

# NAVIGATING THE NEXUS:

A Brighter Future for Children  
in Urban Contexts in Iraq

**World Vision** 

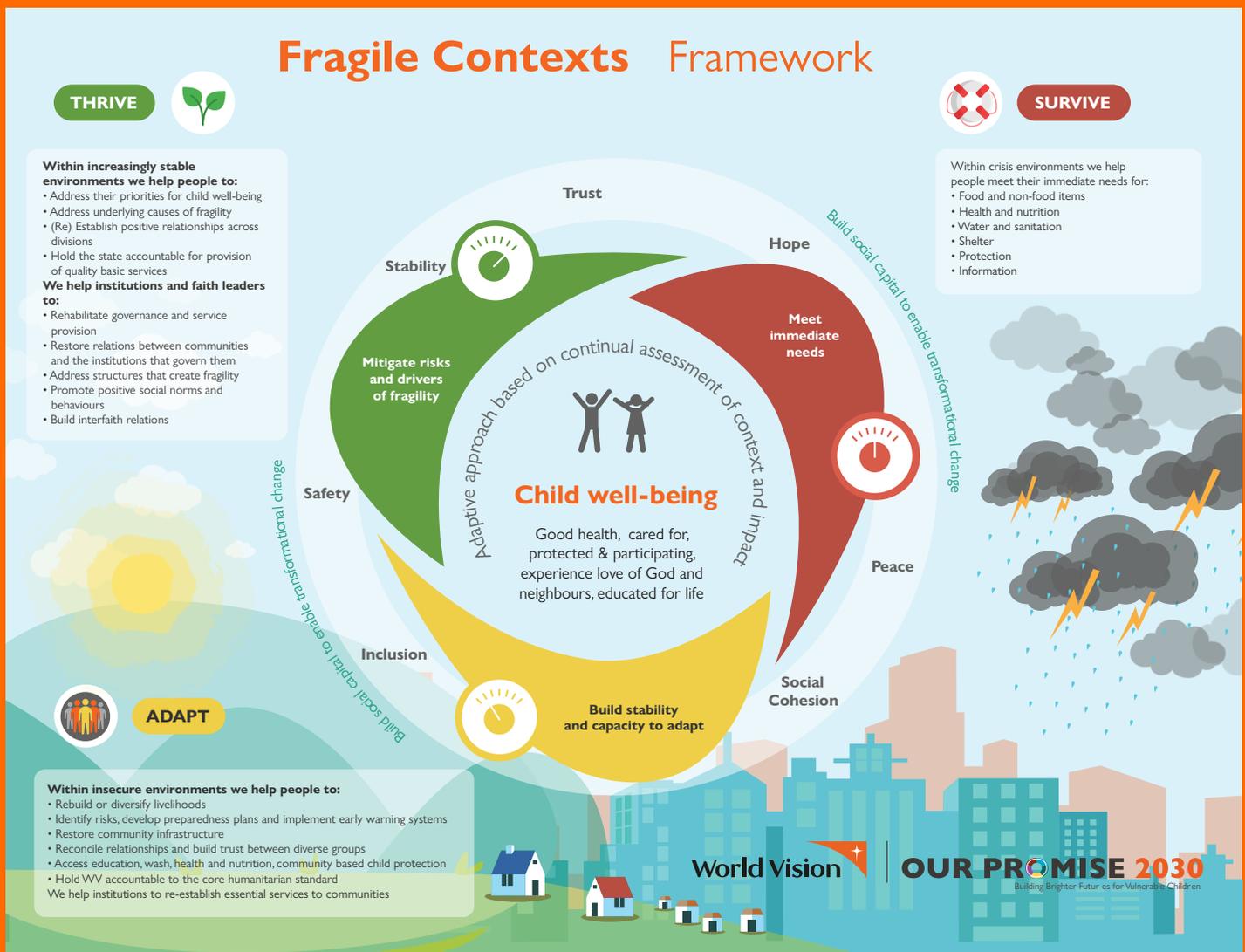
**Our approach**  
to fragile contexts

CASE STUDY

# A brighter future for children: World Vision's Fragile Contexts Approach

Two billion people live in countries where development outcomes are deeply affected by fragility, conflict and violence and which are some of the most dangerous places in the world to be a child. In these fragile contexts children face extreme levels of abuse, exploitation, deprivation and violence, often for generations.

Through its global strategy, Our Promise, World Vision is aligning its humanitarian, development, peacebuilding and advocacy efforts to address fragility. Based on more than 70 years of experience working in fragile contexts, World Vision has developed a Fragile Contexts Programme Approach (see diagram below) to support its efforts to expand and deepen its impact. Its approach has informed global frameworks, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus<sup>1</sup>, and, in turn, is informed by them. World Vision's Fragile Contexts Programme Approach (FCPA) has been piloted in multiple countries, with more planned in the future.<sup>2</sup> World Vision's goal is to make a sustainable difference in the lives of the most vulnerable girls and boys so they can survive, adapt and thrive now and in the future despite fragility. At the heart of the FCPA is the agility to shift from meeting immediate humanitarian needs to addressing root causes even in the context of continued fragility, in order to support transformative change whenever possible, so that communities can build resilience to shocks over the long term.



# Executive Summary

Iraq is one of the most fragile states in the world, fraught with challenges after decades of conflict and instability. The political and economic consequences of the COVID 19 pandemic have been especially disruptive in Iraq, where political turmoil and societal distrust have risen and the economy has been decimated by the significant decline in oil revenue as a result of diminished global demand in 2020, which had long-term effects on the economy including inflation as well as disruption to services which have yet to fully resume. With millions of vulnerable Iraqis returning to their homes, and more than one million still displaced following conflict, the sudden shock of COVID 19 saw poverty rates increase and humanitarian needs deepening. This was followed by a drought year in 2021, which is proving to be an impediment to returns and to economic recovery as rural livelihoods are being decimated.

The international community has sought to address more comprehensively the complex challenges of fragility by advancing a nexus approach linking humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts. Moreover, with global fragility increasing at a time when more people than ever before are entering cities, urban areas have emerged as a new centre of fragility. Urbanisation has simply shifted the landscape of poverty, reproducing many of the risks experienced in rural settings and introducing a cascade of new ones that have increased need. Iraq, increasingly urbanised and plagued by multidimensional fragility, thus represents the imperative of realising a better nexus approach.

The following case study examines World Vision's experience implementing a nexus approach for programming in Northern Iraq, which comprises governorates controlled by the federal authority and the Erbil-based Kurdish regional government. Following the outbreak of conflict with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), World Vision responded to the crisis and has continued to work to meet humanitarian and recovery needs while working to establish longer-term solutions to the ongoing displacement crisis. World Vision's adaptation of programming to strengthen linkages among humanitarian, development and peacebuilding objectives in Iraq has identified a number of key enabling factors for nexus work to be successful:

- **Partnering with local and international organisations** creates opportunities for coordination across cluster programming<sup>3</sup> to better enable nexus objectives. Partnership with local organisations in particular is important to access communities and to build trust and acceptance while also ensuring long-term sustainability.
  - **Utilising a participatory approach and investing in local capacity** improve the durability of programming, essential as World Vision has expanded into more medium- and long-term development programming.
  - **Robust advocacy** generates opportunities for a holistic response through flexible project and funding parameters, providing World Vision with access to more flexible multiyear and multi-sectoral funding.
- This case study also identifies potential impediments and barriers to the operationalisation of the nexus in Iraq and provides recommendations to governments, donors, international financial institutions and World Vision on how to overcome them. Specifically:
- **The Federal Government of Iraq (GoI) and the Government of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI)** should partner with international humanitarian actors to pursue durable solutions for returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) and prioritise the restoration of housing and livelihoods infrastructure as well as assist families to resettle voluntarily, safely and with dignity given existing economic challenges.
  - **Donor agencies and international financial institutions** should provide sustained, flexible, multiyear and multi-sectoral programme funding while extending the timeframe of humanitarian assistance to meet the needs of vulnerable returnees, IDP populations and host communities who continue to require assistance. They should also continue to engage in policy dialogue at the national level to cultivate a better enabling environment and improve coordination across programming.
  - **World Vision** should continue to highlight some of the current challenges and opportunities for programming in Iraq, focusing on existing funding sources that demonstrate successful and flexible mechanisms for future donor support. It should continue to emphasise cross-cutting interventions in diverse urban, peri-urban and rural contexts. Specifically, in urban contexts World Vision should also strengthen its coordination and collaboration role to build alliances with other humanitarian stakeholders in order to achieve our goals by better working across the nexus.
- **Establishing long-term presence and partnership** enables World Vision to build trust and credibility with local government, community leaders, religious leaders and cross-cutting groups including cultural minorities, women and youth, and people living with disabilities. World Vision's multiyear partnerships with faith actors and local civil society to reach out across the nexus to those who have a longer-term stake in the context have especially been useful in ensuring longer-term impact.

## Methodology

This case study relies on a mixed-method research methodology that included a desk review of internal and external literature, an analysis of project documentation and interviews with key stakeholders. The literature review draws upon the narrow amount of literature specific to the application of the nexus approach in fragile urban contexts, along with relevant literature addressing experiences and data at the local and national levels.<sup>4</sup>

World Vision researchers held 10 key informant interviews, speaking to World Vision in-country and global staff, peer nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and local partners over various teleconferencing platforms. Interviews focused on identifying key factors enabling and/or challenging programme implementation and on offering wider reflections on how stakeholders can further improve operationalisation across the nexus.



## Limitations on the study

As with other researchers operating in the international humanitarian and development space, conditions resulting from the global COVID 19 pandemic have influenced this study:

- All interviews were conducted remotely at a time when in-country staff were under significant added strain. The researchers were unable to carry out any field visits and had to rely on desk reviews and a limited number of interviews with a smaller number of available key informants.
- Staff turnover of some key informants meant that interviews were relied on heavily as they happened and in some cases further follow-up questions could not be clarified.
- Few external partners were able to dedicate time and resources to this research, which was not helped by the remote way of working.
- Some actors, especially national organisations and government representatives, were unable to be reached.

# 1. Introduction

For more than four decades Iraq has borne the consequences of conflict and instability, stunting its ability to escape recurring crises and engendering fragility across all dimensions. While Iraq is considered an upper-middle-income country within the Middle East and North Africa region, this designation overlooks a highly unequal distribution of wealth. Moreover, recurrent conflict inside the country and the region has precluded stability, leaving millions of people displaced across its territory and generating significant humanitarian need.<sup>5</sup> A more appropriate and holistic indicator for the context in Iraq is the States of Fragility Index powered by the OECD, which puts Iraq as the 11<sup>th</sup> most fragile state in the world, out of 175 states it examines<sup>6</sup> In the aftermath of large-scale military operations against ISIL, the forward-looking orientation toward development following the Iraq War (2003–11) has once more been impeded by a severe economic contraction and the outbreak of the COVID 19 pandemic, exacerbating the country’s fragility along multiple dimensions.<sup>7</sup>

The campaign of violence unleashed by ISIL across Iraq and Syria has left millions of refugees and IDPs across heavily

urbanised Northern Iraq, primarily in the Sulaymaniyah, Duhok, Erbil, Kirkuk and Ninewa governorates.<sup>8</sup> Northern Iraq has increasingly urbanised in recent decades, prompted not only by the greater economic opportunities available in cities, but also by patterns of displacement stemming from conflicts including the Iran-Iraq War (1980–88), the Gulf War (1991), and the upheaval that has followed the US-led Iraq War (2003–11).<sup>9</sup> Nearly 250,000 Syrian refugees remain displaced in Iraq as of January 2021, primarily in refugee camps across the Duhok, Erbil, Halabja and Sulaymaniyah governorates that make up the semi-autonomous, urbanised KRI.<sup>10</sup> The overwhelmingly urban population in the Duhok, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah governorates of the KRI has reached 75%, 84% and 85% as of 2014, respectively.<sup>11</sup> The periodic influx of refugees also continues to exacerbate humanitarian need in Northern Iraq, such as the more than 12,000 Syrians who fled to the KRI in October 2019.<sup>12</sup> Likewise, 6.1 million Iraqis were displaced by violence from 2014 to 2017, and while more than 4.8 million have returned to their areas of origin, they continue to face significant humanitarian need, as do the more than 1.2 million Iraqis that remained displaced as of January 2021.<sup>13</sup>

**Figure 1. Number of IDPs and Returnees over Time**



Source: International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List, January–February 2021

**Table 1. Current Displacement across Northern Iraq**

Government	Governorate	Syrian Refugees*		Iraqi IDPs**	
		In-Camp	Non-Camp	In-Camp	Non-Camp
Semi-autonomous Kurdistan Region of Iraq	Sulaymaniyah	9,328	22,731	11,600	142,548
	Duhok	55,955	28,102	110,955	121,032
	Erbil	29,948	94,730	13,120	217,218
Federal Government of Iraq	Kirkuk	0	0	0	81,654
	Ninewa	0	608	48,400	191,448
	Salah al-Din	0	0	0	44,652

\*UNHCR, 'Operational Portal – Refugee Response' (May 5, 2021).

\*\* IOM, 'Displacement Tracking Matrix – Iraq Mission' (February 28, 2021).

**Table 2. Housing Damage across Select Governorates in Iraq**

Governorate	Urban Housing Damage in Iraq (affected residential area) Square Meters	US\$ Billion
Ninawa	26,494,995	\$6.736
Salah al-Din	4,215,830	\$3.183
Kirkuk	1,038,491	\$1.140

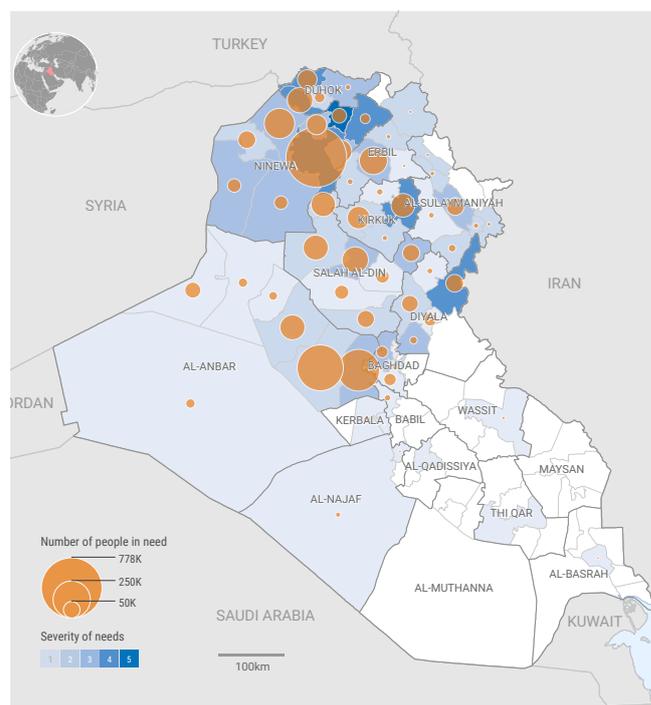
Source: World Bank Group, 'Iraq Reconstruction and Investment,' January 2018

Iraq's vulnerable returnees reside in largely urbanised areas alongside nearly 1 million non-camp IDPs, with 77% of the non-camp displaced residing in the urbanised governorates of the KRI.<sup>14</sup> Urban areas with high concentrations of poor and new migrants are challenged by insufficient infrastructure, housing precarity and a dearth of viable employment opportunities.<sup>15</sup> Destruction of housing poses perhaps the greatest challenge for returnees and non-camp IDPs, with damage to the housing sector as a result of the conflict with ISIL estimated at \$16.1 billion and more than half of the 138,051 residential buildings damaged or destroyed.<sup>16</sup>

As a result, vulnerable poor in urban settings are more likely to treat their residence as temporary, directly contributing to higher rates of intra- and inter-city urban mobility.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, 98% of IDPs residing in the Ninawa Governorate are originally from the governorate – where nearly two-thirds of all housing was damaged – indicating that many are unable to return to their districts of origin and have become secondarily displaced in an effort to access available resources.<sup>18</sup> This scattered displacement among host communities in large urban settings has limited IDPs' ability to access humanitarian assistance, as organisations have struggled to programme adequately for an increasingly mobile population.<sup>19</sup> However, because of the often unplanned nature of non-camp displacement, with 30% of IDPs departing camps as a result of their closure, humanitarian need is often even greater.<sup>20</sup> More than four-fifths of non-camp IDPs require humanitarian assistance, with more than half in acute need, characterised by an inability to meet basic needs in healthcare, food, education and household expenditures.<sup>21</sup>

While the Gol has been relatively tolerant and welcoming of most Syrian refugees within its borders, it has been far less accommodating of IDPs, especially of in-camp IDPs. Impatient with continued displacement and displeased by its optics, the Gol has moved rapidly to close all remaining camps across federal territory. These rushed camp closures have resulted in many international humanitarian actors facing challenges to pursue durable solutions for in-camp IDPs.<sup>22</sup> Between October 2020 and January 2021, 16 formal IDP camps under Gol administration were closed with insufficient planning, pushing more than 42,000 people to return to their places of origin.<sup>23</sup> It is estimated that the current series of camp closures combined with previous camp closure and consolidation efforts will force more than 100,000 returnees to face homelessness and severe

**Figure 2. Severity of Humanitarian Conditions and Number of People in Need by District, January 2021**



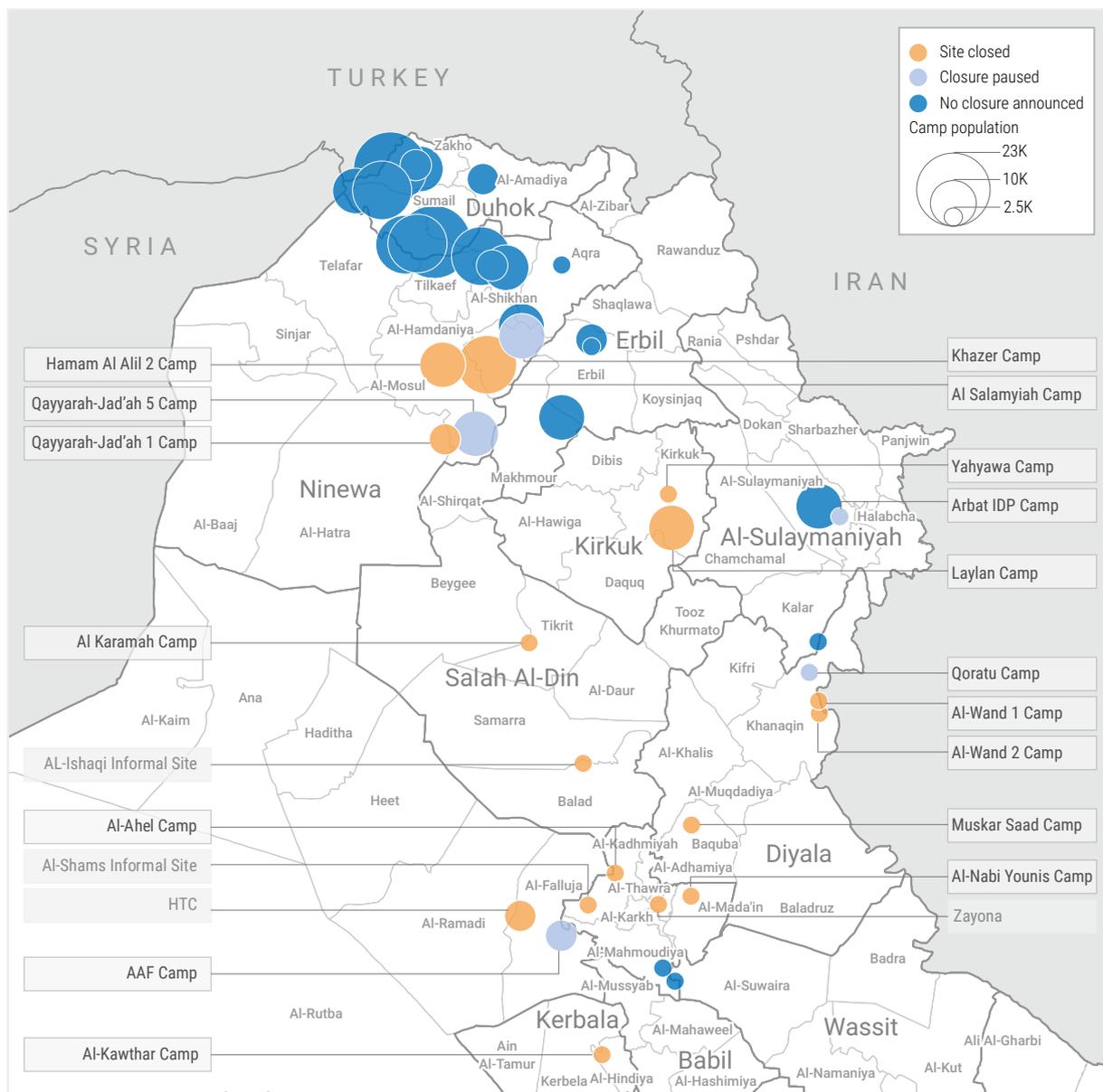
Source: OCHA, 'Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq'

vulnerability in their places of origin, finding their homes destroyed and facing food and water shortages along with limited opportunities for employment, causing the humanitarian needs of those displaced by the closure to deepen.<sup>24</sup>

Refugees and IDPs have fared far better under the KRI government, which has worked with international actors to provide humanitarian aid and transition toward more durable solutions. Nearly all remaining in-camp IDPs are located in the KRI, estimated at nearly 200,000 people across 25 camps as of January 2021.<sup>25</sup>

The uneven responses to the displacement by the Gol and the KRI are indicative of Iraq's broader political fragility. The KRI has maintained autonomy from the Gol since 1992, though only formally recognised in 2005 following the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. The power-sharing agreement between the two governments has been continuously contested by both, with disagreement about

**Figure 3. Camp Closures through January 20,2021**



the KRI's revenue-sharing from oil sales and the Gol's fiscal transfers central to the dispute.<sup>26</sup> While the KRI has in recent years prioritised oil revenue towards its own needs, the Gol has disbursed fiscal transfers 'unevenly, erratically, and partially.'<sup>27</sup> With the balance of power increasingly shifting toward the Gol, tensions were exacerbated in 2017 by its seizure of the oil-producing Kirkuk Governorate from KRI-allied forces in response to a referendum to establish its independence.<sup>28</sup>

The stalemate between the KRI and the Gol has undermined governance nationally, contributing to instability at all levels of government.<sup>29</sup> Public trust in the Gol has increasingly eroded over the past decade, fuelled by 'grievances over corruption, weak accountability, lack of employment opportunities, and inadequate service delivery.'<sup>30</sup> In particular, the prevalence of corruption has become a central concern of Iraqis, with a plurality (32%) ranking corruption as the most important challenge facing the country and few (22%) believing that the Gol is committed to fighting corruption,

according to the most recent Arab Barometer survey (2019).<sup>31</sup> This distrust in the state and the political system, especially among male youth, along with economic grievances, have fuelled widespread protests across the country since October 2019, with 'public trust in the government's capacity to address the country's challenges dropping.'<sup>32</sup>

Against this backdrop, fragility has been exacerbated by the deterioration of the Iraqi economy amidst the collapse in oil prices and the outbreak of the COVID 19 pandemic. Iraq's economy is heavily dependent on oil revenue, accounting for about 60% of the country's gross domestic product and, most important, more than 90% of Iraqi federal government revenue.<sup>33</sup> With the federal public sector financed almost exclusively by oil revenue, the unprecedented fall in oil prices in early 2020 has battered an economy where the public sector is by far the largest employer.<sup>34</sup> In 2020, the Iraqi economy experienced its largest contraction in nearly two decades. The collapse has reverberated across the massive public sector, the underdeveloped private sector and the

vast informal economy, with 72% of men and only 16% of women participating in the formal labour force, among the lowest rates for women in the world.<sup>35</sup> Even prior to current economic challenges, nearly half of all Iraqi youth were not employed, in school or receiving training.<sup>36</sup>

With a faltering economy and tenuous political stability, the COVID 19 pandemic arrived at a particularly challenging time and has exacerbated deeply rooted issues. Restrictions imposed to control the spread of COVID 19 have challenged agriculture, services and the fledgling tourism industry, with Iraq's service sector, which comprises around half the non-oil economy, severely affected.<sup>37</sup> Across the service sector, 39% of employees faced unemployment and 90% saw their hours reduced during 2020, with women and young people particularly hard hit.<sup>38</sup> COVID 19 has also exacerbated fragility across political and societal dimensions in Iraq. A deep societal distrust in the government exists following years of instability, growing inequality and allegations of corruption. Due to these factors a large gap exists between social protection requirements and the government's ability to satisfy them, particularly for Iraq's most vulnerable; this further fuels distrust in the government and dissatisfaction, which pushes people towards alternative power structures and makes them vulnerable to recruitment to violent agendas of various armed groups.

Iraq's healthcare system, already weakened by a myriad of challenges including war damages, corruption, underinvestment and 'brain drain' has been particularly strained by the COVID 19 pandemic.<sup>39</sup> As a result, Iraqis were forced to turn to their families, neighbours and community members for help. This has resulted in people further losing confidence in government institutions.<sup>40</sup>

**Table 3. Overview: Humanitarian Needs in Iraq**

Sector	Number of People in Need*
Education	1,300,000
Emergency Livelihoods	3,400,000
Food Security	730,000
Health	2,400,000
WASH	2,600,000
Shelter	2,600,000
Gender-Based Violence	1,300,000
Child Protection	1,700,000

Source: OCHA, 'Humanitarian Needs Overview,' February 2021

The confluence of economic, political and social fragility, each exacerbated by the outbreak of COVID 19, has generated significant humanitarian needs and rolled back development gains, especially for Iraq's most vulnerable populations. For Iraqis, including 4.8 million returnees, 1.2 million camp and non-camp IDPs, and 250,000 Syrian refugees, overall humanitarian needs remain great, as does the need to create durable solutions for displacement.<sup>41</sup> As of January 2021, more than 1 million IDPs and 3.1 million returnees are in need across Iraq, including 730,000 needing help with food security, 3.4 million with emergency livelihoods, 2.2 million with healthcare, and 1.3 million with education.<sup>42</sup> Among the most vulnerable, 1.7 million children and 1.3 million women require protection from violence.<sup>43</sup> Meeting this urgent humanitarian need is essential to stabilising a local context that will enable Iraqis to create durable solutions and work to close the nexus gap.



# 2.

## World Vision’s urban work in Iraq

World Vision has worked on and off in Iraq since 1999, beginning emergency relief operations in Northern Iraq through a newly established field office in 2014 in response to urgent humanitarian needs spawned by the conflict with ISIL. Focusing on WASH (food security, water, sanitation and hygiene), child protection, education and livelihoods interventions, World Vision has broadened the scope of its work since the conclusion of large-scale military operations in 2017 to include more nexus-style approaches across its programming. This includes incorporating elements of developmental education and life skills, as well as livelihoods interventions, and linking these to more short-term humanitarian and nexus interventions.

World Vision’s work in Iraq previously centred on Northern Iraq, with operations in Duhok, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Salah al-Din, Kirkuk, and Ninewa governorates. As of 2020, though, only 30% of the programme is in the three governorates of KRI, with 70% of programming having shifted to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable returnees who are going back to their places of origin in Ninewa, Kirkuk and Salah al-Din, which are in the control of the GoI. In fiscal year 2020, World Vision programming reached 472,829 beneficiaries, including 254,350 children.<sup>44</sup>

**Table 4. Food Security Beneficiaries in Iraq**

Year	Total Recipients
2020	232,504
2019	197,062
2018	294,055

Source: World Vision Annual Reports 2018 and 2019; World Vision Situation Reports 2020

World Vision runs its food assistance programming in partnership with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), using primarily in-kind, cash and voucher modalities, covering both Iraqi in-camp and non-camp IDPs and Syrian refugees. Cash is distributed through Mobile Money Transfer, Money Transfer Agency and eVoucher transfer mechanisms.

World Vision currently provides food assistance to more than 250,000 people in Erbil, Duhok and Sulaymaniyah.<sup>45</sup> As Northern Iraq is heavily urbanised, with good mobile money infrastructure and well-functioning food markets, the majority of food assistance to IDPs and Syrian refugees is provided by means of mobile money transfers, although World Vision also provides aid through eVouchers. In-kind transfers represent only a small share of all food assistance provided by World Vision.

**Table 5. Food Assistance Transfer Modalities**

Transfer Modality	Definition
Mobile Money Transfer	A payment that is performed by means of a mobile device through the creation of a unique virtual mobile money account that allows the transfer of electronic cash to recipients. This transfer mechanism does not require the recipient to have a formal bank account.
Money Transfer Agency	A payment that is performed through an entity that is able to transfer money electronically between international funders and local recipients.
eVoucher	A transfer to a recipient in the form of a paper or electronic entitlement redeemable at preselected retailers or at specifically organised fairs for a predefined list of commodities, but not for cash.
Food in-kind	The distribution of direct food rations.

Source: WFP Cash and Vouchers Manual, 2nd edition (2014)

**Table 6. Food Security Mobile Money Transfers**

Beneficiary Group	2018	2019	% Change
IDPs	173,109	152,262	-12.0%
Syrian Refugees	59,913	34,961	-41.6%

Source: World Vision Annual Reports, 2018 and 2019

World Vision’s humanitarian programming in Iraq is linked to its development interventions, acting as a natural programming extension across the nexus spectrum. For example, World Vision uses its food assistance programming in refugee and IDP camps in Ninewa, Duhok and Erbil to identify promising youth for participation in its education and life skills for livelihoods Empowerment in Action (EMPACT) programme, a development-oriented project that provides intensive practical technical, financial and language instruction to improve livelihood opportunities. The programme also provides beneficiaries with laptops and internet connections which, in conjunction with micro-work freelance training, are intended to establish the skills and connections necessary for livelihood opportunities.<sup>46</sup> EMPACT draws participants from all vulnerable populations and applies a gender lens by targeting female youth for enrolment.<sup>47</sup> World Vision’s education programming, including EMPACT, reaches nearly 100,000 beneficiaries annually. Around 50% of beneficiaries are girls/women for the education programming, even though EMPACT targeted 60% of beneficiaries being women.<sup>48</sup>

**Table 7. EMPACT Project**

Youth Beneficiaries, 2019	Governorates	Community Composition	Gender Composition
1,455 Salah al-Din Kirkuk	Ninewa Duhok Erbil	50% Syrian refugees 25% IDPs 25% Host Communities	40% Male 60% Female

Sources: World Vision Iraq Annual Report 2019; EMPACT Project Proposal 2021

World Vision’s WASH assistance programmes are likewise centred in the Erbil, Duhok and Sulaymaniyah governorates, although projects have also been undertaken in Ninewa and Kirkuk. In the past, World Vision has worked with local water authorities to rehabilitate water treatment plants and improve water supply, moving towards nexus-style programming by establishing new water sources through boreholes serving both camp populations and host communities in order to ensure continuity through improved local capacity while simultaneously building social cohesion. In addition, in 2019, World Vision introduced child-focused hygiene promotion and water conservation at a regional scale in partnership with the Sesame Workshop. The Access to Safe Clean Water for Children Project is an example of World Vision’s WASH interventions, providing access to safe water for more than 86,000 people annually in nearly 14,500 households among returnee and IDP communities in the Ninewa Governorate.<sup>49</sup> Overall, World Vision’s WASH programming in Iraq reaches more than 210,000 beneficiaries.<sup>50</sup>

World Vision’s health intervention in Iraq focuses on primary healthcare (PHC), providing comprehensive PHC services through approximately 100,000 consultations annually.<sup>51</sup> In addition to comprehensive PHC services, World Vision incorporates a nexus-oriented programme approach aimed at strengthening local systems, includes the provision of specialised training for local Department of Health nurses, doctors and midwives to bridge skills gaps as well as mental health services. In particular, World Vision works with vulnerable populations across Ninewa, Anbar and Salah al Din, who witnessed direct conflict with ISIL.<sup>52</sup> Through specialised and nonspecialised mental health services, World Vision works to improve mental health issues arising due to the violence and human rights violations experienced during the conflict with ISIL. World Vision’s health programming in Iraq reaches more than 30,000 beneficiaries.<sup>53</sup>

World Vision has also moved to link humanitarian programming to long-term livelihood interventions, which have reached nearly 33,000 people, with an emphasis on engaging youth.<sup>54</sup> World Vision has leveraged its long-term community presence and investment in local communities to establish durable livelihoods interventions since 2014, and while COVID 19 has exacerbated immediate need, ongoing programming continues to move from lifesaving relief to longer-term solutions as the pandemic abates. The more than 4.8 million returnees and the 1.2 million IDPs that remain deterred from returning home are primarily challenged by the absence of sustainable livelihoods and employment opportunities that has left them dependent



on humanitarian assistance, ultimately forcing many to incur high levels of debt or sell off assets, and still others into secondary displacement. World Vision’s livelihoods programming in Iraq focuses on supporting micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), providing access to financial services for business rehabilitation and expansion as well as vocational and business education necessary to build inclusive, market-driven linkages in the areas with high numbers of IDPs and returnees.<sup>55</sup> The Sustainable Livelihoods and Economic Recovery programme funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provides a number of long-term interventions, including skills-development training and job-placement opportunities.<sup>56</sup> Since 2020, World Vision has begun comprehensive microeconomic development interventions through support from the Australian NGO Cooperation Programme (ANCP).<sup>57</sup> ANCP is a unique development programme that provides multiyear funding to a select group of effective NGOs. Its allocation of long-term livelihoods funding to World Vision Iraq programming was a result of successful advocacy by World Vision Australia with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia to have Iraq included as a location for longer-term development funding.

# 3.

## Enabling factors for successful work to strengthen the nexus programming and its positive impact on the Iraqi Population

### 1. Long-term community presence and investment in local capacity to improve the durability of solutions

World Vision’s ‘commitment to stay, deliver and address community needs year on year, often requiring a delicate balance of mixing humanitarian and development donor funds and internal resources, has helped build significant trust.’<sup>58</sup> In Iraq, World Vision works to build partnerships with stakeholders including local government, community leaders, religious leaders; and across cross-cutting groups including cultural minorities, women, youth and people living with disabilities. Often this can take the form of building capacities of local authorities and local civil-society actors including project implementation committees who are empowered in a number of ways to influence not only the design and implementation of the projects but to also to be able to work with local authorities to realise other issues of common interest.

World Vision staff noted that faith, irrespective of denomination, is typically an entry point for building trust with and access at the community level. This has been paramount as World Vision has expanded into more medium- and long-term development programming, with projects like the UNDP-funded Sustainable Livelihoods and Economic Recovery intervention in Ninewa. This project was developed after substantial context mapping to enable inclusive integration across marginalised communities in order to build sustainable livelihoods, or ‘making markets work for the poor.’<sup>59</sup> World Vision staff stressed that deepening the investments from short-term humanitarian assistance to longer-term livelihoods has been instrumental to the success of interventions past the project implementation period, with even short-term programming emphasising the long-term nature of the organisation’s commitment.

Building trust across a wide spectrum of partners has enabled World Vision to programme across the humanitarian and development spectrum, and savvy relationship building among local leadership has enabled the organisation to venture into limited social cohesion programming, albeit indirectly. While both the GoI and KRI governments are sensitive to explicit peacebuilding interventions, especially when undertaken by international NGOs, World Vision has had success with facilitating social cohesion through

programming that creates shared, longer-term objectives among vulnerable communities. Staff noted that this was evidenced on a previously completed women’s economic empowerment project that jointly engaged diverse communities in a savings group. Ultimately, World Vision benefits from its long-term engagement and localisation strategies, ensuring programmatic durability by reflecting societal needs rather than elementarily targeting local communities for interventions.

### 2. Partnerships with local and international organisations create opportunities for coordinated programming across nexus challenges

As one of the largest multi-mandate organisations globally, World Vision has been able to leverage its position to coordinate across cluster programming to better enable nexus objectives. World Vision works with multiple local and international organisations to deliver programmes that are effective and reach the most vulnerable communities.



In Iraq, World Vision is among WFP’s largest partners, implementing 90% of the organisation’s cash and voucher programming for both refugees and IDPs.<sup>60</sup> Serving as a primary WFP partner has better enabled World Vision to coordinate across clusters, enabling nexus objectives by connecting humanitarian assistance for vulnerable populations with long-term development programming like the livelihoods-oriented EMPACT project.

Moreover, World Vision’s global scale allows the World Vision office in Iraq to take advantage of global opportunities, obtaining access to more flexible funding via coordination with international World Vision offices focused on donor engagement. As programming has increasingly been oriented toward development objectives, World Vision has leveraged funding from private donations across its global network of offices in countries such as Australia, the United States, Canada and Germany, accounting for 40% of the 2019 budget.<sup>61</sup> These donations have been especially useful in piloting programmes that have research components to demonstrate expertise and success in nexus programming. For example, the Women’s Economic Empowerment programme in West Mosul resulted in some very good results in reestablishing women’s livelihoods.<sup>62</sup>

World Vision also works with local NGOs across a number of sectors including education, child protection and WASH and ensures that the opportunity for mutual learning is maximised for both staff and our partners. World Vision shares its experience but also invests in building the capacity of local partners and committees to help ensure longer-term sustainability of programme impacts. World Vision in Iraq has also effectively partnered with faith leaders to reach more local communities with messaging about several issues, including around COVID-19, and works through faith leaders to reduce violence against children and promote social cohesion where possible and appropriate based on World Vision’s existing programmes.

### 3. Robust advocacy generates opportunities for a holistic response through flexible project and funding parameters

Successful advocacy has enabled World Vision to access more sustainable, flexible, multiyear and multi-sectoral funding required in fragile contexts like Iraq. Beginning in 2020, Iraq was included in the Australia Government’s ANCP’s Partnership Agreement, which allocates funding for cross-cutting livelihoods projects over five-year periods and will focus on women’s economic empowerment in the Ninewa Governorate. The ANCP’s Partnership Agreement is the exception to the short-term funding norm that generates a nexus gap between humanitarian and development objectives. World Vision’s access to this funding source reflects the broad advocacy efforts of the international organisation and its country offices. World Vision staff stressed that Iraq’s inclusion in the ANCP framework was the result of World Vision’s advocacy in Australia, its robust relationship with the Australian government and its ability to advocate successfully that the Iraq context merited long-term development funding.



# 4.

## Barriers to successful work to strengthen the Nexus

### 1. Funding shortfalls produce challenges across the nexus spectrum

#### 1.1 Funding silos between humanitarian and development donors create gaps in funding

**Table 8. World Vision Yearly Funding in Iraq**

World Vision Yearly Funding in Iraq (Cash Income)		
Year*	Total Budget US\$	% Change
2018	17,286,312	
2019	12,815,240	-25.9%
2020	11,200,000	-12.6%
2021	11,144,009	-0.5%

\*World Vision Fiscal Year ends September 30  
 Source: World Vision Annual Reports 2018, 2019, 2020; World Vision Situation Reports 2021

World Vision’s work in Iraq demonstrates that closing the gap between humanitarian and development donor policies and funding is essential to bridging the nexus between humanitarian and development interventions. In a humanitarian context there is rapid and responsive funding available on a short-term basis for prescriptive lifesaving interventions. However, as humanitarian interventions phase out, funding drastically decreases, creating a ‘nexus gap’ for organisations that can work across the humanitarian/development continuum, like World Vision.

Although the COVID 19 pandemic has temporarily reoriented immediate needs in Iraq, the transition back towards long-term development amidst a protracted displacement crisis has produced a sizable decline in available funding. World Vision’s budget declined from US\$17.3 million in 2018 to US\$12.8 million in 2019 (see Table 8).<sup>63</sup> Although funding for livelihoods programming increased nearly 50% over the year, funding for humanitarian interventions across the UN Clusters declined considerably, with the Health Cluster facing a decline of nearly 74.4% (see Table 9).<sup>64</sup>

Despite the precarity generated by COVID-19, humanitarian funding for 2021 declined further to \$11.14 million (see Table 8).<sup>65</sup> Rather than adapting humanitarian funding modalities to transition into longer-term approaches associated with sustainable development, donors have increasingly lost interest in Iraq since the cessation of conflict with ISIL, generating a sizable funding gap that has not been addressed by bridge-style nexus funding or by development funding targeting vulnerable populations. While World Vision staff expressed confidence in their ability to attract new funds and have demonstrably done so (see growth in livelihoods budget in Table 8), the immediate funding gap reflects inconsistency between humanitarian and development donor policies.

The trend of humanitarian responses being underfunded within World Vision is in line with the wider humanitarian financial overview for Iraq. In 2021, the Humanitarian Response Plan, which identified US\$607 million worth of needs, was only 62% funded, down from 2020, when 92% of the US\$662 million required was funded.

**Table 9. World Vision Yearly Funding by Cluster**

World Vision Yearly Funding by Cluster (US\$)								
Year*	Food Security	% change	WASH	% change	Health	% change	Livelihoods	% change
2018	2,247,221		2,420,084		4,148,715		2,074,357	
2019	2,510,905	11.7%	2,086,594	-13.8%	1,062,465	-74.4%	3,001,702	44.7%
2020	3,602,195	43.5%	1,796,204	-13.9%	1,747,687	64.5%	2,351,284	-21.7%
2021	3,912,629	8.6%	785,141	-56.3%	1,322,688	-24.3%	3,979,523	69.3%

\*World Vision Fiscal Year ends September 30  
 Source: World Vision Annual Reports 2018, 2019, 2020 and World Vision Situation Reports 2021 and 2022

## 1.2 Shifting priorities within government and international organisations limit immediate assistance for vulnerable communities

As priorities in Iraq have moved away from humanitarian assistance and towards long-term development, the breadth of assistance for vulnerable returnees – especially the more than 1.2 million Iraqis that remain displaced – has declined. Throughout the conflict with ISIL, IDP households relied on assistance from the Iraqi Ministry of Migration and Displacement and international humanitarian organisations. However, the changing priorities of the GoI and the international organisations have created a gap in support for households that remain displaced. According to evidence gathered by IOM across urban contexts in the GoI and KRI, 'IDPs reported a concurrent decline in receiving aid and a drop in their ability to meet their basic needs, send children to school and get medical care, among other things. IDPs and returnees felt this shift in funding priorities acutely in their ability to meet their basic needs.'<sup>66</sup> World Vision staff highlighted that the organisation's work has reflected this shift, with a steady reduction in overall beneficiary reach, including a shift in the sectoral focus of programming. From 2018 to 2019, the total number of World Vision programming beneficiaries declined by 40%, from 978,362 to 586,736.<sup>67</sup> However, with 82% of IDPs reporting that they did not have any savings left and 63% reporting that they had recently borrowed money nearly three years after the conclusion of military conflict, the ability to create durable solutions to displacement remains challenged by a shortfall of immediate assistance and lack of national policies geared towards supporting the specific needs of the displaced and most vulnerable populations amidst shifting priorities.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, the COVID 19 pandemic has only increased the scale of need among vulnerable returnees and IDPs, with some 2.4 million people in acute need in 2021, compared to 1.8 million in 2020.<sup>69</sup>

## 2. Deteriorating economic conditions impede prospects for place-of-origin interventions across urban settings

The sharp decline in oil prices in 2020 and the economic challenges spawned by the COVID 19 pandemic present a substantial hurdle to the durability of livelihoods solutions as the recovery of the economy will take time. The formal employment landscape in Iraq is driven by oil dependency and a large public sector, which accounted for 14.7% of national wages in 2019. Thousands lost their income, so while prices are recovering, job availability is recovering more slowly.<sup>70</sup> Given the underdevelopment of Iraq's private sector and limited opportunities for formal employment outside of government, worsening economic conditions challenge the ability of livelihoods interventions to connect beneficiaries to the job market. World Vision's Sustainable Livelihoods and Economic Recovery programme implemented in partnership with UNDP and funded by KfW and BMZ has among its expected objectives the creation of business opportunities and job placements for youth. However, with youth unemployment already high, World Vision's ability to

generate linkages to the formal private sector will be further challenged by the economic environment.

Urban areas with high concentrations of poor IDPs are challenged by a dearth of viable employment opportunities, making them prone to migrate.<sup>71</sup> The destruction of local economies during ISIL's occupation of Northern Iraq has had a negative effect on IDPs' decision to return home, especially for those working in agriculture and services whose assets were destroyed.<sup>72</sup> As noted from survey data collected by IOM, 'Working for daily wages, the most common form of work in displacement amongst all respondents, is often not available in their place of origin. The unreliability of money earned through daily wages, even if only a few days a month ... was seen as more sustainable in the places of displacement.'<sup>73</sup> Indeed, lack of livelihood opportunities at place of origin is a primary reason cited by non-camp IDPs for failure to return, along with insufficient funds to rebuild damaged housing.<sup>74</sup> Only 25% of IDPs work in the same job sector as they did prior to displacement, creating additional volatility in finding employment while in displacement.<sup>75</sup> The dislocation of vulnerable populations and their movement in an effort to access services challenges the ability of World Vision to deliver consistent programming. World Vision staff also noted that this mobility precludes an accurate understanding of the effectiveness of interventions, presents a challenge to programming and deters long-term commitment among result-oriented donors.

## 3. Government disengagement limits scope of interventions and creates impediments to programming across the nexus

World Vision's programming has been geographically and programmatically constrained while the organisation continues to build a relationship with the GoI. With the recent change of government, there is a marked effort by the Iraqi federal government systematically and consistently to engage with international humanitarian organisations, although given COVID 19 and a multitude of issues, these efforts are progressing slowly. Faced with widespread insecurity and instability, the GoI is facing challenges in assuming a significant share of the country's recovery burden, which adversely affects international organisations' ability to adopt new approaches and the coordination of beneficiary targeting.<sup>76</sup>

Access challenge across the country for humanitarian actors is also an ongoing limitation on all programming due to a complex combination of political and organisational challenges, including the nascent and developing relationship between the GoI and the international community, as mentioned above; divergent priorities for aid and recovery; high operational costs; and a legacy of risk aversion by organisations.<sup>77</sup>

Delivering aid to IDPs in Iraq has also become more challenging since 2018 as IDP camp closures and consolidation in GoI territory without adequate planning on durable solutions for the displaced populations have led



to thousands of people moving into informal settlements which do not provide adequate basic services or any livelihoods opportunities.<sup>78</sup> The closure of these camps has created secondary displacement across fragile urban contexts, exacerbating housing challenges and creating protection concerns for the 40% of in-camp IDPs in female-headed households.<sup>79</sup>

The Gol and KRI are also not very supportive of third parties' peacebuilding efforts. Both national and regional governments have been faced with increased civil unrest and protests in their territories, and trust in the federal government is low among all Iraqis.<sup>80</sup> COVID 19 has only exacerbated these deep-rooted challenges by introducing economic fragility, straining the fractured relationship between the Gol and the semi-autonomous KRI.<sup>81</sup> Faced with severe sensitivity to peacebuilding efforts, World Vision programming along this nexus spectrum has been constrained, limited to social cohesion efforts pursued only indirectly with accommodating local partners. The absence of explicit peacebuilding efforts creates a significant nexus gap in urban programming, as ethno-religious and political tensions at the community level impede the durability of interventions, especially for IDPs.<sup>82</sup>

#### 4. Transitioning across nexus objectives reveals non-alignment and structural challenges

World Vision's adoption of the nexus framework for its programming in Iraq has not eliminated the existence of well-identified institutional challenges across the nexus spectrum. While the framework aims to bridge the divides across humanitarian, development and peacebuilding objectives, World Vision staff highlighted the persistence of an emergency-oriented perspective despite the transition toward long-term programming. The continued operation from a humanitarian-centric perspective, which relies on the existing humanitarian cluster system established by the United Nations and employed by humanitarian organisations like World Vision, can act as a barrier to a move towards a more developmental orientation because there is no other system for coordination to replace this readily. This results in the perpetuation of siloed humanitarian/development cultures and a continued emergency-oriented perspective, reducing the effectiveness of meeting changing needs that can be enabled by an integrated nexus approach.<sup>83</sup>

# 5.

## Conclusion and recommendations

Despite the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic, Iraq finds itself at a crossroads. COVID-19 deepened humanitarian needs while humanitarian funding and policies were shrinking with an intention to shift towards a more developmental approach. In 2021, this was further complicated by the drought which is now fuelling even more secondary displacement as well as loss of livelihoods. Thus, following a crippling struggle with ISIL and the recent contraction of the oil-dependent economy and a drought, the country's long-term challenges remain immense. To date, more than 4.8 million Iraqis have returned to their areas of origin, while more than 1.2 million IDPs remain deterred from returning home, in addition to the 250,000 Syrian refugees currently in Iraqi territory. The complex nature of the deep-rooted and long-term challenges Iraq now faces ever more so requires working at the nexus of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding action to improve the lives of vulnerable children, women and men living in fragile urban contexts.

The policy context in Iraq has demonstrated that nexus linkages between humanitarian and development work are possible, and when effective they have the potential to improve outcomes for vulnerable communities. Still, this progress alone is inadequate for cementing sustained change, and World Vision is committed to engaging in the country long term through its sustained commitment to local partners and coordination with UN/government and all parties who have a role to play in allowing parallel nexus programming to exist and be effectively funded. World Vision is dedicated to fostering durable solutions for displaced communities and will continue to leverage the global scope of its network to advocate for policies that can improve the lives of vulnerable people in Iraq. The following recommendations are based on World Vision's experience in Northern Iraq and are meant to contribute to ongoing efforts to operationalise the nexus at scale in the country.

### 1. Funding and financing

- **The Gol and the KRI should:**
  - Provide funding to meet immediate needs and focus on assistance for housing infrastructure rehabilitation essential to establishing durable place-of-origin solutions. This requires that IDPs be integrated into the national response plan for funding.<sup>84</sup>
- **Donor agencies and international financial institutions should:**
  - Provide flexible, multiyear and multi-sectoral programme funding in line with Grand Bargain commitments and the OECD's DAC

*Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, especially to local organisations.*

- Extend the timeframe of humanitarian assistance to ensure that the immediate needs of IDPs and vulnerable communities continue to be met as interventions reorient toward durable solutions for displaced communities and development-focused programming.
- **World Vision and likeminded organisations should:**
  - Highlight existing funding sources, like the ANCP Partnership Agreement, that demonstrate successful and flexible mechanisms for future donor support.
  - Continue to collect evidence of successful nexus approaches and highlight them as best practice to donors, financial institutions and all other stakeholders.

### 2. Partnerships, prioritisation and planning

- **The Gol and the KRI should:**
  - Suspend premature closure of the remaining IDP camps and partner with international and national humanitarian actors to pursue durable solutions for in-camp and non-camp IDPs as well as vulnerable returnees.
  - Prioritise the restoration of housing and livelihoods infrastructure, including improving the functioning of food markets, in light of the primacy of economic concerns of returnees and the displaced in a highly urbanised environment.
- **Donor agencies and international financial institutions should:**
  - Engage in policy dialogue at the national level to improve policy implementation in Gol-controlled governorates. By partnering with the Gol, donor agencies and the broader international community can 'cultivate an environment enabling an inclusive national approach to social cohesion'.<sup>85</sup>
  - Work with local organisations as idea generators, not simply as implementers of funding policies developed by donor agencies and international NGOs.
  - Establish funding criteria for partners, in line with UNDP recommendations, that prioritise programmes that demonstrate an integrated approach to fragility and that are based on

analysis across the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding spectrum.<sup>86</sup>

particularly with regard to allowing for more robust programming around social cohesion efforts.

• **International organisations should:**

- Strengthen the coordination and collaboration role to build alliances with other humanitarian stakeholders in order to work more effectively toward goals across the nexus.
- Partner with organisations on research to better understand place-of-displacement dimensions, as existing research indicates that many IDPs are unlikely to return to their areas of origin.
- Work with local organisations, community elders and faith leaders to reach out across the nexus to those who have a longer-term stake in the context.

• **International organisations should:**

- Continue with area-based approaches in urban fragile contexts that employ cross-cutting interventions targeting displaced populations, including refugees, returnees, IDPs, as well as host communities who are seeing their services and opportunities further stretch as returnees come back to the areas.
- Focus on conducting comprehensive labour-needs assessments to ensure that programming interventions are market oriented, geared toward enabling vulnerable populations to 'resume their pre-displacement jobs or find employment in other sectors.'<sup>87</sup> Comprehensive context analysis is essential to ensuring that programming reinforces, rather than disrupts, existing systems.

**3. Programming approaches**

• **Donor agencies and international financial institutions should:**

- Work with the GoI and the KRI to improve policy implementation and coordination across the nexus,



## Key informants

1. Elise Nalbandian – Advocacy and Communications Manager, World Vision Iraq
2. Enest Shoniwa – Head of Operations, World Vision Iraq
3. Kevin Mugenya – Livelihoods and Economic Development Technical Advisor, World Vision Iraq
4. Vanessa Forrest – Senior Program Officer (Grant Acquisition Management), World Vision Iraq
5. Reed Power – Program Officer (Grant Acquisition Management), World Vision Iraq
6. Esmat Sadeeq – West Zonal Manager, World Vision Iraq
7. Dr. Haveen Abdulmajeed – Program Manager, Voice of Older People & Family
8. Salah Hasan – Mosul Program Manager, Al-Ghad League for Woman & Child Care
9. Andrew Meaux – Governance Technical Advisor, International Rescue Committee

## Projects analysed

1. Refugees, Cash-Based Infusion with WFP (Jan–Dec 2021)
2. IDPs, Cash Based Infusion with WFP (Jan–Dec 2021)
3. Faith and Development Response for COVID 19
4. Child Protection in Emergency in West Mosul for COVID 19, Violence, Mental Health
5. Strengthening Healthcare Systems through Sustainable Capacity Building in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq
7. Responding to the Critical Mental Health and Psychosocial Support and Protection Needs of the Crisis Affected Population in Zummar, Ninewa Governorate
8. Clean Water in Ninewa (Proctor & Gamble and World Vision)
9. EMPACT through Money Transfer Agency to Syrian Refugees, IDPs and Host Communities
10. Safe Return(s) to Ninewa (ANCP)
11. Sustainable Livelihoods and Economic Recovery in Til Kaif and Ninewa (UNDP)
12. Enhancing Resilience in Kirkuk and Ninewa Communities through Livelihoods Support and Strengthened Social Cohesion

## Acronyms

ANCP	Australian NGO Cooperation Programme
COVID-19	coronavirus disease
EMPACT	World Food Programme-funded Empowerment in Action Programme
FCPA	Fragile Contexts Programme Approach (World Vision)
Gol	Federal Government of Iraq
IDP	internally displaced person
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
MSME	micro, small and medium enterprise
MMT	Mobile Money Transfer
MTA	Money Transfer Agent
NGO	nongovernmental organisation
OCHA	Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (United Nations)
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
PHC	primary healthcare
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WASH	water, sanitation and hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> OECD, "DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus," OECD/LEGAL/5019.
- <sup>2</sup> FCPA pilot countries: Afghanistan, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Iraq, Mali, Mexico, South Sudan.
- <sup>3</sup> Humanitarian organisations including international nongovernmental organisations, local nongovernmental organisations and the UN work in various sectors of humanitarian assistance and use the cluster system to coordinate activities and plan joint programming.
- <sup>4</sup> For additional context on pandemic-related constraints to nexus research, see FAO, Development Initiatives and Norwegian Refugee Council, "Development Actors at the Nexus: Lessons from Crises in Bangladesh, Cameroon and Somalia," Synthesis Report (Rome: March 30, 2021), <http://www.fao.org/3/cb3835en/cb3835en.pdf>.
- <sup>5</sup> World Bank, "Iraq," World Bank Open Data, n.d., <https://data.worldbank.org/country/IQ>.
- <sup>6</sup> OECD, "States of Fragility 2020," (2020), [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/states-of-fragility-2020\\_ba7c22e7-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/states-of-fragility-2020_ba7c22e7-en).
- <sup>7</sup> Barbara-Anne Krijgsman et al., "Impact of the Oil Crisis and COVID-19 on Iraq's Fragility," (UNDP, August 2020), [https://iraq.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/undp\\_iq\\_impact\\_of\\_the\\_oil\\_crisis\\_and\\_covid\\_19\\_on\\_iraq\\_fragility.pdf](https://iraq.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/undp_iq_impact_of_the_oil_crisis_and_covid_19_on_iraq_fragility.pdf).
- <sup>8</sup> OCHA, "Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq," Humanitarian Programme Cycle 2021 (OCHA, February 2021), <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Iraq%20Humanitarian%20Needs%20Overview%20%28February%202021%29.pdf>.
- <sup>9</sup> IOM, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), "Demographic Survey: Kurdistan Region of Iraq," Demographic Survey, July 2018, [https://iraq.iom.int/files/KRSO\\_IOM\\_UNFPA\\_Demographic\\_Survey\\_Kurdistan\\_Region\\_of\\_Iraq.pdf](https://iraq.iom.int/files/KRSO_IOM_UNFPA_Demographic_Survey_Kurdistan_Region_of_Iraq.pdf).
- <sup>10</sup> UNHCR, "Iraq January 2021," Fact Sheet (UNHCR, January 2021), <https://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/UNHCR%20Iraq%20fact%20sheet%20January%202021.pdf>.
- <sup>11</sup> IOM, UNFP, "Demographic Survey: Kurdistan Region of Iraq."
- <sup>12</sup> UNHCR, "Iraq January 2021," and UNHCR, "UNHCR Country Portfolio Evaluation: Iraq," Evaluation Report (UNHCR, August 2020), <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/research/evalreports/5f6df4a04/unhcr-iraq-country-portfolio-evaluation.html>.
- <sup>13</sup> OCHA, "Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq" and UNHCR, "Iraq January 2021".
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>15</sup> World Vision, "Making Sense of the City," 2016, <https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/Making%20Sense%20of%20the%20City-Revised-FINAL.pdf> and World Vision, "World Vision's Cities for Children Framework," accessed 13, 2021 [https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/Cities%20For%20Children%20Summary\\_Final.pdf](https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/Cities%20For%20Children%20Summary_Final.pdf)
- <sup>16</sup> World Bank Group, "Iraq Reconstruction and Investment Part 2: Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates," January 2018, <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/600181520000498420/pdf/123631-REVISED-Iraq-Reconstruction-and-Investment-Part-2-Damage-and-Needs-Assessment-of-Affected-Governorates.pdf>
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup> World Vision Iraq, "Responding to the Critical Mental Health and Psychosocial Support and Protection Needs of the Crisis Affected Population in Zummar, Ninewa Governorates," (August 2020); and IOM, "Access to Durable Solutions among IDPs in Iraq," (2019).
- <sup>19</sup> OCHA, "Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq."
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>22</sup> UNHCR, "Country Portfolio Evaluation: Iraq."
- <sup>23</sup> OCHA, "Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq."
- <sup>24</sup> World Vision Iraq, "Situation Report: October to December 2020," (December 2020).
- <sup>25</sup> OCHA, "Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq."
- <sup>26</sup> Raad Alkadiri, "Federalism and Iraq's Constitutional Stalemate," (Chatham House, November 2020), <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/2020-11-27-iraq-federalism-alkadiri.pdf.pdf>.
- <sup>27</sup> World Bank Group, "Breaking Out of Fragility: A Country Economic Memorandum for Diversification and Growth in Iraq," (2020), <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/34416/9781464816376.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y>.
- <sup>28</sup> Maher Chmaytelli and Mustafa Mahmoud, "Iraqi Forces Seize Oil City Kirkuk from Kurds in Bold Advance," Reuters (October 15, 2017), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-kurds-kirkuk/iraqi-forces-seize-oil-city-kirkuk-from-kurds-in-bold-advance-idUSKBN1CK0XL>
- <sup>29</sup> World Bank Group, "Breaking Out of Fragility: A Country Economic Memorandum for Diversification and Growth in Iraq."
- <sup>30</sup> Alkadiri, "Federalism and Iraq's Constitutional Stalemate."
- <sup>31</sup> Arab Barometer, "Arab Barometer V: Iraq Country Report," (2019), [https://www.arabbarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/ABV\\_Iraq\\_Report\\_Public-Opinion\\_2019.pdf](https://www.arabbarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/ABV_Iraq_Report_Public-Opinion_2019.pdf).
- <sup>32</sup> World Bank Group, "Breaking Out of Fragility: A Country Economic Memorandum for Diversification and Growth in Iraq."
- <sup>33</sup> Krijgsman et al., "Impact of the Oil Crisis and COVID-19 on Iraq's Fragility."
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>35</sup> Barbara-Anne Krijgsman and Bryn Welham, "The Impact of COVID-19 on the Iraqi Economy," (UNDP, October 2020).
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Krijgsman et al., "Impact of the Oil Crisis and COVID-19 on Iraq's Fragility."

<sup>40</sup> National Democratic Institute, "Political Distrust and Frustration Mount as Pandemic Impacts Iraq," (January 2021), [https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/NDI%20Iraq%20-%20Political%20Distrust%20Research%20Report%20FINAL%20\\_EN.pdf](https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/NDI%20Iraq%20-%20Political%20Distrust%20Research%20Report%20FINAL%20_EN.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> Displaced populations typically continue to face significant needs after the conclusion of conflict, requiring support regardless of whether they return home or try to integrate elsewhere. Durable solutions for IDPs include their voluntary return home in safety and dignity, local integration elsewhere in country, or resettlement in another country. Durable solutions are achieved 'when internally displaced persons no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement.' UNHCR, "ISAC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons," (April 2010), <https://www.unhcr.org/50f94cd49.pdf>.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> World Vision, "Iraq Situation Report: July to September 2020," (October 2020).

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> World Vision Iraq, "EMPACT Project Proposal," (January 2021).

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> World Vision, "Situation Report: July to September 2020."

<sup>49</sup> World Vision Iraq, "WASH: KRI Summary," (January 2018), <https://www.wvi.org/meero/publication/wash-kri-summary>.

<sup>50</sup> World Vision, "Situation Report: July to September 2020."

<sup>51</sup> World Vision Iraq, "World Vision Iraq Annual Report 2019," (April 2020), <https://www.wvi.org/publications/annual-report/iraq/world-vision-iraq-annual-report-2019>.

<sup>52</sup> World Vision Iraq, "Responding to the Critical Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) and Protection Needs of the Crisis Affected Population in Zummar, Ninewa Governorates."

<sup>53</sup> World Vision, "Situation Report: July to September 2020."

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> World Vision Iraq, "Sustainable Livelihoods and Economic Recovery, Til-Kaif, Ninewa Governorates," (October 2020).

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> World Vision Iraq, "Safe Returns Project: Ninewa," (April 2020).

<sup>58</sup> World Vision, "A Brighter Future for Children: Realising the Nexus in Afghanistan," (November 2020).

<sup>59</sup> World Vision Iraq, "Sustainable Livelihoods and Economic Recovery, Til-Kaif, Ninewa Governorates."

<sup>60</sup> WFP assumed leadership for food assistance programming following the exit of UNHCR, the agency mandated for aiding refugees that served in this role during the height of conflict with ISIL.

<sup>61</sup> World Vision Iraq, "Sustainable Livelihoods and Economic Recovery, Til-Kaif, Ninewa Governorates."

<sup>62</sup> World Vision, "Investing in Women's Economic Empowerment in Iraq," (2021), <https://www.wvi.org/publications/research/iraq/investing-womens-economic-empowerment-iraq>.

<sup>63</sup> World Vision, "World Vision Iraq Annual Report 2019," "World Vision Iraq Annual Report 2020," and World Vision Situation Reports 2021.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> World Vision, "Situation Report: July to September 2020."

<sup>66</sup> IOM, "Access to Durable Solutions among IDPs in Iraq: Unpacking the Policy Implications," (2020), [http://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/DurableSolutions/202011151610653\\_IOM%20Iraq%20Access%20to%20Durable%20Solutions%20Among%20IDPs%20in%20Iraq-Unpacking%20the%20Policy%20Implications.pdf](http://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/DurableSolutions/202011151610653_IOM%20Iraq%20Access%20to%20Durable%20Solutions%20Among%20IDPs%20in%20Iraq-Unpacking%20the%20Policy%20Implications.pdf)

<sup>67</sup> World Vision Iraq, "World Vision Iraq Annual Report 2021," (2019), <https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/Iraq%20A.Report-elec.pdf>; and World Vision Iraq, "World Vision Iraq Annual Report 2019."

<sup>68</sup> World Vision Iraq, "World Vision Iraq Annual Report 2019."

<sup>69</sup> OCHA, "Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq."

<sup>70</sup> Krijgsman and Welham, "The Impact of COVID-19 on the Iraqi Economy."

<sup>71</sup> World Vision, "Making Sense of the City," and World Vision, "World Vision's Cities for Children Framework."

<sup>72</sup> World Bank Group, "Iraq Reconstruction and Investment Part 2: Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates."

<sup>73</sup> IOM, "When Affordability Matters: The Political Economy and Economic Decision Making of Iraqi IDPs." (December 2019), <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/when-affordability-matters-political-economy-and-economic-decision-making-iraqi-idps>.

<sup>74</sup> IOM, "Urban Displacement in Iraq: A Preliminary Analysis," (April 2020), [https://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/DurableSolutions/202056452433\\_iom\\_dtm\\_URBAN\\_DISPLACEMENT\\_IN IRAQ\\_.pdf](https://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/DurableSolutions/202056452433_iom_dtm_URBAN_DISPLACEMENT_IN IRAQ_.pdf)

<sup>75</sup> IOM, "Access to Durable Solutions among IDPs in Iraq: Livelihoods and Economic Security in Displacement," (2020), [https://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/DurableSolutions/2020121389453\\_IOM\\_Iraq\\_Access\\_to\\_Durable\\_Solutions\\_Livelihoods\\_and\\_Economic\\_Security\\_in\\_Displacement.pdf](https://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/DurableSolutions/2020121389453_IOM_Iraq_Access_to_Durable_Solutions_Livelihoods_and_Economic_Security_in_Displacement.pdf)

<sup>76</sup> UNHCR, "UNHCR Country Portfolio Evaluation: Iraq."

<sup>77</sup> CORE, "Humanitarian Access SCORE Report: Iraq – Survey on the Coverage, Operational Reach, and Effectiveness of Humanitarian Aid," (July 2021), [https://www.humanitarianoutcomes.org/sites/default/files/publications/score\\_iraq\\_2021.pdf](https://www.humanitarianoutcomes.org/sites/default/files/publications/score_iraq_2021.pdf)

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> USAID, "Iraq – Complex Emergency," (December 16, 2020), [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2020\\_12\\_16%20USG%20Iraq%20Complex%20Emergency%20Fact%20Sheet%20%231.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2020_12_16%20USG%20Iraq%20Complex%20Emergency%20Fact%20Sheet%20%231.pdf).

<sup>80</sup> World Vision, "Situation Report: July to September 2020."

<sup>81</sup> Andy Mclean and Henry Smith, "Impact of COVID-19 on Social Cohesion in Iraq," (UNDP, November 2020).

<sup>82</sup> IOM, "Protracted Displacement in Iraq: Revisiting Categories of Return Barriers," (January 2021), [http://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/DurableSolutions/2021223411770\\_IOM%20Iraq%20Protracted%20Displacement%20in%20Iraq-%20Revisiting%20Categories%20of%20Return%20Barriers.pdf](http://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/DurableSolutions/2021223411770_IOM%20Iraq%20Protracted%20Displacement%20in%20Iraq-%20Revisiting%20Categories%20of%20Return%20Barriers.pdf).

<sup>83</sup> Tilly Alcayna, "Ready to Change? Building Flexibility into the Triple Nexus," (ALNAP, December 12, 2019), <https://www.alnap.org/help-library/ready-to-change-building-flexibility-into-the-triple-nexus>.

<sup>84</sup> IOM, "Access to Durable Solutions among IDPs in Iraq: Unpacking the Policy Implications."

<sup>85</sup> Mclean and Smith, "Impact of COVID-19 on Social Cohesion in Iraq."

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> IOM, "Access to Durable Solutions among IDPs in Iraq: Unpacking the Policy Implications."



## CONNECT WITH US

### **WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL OFFICES**

Executive Office  
Waterview House  
1 Roundwood Avenue  
Stockley Park Uxbridge  
Middlesex UB11 1FG  
UK  
+44.207.758.2900

### **New York and United Nations Liaison Office**

2nd Floor  
919 2nd Avenue New York  
NY 10017  
USA  
+1.212.355.1779

### **Geneva and United Nations Liaison Office**

Chemin de Balexert 7-9  
Case Postale 545  
CH-1219 Châtelaine  
Switzerland  
+41.22.798.4183

### **Brussels and EU Representation**

18, Square de Meeûs  
1st Floor, Box 2B-1050 Brussels  
Belgium  
+32.2230.1621

[www.wvi.org](http://www.wvi.org)

### **Acknowledgement**

Authors: Dmitry Diment, Nina Nepesova  
Contributors: Kevin Savage, Aline Rahbany  
World Vision Iraq staff: Nicole Peter, Enest Shoniwa, Elise Nalbandian, Vanessa Forrest, Kevin Mugenya, Reed Power, Youssef Mhanna, Richard Mulandi  
Partners: Al-Ghad League for Women and Child Care, Voice of Old People and Family (VOP), Al Messalla Organisation