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Final Evaluation: Integrated Reconciliation Project

Final Report

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Contents

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1.1. Background	3
1.2. Evaluation Objectives and Methodology	3
1.3. Evaluation Findings	4
1.4. Conclusions	9
1.5. Recommendations	11
2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	13
3. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY	14
3.1. Evaluation Objectives.....	14
3.2. Evaluation Criteria and Questions	15
3.3. Stakeholders Consulted	17
3.4. Data-collection and Data Analysis.....	18
3.5. Evaluation Limitations.....	19
4. EVALUATION FINDINGS	21
4.1. Relevance	21
4.2. Coherence	27
4.3. Efficiency	28
4.4. Effectiveness	32
4.5. Impact:	42
4.6. Sustainability:.....	46
5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	48
5.1. Conclusions	48
5.2. Recommendations	50
6. ANNEXES – List of People Interviewed.....	52

List of Abbreviations	
CBO	Community Based Organization
CCSP	Higher Committee for Coexistence and Social Peace
EQ	Evaluation Questions
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FFS	Funding Facility for Stabilization
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ICRRP	Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme
IRP	Integrated Reconciliation Programme
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
KII	Key Informant Interview
MOLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MOMD	Ministry of Migration and Displaced
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ONSA	Office of National Security Advisory
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNAMI	UN Assistance Mission for Iraq
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. Background

Iraq has experienced waves of violent conflicts and war since 2003. According to the Global Peace Index in 2017¹, Iraq ranked 161 out of 163 countries in terms of societal safety and security, domestic and international conflict and degree of militarization. Following the defeat of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) by Iraqi Federal Government in 2017, the country has been out of conflict, but remained fragile. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Iraq Country Office has been supporting the social cohesion and community reconciliation for decades through humanitarian, recovery and resilience programmes. During 2015-2019, the Integrated Reconciliation Programme (IRP) has been implemented with UK funding of USD 1.2 million (2017-2018). An internal review took place in 2018, Since then, the IRP Project was implemented with funds from the Government of Denmark of USD 3,247,060 million (21.5 million Danish Krone) and was guided by an integrated results framework and workplan between 2019 and 2021, managed by one UNDP Iraq country team. To this end, UNDP Iraq Country Office has launched a call to conduct the final evaluation of the project.

The IRP Project had four distinct outputs that contribute to of the UNDP Iraq Country programme Outcome 'Conditions improved for the safe return of internally displaced persons in newly liberated areas'; those are:

1. Community social cohesion mechanisms created and/or supported.
2. Socio-economic support services provided to reduce tensions.
3. Civil society capacities strengthened to become more effective partners in social cohesion and peacebuilding.
4. National systems for coordination and planning social cohesion and reconciliation efforts in Iraq strengthened.

1.2. Evaluation Objectives and Methodology

The Final Project Evaluation is part of UNDP's commitment to improved results-based management. The findings and recommendations are expected to inform and help improve decision-making relating to implementation for the Iraq Social Cohesion Programme which forms the 2020-2024 programming platform for UNDP Iraq interventions to promote social cohesion and reconciliation.

The objectives of the Final Evaluation of the IRP Project are to:

1. Assess the relevance of the project's results.
2. Assess the efficiency of project implementation, including the operations support.
3. Assess the effectiveness of the project and its activities in reaching the stated objectives.

¹ Institute for Economics and Peace. 2017. Global Peace Index 2017: Measuring Peace in a Complex World, Sydney <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/GPI-2017-Report-1.pdf>

4. Assess the appropriateness of the project design and management arrangements for achieving the stated objectives.
5. Assess the sustainability of the project results.
6. Outline lessons learned and good practices that can be used in the planning and implementation of the Iraq Social Cohesion Programme, regular review, implementation and monitoring of all UNDP similar interventions.
7. Provide constructive and practical recommendations on factors that can contribute to project sustainability, (if required/where relevant) including for the Country Programme 2020-2024.

The evaluation assessed the project using the standard OECD/DAC evaluation criteria² of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact. The inception report was submitted in October 2021 and a field mission was conducted to Iraq, where Baghdad, Irbil, Falouja, and Ramadi were visited. The evaluation methodology adopted a hybrid approach with both qualitative and quantitative data collection in a transparent and participatory manner, involving and incorporating feedback from various stakeholders and partners. 30 evaluation questions were used, as provided by the ToRs. During the evaluation mission a total of 110 people were interviewed in Baghdad, Erbil (also covering Anbar), Fallujah, and Ramadi..

1.3. Evaluation Findings

Relevance

The Iraq Damage and Needs Assessment³, conducted by the Iraq Government and the World Bank in 2017, confirmed the need for conflict-sensitive recovery policies and resilience efforts with special attention to IDPs and returnees. In response, the IRP Project was designed and implemented between 2017 and 2021 and focused on addressing critical challenges through four integrated outputs. It aimed to address social and religious tensions, ethnic strife, and persistent insecurity in Iraq. The project also aimed to strengthen national systems to coordinate reconciliation efforts. The project responded to the socio-economic challenges and psychological traumas. Gender was mainstreamed through all the IRP Project activities with special attention to women, girls, and survivors of SGBV/GBV. The project also made it a priority to engage youth in decision-making and in promoting social cohesion and solidarity.

The IRP Project had a strategic fit with the Iraq Vision 2030 for Sustainable Development⁴, specifically, with Priority 4 ‘Safe Society’. It is aligned with the Country’s National Development Plan 2018-2022⁵, Strategic Objective 1: ‘Establishing the foundations of good governance’ and Strategic Objective 3:

² OECD.2021. Evaluation Criteria. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

³ Iraq Ministry of Planning and World Bank Group. 2018. Iraq Reconstruction and Development Framework 2018-2027

<https://www.iraq-businessnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Iraq-Recons-Inves-World-Bank-Jan-2018.pdf>

⁴ Iraq Ministry of Planning. 2019. Iraq Vision 2030 for Sustainable Development: The Future we Want.

<file:///C:/Users/doaa.arafa/Documents/Consultancy/IRP/Resources/1568714423e99cb9efb0b0a786344a1294683d4931--%D8%B1%D8%A4%D9%8A%D8%A9%202030%20e.pdf>

⁵ Ministry of Planning, Republic of Iraq. 2017. National Development Plan 2018-2022. https://www.iraq-iccme.jp/pdf/archives/nationaldevelopmentplan2018_2022.pdf

‘Recovery of communities affected by the for the poorest and vulnerable groups.’ The project addressed critical political and social challenges identified by the Iraq Reconstruction and Development Framework Plan 2018-2027⁶. The project design was also aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and SDG 5 Gender equality. The IRP project design was complementary to Outcome 3 of UNDP’s Strategic Plan: ‘Strengthen resilience to shocks and crises’ and was designed in alignment with the UNDP Iraq Country Programme 2016-2020⁷ and Country Programme 2020-2024⁸.

UNDP developed a Theory of Change (ToC) for the IRP Project which maintained that community reconciliation efforts would gradually build trust and promote community discussions that can address historical divides and root causes of the conflict. The ToC assumed that this could be reached through establishing and empowering local peace mechanisms; namely Local Peace Committees (LPCs), Women Peace Groups (WGs) and Youth Peace Groups (YGs) that implement community initiatives. CBOs and NGOs are key players, they are capacitated to support the peace mechanisms and to provide psychosocial support for survivors of SGBV. The project’s ToC also assumed that Iraqi authorities and civic leaders would be enabled to find remedies for challenges of IDPs to return home. Activities to enable this change include capacitating media professionals, supporting national level institutions, and establishing coordination mechanisms.

The IRP Project considered the gender-specific impacts of the conflict on women, men, and children in affected communities. Issues of women and girls’ protection, capacity building and participation were considered in the project design and in its Results framework and mainstreamed across all stages of the project. The IRP Project adopted a rights-based approach to reconciliation that endeavour to bring about transformational change and reduce underlying vulnerabilities. Minority groups of the poor, women, people with disabilities, youth and IDPs are marginalized and faced targeted actions against their human rights, which the project attempted to address through its activities.

Coherence

The IRP project complemented the Government of Iraq’s social cohesion and peace efforts and supported the establishment and activation of local peace mechanisms under the Permanent Higher Committee for Coexistence and Social Peace (CCSP) at the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, as well as Follow Up National Reconciliation Committee (IFNRC) of the Office of Iraq’s Prime Minister and with the same committee that is currently named the Committee for Dialogue and Societal Peace (CDSP) . The project collaborated primarily with this committee and also with local government namely, Ministry of

⁶ Iraq Ministry of Planning and World Bank Group. 2018. Iraq Reconstruction and Development Framework 2018-2027 <https://www.iraq-businessnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Iraq-Recons-Inves-World-Bank-Jan-2018.pdf>

⁷ UNDP. 2015. UNDP Country Programme 2016-2020.

<file:///C:/Users/doaa.arafa/Documents/Consultancy/IRP/Resources/UNDP%20Iraq%20country%20programme%202016%202020.pdf>

⁸ UNDP. 2019. Iraq Country Programme 2020-2024.

<file:///C:/Users/doaa.arafa/Documents/Consultancy/IRP/Resources/UNDP%20Iraq%20country%20programme%202020%202024.pdf>

Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA), Ministry of Migration and Displaced (MOMD) and Ministry of Youth and Sports. The IRP project contributed to the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the Iraq United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). It complemented efforts by other UN agencies in Iraq, including International Organization for Migration (IOM), UN-Women, UN Population Fund (UNFPA), and the World Bank in Iraq. Also, international organizations and NGOs such as GIZ/Germany, PAX Peace Organization/Netherlands and UPP Un Ponte Per/Italy. Moreover, CBOs and NGOs were heavily involved with the IRP project facilitating the implementation of initiatives at the local level. The project presented an opportunity to work in complementarity with other initiatives and CBOs, which consolidated efforts and made their presence more accepted and impactful.

Following UNDP review of its projects in Iraq in 2018, the IRP project was re-designed. The revision and design were done upon recommendation of UNDP Regional Hub experts following a revision mission,. However, there was limited participation by stakeholders during the project design phase. Stakeholders became more engaged during implementation, where the project coordinated with the IFNRC and with the Higher Committee for Coexistence and Social Peace (CCSP). Also, as reported by CBOs interviewed by the evaluation, the IRP project enabled the implementation of local activities that were designed and proposed by the CBOs. Respondents highlighted that there is an increased attention by the Government of Iraq for coordination between development and humanitarian partners in Iraq. Coordination with UN agencies was modest, limited to participating in joint meetings and working groups.

Efficiency

During the first two years of the IRP project, implementation was slow with no clear achievements, additional expected funding from the German and UK was not received. It was until the project revision at the end of 2018 when implementation started with received funds from the Danish Government (USD 2.735 million). Outputs were steadily achieved towards the set targets and reported throughout 2019 to 2021, albeit with challenges due to the hit of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The pandemic caused delays and difficulties in maintaining regular physical interaction with community members. Moreover, political changes in Iraq and pertinent changes in leadership of the Coexistence and Communal Peace Committee (CCPC) affected the progress at the national level. The project was directly implemented by UNDP Iraq Country Office, administered by a dedicated staff based in the country office in Baghdad, in addition to 6 field facilitators designated to different geographic areas. A project board was established and provided strategic direction, experts and international consultants were hired as needed. The project relied on implementing partner NGOs and local community facilitators located in target areas, it was noted by the interviewees during the evaluation that the capacities of some of the CSOs implementing/supporting the implementation of some of the local initiatives were limited.

Communications was one of the core pillars of the project around which dialogue and capacity building activities were implemented. A Communication and Visibility Strategy was developed that promoted social cohesion through different tools. The strategy mapped key audience and intended outputs, hence best communication channels would be identified and used. It was effective in terms of promoting the

project activities and achievements and increased interest among diverse Iraqi population groups about unity, peace building, and social cohesion.

A structured reporting and M&E system were revised in 2019 and the project's logical framework was developed. The project results and outputs fed into Outcome 3 of the UNDP country programme 2016-2020 'Conditions improved for the safe return of internally displaced persons in newly liberated areas.' The annual and quarterly reporting was structured around the activities' contribution to IRP's four set outputs with gender disaggregated data. Monitoring of capacity building activities depended on pre and post-tests that were then analysed and observations shared in progress reports. Field facilitators provided weekly reports through a template designed by the Project team.

Effectiveness

The evaluation concluded that there was contribution of the four interconnected outputs of the IRP project to improving conditions for the safe return of IDPs in newly liberated areas (UNDP Country Programme Outcome 3). The outputs are fully achieved or on-track to be achieved during the remaining lifetime the project. Some activities were not implemented due to mobility restrictions as a result of COVID-19, such as physical domestic, regional, and international study tours. Gender and women's empowerment considerations were mainstreamed across the IRP project design and implementation, which was central to achieving its intended outputs. The project, with focus on women, contributed to the SDG 5 Gender Equality, the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021⁹ and the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security¹⁰. Towards the end of 2018, UNDP reviewed and adjusted the IRP project based on the findings of a lessons-learned exercise, an internal planning workshop for an integrated strategy, a political economy analysis, in addition to an evaluation of existing LPCs. The project also builds on lessons learned from final reports of previous UNDP integrated reconciliation projects, IRP project's reporting, as well as the studies conducted during the project's lifetime.

UNDP, IFCNR and its predecessor CCSP developed LPCs as networks of community-based mechanisms at the grass-root level to facilitate reconciliation processes, representing all major groupings in the community. The project also established WPGs, YPGs and Community Dialogue Committees (CDCs) that implemented community-level initiatives. The project improved coordination and capacities at the different levels by supporting the implementation of community-led initiatives by the WPGs, YPGs and CBOs, building their capacities on how to advocate for social cohesion and peaceful coexistence in their communities. They were also trained on how to facilitate the return of IDPs and assist in resolving community conflicts. During the evaluation, respondents from youth and women groups reported that they have increased their self-confidence and dialogue and social cohesion skills. They felt trusted by their communities and got empowered to address the issues that at one point had affected them. Youth have

⁹ UNDP. 2017. UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021.

<https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/UNDP%20Gender%20Equality%20Strategy%202018-2021.pdf>

¹⁰ UN Department of Information. 2005. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/>

the will and the project equipped them with the skills to enable them to bring back peaceful relationship. The project coordinated with other UN agencies and development partners working on social cohesion in Iraq, including IOM, UNFPA, UN-Women, GIZ and partnered with Swiss Peace and Folke Bernadotte Academy.

The project addressed protection concerns of women survivors of SGBV through support for women led, community-based initiatives to mitigate conflict and respond to shocks. Capacity building programme was implemented targeting WPGs and YPGs. The project trained social workers from MOLSA and from CSOs on providing psychosocial support for women SGBV survivors. Coexistence and peace building community-led initiatives were implemented assisting more than 30,000 SGBV women in the liberated areas in Iraq. Further, an analytical study was developed on re-design MOLSA's protocols to strengthen victim assistance policies.

During the evaluation families interviewed explained the fear and stress they encountered as perceived to be ISIL-affiliated families following the war. Some continued to live in their communities in ISIL occupied areas. The interviewed returnees provided positive feedback about the project's role in facilitating their return to their home areas. The project facilitated their re-integration into communities through a network of grass-root community mechanisms. They mentioned how beneficial were the conferences, meetings and dialogue conducted by peace groups and facilitators on social peace and coexistence with the tribal leaders and sheikhs and local authorities. In addition, they were supported by another project under social cohesion programme to rehabilitate their homes that were not ready for their return.

Despite the fact that the COVID-19 crisis has delayed project activities, it was also an opportunity for the project to introduce new activities and working modalities. For example: The project supported protection of the most vulnerable from the spread of the pandemic by providing hygiene kits and food baskets and through awareness raising on health protection measures. The project shifted to virtual implementation of some activities expanding the reach to 100,000 beneficiaries. In partnership with the Women Leadership Institute, the project conducted the 'Women and Girls in Iraq During the COVID-19 Pandemic' study¹¹ and held surveys on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the women in liberated areas.

Impact

The IRP project improved the conditions for the safe return of IDPs in newly liberated areas through an integrated set of activities. These activities worked in parallel to protect diverse beneficiary groups, support civic society and create an enabling political environment for social cohesion and peace. This was complemented with peace building and civic engaging media promotion. The project worked under the social cohesion vision adopted by the Iraqi government and the international community , yet there has been no national social cohesion strategy developed.

¹¹ UNDP. 2020. Women and Girls in Iraq During the COVID-19 Pandemic.
<https://www.iq.undp.org/content/dam/iraq/docs/Stabilization/UNDP-IQ-Women%20During%20COVID-19.pdf>

The project assisted 49,279 people and 39,681 women have been directly reached from this project as of July 2021. 3,411 IDP families returned to their home communities through the work of the LPCs/CDCs. In addition, to approximately reaching 400,000 people through media products and campaigns. Overall the project contributed to the following outputs:

- Return of IDP families to their areas of origin and ensuring their rights are protected
- Strengthened social cohesion through community peace mechanisms
- Peace-building citizen media and journalism promoted with increased civic capacities
- Increased women's participation in the peace agenda in Iraq
- SGBV victims protected with psychological support, while national systems capacitated
- Changed perceptions around gender roles and social norms

Sustainability

The project met the key elements of the UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards (SES)¹², those are Leave No One Behind, Human Rights, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, Sustainability and Resilience. However, it was not clear to the evaluation if the project had an embedded accountability mechanism within the project. Accountability to beneficiary was to an extent met through the community-level network of LPCs/CDCs and peace groups. Two main risks were accounted for by the evaluation based on the review of documents and the responses from stakeholders. First, related to the fragile political and security situation in Iraq and the changing priorities and hence the level of acceptance of the project's objectives and approaches. Second, is related to the lack of medium to longer term funding to sustain the local peace mechanisms established and to allow them to continue their work on community-led initiatives that promote social cohesion and advance a reconciliation process in Iraq.

1.4. Conclusions

Evaluation Criteria	Conclusions
Relevance	<p>The alignment of the project focus and outputs to government priorities ensured government buy-in and support to the implementation of activities. The IRP Project focused on addressing challenges faced by the Iraqi people and identified in the Iraq Damage and Needs Assessment.</p> <p>Contributing to Outcome 3 of the Iraq UNDP Country Programme ensured working towards a common vision in complementarity with other UNDP programmes and the Country Programme's Theory of Change.</p> <p>As assumed in the project's ToC, establishing and empowering local peace mechanisms and networks of LPCs/CDCs, WPGs, YPGs and facilitators enabled local community social cohesion efforts to become credible in the eyes of citizens</p>

¹² UNDP Social and Environmental Standards (SES). <http://www.undp.org/ses>

	<p>and paved the way for a gradual deepening of trust. It also enabled local authorities and communities to address challenges of IDPs to return to their homes.</p>
Coherence	<p>The IRP project complemented the Government of Iraq's efforts by supporting their national agendas, coordination mechanisms and participation in events. One of the main areas of support is the effort to repatriate IDPs to their home areas and to establish and activate LPCs.</p> <p>Coordination with UN agencies was limited throughout the project, there are opportunities for stronger partnerships and joint programming. There is also opportunity for increased coordination between networks at the local structures, including WPGs, YPGs, LPCs/CDCs and to an extent with local authorities. Engaging NGOs at the onset of the project is important to ensure they play an effective role to support communications and local coordination.</p>
Efficiency	<p>The IRP project's revision at the end of 2018 was a turning point for the vision and direction of UNDP's efforts on social cohesion in Iraq, bolstered by the political assessment, LPC evaluations and other programming documents issued along the review.</p> <p>The project, with funds from the Danish Government, adopted a participatory bottom-up approach in achieving its intended outputs. It depended on engaging facilitators, communication mechanisms, LPCs/CDCs and women and youth groups.</p>
Effectiveness	<p>The outputs of the project were fully achieved or on-track to be achieved during the remaining lifetime the project. Some activities were not implemented due to mobility restrictions as a result of COVID-19. Moreover, the short duration following the review in 2018 was a challenge facing effectiveness of implementation of activities.</p> <p>Concerns around security and social stability, political contexts and gender social norms largely affected the achievements of project results, as it depended on capacity building and community-led initiatives.</p> <p>Members of the peace groups and LPCs/CDCs established by the project allowed for improved coordination and capacities within their communities. Youth and women, most of which were victims of social conflicts and war represented agents of change and creatively and passionately implemented community-led</p>

	<p>initiatives. Gaining the trust of the community groups and local authority was a key for better social cohesion.</p> <p>Integrated community activities that addressed capacity building, women empowerment and psychological support, citizen's media promotion and coordination with local authorities was successful. Returning IDPs to their homes was the primary achievement of this integrated bottom-up approach.</p> <p>Despite the fact that the COVID-19 crisis has delayed project activities, it was also an opportunity for the project to introduce new activities and working modalities.</p>
Impact	<p>The return of more than 3,400 ISIL families to their homes was accounted as the project's main achievement, while before, they were not allowed to even visit the region.</p> <p>Citizen's media and journalism have proved to be a convenient medium for women and vulnerable groups to share their stories and express themselves. It supports in gaining self-confidence and a useful part for psychological support for victims.</p>
Sustainability	<p>Two main risks appeared during the evaluation related to the fragile political and security situation in Iraq and the changing priorities. Additionally, the lack of medium to longer term funding to sustain the local peace mechanisms established and allow for continuing their activities within the communities.</p> <p>A sustainability strategy would have helped to consider these sustainability risks if prepared at any point during the project's lifetime.</p>

1.5. Recommendations

- Recommendation 1: Focus on empowering women members of LPCs/CDCs to strengthen gender elements and participation of women in promoting peace and security in their communities and in Iraq.
- Recommendation 2: Design specific interventions in future programmes with emphasis on livelihoods and income-generation for women from different sects and religions. This would contribute to their social and economic empowerment, as well as offer opportunities for improved social cohesion and peaceful co-existence through gender-sensitive supply chains and marketing.

- Recommendation 3: For future programming, target children as a primary target beneficiary group. Other UN agencies such as UNICEF and UNODC are working with children, joint programmes can be considered. This could be done through de-radicalisation activities to ensure adequate assimilation within communities. Also, through activities that help them cope with post-war fear and trauma. Children could also be reached through teachers, community groups after receiving necessary capacity building.
- Recommendation 4: Although there are several UN coordination mechanisms and UNDP is present strongly in the leading seat or as active member, there is an opportunity for joint programming with other UN agencies and development partners active in Iraq, according to their mandates and fields of expertise. This may include with UNICEF for children's programming, ILO for livelihoods and decent work for vulnerable groups and IDPs and others.
- Recommendation 5: Create the necessary linkages between the peace mechanisms that are established and empowered on the ground (YPGs, WPGs, LPCs/CDCs and local authorities) to strengthen their roles and have more impactful initiatives in their areas.
- Recommendation 6: For future programming, embed outcome-level monitoring into the M&E project plan with indicators that are aligned with the UNDP's Country Programme in Iraq, contributing to the corresponding outcome.
- Recommendation 7: Consider a robust sustainability strategy to be developed during the design phase of the future programme, and to remain a live document updated throughout the project lifetime. The elements should cover resource mobilization and funding, exit and government handover and endorsement, as well as expansion in more areas. LPCs/CDCs should be specifically capacitated on resource mobilization for sustainability.
- Recommendation 8: Consider holding regular discussions with facilitators and local partners (such as Youth and women Groups) on security and access concerns while implementing activities and exploring options for mitigation of risks, though this is done by the team on case by case , it is recommended to be done regularly

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Iraq has experienced waves of violent conflicts and war since 2003. According to the Global Peace Index in 2017¹³, Iraq ranked 161 out of 163 countries in terms of societal safety and security, domestic and international conflict and degree of militarization. Following the defeat of ISIL by Iraqi Federal Government in 2017, the country has been out of conflict, but remained fragile. There were improvements in the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The government has made the return of IDPs and their families to their home areas a priority. Since then, this post-conflict period has seen gradual return of over 4.94 million Iraqis to their areas of origin, yet around 1.19 million still remain displaced, in addition to 247,000 Syrian refugees¹⁴. OCHA Iraq¹⁵ indicated that IDPs currently live in all 18 governorates, in over 100 districts throughout the country. Over 92% of all remaining IDPs are in protracted displacement, having been displaced for three years or longer, with most displaced for more than 5 years. Challenges to the return and reintegration of IDPs are related to humanitarian needs, and the lack of social acceptance, trust and cohesion between returnees and different communities who are unwilling to live alongside. A pervasive issue is the stigmatization of Sunni Arab IDPs and their families suspected of having supported ISIL or being related to someone in ISIL, they are targets of discrimination and exclusion. Gender inequalities and the systemic exclusion of women and girls, exacerbated by conflict and fragility, also undermine Iraq's social cohesion and produce gendered vulnerabilities.

On another front, the economic conditions in Iraq are challenging in general, affected by the political instability, social unrest and a deepening state-citizen divide¹⁶. This is also now combined with more recent challenges such as the early 2020 decline in oil prices¹⁷ and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on jobs and revenue losses. These issues are prolonging the Iraq's displacement crisis, exacerbate intergroup tensions and trigger further violence. Understanding the factors that drive social acceptance of returnees is therefore crucial not only for ending displacement, but also for building social cohesion, promoting reconciliation, and preventing future conflict in Iraq.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Iraq Country Office has been supporting the social cohesion and community reconciliation for decades through humanitarian, recovery and resilience

¹³ Institute for Economics and Peace. 2017. Global Peace Index 2017: Measuring Peace in a Complex World, Sydney <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/GPI-2017-Report-1.pdf>

¹⁴ International Organization for Migration (IOM). 2021. Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 123, Oct. 2021 file:///C:/Users/daaa.arafa/Documents/Consultancy/IRP/Resources/20211024524569_DTM_123_Report_August_September_2021.pdf

¹⁵ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). 2021. Iraq Humanitarian Bulletin, July 2021 https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/july_2021_humanitarian_bulletin_final_en.pdf

¹⁶ World Bank. 2020. Addressing the Human Capital Crisis: A Public Expenditure Review for Human Development Sectors in Iraq. <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/568141622306648034/addressing-the-human-capital-crisis-a-public-expenditure-review-for-human-development-sectors-in-iraq>

¹⁷ As indicated by the World Bank, Iraq is one of the most oil-dependent countries in the world. Over the last decade, oil revenues have accounted for more than 99% of exports, 85% of the government's budget, and 42% of GDP. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/iraq/overview#1>

programmes. During 2015-2019, three projects were being implemented as a response to the ISIL occupation crisis: Integrated Reconciliation Programme (IRP), Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS) and Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP). The IRP Project started in 2017 and had undergone several rounds of revisions and adjustments until it reached its present form, which has continued from January 2019 until December 2021. Since 2018, the IRP Project was implemented with funds from the Government of Denmark of around USD 3,247 million (21.5 million Danish Krone), and USD 1.051 million from UNDP Funding Window in addition to 600 thousands from UNDP core resources , previous phase of IRP has been funded by USD 2.081 million from Germany, USD 1.674 million from UK

An internal review for the project took place in December 2018 and resulted in progressively consolidating the work of all social cohesion components from different projects into one integrated portfolio, and has guided the implementation of IRP from 2019 to 2021. The whole social cohesion programme including IRP project became guided by an integrated results framework, joint workplan and monitoring framework and managed by one UNDP Iraq country team (2019-2021). To this end, UNDP Iraq Country Office has launched a call to conduct the final evaluation of the project.

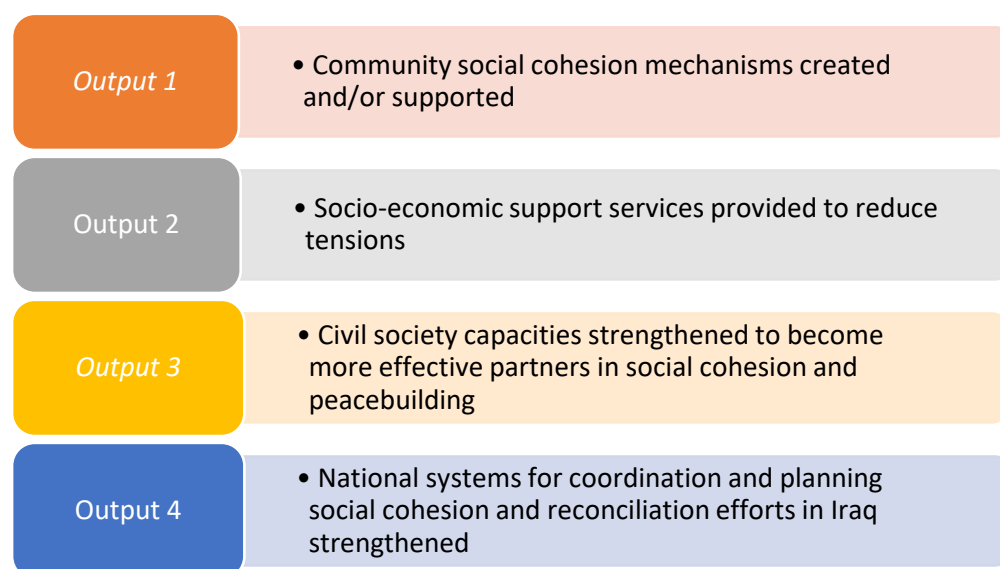


Figure 1: IRP project Outputs

3. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Evaluation Objectives

According to the Terms of Reference (ToRs) by UNDP, the objectives of the Final Evaluation of the IRP Project are to:

1. Assess the relevance of the project's results.
2. Assess the efficiency of project implementation, including the operations support.
3. Assess the effectiveness of the project and its activities in reaching the stated objectives.

4. Assess the appropriateness of the project design and management arrangements for achieving the stated objectives.
5. Assess the sustainability of the project results.
6. Outline lessons learned and good practices that can be used in the planning and implementation of the Iraq Social Cohesion Programme, regular review, implementation and monitoring of all UNDP similar interventions.
7. Provide constructive and practical recommendations on factors that can contribute to project sustainability, (if required/where relevant) including for the Country Programme 2020-2024.

The Final Project Evaluation is part of UNDP's commitment to improved results-based management. Therefore, the evaluation findings and recommendations are expected to inform and help improve decision-making relating to implementation for the Iraq Social Cohesion Programme which forms the 2020-2024 programming platform for UNDP Iraq interventions to promote social cohesion and reconciliation. The evaluation examined the project's focus on the National Level, as well as on the governorates of Salah Al din, Anbar, and Ninewa. The Project operationally closes on 31 December 2021.

3.2. Evaluation Criteria and Questions

The evaluation follows the **OECD-DAC¹⁸ criteria** of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. The evaluation approach was transparent and participatory, involving and incorporating feedback from various stakeholders and partners. 30 evaluation questions were used as provided by the ToRs. During the evaluation mission a total of 110 people were interviewed in Baghdad, Erbil (also covering Anbar), Fallujah, and Ramadi. Annex I includes a list of people interviewed during the evaluation mission.

The Evaluation Matrix presented in Annex II of this report presents the evaluation questions, sources of information, methods of data collection for each evaluation questions. It also provides evaluability criteria for each evaluation question.

Additionally, the evaluation considered **Cross-cutting issues** in all stages of the data collection phase, including gender equality and empowerment of women, human rights, young people, diversity, and needs and priorities of people with disability will be considered. This was done by consistently asking all stakeholders about these issues, ensuring the responses are collated, analysed and presented in the draft and final evaluation reports. The evaluation report ensured that all the collected data were disaggregated by sex and other relevant categories and employed a diverse range of data sources and processes that ensured inclusion of diverse stakeholders, including the most vulnerable where appropriate. The Evaluation questions are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Final Evaluation Questions

¹⁸ OECD.2021. Evaluation Criteria. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

Criteria	Questions
Relevance	EQ 1: To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to security, political, economic, institutional and other changes in the country?
	EQ 2: To what extent was the project in line with the recovery, national development priorities and policies, the UNDP country programme's outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs?
	EQ 3: To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant UNDP country programme outcome?
	EQ 4: To what extent does the project contribute to the human rights-based approach, gender equality and women's empowerment? Especially, with regard to the target beneficiary groups including the return IDPs, youth, women, disabled persons, etc.?
Coherence	EQ 5: To what extent did the project complement work among different entities, including civil society and other UN actors?
	EQ 6: How were stakeholders involved in the project's design and implementation?
Efficiency	EQ 7: How efficient is the functioning of the project management, technical support, administrative, procurement and financial management procedures? To what extent have the project management structure and allocated resources been efficient in achieving the expected results?
	EQ 8: To what extent has the project implementation been efficient and cost-effective?
	EQ 9: To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?
	EQ 10: What is the visibility and communications strategy adopted by the project? Has it been cost-effective in terms of promoting the project and its achievements?
	EQ 11: How is the project keeping track of project progress on expected outputs and outcomes? Does the monitoring and evaluation system put in place allow for continuous collection and analysis of quality and segregated data on expected outputs and outcomes?
Effectiveness	EQ 12: To what extent are the project outputs and outcomes fully or partly achieved or on-track to be achieved?
	EQ 13: To what extent are strategies for gender and women's empowerment incorporated?
	EQ 14: What are the main factors influencing the achievement of project outputs, outcomes, including gender and women's empowerment results as of July 2021
	EQ 15: The extent to which findings of data analysis or project best practices are used for drawing lessons learned, and adjusting implementation?
	EQ 16: To what extent have the project's activities led to improved coordination, cooperation, and capacity as relevant at the National and/or Governorate and/or Municipality levels? To what extent does the project have the support of the government both at national and local levels?
	EQ 17: To what extent have the project's activities led to improved coordination, cooperation and consultation among development partners (including UN agencies, and donors to this project)? How did the project steering committee contribute to a regular gathering of development partners to discuss development priorities?

	EQ 18: To what extent has the project been actively seeking partnership with relevant actors in view of strengthening project implementation and/or ensuring project sustainability?
	EQ 19: To what extent do the project's activities/management systems mitigate and address protection concerns of vulnerable populations (returnees, communities that did not leave ISIL controlled areas, minority communities, etc.) in the targeted areas?
	EQ 20: What is the level of quality of the project outputs and/or the project activities?
	EQ 21: To what extent the project has been able to mobilize financial resources?
	EQ 22: To what extent has the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic affected activity implementation and the quality of activities?
Impact	EQ 23: What has happened/changed as the result of IRP support in the target locations, as of July 2021?
	EQ 24: What real difference have the activities made to the lives of beneficiaries (taking into account gender considerations, such as focus on women-headed households, as well)?
	EQ 25: How many people (gender disaggregated) have been affected by the project as of July 2021?
Sustainability	EQ 26: Are suitable strategies for sustainability developed and implemented?
	EQ 27: Are there any financial, social, political or other risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project's contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes? To what extent are the project results likely to be sustained in the long-term?
	EQ 28: What are the major factors (i.e. socio-economic, environmental, legal and institutional framework, governance, security etc.) which have influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project, as of July 2021?
	EQ 29: To what extent did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs?
	EQ 30: To what extent are lessons learned being documented by the project team and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?

3.3. Stakeholders Consulted

The evaluation consulted all IRP Project stakeholders, who were identified based on a mapping exercise and review of project documents. Beneficiaries, communities, national institutions, donors, UNDP, UN agencies and Community Based Organizations (CSOs) were engaged during the field data collection. Table 2 provides an overview of the evaluation stakeholders.

Table 2: Stakeholders Consulted

Stakeholder Type	Specific Stakeholder
Indirect Beneficiaries/Project Partners/Implementers	UNDP Team
	Members Local Peace committees (LPC)
	Religious Leaders
	Iraqi Champions for Reconciliation (Nashat Akram, Mustafa Zeir, Chef Aya)
	Women Peace Groups (WPGs)

	Youth Network for Social Cohesion / Youth Groups (YGs)
	Finalists of the Social Media Competition
	Communal Dialogue Committees (CDC)
Direct Beneficiaries (Iraqi Citizens)	Returning Families
	Beneficiaries of community initiatives
	Recipients of food and/or hygiene packages/distributions
	Local Authorities of Anah and Falluja District in Anbar , Muhallabiya District in Ninewah, Shirqat district in Salahedin
	Tribal & Reconciliation Committee at the Parliament
	Ministry of Migration and Displaced (MOMD)
Civil Society Organization	Al-Tahreer Association for Development
	Sample of CSOs implementing community initiatives led by WPGs and/or YGs
	SANAD
	Tammuz Organization for Social Development
International Organizations/Donors	GIZ
	UNAMI/ Chair of UN National Dialogue and Coexistence Working Group
	Danish MFA
	Representatives from UN Joint Platform (IOM, and UNODC)
	UN Women
	Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA)
	Swiss Peace

3.4. Data-collection and Data Analysis

Evaluation Approach

The evaluation adopted a mixed-methods approach that focussed on collecting qualitative data from project stakeholders and participants, while building on existing analysis of standardized, quantifiable and classifiable regular data linked to monitoring systems. In particular, the evaluation considered the project's results framework and theory of change, examined selected indicators and verified progress according to the original project design. The evaluation examined UNDP's interventions in their own merit, as well as their contribution to wider objectives of UNDP such as resilience building, advancing economic growth, women's rights and specific UNDAF objectives and identified SDGs. The evaluation approach was transparent and participatory, incorporating feedback from various stakeholders and partners.

Evaluation Methods

1. **In-depth desk review** and analysis of available qualitative and quantitative secondary data, including annual reports, project documents, mission reports, strategic country development documents and any other relevant document. The evaluation used available data to the greatest extent possible. As part of desk review, the evaluation carefully assessed these document and reports provided by UNDP, as well as relevant national documents and any relevant literature. A detailed assessment of the documentation supported the development of findings and complemented information received through the field data collection.

2. **Qualitative data collection through field mission** conducted to Iraq between 20 November and 6 December 2021, where Baghdad, Irbil, Falouja, Ramadi were visited. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted mostly in person and face to face. In cases where meetings in person were not possible, interviews were conducted via Zoom/skype and phone with project's stakeholders including project beneficiaries, relevant stakeholders. A stakeholders' mapping was conducted as part of the Inception Phase to ensure that all relevant stakeholders were included. The evaluation made sure that the voices, opinions and information of targeted citizens and participants in IRP were considered. Focussing on conversations with returnees, host communities, survivors of GBV/SGBV/ youth. They were selected for interviews in close collaboration with UNDP. Data collection instruments (questionnaires) were developed during the Inception Phase, which were submitted to UNDP as part of the Inception Report for feedback. Once feedback was received, the tools were revised and finalised before the data collection phase begins. Data collection tools, instruments and protocols are presented for each type of stakeholder in Annex III.
3. **Quantitative data** was drawn from standardised and quantifiable data collected by the project through its results framework and indicators.

Data Analysis

After collection, the data was analysed, then verified and triangulated through correlation of data obtained from different stakeholder groups, as well as through different methods. The team ensured that findings are backed by a combination of sources and methods, to ensure validity and reliability.

The following principles guided the data analysis process:

1. Methods of data collection and stakeholders' perspectives were triangulated for as many as possible of the evaluation questions. This includes asking similar questions to different stakeholders, noting similarities and differences. Whenever inconsistencies are noted between the various stakeholders, the team clarified as much as possible.
2. Although a consistent approach was followed to ensure grounds for a good qualitative analysis, the assessment incorporated a degree of flexibility to maintain a sense of ownership of the stakeholders.

Ethical Standards

International data collection methods were followed, these include ensuring the consent of the participants in the data collection. This was done by reading a consent form to the participants at the beginning of meetings and receiving their oral approval to participating. Confidentiality and anonymity of the data is ensured. The setting for the interviews had to be safe and confidential. The evaluation adheres to the standards of **UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System**.

3.5. Evaluation Limitations

As with any research there were certain limitations encountered:

- Availability of participants for interviews.

- Level/validity of information willingly shared.

4. EVALUATION FINDINGS

4.1. Relevance

EQ 1: To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to security, political, economic, institutional and other changes in the country?

After long years of war, violent conflicts and destruction, Iraq was confronted in 2017 with two million Iraqis who were internally displaced and more needed humanitarian assistance, mostly in areas of northern and central Iraq. The effects of displacement were felt both by host communities and IDPs with disrupted access to basic services, destroyed livelihoods and increased protection issues. The Iraq Damage and Needs Assessment¹⁹ that was prepared in preparation of the Reconstruction and Development Framework confirmed that the political and social landscape requires conflict-sensitive recovery policies and resilience efforts with special attention to IDPs and returnees, as well as to preventing and redressing the impacts of gender-based violence (GBV) and violence experienced by youth.

In response, the IRP Project was designed and implemented between 2017 and 2021 and focused on addressing the following challenges through four integrated outputs:

- Outputs 1 and 3 were designed to create community social cohesion mechanisms and strengthen civil society capacities to become more effective partners for cohesion and peacebuilding in order to respond to social and religious tensions, ethnic strife and persistent discrimination. Communities were divided between populations seen as having been affiliated to ISIL, former combatants and those who suffered prosecution or were displaced.
- Moreover, in this context, the GoI had to deal with the political difficulties of reintegration of liberated Sunni communities into the political system, demobilization and integration of powerful Shiite militias into the Iraqi security forces, as well as addressing ongoing tensions with Kurdish groups in the north. The IRP Project responded to this issue throughout its four outputs, with more focus in Output 4 by strengthening national systems for coordination and planning social cohesion and reconciliation efforts in Iraq.
- Further, the impact of the prolonged conflict had been affecting the physical and mental well-being, living standards, and capacity for resilience and recovery of millions of Iraqis. Exposure to violence and explosive ordnance resulted in many people sustaining physical and psychological injuries. The IRP Project planned to address this through Output 2 through socio-economic support services to reduce tensions.

¹⁹ Iraq Ministry of Planning and World Bank Group. 2018. Iraq Reconstruction and Development Framework 2018-2027 <https://www.iraq-businessnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Iraq-Recons-Inves-World-Bank-Jan-2018.pdf>

- Iraqi women were marginalized and unable to contribute economically, socially, and politically. They suffered from insufficient educational opportunities and health care, high levels of violence and inequality and limited access to the labour market at the rate of 12.4% compared to 72.6% for men.²⁰ The Project aimed to address the limited job and livelihood opportunities for youth, who otherwise would be susceptible for recruitment into armed or terrorist groups and falling into extremism or substance abuse. Addressing gender inequalities was mainstreamed through all the IRP Project activities that paid a special attention to women, girls and victims of SGBV/GBV. The Project made it a priority to engage youth in decision-making and in identifying innovative tools for promoting social cohesion and mutual understanding and solidarity.

Feedback from interviewees during this evaluation highlighted needs that the IRP project responded to. For example, the need for safe dialogue platforms where community groups can discuss without fear of retaliation and could resolve conflicts created as a result of ISIL, such as with the case of Sunni and Arab in Anbar area. Some areas were specifically more volatile as mentioned by interviewees of this evaluation, such as Kirkuk, Himreen in DIALA, Tel Aafar in Ninewa, Salaheldin, Sinjar and also Omara in Basra. It was also mentioned that the situation was more critical in villages and suburbs more than in cities, and in areas rich with oil. Interviewed stakeholders also reflected on the disconnection between the micro and macro levels and the role CBOs play in reaching community and religious leaders. For that they lack necessary skills and communication abilities to bring people together.

Issues of corruption and government capacities also were raised. FGDs with government staff showed their appreciation to the UNDP's work in Iraq and how its support is important given that the government is still not ready to address the amount of political, safety and security issues facing the country. Also mentioned was need for media platforms that address social and culture diversity, not only politics, as well as introducing and building capacities of young people on citizen journalism.

EQ 2: To what extent was the project in line with the recovery, national development priorities and policies, the UNDP country programme's outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs?

The IRP Project had a strategic fit with the Iraq Vision 2030 for Sustainable Development²¹, specifically, with Priority 4 'Safe Society' and its four goals. The Project Output 1 is more aligned with the Vision goal 4.1 'Enhance the culture of tolerance, dialogue, and community peace'. Project Outputs 2 and 4 are both aligned with the Vision's goal 4.2 'Appropriate development of families, women and vulnerable groups.' Project Output 3 is aligned with the Vision's goal 4.3 'Enhance the values of citizenship and reduce the aspects of inequality'. While Project Output 3 is more aligned with the Vision's goal 4.4 'Establish the values of achievement, initiative and voluntary work'.

²⁰ UNDP. 2020. Human Development Report 2020, The Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene Iraq http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/IRQ.pdf

²¹ Iraq Ministry of Planning. 2019. Iraq Vision 2030 for Sustainable Development: The Future we Want. <file:///C:/Users/doa.a.ara/Downloads/Consultancy/IRP/Resources/1568714423e99cb9efb0b0a786344a1294683d4931--%D8%B1%D8%A4%D9%8A%D8%A9%202030%20e.pdf>

Along the same lines, the IRP Project is aligned with the Country's National Development Plan 2018-2022²², Strategic Objective 1: 'Establishing the foundations of good governance', Strategic Objective 3: 'Recovery of communities affected by the displacement crisis and the loss of human security.' The Iraq Reconstruction and Development Framework Plan 2018-2027²³ has outlined critical challenges that contributed to the humanitarian, security and justice, political and economic crisis caused by ISIL in Iraq. The IRP Project addressed critical political and social challenges identified in the Framework. Political challenges associated with identity and sectarian divides, delays in advancing national reforms and a feeling of exclusion from the national political debate at the subnational level. Social challenges associated with the breakdown in social cohesion and trust between ethnic and religious groups, as well as widespread exclusion of vulnerable groups, including ethno-religious minorities, women, children and youth. The Project design was also aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and SDG 5 Gender equality.

Anchored in the UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021²⁴ and committed to the principles of gender equality and leaving no one behind, the IRP Project was aligned with the UNDP's vision to help countries achieve sustainable development by eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, accelerating structural transformations for sustainable development and building resilience to crises and shocks. The Project design was complementary to Outcome 3 of UNDP's Strategic Plan: 'Strengthen resilience to shocks and crises', specifically Output 3.2.1 'National capacities strengthened for reintegration, reconciliation, peaceful management of conflict and prevention of violent extremism in response to national policies and priorities', and Output 3.3.2 'Gender-response and risk-informed mechanisms supported to build consensus, improve social dialogue and promote peaceful, just and inclusive societies'. The Project contributed to two out of the six UNDP solutions outlined in the Strategic Plan; 'Enhance national prevention and recovery capacities for resilient societies' and 'Strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.'

²² Ministry of Planning, Republic of Iraq. 2017. National Development Plan 2018-2022. https://www.iraq-iccme.jp/pdf/archives/nationaldevelopmentplan2018_2022.pdf

²³ Iraq Ministry of Planning and World Bank Group. 2018. Iraq Reconstruction and Development Framework 2018-2027 <https://www.iraq-businessnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Iraq-Recons-Inves-World-Bank-Jan-2018.pdf>

²⁴ UNDP. 2017. UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021. file:///C:/Users/doaa.arafa/Documents/Consultancy/IRP/Resources/DP_2017_38-EN.pdf

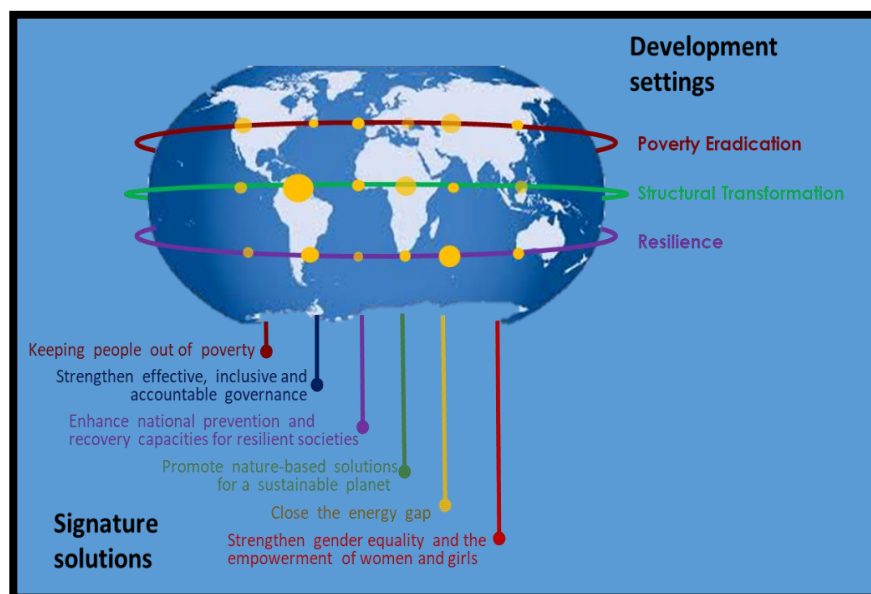


Figure 2: IRP Project contribution to UNDP strategy

Prior to 2019, the IRP Project was implemented in complementarity with two other projects, namely, the Funding Facility for Stabilisation (FFS) and the Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Project (ICRRP) projects. IRP and the social cohesion components in the other two projects were then consolidated into one integrated project guided by a joint results framework, workplan and monitoring framework, and managed by one integrated team. The IRP Project was then designed in alignment with the UNDP Country Programme 2016-2020²⁵, Outcome 3: ‘Conditions improved for the safe return of internally displaced persons in newly liberated areas’ through two pathways (a) developing a framework for rights, peace and stability through public institutional reform; and (b) reviving communities through direct intervention to stabilize newly liberated areas in preparation for early returns and recovery. It also continues to be aligned with the UNDP Country Programme 2020-2024²⁶ through the pathways: (a) strengthened stabilization; and (b) improved governance with accountable institutions that protect the rights of vulnerable groups and pave the way for citizen-state trust. These pathways are all underpinned by the humanitarian-peace-development nexus and forging a new social contract in Iraq.

EQ 3: To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant UNDP country programme outcome?

²⁵ UNDP. 2015. UNDP Country Programme 2016-2020.

<file:///C:/Users/doaa.arafa/Documents/Consultancy/IRP/Resources/UNDP%20Iraq%20country%20programme%202016%202020.pdf>

²⁶ UNDP. 2019. Iraq Country Programme 2020-2024.

<file:///C:/Users/doaa.arafa/Documents/Consultancy/IRP/Resources/UNDP%20Iraq%20country%20programme%202020%202024.pdf>

UNDP developed a Theory of Change (ToC) for the IRP Project through a bottom-up approach of four interlinked outputs. It assumed that local community social cohesion efforts would be credible in the eyes of citizens and would pave the way for a gradual deepening of trust. It would increase the potential for longer-term community-based discussions that deal with historical divides and root causes of the conflict.

The ToC assumed that this could be reached through establishing and empowering local peace mechanisms; namely Local Peace Committees (LPCs), Women Peace Groups and Youth Peace Groups that mobilize positive community initiatives. CBOs and NGOs are key players, they are capacitated to support the peace mechanisms and to provide psychosocial support for survivors (Outputs 1 and 2).

The Project's ToC also assumed that Iraqi authorities and civic leaders would be enabled to find remedies for obstacles caused directly by ISIL, such as challenges of IDPs repatriation, or prevailing questions over accountability and compensation (Outputs 3 and 4).

Activities to enable this change include building the capacity of media professionals, supporting national level institutions and coordination mechanisms to ensure space for civil society organizations and facilitating coordination on social cohesion within the UN family, community-based peacebuilding and the GoI. During this evaluation, interviewed UNDP project staff, stakeholders and partners emphasised the unique approach of this IRP project as it adopted a bottom-up approach to social cohesion. It established and empowered local peace mechanisms, including LPCs, Youth and Women Peace Groups and created close partnerships with the local authorities and civil society organizations.

EQ 4: To what extent does the project contribute to the human rights-based approach, gender equality and women's empowerment? Especially, with regard to the target beneficiary groups including the return IDPs, youth, women, disabled persons, etc.?

[Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment](#)

Theory of Change of the UNDP Country Programme in Iraq

If, local mechanisms prevent conflict and resolve issues, there's more trust between communities; Iraqis understand issues and each other; excluded groups elevate their needs; institutions cooperate better; there's strong vision and strategies; interventions don't create or worsen conflict.

Then, Issues can be addressed effectively at the right levels, sufficient capacities and resources sitting with Iraqi institutions and people, the social cohesion agenda has broad and inclusive ownership, external support is more efficient and conflict sensitive.

Because of integrated, interlinked, capacitated, and combined efforts in an enabling environment for peace and social cohesion in Iraq.

The Iraq Damage and Needs Assessment²⁷ conducted in 2017 by the GoI and World Bank highlighted that years of war and conflict had negatively affected women and girls, particularly in terms of health, mobility, and social composition, making them extremely vulnerable. GBV had increased markedly, including early and forced marriages and sexual violence, which had been a used tactic of terror in the armed conflict. A pervasive lack of awareness as to what constitutes violent acts contributes to the problem of reporting and assessing the extent of domestic violence. Men and boys also faced unique vulnerabilities because of years of conflict, including recruitment to armed forces and militia groups, targeted abuse and killings, and limited job opportunities. This is more so among IDPs because of increased interpersonal violence and the breakdown of social and support networks.

The IRP Project, in line with the *UNDP Strategy* and the *UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security*²⁸, considered the gender-specific impacts of the conflict on men and women and children in communities. Gender equality and women's empowerment was a critical component mainstreamed across all stages of the project. Issues of women and girls' protection, capacity building and participation were considered in the project design and in its Results framework. The project recognized the need for direct targeted interventions to protect and empower women and girls from different backgrounds and locations. Stakeholders in the evaluation confirmed that the project allowed for women and men's participation in the planning, implementation and monitoring of social cohesion initiatives. The WPGs aimed to offer them a platform to interact and find common ground, including by promoting inter-generational dialogue and facilitating dialogue amongst them. The project also partnered with civil society organizations that focus on women and girls' empowerment. In FGDs with members of project's women groups, women said that they suffered a lot due to marginalization, extremism and inequalities in their societies during ISIL rule. Participation in the project gave them the chance to contribute to bringing peace, securities and get rights for them and their children.

Rights-based approach

The Iraq UNDP Country programme has identified some threats to the basic principles of human rights and non-discrimination. Those included political movements and ideologies, weak or biased legal frameworks and socio-cultural norms and values. The IRP Project adopted a rights-based approach to reconciliation that endeavour to bring about transformational change and reduce underlying vulnerabilities. Acknowledging the magnitude of challenges brought by the social and ethnic diversity in Iraq, representation of minority groups constituted a core element in the project's effort on social cohesion. Minority groups of women, IDP returnees, and families perceived to have been affiliated to ISIL were integrated within the project activities.

The project also included an integrated risk analysis and needs assessment to guide the projects activities, especially those related to strengthening national and local reconciliation and social cohesion capacities.

²⁷ Iraq Ministry of Planning and World Bank Group. 2018. Iraq Reconstruction and Development Framework 2018-2027 <https://www.iraq-businessnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Iraq-Recons-Inves-World-Bank-Jan-2018.pdf>

²⁸ UN Department of Information. 2005. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/>

4.2. Coherence

EQ 5: To what extent did the project complement work among different entities, including civil society and other UN actors?

Government

The Government of Iraq, civil society, and development partners have been putting effort to support recovery and reconstruction of the country after years of conflict and war. Work on social cohesion and coexistence is recognized as one of the most critical challenges addressed by national actors and partners. Since 2003, Iraq has undertaken at least three major national reconciliation programmes: first, there was the Arab League's attempts at mediation in 2006; second, the Al-Maliki government's "Reconciliation and National Dialogue Plan" in 2006; third the formation of the Implementation and Follow-up Committee for National Reconciliation (IFCNR); fourth, the processes built around an agreement called the "Baghdad Document"; and fifth, the formation of the Supreme Committee for Coexistence and Communal Peace (CCPC). The IRP project complemented the Government of Iraq's efforts by supporting their national agendas, coordination mechanisms and participation in events. One of the main areas of support is the effort to repatriate IDPs to their home areas and to establish and activate LPCs. The project primarily collaborated with IFNRC and CCPC, local government in the liberated Iraqi governorates. Additionally, the project worked in close collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA), Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MOMD), and Ministry of Youth and Sports.

UN and international organizations

The IRP project had been complementing efforts of international development organizations and contributing to the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the Iraq United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). The project's work complemented efforts by other UN agencies and development partners in Iraq, including IOM, UNFPA, UN-Women, GIZ, and Swiss Peace. UNDP Country Office is part of several thematic working groups or task forces, including on gender and SGBV.

Civil Society

The approach adopted by the project had relied primarily on local level mechanisms. The project complemented efforts by CBOs and NGOs who were heavily involved in facilitating the implementation of initiatives at the local level. They work on mobilizing community members to be represented on women and youth peace groups. Working in complementarity with the UNDP/IRP project presented an opportunity for the NGOs and CBOs to have a more accepted and impactful presence within the communities.

EQ 6: How were stakeholders involved in the project's design and implementation?

Following the UNDP review of its projects in Iraq in 2018, the IRP project was re-designed under the newly established pillar of social cohesion at the country office. There was limited participation by stakeholders

during the project re-design phase. Stakeholders became more engaged during implementation as reported by interviewed NGOs.

On the implementation side, the project coordinated with the IFNRC of the Office of Iraq's Prime Minister and its predecessors currently the Committee for Dialogue and Societal Peace (CDSP) on the establishment and activation of the LPCs at the governorate level. Also, as reported by CBOs interviewed by the evaluation (e.g.: Nawat Elosra, Tammuz and Sanad), the IRP project enabled the implementation of local activities that were designed and proposed by the CBOs. These initiatives were based on the CBOs' deep knowledge about the situation and contexts in each area. They also have the experience working on social cohesion for many years, and many of the volunteers and staff were affected by the conflicts themselves, some were IDPs. Nevertheless, some other NGOs (e.g.: Wasel tase) reported not having enough communication with UNDP and not involved in trainings, this depends of the type of engagement as the latest has been partnered with for COVID -19 response .

Respondents to the evaluation highlighted that there is an increased attention by the Government of Iraq for coordination between development and humanitarian partners in Iraq. Coordination with some UN agencies was modest (e.g. UN-Women). Coordination with UN agencies was limited to participating in joint steering committee meetings, technical coordination meetings and working groups, more of sharing progress rather than actual collaboration. This included meetings within the UN Joint Framework dealing with return and reintegration of families perceived as affiliated with ISIL, Peace and Reconciliation Working Group in Ninawa, UN National Dialogue and Coexistence Working Group, the Durable Solutions Technical Working Group. There is a need for meaningful coordination such as through joint workplans, field-level implementation and knowledge sharing to avoid duplication of efforts in the same geographical areas. There were few exceptions, like in Ninewa, UNDP and GIZ jointly implemented activities building on the LPCs created, for that there was close coordination between both agencies. UNDP and IOM started operational meetings on monthly basis to discuss and share detailed information on targeting, engaging local authorities, specific activities and other. On another front, coordination between NGOs or CBOs at the local level was very limited, there is an increased competition between them to get donor funding. They are however coordinating in a better manner with local authorities as part of the project.

4.3. Efficiency

EQ 7: How efficient is the functioning of the project management, technical support, administrative, procurement and financial management procedures? To what extent have the project management structure and allocated resources been efficient in achieving the expected results?

Project management

The IRP project was directly implemented by UNDP Iraq Country Office, administered by a team leader, deputy team leader, four project officers, communications officer, M&E officer, admin & finance officer, in addition to 6 field facilitators designated to certain geographic areas. UNDP Country Office's support units helped in implementation, including Procurement, Finance, Gender and Human Resource units. A project board was established and provided strategic direction. The project relied on implementing partner NGOs, CBOs and local community facilitators located in target areas to ensure strong presence

necessary for the implementation of activities on the ground and for coordination with local stakeholders. Partner NGOs included: Tammuz (media), Tahreer, Wasal Tassel, UIMS, Sanad and Kurdistan Human Rights Watch (COVID-19), in addition to Swiss Peace and Folk Bernadette Academy of the Sweden Agency for the Peace and Security²⁹. Feedback from some NGOs showed communication challenges with volunteers of the youth and women groups, which they attributed to the fact that NGOs were not engaged since the onset of the project. The situation got better when coordination meetings were held together with UNDP.

Technical Support

Project technical capacity is anchored on the long experience of UNDP Iraq working on social cohesion and community rehabilitation. Experts and international consultants were hired were needed, such as an international media expert to support social cohesion communication strategy. A National Policy Expert on GBV was hired to review gender policies within MOLSA and national institutions. Also, a Social Cohesion and Conflict Sensitivity expert worked with UNDP Social Cohesion team (supported by Swiss Peace) and conducted a scoping mission to develop the Integrated Social Cohesion Programme. A UNDP social cohesion specialist from UNDP Lebanon has been deployed for a mission to assess the work of LPCs.

Administration

UNDP procedures were followed for the implementation of workshops, trainings or any activities in terms of procurement and management of the processes. The project team has built capacities of NGOs staff on UNDP systems, which was useful for the project management and would be in case of future partnerships with other organizations.

Financial management

The project has an Admin -Finance officer tasked to follow up on financial management of the project under supervision of the Team leader. The Country Office finance and procurement units support the project

EQ 8: To what extent has the project implementation been efficient and cost-effective?

During the first two years of the IRP project, implementation was slow with no clear achievements and potential additional expected funding from the German and UK Governments was not received. When interviewed by the evaluators, the project team recognized that the project back then had no strategic outlook for implementation, creating a turmoil that they strived to overcome. It was until the project's revision at the end of 2018 when full-scale implementation started, with the additional funds received from the Danish Government (USD 2.735 million). The project adopted a participatory bottom-up approach in achieving its intended outputs. It depended on engaging facilitators, communication mechanisms, LPCs, women and youth groups. The project depended largely on NGO and CBO implementing partners for the implementation of activities and coordination with religious leaders, local authorities and communities on ground. However, it was noted during the evaluation that their capacities

²⁹ Swiss Peace <https://www.swisspeace.ch/projects/mandate/>

and skills were limited in different fields, including in financial management, monitoring and communications. Evaluation respondents reported that training would have benefited the performance of the implementing partners in these areas. This approach was flexible and context related, facilitating the return of many IDPS including with perceived ISIL affiliation across Anbar, Salah al Din and Ninewa governorates.

EQ 9: To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?

Outputs were steadily achieved towards the set targets and highlighted in the project progress reports throughout 2019 to 2021, albeit with challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The pandemic caused delays and difficulties in maintaining regular physical interaction with community members. Moreover, political changes in Iraq and pertinent changes in leadership of the Committee for Coexistence and Social Peace (CCSP) affected the progress at the national level. Interviewees indicated that there was a challenge with the timeframe of the project, the timing allocated to implementation of interventions was very short in comparison to the target that NGOs needed to achieve.

EQ 10: What is the visibility and communications strategy adopted by the project? Has it been cost-effective in terms of promoting the project and its achievements?

The IRP project developed a Communication and Visibility Strategy that promoted social cohesion through different tools. This included social media platforms, nation-wide competitions, web stories and radio and television broadcasts. Communications was the core pillar of the project around which dialogue and capacity building activities were implemented. The strategy mapped key audience and intended outputs, hence best communication channels would be identified and used. This included dialogue with government, religious leaders, peace mechanisms, youth and women peace groups, training of young journalists, and campaigns by social cohesion champions. The implementation of the communications strategy was advantaged with the on-ground presence of the field facilitators, local peace mechanisms and youth and women groups.

The strategy was effective in terms of promoting the project activities and achievements that aimed to increase interest among Iraqi diverse population groups about unity, peace building and social cohesion. There was strong engagement by different groups in art and photo contests, campaigns on social media and Iraqi TV channels and radio spots that reached more than a hundred thousand people. The project team and progress reports reported 14 web stories, 16 short videos and info-graphs and 4 radio ads. In addition to a debate forums and competitions, as well as the Diversity platform for youth.

The below are some of the published visibility materials published during the IRP project's lifetime

- "My son volunteered his soul to Iraq: Forgiveness towards reconciliation" ([article link](#));
- "Celebrating Iraqi culture: Diversity is strength in Ninewa Plains" ([article link](#));
- "Peacebuilding from the ground up: UNDP Iraq and swiss peace launch training on mediation for national peacebuilding practitioners in Iraq" ([article link](#));
- "Advocating a Gender Perspective in Peacebuilding: New MoU between UNDP Iraq and Folke Bernadotte Academy signed" ([press release link](#));
- "UNDP Iraq Supports the National Security Advisory / the National Committee on the implementation of the Strategy for Combating and Preventing Violent Extremism in Iraq" ([press release link](#));
- "UNDP Iraq launches handbook on citizen journalism to promote social cohesion as part of young media professionals program" ([press release link](#));
- "UNDP Iraq hosts Interfaith Religious Conference in Erbil on peaceful coexistence to encourage return and reintegration of the displaced" ([press release link](#));
- "A Day in My Life: Anbar youth share stories of those affected by COVID-19 in Iraq" ([article link](#));
- "United We Rise: How diverse religious leaders are promoting coexistence in Iraq" ([article link](#));
- "UNDP supports reintegration of families with perceived affiliation to ISIL at Local Peace Conference, Habbaniyah" ([article link](#));
- "Local Peace Committees on the Front-Line: Over 100,000 reached in Iraq" ([article link](#));
- "Religious leaders celebrate World Interfaith Harmony Week in Iraq" ([article link](#));
- "Agents of Change: Building Peace in Iraq" ([article link](#));
- "Women Lead the Way in Iraq" ([article link](#));
- "Raising Voices for Diversity: UNDP Iraq launches citizen journalism platform" ([article link](#));
- "#tolerance instead of violence" social media campaign in Diyala and #Ino4Dev campaign for youth in 2017
- Football champion Nashaat Akram video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjZAwv0uvEg&t=3s>
- "Seven Messages of Hope: Unity in Iraq During COVID-19" ([article link](#));
- "Iraqi youth step up: Future leaders help those in need" ([article link](#));
- "Sanitizing schools: Securing a safe environment for education in Iraq" ([article link](#));
- Web post for International Day of Peace featuring women's groups ([Facebook link](#));
- Social Cohesion Programme was discussed and promoted on Radio Al-Salam: <https://web.facebook.com/RadioAlSalam/videos/2376002665836801/>
- Two web stories on the work of LPCs in Anbar to [combat the spread of COVID-19](#) and [sewing of masks](#) by women in Ninewa
- Web stories by the Salah Al-Din [Women's Peace Group during COVID-19](#) and training on [psychosocial support](#).
- "COVID-19 Awareness" ([video link](#));
- "Connecting Online" ([video link](#));
- "Community Reconciliation Infographic" ([video link](#));
- "Unity through Sport featuring Nashat Akram" ([video link](#));
- "Supporting the Vulnerable" ([video link](#));
- "UNDP Iraq hosts interfaith conference for religious leaders on peaceful coexistence" ([press release link](#));
- "Reaching the unreachable: The return of families perceived as affiliated with ISIL" ([web story link](#));
- "You are the future: UNDP Iraq celebrates International Youth Day" ([web story link](#));
- "The future is now: Engaging youth to prevent violent extremism in Iraq" ([web story link](#));
- "UNDP supports the Iraqi Government for reintegration of returnees from Al-Hol Camp" ([press release link](#));
- "Towards Healing in Iraq: Communities of return receive conflict resolution training" ([web story link](#));
- "Returning hope: Reintegration workshops prepare communities of return in Iraq" ([web story link](#));
- Public Service Announcements in 2018 by four public figures: Ghada Rasol - Zainab El Aqabi - Noor Sabri - Fareed Lafta

EQ 11: How is the project keeping track of project progress on expected outputs and outcomes? Does the monitoring and evaluation system put in place allow for continuous collection and analysis of quality and segregated data on expected outputs and outcomes?

During the first phase of the project prior to 2017, there was no structured reporting and M&E system, which was revised in 2019, and the project's logical framework was developed. The project did not have outcomes of its own, the results of activities and their outputs fed into Outcome 3 of the UNDP country programme 2016-2020 'Conditions improved for the safe return of internally displaced persons in newly

liberated areas.’ This ensured full alignment with the UNDP projects and programmes in Iraq and with UNAMI. The annual and quarterly reporting was structured around the activities’ contribution to the four set outputs with gender disaggregated data. Monitoring of capacity building activities depended on pre and post-tests that were then analysed and observations shared in progress reports. Monitoring progress of implementation depended on facilitators and NGO implementing partners who submitted weekly and monthly reports using formats designed by the project’s M&E team. They also reported as necessary following the implementation of field activities, such as workshops, events, meetings that may have been coordinated by the social cohesion team. The NGOs and the M&E team conducted analysis for the shared information. The project team carried out programmatic monitoring visits to follow the progress of overall implementation and discuss challenges with NGOs. Gender and communication activities such as web stories or social media posts are assessed by the project team.

4.4. Effectiveness

EQ 12: To what extent are the project outputs and outcomes fully or partly achieved or on-track to be achieved?

The outputs were fully achieved or on-track to be achieved during the remaining lifetime the project, as outlined below. Some activities were not implemented due to mobility restrictions as a result of COVID-19, such as physical domestic, regional, and international study tours.

Output 1: Community social cohesion mechanisms created and/or supported

- Established and activated community-level social cohesion mechanisms, including 24 LPCs, 4 CDCs, 4 YPGs and 5 WPGs.
- Dialogue between different mechanisms and with local government through community networks established in Anbar, Diyala, Ninewa (underway in Salah al-Din and Kirkuk).
- 3,411 IDPs with perceived ISIL-affiliation returned to their areas of origin in Anbar (871 families), Salah al-Din (1,300 families), and Ninewa (1,240 families) governorates, in addition to 42 families from Al Hol camp.
- 3 conferences with religious leaders were held in Erbil, Anbar and Salah al-Din for interfaith dialogue and for capacity building on community coexistence and reintegration of IDPs.
- One national conference was held between all LPCs and CDSP on the linkages between their work at the local level and with the national government.
- LPCs implemented public sessions and implemented a total of 45 community initiatives.
- 26 Community-level initiatives for social cohesion implemented by community champions (13 men and 17 women).
- During COVID-19, the project supported IDPs with health and food items through CBOs and LPCs.

Output 2: Socio-economic support services provided to reduce tensions

- 659 social workers, affiliated to MOLSA and women-led NGOs, were capacitated on the provision of psychological support tools and referral pathways.

- They supported 30,330 SGBV women victims in the liberated areas, even during COVID-19 they were reached virtually.
- An analytical study developed on re-design MOLSA protocols to strengthen victim assistance policies, with the support from 100 women SGBV survivors.
- A study on COVID-19 effects on women and girls was developed³⁰, in partnership with the Women Leadership Institute.
- In collaboration with UN-Women, a review on national policies on SGBV was carried-out with participation of government civil society members and academia.

Output 3: Civil society capacities strengthened to become more effective partners in social cohesion and peacebuilding

- Virtual groups were formed for social media activists and students of journalism and media who participated in the workshops in Anbar, Baghdad, Dhi Qar, Diyala, Duhok, Erbil, Najaf, Ninewa, Salah al-Din and Sulaymaniyah.
- 2 young media professionals debate forums took place at universities in Anbar and Mosul on the role of media and youth to promote social cohesion.
- 6 capacity building workshops were held for 124 social media activists and students of journalism and media.
- An interactive digital platform “Diversity” was launched, and 240 media products were published by trainees through citizen engagement.
- A manual was developed on citizen’s journalism for peace-coexistence and social cohesion.
- A total of 40 news segments, radio spots and short videos were produced by media professionals.

Output 4: National systems for coordination and planning social cohesion and reconciliation efforts in Iraq strengthened

- 3 roundtable discussions were held between community-based mechanisms and government.
- Consultation meetings held in Ninewa, Baghdad and Salah al Din between youth and women groups, local government, CDCs and representatives from the CDSP.
- Social media competitions, art and photography contests, web series and audio-visual products were published
- Planning with national counterparts for the formation of the National Women Forum, in line with the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 agenda on Women, Peace, and Security and the UNDP Gender Strategy.

EQ 13: To what extent are strategies for gender and women’s empowerment incorporated?

Gender and women’s empowerment considerations were mainstreamed across the IRP project design and implementation, which was central to achieving its intended outputs. The project, with focus on

³⁰ UNDP. 2020. Women and Girls in Iraq During the COVID-19 Pandemic.
<https://www.iq.undp.org/content/iraq/en/home/library/Stabilization/women-and-girls-in-iraq-during-covid-19-pandemic.html?fbclid=IwAR0Es4KQctOPhOILJHRz4dgxr9LyxMrIXSHJABlqhPflTuVTS-SDnjTG2pY>

women, contributes to the SDG 5 Gender Equality which envisions “a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, in which every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality and all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment removed.” The project incorporated the commitments of the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021³¹, leaving no one behind and ensuring human rights principles. The project embraced the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security³² issued in 2020.

Recognizing the role of women in community reconciliation, the project adopted gender-sensitive programming and addressed the specific needs of women and girls. The project intensified its efforts to mainstream gender equality across all of its interventions, aiming to develop women’s capacities to have meaningful participation in social cohesion initiatives and community reconciliation processes.

Highlights of the extent to which the project incorporated gender and women’s empowerment include:

- Preventing and responding to gender-based violence, mainly through the project’s Output 2 ‘Socio-economic support services provided to reduce tensions’, but also through all other outputs. CBOs and social workers were trained on the provision of psychological support tools and supported thousands of women who were victims of SGBV.
- Promoting women’s participation in decision-making through Output 1 ‘Community social cohesion mechanisms created and/or supported’, and through Output 3 ‘Civil society capacities strengthened to become more effective partners in social cohesion and peacebuilding’. Women Peace Groups were created, and community-led initiatives were implemented. Women played key role in addressing safety and extremism and in the return of IDP families to their homes in Anbar, Nineveh, Salah al-Din and Diyala. In addition to the production and dissemination of media material, videos, web stories and articles, and launching the ‘#tolerance instead of violence’ campaign.
- Strengthening gender-responsive strategies in crisis, in conflict prevention and recovery through Output 4, a review on national policies on SGBV was carried-out with participation of government civil society members and academia. An analytical study developed on re-design MOLSA protocols to strengthen victim assistance policies, with the support from 100 women SGBV survivors. Dialogue was facilitated between women and men at the community level and with local authorities, including police units, and with government officials. Also, during COVID-19, a study on its impact on women was conducted in five governorates.

EQ 14: What are the main factors influencing the achievement of project outputs, outcomes, including gender and women’s empowerment results as of July 2021

[Security concerns](#)

³¹ UNDP. 2017. UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021.

<https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/UNDP%20Gender%20Equality%20Strategy%202018-2021.pdf>

³² UN Department of Information. 2005. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/>

The unstable security situation in Iraq and fragile stability limited access to some locations and hindered the reach to some target groups. This was very critical in affecting the implementation pace of this project for its dependence on on-ground activities and presence. Many of the interviewed YPGs, WPGs and facilitators mentioned that they did not feel secure during the implementation, some proposed having issued special IDs to facilitate their mobility between locations.

Gender social norms

Gender social norms and stereotypes are taboos in most of the Iraqi areas that are affecting the women's participation in the peace agenda. Interviews with stakeholders reflected that it was difficult during the project's implementation to address women's concerns in some areas due to resistance in changing social norms and mindsets of people in societies. Facilitators, WPGs and YPGs were sometimes accused of trying to change customs and bring-in western culture into the Iraqi conservative society.

Hindered efforts due to political and social contexts

Political changes in Iraq, changing priorities and level of acceptance of the project's objectives and approaches. There was agreement with the national counterpart and with the government, and the project was keen to engage with the government to ensure support and sustainability. Yet there was a challenge in some areas to maintain the move forward as planned, in particular at community level. For example, in the formation of LPCs and selection of members. Moreover, long standing social strife in Iraqi context and the level of grievances and hatred within and between communities who once had different affiliations, were subject to several cycles of violence. Social cohesion needs time to overcome this history, which made achieving the social agenda and IDP returning agenda difficult to achieve.

Duration for implementation

In 2017 and 2018, reconciliation efforts by the project mostly had very limited achievements. As accounted in the evaluation, this was due to the lack of engagement of different stakeholders, including with the local communities and with local authorities. Also due to the absence of long-term vision for sustainability and goal of the social cohesion and reconciliation agenda of the project. Limited funding was also a main factor for not being able to proceed with the activities until the review of the project in 2018 and receipt of the funds from the Danish Government. The remaining time of the project was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic which slowed the implementation of activities. Most respondents during the evaluation highlighted the short time for the implementation of activities as one of the challenges faced by the project.

EQ 15: The extent to which findings of data analysis or project best practices are used for drawing lessons learned, and adjusting implementation?

Towards the end of 2018, the UNDP went through an internal review that consolidating the work of the cohesion from different projects implemented separately since 2015 into one. UNDP took steps to ensure a more integrated approach to reconciliation and social cohesion programming in Iraq. As such, the project was adjusted in 2019 and thereafter based on the findings of:

- A lessons-learnt exercise that shed light on challenges and achievements and provided comprehensive recommendations for an integrated approach for programming.

- An internal planning workshop for an integrated strategy for social cohesion and peaceful coexistence in Iraq.
- A political economy analysis conducted by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to assess the efforts at central level Iraq for social cohesion, reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. Annex C of the analysis presented a list of key reconciliation documents and readings for Iraq.
- Evaluation of existing LPCs that reviewed their model, structure, impact and achievements of these LPCs and drew lessons learned for establishing new LPCs and empower the existing ones.
- Final reports of the previous phase of the integrated reconciliation project funded by UK and German Governments.
- IRP project's reporting which presented narrative on faced operational and programmatic challenges and risks and their mitigation measures.
- The study 'Women and Girls in Iraq During the COVID-19 Pandemic'³³ that looked at the impact of the crisis on women and provided recommendations that guided the project's response to support women during the crisis.

The main findings and best practices that guided the revised Danish-funded phase of the IRP project could be summarized as follows:

- Reconciliation programmes need to be local in design given the breadth of different disputes at a local community level.
- Change narrative from 'reconciliation' to give right signals and manage expectations, social cohesion and peaceful coexistence are better options.
- Emphasis on government buy-in to ensure facilitation of reconciliation at a national level and coordination with local level.
- Consideration to intergenerational trauma and psychological difficulties resulting from cycles of conflicts faced by the communities.
- Stronger focus on youth to be mainstreamed into the project components and through dedicated activities.
- Balance between maintaining the important partnership with the Government and diversifying partners.
- Supporting community consultations and dialogue can be done through different types of community mechanisms. LPCs to be one of several mechanisms that UNDP support for social cohesion objectives at community level.
- LPCs form a good model for reconciliation and peace building process at the grassroots level provided that members are inclusive and the mandate reflects the needs of each location.
- Invest in measuring impact (not only monitoring activity implementation) and stronger results reporting. Possible additional evaluations or lessons learned.
- Provide support to the coordination between national and international NGOs on peace building.
- Bolster public awareness and communication work with a clear strategy that utilizes awareness work across project outputs.

³³ UNDP. 2020. Women and Girls in Iraq During the COVID-19 Pandemic
<https://www.iq.undp.org/content/dam/iraq/docs/Stabilization/UNDP-IQ-Women%20During%20COVID-19.pdf>

- Invest more human capacity at local level (local facilitators and NGOs/CBOs).
- Although COVID-19 crisis delayed implementation, it offered opportunities through the use of technology, ensuring regular communication and presence of the field staff and local partners.

EQ 16: To what extent have the project's activities led to improved coordination, cooperation, and capacity as relevant at the National and/or Governorate and/or Municipality levels? To what extent does the project have the support of the government both at national and local levels?

UNDP, IFCNR and its predecessors, currently called CDSP developed LPCs as networks of community-based mechanisms at the grass-root level to facilitate inclusive, fair and context-specific reconciliation processes. Members of these committees represent all major groupings in the community from civic structures, religious groups, academic institutions, tribes and local government (LPCs in Ninewa, Salahuddin and Anbar were led by local government). They volunteer to develop effective processes of community reconciliation. The project also established WPGs, YPGs and CDCs that implemented community-level initiatives. The IRP project supported national agendas and priorities on social cohesion, peace building and reintegration of IDPs to their home areas. The project collaborated with IFNRC and CCPC, governors, MOLSA, MOMD, National Committee for the Return of Iraqis from Al-Hol, among other national entities.

The IRP project improved coordination and capacities at the different levels through:

- Evaluation of existing LPCs and the development of strategic support pack of documents that laid the ground for effective LPC work on ground. In coordination with IFCNR and CCDP the strategic pack outlined the charter, founding principles, ToRs and operating procedures of LPCs.
- Established 24 LPCs, 4 CDCs, 4 YPGs and 5 WPGs in different governorates. They advocated for the needs of women, young people and children. They implemented some social cohesion initiatives such as scout meetings, book clubs, rehabilitate some houses and schools, provided vocational trainings and supported returning families. They were recognised as leaders in their communities. The evaluation noted from feedback of different stakeholders that coordination between YPGs/WPGs and LPCs was limited as their objectives were different. The later were formed of high-ranking people in the community and local government and they focused on solving problems in tribal communities and mediation.

- Capacity building was provided to the LPCs, YPGs, WPGs and facilitators on how to advocate for social cohesion and peaceful coexistence in their communities. They were also trained on how to facilitate the return of IDPs and assist in resolving community conflicts, including those of particular concern for women. Workshops were held to support these grass-root mechanisms on setting vision, goals and activity plans that guide them to lead initiatives in their communities. They were trained on journalism and journalism ethics. During the evaluation, respondents from youth and women groups reported that they have increased their self-confidence and dialogue and social cohesion skills. They felt trusted by their communities and got empowered to address the issues that at one point had affected them, as many were subject to violence, conflicts or were IDPs living in vulnerable situations. Youth have the will and the project equipped them with the skills to enable to bring back peaceful relationship and reduce the gap that was created by youth during conflict. The trainings have changed their own perceptions about gender issues and about social peace.

"I was an IDP, we had to move at night to a different governorate, there we had nothing. I needed help and I did not get it. So, I wanted to give back to the community and be able to help the people." Member of a WPG

"These trainings opened out horizon and how we can work within the community. There is positive energy that I move it to the peers." Member of a YPG

"I am a role model for others. I can help IDPs and in 2019, I was honored by some of the best activists in Iraq. I am proud of myself and I have more passion." Member of a WPG

"With these trainings we understand different societal problems and we understand the different religions and ethnicities." A member of a YPG

- Strengthened link of LPCs to national government through a national conference and through roundtable discussions and dialogue. The project also supported LPCs to hold dialogue sessions with different groups, such as with media professionals that discussed the role of media narratives for social cohesion advocacy. This is in addition to meetings with women groups, religious leaders and youth. During the evaluation, facilitators indicated that the LPCs in Anbar were formed after a conference with the Governor that discussed the ISIL-families situation. A code of conduct and special decree governed the work on social cohesion and peace building in this special context.
- Trained NGOs (in collaboration with GIZ) on how to design technical and financial proposals and implement local initiatives.
- Social workers from MOLSA and from different CSOs were capacitated on providing psychosocial support for women SGBV survivors, referral mechanisms and the tools to handle challenges such as re-traumatization of victims.

EQ 17: To what extent have the project's activities led to improved coordination, cooperation and consultation among development partners (including UN agencies, and donors to this project)? How did the project steering committee contribute to a regular gathering of development partners to discuss development priorities?

The project coordinated with other UN agencies and development partners working on social cohesion in Iraq, including IOM, UNAMI, UNFPA, UN-Women, GIZ, and Swiss Peace. It also compliments other agencies work, IRP's support to Iraqi youth and women complemented the Decent Work Project³⁴ of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Youth Development and Empowerment Programme³⁵ of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and Promoting the Inclusion of Conflict-Affected Iraqi Youth Project³⁶ of the World Bank in Iraq, as well as UN-Women's various programmes in Iraq. The project also coordinated protection work for perceived ISIL-affiliated families together with IOM, UNICEF and UNODC. The Partners that the project coordinated with GIZ/Germany³⁷, PAX Peace Organization/Netherlands³⁸, Ford Bernadette on gender and Swiss Peace of Sweden Agency for the Peace and Security³⁹ on mediation and dialogue, as well as UPP Un Ponte Per/Italy⁴⁰. UNDP continues to lead and actively participate in a number of coordination committees, task forces and working groups related to reconciliation and social cohesion including the UN joint framework to ensure reconciliation and reintegration of children, young people, and adults formerly associated with ISIL, the Peace and Reconciliation Working Group in Ninewa, the UN National Dialogue and Coexistence Working Group, the Durable Solutions Technical Working Group, PREV, Gender and SGBV task forces. Appropriate information-sharing and coordination of social cohesion and reconciliation efforts continue to take place.

EQ 18: To what extent has the project been actively seeking partnership with relevant actors in view of strengthening project implementation and/or ensuring project sustainability?

The IRP project through UNDP strengthened its partnership and engagement with religious leaders, community leaders and government officials. Also, with UN agencies and development organizations.

- Implementation and Follow-up Committee for National Reconciliation (IFCNR)
- High Committee for Coexistence and Social Peace (CCSP)
- Committee for Dialogue and Societal Peace (CDSP)
- Ministry of Migration and Displaced (MOMD)
- Office of National Security Advisory (ONSA)

³⁴ Decent Work Iraq https://www.ilo.org/beirut/countries/iraq/WCMS_760635/lang--en/index.htm

³⁵ Youth Development and Empowerment Programme <https://iraq.unfpa.org/en/topics/youth-development-and-empowerment>

³⁶ Promoting the Inclusion of Conflict-Affected Iraqi Youth Project <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2020/12/02/iraq-engaging-youth-to-rebuild-the-social-fabric-in-baghdad>

³⁷ GIZ in Iraq <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/52758.html>

³⁸ Pax for Peace Iraq <https://paxforpeace.nl/>

³⁹ Swiss Peace <https://www.swisspeace.ch/projects/mandate/>

⁴⁰ Un Ponte Per Iraq <https://www.unponteper.it/en/chi-siamo/>

- Governors of Anbar, Ninewa and Salah al-Din governorates
- Development partners, such as GIZ, Swiss Peace, IOM, UNAMI, UN-Women and UNFPA

EQ 19: To what extent do the project’s activities/management systems mitigate, and address protection concerns of vulnerable populations (returnees, communities that did not leave ISIL controlled areas, minority communities, etc.) in the targeted areas?

SGBV women victims

The project addressed protection concerns of women who are victims of SGBV through support for women-led community-based initiatives to mitigate conflict, curb violence and respond to shocks. WPGs and YPGs were established in Anbar, Diyala, Salah al-Din and Nineveh governorates and were supported by the project to implement coexistence and peace building community-led initiatives. These initiatives included web-stories, women book clubs, expressive writing, distribution of Personal Protective Equipment and more. A youth campaign to combat domestic violence ‘#tolerance instead of violence’ was launched that included stories of survivors of domestic violence and a live discussion on Facebook with community police units to provide advice to women affected by domestic violence. The project reports assisting more than 30,000 SGBV women victims in the liberated areas in Iraq. A capacity building programme was implemented targeting social workers from MOLSA and women-led NGOs on psychological support tools and referral pathways. Further, an analytical study was developed on re-design MOLSA protocols to strengthen victim assistance policies and a workshop on national policies on SGBV was conducted with participation of government civil society members and academia⁴¹ (review to be published).

IDP returnees and communities that did not leave ISIL areas

The evaluation identified the fear and stress lived by the ISIL-affiliated Iraqi families following the war. Some just continued to live in their communities in ISIL occupied areas. Regardless whether their decision was to resist, embrace, work with ISIL under duress or escape, they faced collective punishment for real or perceived connections to ISIL. With the government concerned more with closing IDP camps (50 camps closed), returning IDPs to their home areas faced political and social challenges. Interviewed returning families mentioned that they desired to return to their homes when the war ended, but the situation was very difficult for them due to the affiliation of someone from their family members to ISIL. 90% of them were not happy with ISIL or the youth that joined them and no one agreed with their actions. A couple of the respondents said they were happy that this member of the family who was affiliated to ISIL had died (a son of one and a brother of another). They were physically assaulted and verbally abused and faced retaliation and hatred. Army and security actors denied some of them freedom of movement and physical safety, they also faced delayed salaries and difficulty issuing legal documents.

⁴¹ UNDP. 2020. Voices of Women Empowerment. <https://www.iq.undp.org/content/iraq/en/home/stories/2020/12/voices-of-women-empowerment.html>

The interviewed returnees provided positive feedback about the project's role to facilitate their return to their home areas. The project facilitated their re-integration into communities through network of grass-root community mechanisms. They mentioned how beneficial were the conferences, meetings and dialogue conducted by peace groups and facilitators on social peace and coexistence with the tribal leaders and sheikhs and local authorities. In addition, the project facilitated to rehabilitate their homes that were not ready for their return through other Social Cohesion project. They were also provided with health PPE kits and some vocational training for livelihood opportunities. The interviewed facilitators who were engaged with this project mentioned that they started to bring back the families who are ISIL affiliated and paved the way for this through meetings carried-out with tribes and local government (focused on Halabiya and Ayadiya). Afterwards, a conference was held and signed a peace agreement enabling the return back of 1,500 families in these two areas.

EQ 20: What is the level of quality of the project outputs and/or the project activities?

The quality of project outputs and activities were deemed satisfactory by all interviewed stakeholders. Government officials interviewed in Baghdad and in Falluja spoke highly of the partnership with UNDP. They reiterated that the conferences and the meetings organised by UNDP supported activities for national reconciliation and peaceful coexistence.

Women and youth interviewed during the evaluation also spoke highly of the support they received through the trainings and the support for the implementation of community initiatives. The outcomes of these trainings for women and youth have gone beyond a simple engagement in a community activity. Women and youth voiced their satisfaction with the activities and recounted with immense pride how the project helped them better understand the dynamics of conflict and recognize their role within the community.

Returning families and recipients of hygiene and food baskets also positively commented on the status of their newly refurbished houses as well as the value added of the food and hygiene baskets they received. Families mentioned that these types of baskets helped them cope with the economic hardship and made them feel better integrated within their communities.

EQ 21: To what extent the project has been able to mobilize financial resources?

The project has been funded by Denmark during the last three years, but also additional funds were mobilized from UNDP Funding Window due to the improved positioning of UNDP in the agenda of reconciliation and social cohesion that the project could achieve. Other funds were received capitalizing on the outputs of the project and investing in them such as the local peace mechanisms and their success in reconciliation and facilitating return and reintegration and the strong partnerships with local government and civil society , yet the funds were not directly allocated to IRP but under the integrated social cohesion portfolio and this was due to some donors funding requirement (Japan Supplementary Fund requires a separate project document, Germany and Netherlands have already ongoing funding channel for social cohesion within Window 4 of the Funding Facility for Stabilization, Switzerland and France opted to technical support through staff deployment , Swiss Peace and Folke Bernadotte Academy offered capacity building support.

EQ 22: To what extent has the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic affected activity implementation and the quality of activities?

Despite the fact that the COVID-19 crisis has delayed project activities, it was also an opportunity for the project to introduce new activities and working modalities. For example: The project supported protection of the most vulnerable from the spread of the pandemic by providing hygiene kits and food baskets and through awareness raising on health protection measures. The project coordinated with MOMSA to identify the needy families. Interviewed families during the evaluation expressed appreciation of this assistance and found it a useful contribution to protect them against the COVID-19 shock. Facilitators, on the other hand, reported that this activity helped to mitigate tension amongst the vulnerable communities and increased trust in LPCs because they responded to their needs.

The project shifted to virtual implementation of some activities (whatsapp groups) expanding the reach to 100,000 beneficiaries. The project had a comparative advantage at this time because of the established field level networks, including the facilitators and the LPCs. NGOs and WPGs were trained by the project to reach isolated women in remote areas through phone calls and joint phone sessions. The project also increased focus on communications through social media and intensified its media products and interactive initiatives and dialogue.

In partnership with the Women Leadership Institute, the project conducted the ‘Women and Girls in Iraq During the COVID-19 Pandemic’ study⁴² and held surveys on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the women in liberated areas. The study covered 2,500 women in the five governorates of Baghdad, Ninewa, Anbar, Kirkuk, and Salah al-Din, where the women either IDPs or returnees. The study showed that violence against women and girls significantly increase following the onset of the pandemic, particularly incidences domestic violence which was already prevalent in Iraq. The study also found that women and girls experienced pandemic induced increased levels of household stress. Women and girls were at higher risk of infection and mortality due to lack of access to information and healthcare facilities, higher rates of illiteracy, as well lack of purchasing power. Women experienced higher instances of income loss and reduced livelihood opportunities than men.

4.5. Impact:

EQ 23: What has happened/changed as the result of IRP support in the target locations, as of July 2021?

The IRP project improved the conditions for the safe return of IDPs in newly liberated areas through an integrated set of activities. These activities worked in parallel to protect diverse beneficiary groups, support civic society and create an enabling political environment for social cohesion and peace. This was

⁴² UNDP. 2020. Women and Girls in Iraq During the COVID-19 Pandemic.
<https://www.iq.undp.org/content/dam/iraq/docs/Stabilization/UNDP-IQ-Women%20During%20COVID-19.pdf>

complemented with peace building and civic engaging media promotion. The project worked under the social cohesion umbrella adopted by the Iraqi government and the international community.

Return of IDP families to their areas of origin and ensuring their rights are protected

The project facilitators saw that the biggest achievement was the return of more than 3,400 ISIL families to their homes, while before, they were not allowed to even visit the region. In Anbar, Salah al-Din, Kirkuk and Ninewa, the communities are 90% returning IDPs. Through this project, UNDP were the first to facilitate return of families in some areas such as Toz-kormato and Shergat, then the government started working on returning more families in these areas. During the evaluation, the interviewees highlighted some activities to support IDP and raise awareness about them.

COVID-19 presented an opportunity to strengthen social cohesion. For example, face masks were produced by widows or wives of missing persons, they were distributed by YPGs who made sure to tell people that these are made by returning IDP wives and make this group recognizable. Those women opened their sewing workshops that were closed for years and worked on the masks. One of the interviewees called them ‘the masks of peace’. Another initiative was to record videos about their work during COVID and some volunteers would collect funds to help poor and vulnerable families. Youth groups (Christians and Muslims) participated together in cleaning a church in Mosul, cleaning the hatred writings on walls by ISIL to write quotes about peace.

“UNDP has a good reputation and when I say I am UNDP, they welcomed us. For example, in Muhalkabiya, we held 21 meetings with the communities, with the Hashd, with security and with the returnees. Over four months, we tried to bridge opinions.” IRP project Facilitator

“The army and security arrested everyone in the families of ISIL and we were really scared. It was a lot of stress for all of us. In the tribal meeting, they agreed with the relevant authorities on how to bring back ISIL families. When we returned things were better.” IDP returnee from an ISIL-affiliated family

Strengthened social cohesion through community peace mechanisms

The project adopted a bottom-up approach for social cohesion that was based on the context specifics of each community. A network of LPCs, WPGs and YPGs was established and capacitated in Anbar, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Diyala, and Kirkuk governorates. Interviewed members of the YPGs and WPGs mentioned that the trainings they attended with the project made them understand the different societal problems, different religions and ethnicities. They brought different groups together, including Kurds, Yazidis and Muslims went on trips in streets and places of Baghdad and saw the intermix between culture that existed in previous times. The trainings provided them with skills on how to analyze conflict dynamics and how to focus on solutions. These trainings opened up their horizons and changed them, made them less judgmental and more accepting, and they realized that they have a responsibility towards the society, they became agents of change, as they mentioned during the evaluation. The interviewees from the WPGs and YPGs also went on to say that, within their communities, they had started to gradually introduce a small part of what they learnt. Each one of the active members of the peace groups works with a network

of people, either face to face or through social media platforms. They implemented initiatives that benefited their communities and brought diverse groups together. The evaluation found that these networks gained trust and acceptance within their respective communities, they were able to respond to needs and facilitate dialogue between different tribes, local authorities and groups. By time, the project-established peace groups managed to diffuse these ideas into the communities.

"UNDP became a tool to help bridge the gap amongst us as community. So, there is closeness and we avoided the revenge that we had. Not all houses were ready, they helped with the rehabilitation of some, we did not have any income over the years." IDP returnee from an ISIL-affiliated family

Talking about families affiliated to ISIL was a taboo. One of the officials once said we should put them in a hole and bury them. Now, they speak about them being members of the community and should not be marginalised. Things have changed. IRP project Facilitator

Peace-building citizen media and journalism promoted with increased civic capacities

The project promoted capacities on social cohesion and peaceful co-existence journalism and media and produced a manual that is available for use by anyone interested in this field. The WPGs and WPGs established by the project implemented community initiatives that particularly helped to share women's stories and voices. The project's NGO implementing partners offered specialized training on mobile journalism for women who are interested to work in journalism and supported them to publish media pieces. During the evaluation, stakeholders mentioned that some young people who were trained were able to find jobs, and that some students and graduates of media faculties who participated in project activities chose to continue working on this specific area of citizens journalism. Moreover, the youth campaign to combat domestic violence '#tolerance instead of violence' launched by the project in May 2020 was shared by more than 60 social media platforms in Iraq, including local news agencies, government officials, social media influencers and NGOs⁴³. The campaign included stories of survivors of domestic violence and a live discussion on Facebook with community police units to provide advice to women affected by domestic violence. A consensus of young women members expressed the hope that the campaign would encourage women to speak out and discuss their problems and that in itself being a positive development in moving from submission to speaking with courage. Further, the young peace volunteers started the platform.

EQ 24: What real difference have the activities made to the lives of beneficiaries (taking into account gender considerations, such as focus on women-headed households, as well)?

Complementing the evaluation findings above, looking at the difference the project made to the lives of women, the evaluation accounted for the following:

⁴³ UNDP. 2020. Annual Gender report 2020 Iraq. <https://www.iq.undp.org/content/iraq/en/home/library/Stabilization/annual-gender-report-2020.html>

[Increased women's participation in the peace agenda in Iraq](#)

The project facilitated the attendance of representatives of WPGs in the LPCs, they were not taken seriously at the beginning, but then their voices were heard and they were listened to. Feedback during the evaluation stressed on the positive role played by the WPGs to serve the community. They changed the perception about the role women can play in peacebuilding, the role dominated necessarily by men or politicians. Through the implemented community-led initiatives by the WPGs, some women went to different cities to meet with IDP returnee women and the wives of missing husbands creating an environment where the community shows support.

[SGBV victims protected with psychological support, while national systems capacitated](#)

The project addressed protection concerns of women who are victims of SGBV through support for women-led community-based initiatives to mitigate conflict, curb violence and respond to shocks. Capacity building programme was implemented targeting social workers from MOLSA and women-led NGOs on psychological support tools and referral pathways. This allowed for wider reach of the support to women in rural areas who otherwise would have been isolated with violence due to accessibility issues. WPGs and YPGs were established in Anbar, Diyala, Salah al-Din and Nineveh governorates and were supported by the project to implement coexistence and peace building community-led initiatives. These initiatives included web-stories, women book clubs, expressive writing, distribution of Personal Protective Equipment and more.

[Changed perceptions around gender roles and social norms](#)

Based on feedback from different stakeholders, the evaluation found that there is change in perceptions around gender social norms. For example, around women's freedom of mobility and women's self-worth and social participation within the community. Many stories were mentioned to the evaluator by the different stakeholders, for example:

- [Women book club in Anbar](#). Anbar is a conservative and tribal governorate where women in most areas have to cover-up and are not allowed to go out of their homes or engage with the community. The project managed to form a WPG of young educated women who started community initiatives. One was to hold an online book club, where they discussed books with theme of women's empowerment and discussed the books online broadcasting the session on Facebook. They found that the books discuss issues similar to their contexts in Anbar. This was a success to bring the women to speak publicly and share their views, and to convince some of the men in their families to allow them to participate in this activity.

- Publishing 'Eyeliner Kohl'⁴⁴ real life storybook about domestic violence during COVID-19. Led by a female shop owner in Anbar, the book included stories of nurses, housewives or families who lost a member. It was written by a group of young women and youth who presented stories of very good ideas, design and language. The book was published online by the project, that also produced 200 copies based on demand, and helped the women to organize a launching event.



EQ 25: How many people (gender disaggregated) have been affected by the project as of July 2021?

The project assisted 49,279 people and 39,681 women have been directly reached from this project as of July 2021. 3,411 IDP families returned to their home communities through the work of the LPCs/CDCs. In addition, to approximately reaching 400,000 people as a result of media products and campaigns.

4.6. Sustainability:

EQ 26: Are suitable strategies for sustainability developed and implemented?

The evaluation note that the project did not include a sustainability strategy. The project's commitment to social and environmental sustainability were underpinned by the UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards (SES)⁴⁵. The project met the key elements of the SES, listed below. However, it was not clear if the project had an embedded accountability mechanism within the project. Accountability to beneficiary was to an extent met through the community-level network of LPCs/CDCs and peace groups.

- Leave No One Behind
- Human Rights
- Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
- Sustainability and Resilience
- Accountability

EQ 27: Are there any financial, social, political or other risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project's contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes? To what extent are the project results likely to be sustained in the long-term after a) completion of activities and handover to end-user, and b) after the closure of IRP? What is the risk that the level of stakeholders' ownership will not be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained?

⁴⁴ Facebook post about the Eyeliner storybook <https://ne-np.facebook.com/kohel.2020/posts/1657009747831627>

⁴⁵ UNDP Social and Environmental Standards (SES). <http://www.undp.org/ses>

The potential for sustainability of project interventions is varied. On the one hand the capacity building activities and focus on women and youth is likely to continue to have an impact on the long run. This impact is based on the fact that the psychological support provided to women and youth has increased the later self-worth and commitment to their communities. Asked what would happen at the end of the project, young people interviewed explained that they have started to understand the needs in their communities and that they were able to continue to be active agents of change. Young people also explained that the trainings and the initiatives helped bring them closer to their communities and develop new networks that they could work through in future initiatives in the future.

The level of empowerment and clarity of pathway was perhaps less clear for women who are affected by strong customs and traditions that impacts their freedom of movement and ability to participate in public life widely.

The alignment of project activities and methodologies especially the activation of the LPCs with the government policies could be seen as a double edged sword. On the one hand the government is likely to continue to support the LPCs which would ensure local ownership. However, the sustainability of this particular structure is contingent on government support and recognition which seems to be lacking in some areas. This could explain why in some locations LPCs appear to be more active compared to others. The role of women within the LPCs themselves require further attention and support to strengthen their role and to ensure gender-transformative approaches are used so that gender-concerns are reflected in the work of the LPCs.

EQ 28: What are the major factors (i.e. socio-economic, environmental, legal and institutional framework, governance, security etc.) which have influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project, as of July 2021?

Two main risks were accounted for by the evaluation based on the review of documents and the responses from stakeholders. First, related to the fragile political and security situation in Iraq and the changing priorities and hence the level of acceptance of the project's objectives and approaches. Second, is related to the lack of medium to longer term funding to sustain the local peace mechanisms established and to allow them to continue their work on community-led initiatives that promote social cohesion and advance a reconciliation process in Iraq.

EQ 29: To what extent did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs?

No clear environmental threats were posed by the IRP project.

EQ 30: To what extent are lessons learned being documented by the project team and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?

The project documented lessons learnt through quarter and annual reports. A number of studies and learning manuals were developed and widely shared, including: a lessons-learnt exercise that shed light on challenges and achievements, a political economy analysis, evaluation of LPCs/CDCs, a study on women during COVID-19.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusions

Evaluation Criteria	Conclusions
Relevance	<p>The alignment of the project focus and outputs to government priorities ensured government buy-in and support to the implementation of activities. The IRP Project focused on addressing challenges faced by the Iraqi people and identified in the Iraq Damage and Needs Assessment.</p> <p>Contributing to Outcome 3 of the Iraq UNDP Country Programme ensured working towards a common vision in complementarity with other UNDP programmes and the Country Programme's Theory of Change.</p> <p>As assumed in the project's ToC, establishing and empowering local peace mechanisms and networks of LPCs/CDCs, WPGs, YPGs and facilitators enabled local community social cohesion efforts to become credible in the eyes of citizens and paved the way for a gradual deepening of trust. It also enabled local authorities and communities to address challenges of IDPs to return to their homes.</p>
Coherence	<p>The IRP project complemented the Government of Iraq's efforts by supporting their national agendas, coordination mechanisms and participation in events. One of the main areas of support is the effort to reintegrate IDPs to their home areas and to establish and activate LPCs.</p> <p>Coordination with UN agencies was limited throughout the project, there are opportunities for stronger partnerships and joint programming. On another front, coordination between networks at the local meetings, including WPGs, YPGs, LPCs/CDCs and to an extent with local authorities. Engaging NGOs at the onset of the project is important to ensure they play an effective role to support communications and local coordination.</p>
Efficiency	<p>The IRP project's revision at the end of 2018 was a turning point for the vision and direction of the UNDP's efforts on social cohesion in Iraq, bolstered by the political assessment, LPC evaluations and other programming documents issued along the review.</p>

	<p>The project, with funds from the Danish Government, adopted a participatory bottom-up approach in achieving its intended outputs. It depended on engaging facilitators, communication mechanisms, LPCs/CDCs and women and youth groups.</p>
Effectiveness	<p>The outputs of the project were fully achieved or on-track to be achieved during the remaining lifetime the project. Some activities were not implemented due to mobility restrictions as a result of COVID-19. Moreover, the short duration was a challenge facing effectiveness of implementation of activities.</p> <p>Concerns around security and social stability, political contexts and gender social norms largely affect the achievements of project results, as it depended on capacity building and community-led initiatives. Increasing the participation of women in LPCs is further needed.</p> <p>Members of the peace groups and LPCs/CDCs established by the project allowed for improved coordination and capacities within their communities. Youth and women, most of which were victims of social conflicts and war represented agents of change and creatively and passionately implemented community-led initiatives. Gaining the trust of the community groups and local authority was a key for better social cohesion.</p> <p>Integrated community activities that addressed capacity building, women empowerment and psychological support, citizen's media promotion and coordination with local authorities was successful. Returning IDPs to their homes was the primary achievement of this integrated bottom-up approach.</p> <p>Despite the fact that the COVID-19 crisis has delayed project activities, it was also an opportunity for the project to introduce new activities and working modalities.</p>
Impact	<p>The return of more than 3,400 ISIL families to their homes was accounted as the project's main achievement, while before, they were not allowed to even visit the region.</p> <p>Citizen's media and journalism have proved to be a convenient medium for women and vulnerable groups to share their stories and voice themselves. It supports in gaining self-confidence and a useful part for psychological support for victims.</p>

Sustainability	<p>Two main risks appeared during the evaluation related to the fragile political and security situation in Iraq and the changing priorities and the lack of medium to longer term funding to sustain the local peace mechanisms established and allow for continuing their activities within the communities.</p> <p>A sustainability strategy would have helped to consider these sustainability risks if prepared at any point during the project's lifetime.</p>
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5.2. Recommendations

- Recommendation 1: Focus on empowering women members of LPCs/CDCs to strengthen gender elements and participation of women in promoting peace and security in their communities and in Iraq.
- Recommendation 2: Design specific interventions in future programmes with emphasis on livelihoods and income-generation for women from different sects and religions. This would contribute to their social and economic empowerment, as well as offer opportunities for improved social cohesion and peaceful co-existence through gender-sensitive supply chains and marketing.
- Recommendation 3: For future programming, target children as a primary target beneficiary group. Other UN agencies such as UNICEF and UNODC are working with children, joint programmes can be considered. This could be done through de-radicalisation activities to ensure adequate assimilation within communities. Also, through activities that help them cope with post-war fear and trauma. Children could also be reached through teachers, community groups after receiving necessary capacity building.
- Recommendation 4: Although there are several UN coordination mechanisms and UNDP is present strongly in the leading seat or as active member, there is an opportunity for joint programming with other UN agencies and development partners active in Iraq, according to their mandates and fields of expertise. This may include with UNICEF for children's programming, ILO for livelihoods and decent work for vulnerable groups and IDPs and others.
- Recommendation 5: Create the necessary linkages between the peace mechanisms that are established and empowered on the ground (YPGs, WPGs, LPCs/CDCs and local authorities) to strengthen their roles and have more impactful initiatives in their areas.

- Recommendation 6: For future programming, embed outcome-level monitoring into the M&E project plan with indicators that are aligned with the UNDP's Country Programme in Iraq, contributing to the corresponding outcome.
- Recommendation 7: Consider a robust sustainability strategy to be developed during the design phase of the future programme, and to remain a live document updated throughout the project lifetime. The elements should cover resource mobilization and funding, exit and government handover and endorsement, as well as expansion in more areas. LPCs/CDCs should be specifically capacitated on resource mobilization for sustainability.
- Recommendation 8: Consider holding regular discussions with facilitators and local partners (such as Youth and women Groups) on security and access concerns while implementing activities and exploring options for mitigation of risks, though this is done by the team on case by case, it is recommended to be done regularly

6. ANNEXES – List of People Interviewed

Stakeholder Type	Specific Stakeholder	Who
Project Team	UNDP Social Cohesion	Nadia Awamleh AbdelMoneim Mustafa Sara Malamund Zeina Ali Ahmed Sundus Abbas Miriam Pineau Mohamed El Deleimi Zaid El Hayali
	Tammuz Organization for Social Development	Yasser Salim
Indirect Beneficiaries/Project Partners/Implementers	UN Women	Dina Zorba
Government Partners	Tribal & Reconciliation Committee at the Parliament UNAMI/ Chair of UN National Dialogue and Coexistence Working Group	Dr. Abood Mohammed Alnajjar, Khalid Al Sawi
International Organizations/Donors	Danish MFA	Jan Poulsen
Government Partners	Ministry of Migration and Displaced (MOMD)	

Indirect Beneficiaries/Project Partners/Implementers	UNDP	Resident Representative + Social Cohesion Team Leader
Indirect Beneficiaries/Project Partners/Implementers	Religious Leaders	Selected leaders from Nienwa
	Glitter Media company	Kawa Rasul
	UNDP Social Cohesion	Field Facilitators
	Local Authorities of Anah and Falluja District in Anbar , Muhallabiya District in Ninewa, Shirqat district in Salaheddin	Local authorities from Muhalabiya
	IOM	Andrew Craig
Indirect Beneficiaries/Project Partners/Implementers	Sample of CSOs implementing community initiatives	Wasel Tasel Organization
Direct Beneficiaries (Iraqi Citizens)	Returning Families	Selected families from Muhalabiya
	Beneficiaries of community initiatives	Beneficiaries identified by KOHRW
	Recipients of food and/or hygiene packages/distributions	Beneficiaries identified by KOHRW
Sample of CSOs implementing community initiatives	United Iraqi Medical Society (UIMS)	
	SNAD - Ali Dawood	

Indirect Beneficiaries/Project Partners/Implementers	Fallujah major, LPCs	
	Anbar Youth Group - Training	
	UNDP	Sundus Abbass

Annex II: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Question	Specific Question	Data Source /Stakeholder	Data Collection Method	Indicator/Evaluability Criteria
Relevance: the extent to which the project strategy, proposed activities and expected outputs and outcomes are justified and remain relevant to beneficiaries' assessed needs, country's policies and donor's priorities				
<i>EQ 1: To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to security, political, economic, institutional and other changes in the country?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How was the project designed? - How did the project interventions change overtime in response to changes in the country? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNDP Team - Government 	KIIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presence of conflict analysis Evidence of consultation meetings/community consultations and national consultations
<i>EQ 2: To what extent was the project in line with the recovery, national development priorities and policies, the UNDP country programme's outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How are the objectives of the project aligned with UNDP Strategic plan? - In What way do the objectives correspond or reflect SDGs? Which SDGs in particular? - How is the project aligned with GoI priorities and development plans? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Document review - UNDP Team - Government 	KIIs	Evidence of linkages between the project and other UNDP country documents
<i>EQ 3: To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant UNDP country programme outcome?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the intervention logic of the project? - to what extent is the project contributing to wider UNDP Country programme in Iraq? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review - UNDP Team 	KIIs	Evidence of linkages between the project and other UNDP country documents
<i>EQ 4: To what extent does the project contribute to the human rights-based approach, gender equality and women's empowerment? Especially, with regard to the target beneficiary groups including the</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How are cross-cutting issues such as GEEW and HRBAs reflected in the project document? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review Monitoring data 	KIIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GEEW is reflected through indicators HRBAs are reflected in the design of the project

<i>return IDPs, youth, women, disabled persons, etc.?</i>	- How is diversity reflected in the design and implementation of project activities?	Progress reports - UNDP Team		Availability of diversity data
Coherence				
<i>EQ 5: To what extent did the project complement work among different entities, including civil society and other UN actors?</i>	- Who are the main partners of the project at the national and district levels? - What are the coordination mechanisms of the project with other UN actors, donors, CSOs?	- UNDP Team - UN Actors - CSOs - Donors directly and indirectly involved in the activities	KIIs	- Presence of coordination mechanisms - Minutes of meetings - Joint work plans - Joint interventions
<i>EQ 6: How were stakeholders involved in the project's design and implementation?</i>	- How was the project designed? - what is the role of stakeholders in the design of project activities? How are workplans developed?	- UNDP Team - Government - LPCs, WPGs, YGs,	KIIs FGDs	Needs assessments Consultations at community and national levels conducted prior to implementation Trainings on conducting community needs assessments
Efficiency: the extent to which the project resources (funds, expertise/human resources, time, etc.) are optimally used and converted into intended outputs.				
<i>EQ 7: How efficient is the functioning of the project management, technical support, administrative, procurement and financial management procedures? To what extent have the project management structure and allocated resources been efficient in achieving the expected results?</i>	What is the management structure of the project (organigram) how effective is it? What kind of technical support is provided to the project? By the project?	- UNDP Team - LPCs, WPGs, YGs,	KIIs FGDs	Clarity of project organigram and reporting lines. Coordination with other projects within UNDP Joint activities with other projects.

	How have resources been used (both financial and human resources) Have funds been disbursed regularly? Why/why not?			
<i>EQ 8: To what extent has the project implementation been efficient and cost-effective?</i>	What has been the implementation process of the project?	- UNDP Team - LPCs, WPGs, YGs, UN actors	KIIs FGDs	Clarity of procurement system for partners Clarity of financial reporting for partners
<i>EQ 9: To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?</i>	What have been some implementation challenges? How were they overcome? What could be done differently in the future? How has coordination with other projects or other actors supported the efficiency of the project?	- UNDP Team - LPCs, WPGs, YGs, UN actors	KIIs FGDs	Availability of funds in timely fashion Evidence of Increased coordination between UNDP projects
<i>EQ 10: What is the visibility and communications strategy adopted by the project? Has it been cost-effective in terms of promoting the project and its achievements?</i>	How has the project developed a communication and visibility strategy? How effective has the strategy been? What are some of the results of this strategy?	UNDP Team Media Professionals Social media competition participants	KIIs FGDs	Presence of a communication strategy Products of the communication strategy (videos, brochures, et.al)
<i>EQ 11: How is the project keeping track of project progress on expected outputs and outcomes? Does the monitoring and evaluation system put in place allow for continuous collection and analysis of quality and segregated data on expected outputs and outcomes?</i>	How were outcomes and outputs designed? How is data collected for the different indicators? How is data collected used for management decision making?	UNDP Team M&E officer	KIIs	Indicators are sex disaggregated # of women and men with disabilities and other vulnerable groups reported on

	Is data segregated to reflect diversity?			Minority groups clearly referred to in reporting
Effectiveness: the extent to which the project's expected outputs and outcomes are being achieved or are expected to be achieved. Factors contributing to or detracting from the achievement of the project desired results and objectives should also be included in the assessment.				
<i>EQ 12: To what extent are the project outputs and outcomes fully or partly achieved or on-track to be achieved?</i>	What has been achieved to date? Why?	UNDP Team Government Direct and Indirect Beneficiaries CSOs	KIIs FGDs	Availability of indicator data
<i>EQ 13: To what extent are strategies for gender and women's empowerment incorporated?</i>	What has been the gender approach of the project? Was it effective? Why/why not? What could be done differently? How has the project collaborated with other UN Actors to promote GEEW? What has been the outcome to date?	UNDP Team UN Actors Government Actors focusing on Gender Monitoring data	KIIs	Evidence of collaboration with UN Actors on GEEW Support provided to government departments working on women Overall number of women and girls in different committees
<i>EQ 14: What are the main factors influencing the achievement of project outputs, outcomes, including gender and women's empowerment results as of July 2021</i>	What were the enabling factors for the achievement of the project? How has the project overcome initial challenges? What lessons could be drawn for future programming?	UNDP Team Government Indirect Beneficiaries UN Actors CSOs	KIIs FGDs	
<i>EQ 15: The extent to which findings of data analysis or project best practices are used for drawing lessons learned, and adjusting implementation?</i>	How have the studies and monitoring data been used to inform project implementation? How often were conflict analysis conducted? What was implemented from the internal 2018 review? How	UNDP Team	KIIs	Evidence that monitoring data helped change project approaches (note to file, emails, meeting notes...etc.)

	has this affected project implementation?			
<i>EQ 16: To what extent have the project's activities led to improved coordination, cooperation, and capacity as relevant at the National and/or Governorate and/or Municipality levels? To what extent does the project have the support of the government both at national and local levels?</i>	How do stakeholders feel about the project? How do stakeholders see the value added of the project in terms of coordination and improved capacity? In what ways has the GoI supported the project? What could be done to strengthen political support at national and local levels?	Indirect Beneficiaries Government UN Actors CSOs Local Government UNDP Team	KIIs FGDs	Positive or negative feedback from the stakeholders
<i>EQ 17: To what extent have the project's activities led to improved coordination, cooperation and consultation among development partners (including UN agencies, and donors to this project)? How did the project steering committee contribute to a regular gathering of development partners to discuss development priorities?</i>	What are the coordination mechanisms between the project and other development partners? How effective were they? Why? How can they be improved? What is the value added of the project's steering committee? What lessons learned could be drawn from this implementation model?	UNDP Team UN Actors CSOs Government	KIIs	Number of project partners Type of partnerships Partnership modalities
<i>EQ 18: To what extent has the project been actively seeking partnership with relevant actors in view of strengthening project implementation and/or ensuring project sustainability?</i>	To what extent was partnership building a key strategy of the project? How many partners does the project have? How does the project define partnership? How are partnerships nurtured? How has this affected or likely to affect sustainability?	UNDP Team UN Actors CSOs Government	KIIs	Number of project partners Type of partnerships Partnership modalities
<i>EQ 19: To what extent do the project's activities/management systems mitigate and address protection concerns of</i>	To what extent are protection of vulnerable populations reflected in project activities? Which activities	UNDP Team	KIIs FGDs	Evidence of collaboration with protection-focused partners

<i>vulnerable populations (returnees, communities that did not leave ISIL controlled areas, minority communities, etc.) in the targeted areas?</i>	focus on identifying protection needs and priorities? Has the project collaborated with other protection actors at government and CSO level to ensure protection needs of vulnerable groups is addressed? What has been the outcome of such actions?	Government especially at local level CSOs at local level Direct Beneficiaries		Discussions with government and or CSOs around protection Training material reflecting protection concerns Testimonies of beneficiaries
<i>EQ 20: What is the level of quality of the project outputs and/or the project activities?</i>	What are the tangible results/outputs of the project? How many studies have been conducted? How many conflict analysis? How many media reports? How many trainings? Awareness sessions? What do the indicators reflect in terms of achievements of the project? How do the stakeholders feel about the quality of the deliverables?	UNDP Team All Stakeholders	KIIs FGDs	Conflict Analysis Documents Research Papers published Media articles Positive and negative feedback from stakeholders
<i>EQ 21: To what extent the project has been able to mobilize financial resources?</i>	In addition to the governments of the UK, Germany, and Denmark, how has the project managed to mobilize financial resources? How has the project capitalized on existing resources to strengthen effectiveness and efficiency?	UNDP Team Finance Officers	KIIs	Evidence of resource mobilisation Outcome of increased resources available
<i>EQ 22: To what extent has the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic affected activity implementation and the quality of activities?</i>	How has the pandemic affected the project positively or negatively? How has the project used the pandemic to strengthen the	UNDP Team	KIIs	

	<p>participation in activities especially for vulnerable and marginalized groups? How has the project capitalized on existing community groups to help increase health awareness during the pandemic? What have been some negative aspects of the pandemic? Are there lessons that could be drawn about the resilience of the project?</p>			
<p>Impact: analysing the positive and negative changes produced by the Project, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. This involves the main impacts and effects resulting from the activity on the local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators. The examination should be concerned with both intended and unintended results and must also include the positive and negative impact of external factors, such as changes in terms of social and economic conditions</p>				
<p><i>EQ 23: What has happened/changed as the result of IRP support in the target locations, as of July 2021?</i></p>	<p>What change did the project make in the communities? What are the tangible results of the project? Are they uniform across locations? What explains difference?</p>	<p>UNDP Teams Government Indirect Beneficiaries Direct Beneficiaries UN Actors Partners</p>	<p>KIIs FGDs</p>	<p>Positive and negative responses from beneficiaries both direct and indirect; government; other stakeholders</p>
<p><i>EQ 24: What real difference have the activities made to the lives of beneficiaries (taking into account gender considerations, such as focus on women-headed households, as well)?</i></p>	<p>What changes did the project make in the life of its direct and indirect beneficiaries? How has the project affected young people? How has the project affected women?</p>	<p>UNDP Teams Government Indirect Beneficiaries Direct Beneficiaries UN Actors Partners</p>	<p>KIIs FGDs</p>	<p>Positive and negative responses from beneficiaries both direct and indirect; government; other stakeholders</p>

	How has the project affected LPCs and government? How has the project affected CSOs, social workers, media students?			
<i>EQ 25: How many people (gender disaggregated) have been affected by the project as of July 2021?</i>	Who was involved in the project? How does the project count direct and indirect beneficiaries? How is data collected and disaggregated? How is double counting avoided?	UNDP Team	Monitoring Data KIIs	Monitoring systems Evidence of absence of double counting
Sustainability: analyzing whether benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable				
<i>EQ 26: Are suitable strategies for sustainability developed and implemented?</i>	Does the project have an exit strategy? How is sustainability mainstreamed within the project design and implementation modality? Is there local ownership of project interventions? What systems and structures have been developed or put in place by the project to support sustainability? How effective are they? To what extent there has been legal developments to support the continuation of project interventions and outputs? Are other donors interested in continuing funding projects of this type?	UNDP Team Government Indirect Beneficiaries CSOs	KIIs FGDs	

EQ 27: <i>Are there any financial, social, political or other risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project's contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes? To what extent are the project results likely to be sustained in the long-term after a) completion of activities and handover to end-user, and b) after the closure of IRP? What is the risk that the level of stakeholders' ownership will not be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained?</i>	What will happen at the end of the project? What will continue? What will stop? What explains potential continuity and risks of cessation? How would community structures continue to be sustainable? What is required over the coming months to strengthen sustainability?	UNDP Team Government Indirect Beneficiaries CSOs	KIIs FGDs	
EQ 28: <i>What are the major factors (i.e. socio-economic, environmental, legal and institutional framework, governance, security etc.) which have influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project, as of July 2021?</i>	What are the key factors affecting sustainability? Are they internal or external to the project? How can they be mitigated?	UNDP Team Government Indirect Beneficiaries CSOs	KIIs FGDs	
EQ 29: <i>To what extent did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs?</i>	What have been done to mitigate risks and ensure sustainability?	UNDP Team Government	KIIs	
EQ 30: <i>To what extent are lessons learned being documented by the project team and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?</i>	What are the lessons learned from this project? How have they been shared with relevant parties? Who have been those parties?	UNDP Team	KIIs	