groups and dialects.

Moreover, ACTED will implement WASH related projects in the area of governance. Capacity building for the local authorities that manage the rehabilitated infrastructures has proved to be crucial for appropriate maintenance. Through this capacity building, advocacy will be promoted in terms of waste water treatment, as well as water conservation and resources recovery.

Based on its previous experience, ACTED will continue the implementation of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) that can fall under different sectors, including WASH, education, livelihoods etc. It has been proven that QIPs improve the living conditions of the catchment population, but also increase social cohesion, as they reduce the tension for basic services and they can include communal spaces for the different populations to meet, such as restoration of community parks. For more targeted efforts to increase social cohesion and in areas where community tensions are very

high and require reconciliation activities and leveraging of community peace agreements, ACTED will partner with specialized local and international partners, in order to provide the most adapted services and ensure maximum impact. ACTED teams will be trained, as needed, to avoid increasing community tensions through any of the interventions.



Inclusive Economic Opportunities and Sustainable Infrastructure

In Iraq, as is the case with most of the developing world, the per capita waste generation has been increasing. This systemic problem has disastrous consequences on the economy and the environment. In the coming years, ACTED will be focusing on holistic solutions that bring different sectors together and address this complex crisis.

To continue with, as unemployment remains one of the main constraints to economic development, job creation and matching of skills and professional demand will be the main focus under the livelihoods sector. ACTED is planning to provide on the job trainings in sectors of current interest of the youth and the market, such as digital skills and entrepreneurship, but also the sectors recommended by circular economy assessments.

The activities will target individuals, as well as SMEs and start-ups through trainings, incubation services and provision of grants for the development of start-ups. In the beginning of 2020, ACTED will open its first Innovation Lab for youth in Dohuk governorate, supported by UNICEF, and further develop its programming in this sector. Given that the population relies more on governmental opportunities, job fairs and events will be organized, as well as job placement will be facilitated, in order to create linkages with the private sector. Particular attention will be paid to the needs of women, including aspects such as protection at the work place, with relevant trainings and awareness raising for both the employers and the employees.

Even if digital skills and entrepreneurship are of high interest in the last years, agriculture remains one of the main sources of income for the majority of the population in urban areas and therefore, ACTED will be continuing its programming and interventions to the benefit of farmers to promote green and resilient economy and income generation.

Through its agricultural interventions, ACTED will promote water harvesting and regeneration of diversified vegetation systems via technical trainings to the farmers, in order to gain a competitive advantage in the market with a considerate use of the resources. WASH projects, such as rehabilitation and reconstruction of irrigation systems and grey water reuse will be used to boost agricultural production and promote climate-smart and innovative techniques.



Strengthening Institutions and Civil Society

ACTED has been working for the past years with the vibrant civil society in the country, particularly in Dohuk governorate. Capacity building activities, through trainings and support for the implementation of local initiatives will continue being implemented for civil society partners, as well as for local authorities in various sectors of ACTED's expertise, including protection, provision of CCCM services, waster management and general organisational capacity. Moreover, ACTED will be working on bringing together civil society actors and local authorities at the district, governorate and central government level to ensure a sustainable and bottom-up approach to community problem-solving. This will be done through the financial support and continuous mentoring for local organisations to implement activities in the areas that are of interest in their communities and participating in local forums and events that bring together all the relevant stakeholders.

ACTED will also supporting the civil society advocacy initiatives, including capacity building on the use of media and other communication channels that are identified on a case by case basis. Last but not least, ACTED has established a French-Iraqi cultural centre in Mosul that will continue supporting in the coming years, creating strategic partnerships and organizing events for the community.



Reinforcing and Mainstreaming Protection



Protection aspects are and will continue being included in ACTED's interventions. Even from the very first stages of the project, protection will be integrated in the different assessments and service mappings to ensure referral pathways when needed. ACTED will continue its case management activities and reinforce its mobile units in order to gain access to hard to reach areas. In order to adopt a community approach, community protection focal points and community protection committees will be formed and trained in order to identify cases and refer them to the relevant actors for further support. Local protection actors and local authorities will be provided with capacity building in order to provide better quality of services to the community. Moreover, ACTED will mainstream protection into its livelihood activities, by choosing the most vulnerable protection cases to support through training, job placement and counseling, to facilitate their inclusion in the society.

