

United Nations Population Fund
Iraq Country Office



ANNUAL REPORT
2020

*Delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted,
every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled.*



Foreword

In 2020, UNFPA launched its new country programme document (CPD 2020-2024) focused on ensuring reproductive rights of women and young people, and eliminating gender based violence in humanitarian and development context. The country programme directly contributes to the three transformative results of UNFPA: eliminating preventable maternal deaths; zero GBV, and zero unmet needs for family planning.

The new country programme has four outcomes namely sexual reproductive health, adolescents and youth, gender equality and women's empowerment, and population dynamics. This comprehensive approach supports the country in fulfilling the commitments made in Nairobi in 2019.

The first year of the country programme implementation was affected by the COVID19 pandemic. The pandemic touched every community and every family in Iraq but especially the most vulnerable people. The UNFPA team quickly adjusted the programme implementation strategies to the evolving epidemiological situation and emerging challenges to deliver meaningful results. Based on our assessment, ten governorates with the lower development indicators were prioritised for the country programme implementation. They are Anbar, Baghdad, Basra, Dohuk, Erbil, Kirkuk, Nineveh, Qadisiyyah, Salahaddin, Sulaymaniyah.

I am proud of the UNFPA team and our partners who, regardless of the pandemic, reached out to the most vulnerable communities and ensured the provision of services protecting their lives and livelihoods.

This report shows not only the achieved targets and milestones but also the impact of UNFPA efforts on women and girls lives and choices.

I thank all partners who support UNFPA and our efforts in increasing opportunities and choices for women and young people for fulfilling their full potential.

We are confident that we will come closer to realising a world where no

**UNFPA Representative to Iraq
Dr Rita Columbia**



Responding to the humanitarian crisis



Ensuring reproductive rights for all



Empowering young people and adolescent girls



Responding



Ending gender-based violence



Promoting data and evidence-based programming



to the COVID-19 pandemic

UNFPA Iraq's commitments

contributing to the transformative results

End unmet need for FP

45%

of women aged 15-49 use modern contraceptives to prevent unintended pregnancies and exercise their reproductive rights

End preventable maternal deaths

10%

Reduction of adolescent birth rate

End gender-based violence

10%

Reduction in GBV among women and girls aged 15 years and older



Population and development



Census data is fully utilized by policy and decision-makers to fulfil the ICPD POA and achieve the SDGs



Responding to the humanitarian crisis

In 2020, UNFPA provided humanitarian services to beneficiaries in the following governorates: Anbar, Babylon, Baghdad, Dahuk, Diyala, Erbil, Kirkuk, Najaf, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Sulaymaniyah. UNFPA reached **929,418** beneficiaries with humanitarian assistance or **97%** of the targeted **950,000** beneficiaries.

UNFPA delivered its humanitarian assistance through **151** facilities operational in 11 governorates of Iraq. UNFPA allocated for humanitarian needs **\$13,469,555** of which **95%** were utilized.

Provision of Sexual Reproductive Health Services



TARGET
500,000



REACHED
601,491

Under adolescents and youth programme



TARGET
150,095



REACHED
115,870

Under GBV programme



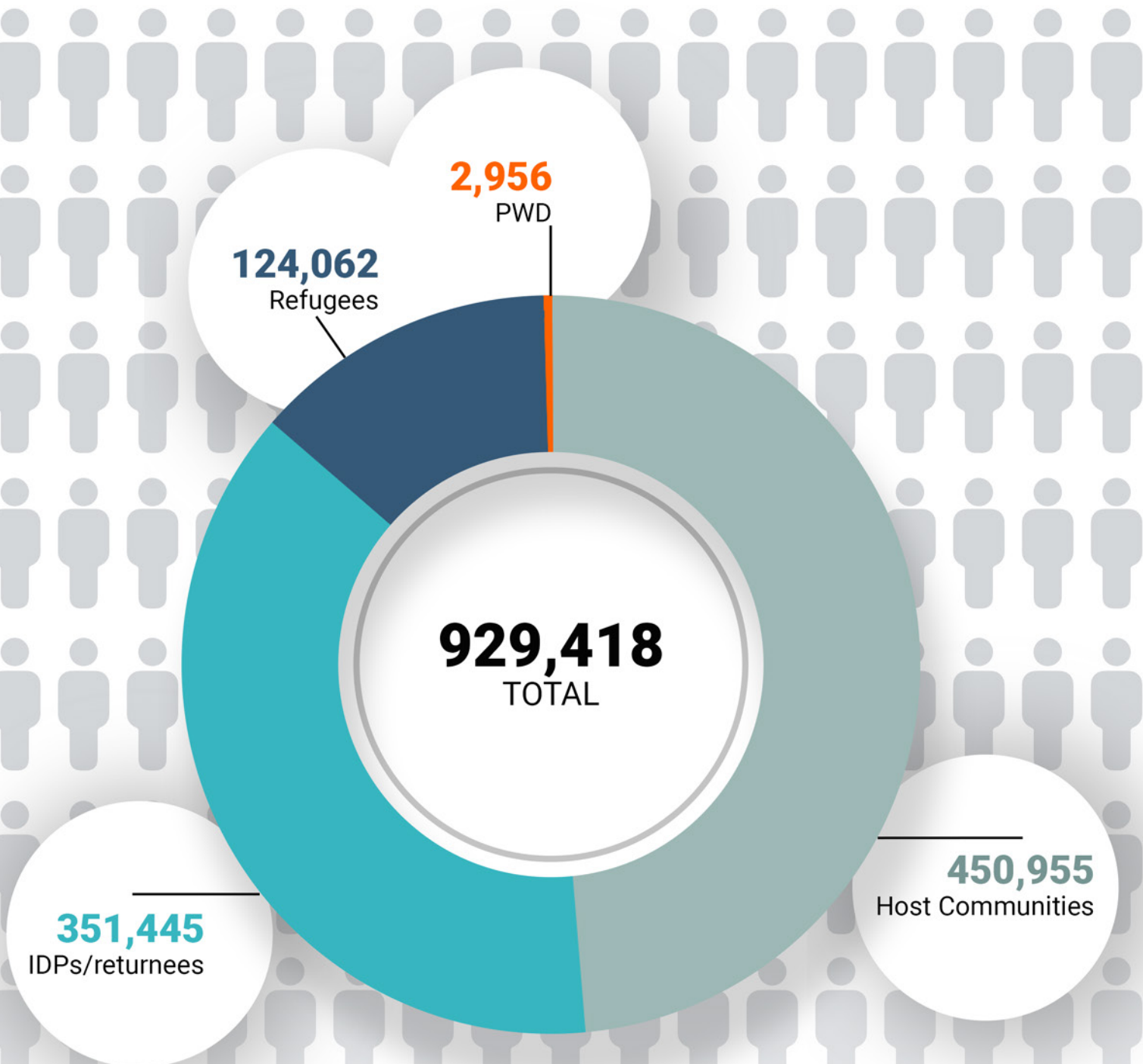
TARGET
300,000



REACHED
318,679

People we serve

Population reached by the humanitarian programme



Beneficiaries belonged to the following population groups: 48% host communities, 38% IDPs and returnees (86% being returnees), 14% refugees from Syria. Majority of refugees reside in Kurdistan region and Ninawa governorate. In 2020, 2,956 persons with disability were reached: 1,411 (47%) with reproductive health services and 1,554 (52%) with GBV services in Erbil, Ninawa, Sulaymaniyah and Diyala Governorates.

Reproductive health

Women and girls received integrated SRH services in ten governorates: Anbar, Babylon, Dahuk, Diyala, Erbil, Kirkuk, Ninawa, Qadissiya, Salahaldin, Sulaymaniyah. UNFPA supported 72 health care facilities in IDP, refugee camps, returnees' areas and host communities.

In 2020, 4,991 normal vaginal deliveries were assisted and 2,181 C/S were performed in these facilities. UNFPA supported CEmONC services in five hospitals (Hammam Al Aleil field hospital, Hawiga, Al Qaim, Dohuk, Zakho and BEmONC services in 7 facilities which include one delivery room in Domiz, one refugee camp, and six facilities out of camps in Ana, Hatra, Baaj, Sinjar, Tal Abta, Yathrib.), in addition to RH clinics in nine refugee and 35 IDP camps were supported. Moreover, UNFPA supported 14 RH clinics and two mobile RH clinics in returnees' areas and in host communities.

To increase access to family planning services for populations affected by emergencies, UNFPA supported family planning services through 13 RH static clinics in Anbar, Ninawa, Kirkuk and Salahaddin, 35 RH clinics in IDP camps and nine RH clinics in refugee camps. These family planning services were provided to 16,356 women, including 1,350 girls (15 to 19 years old).

601,491

Beneficiaries

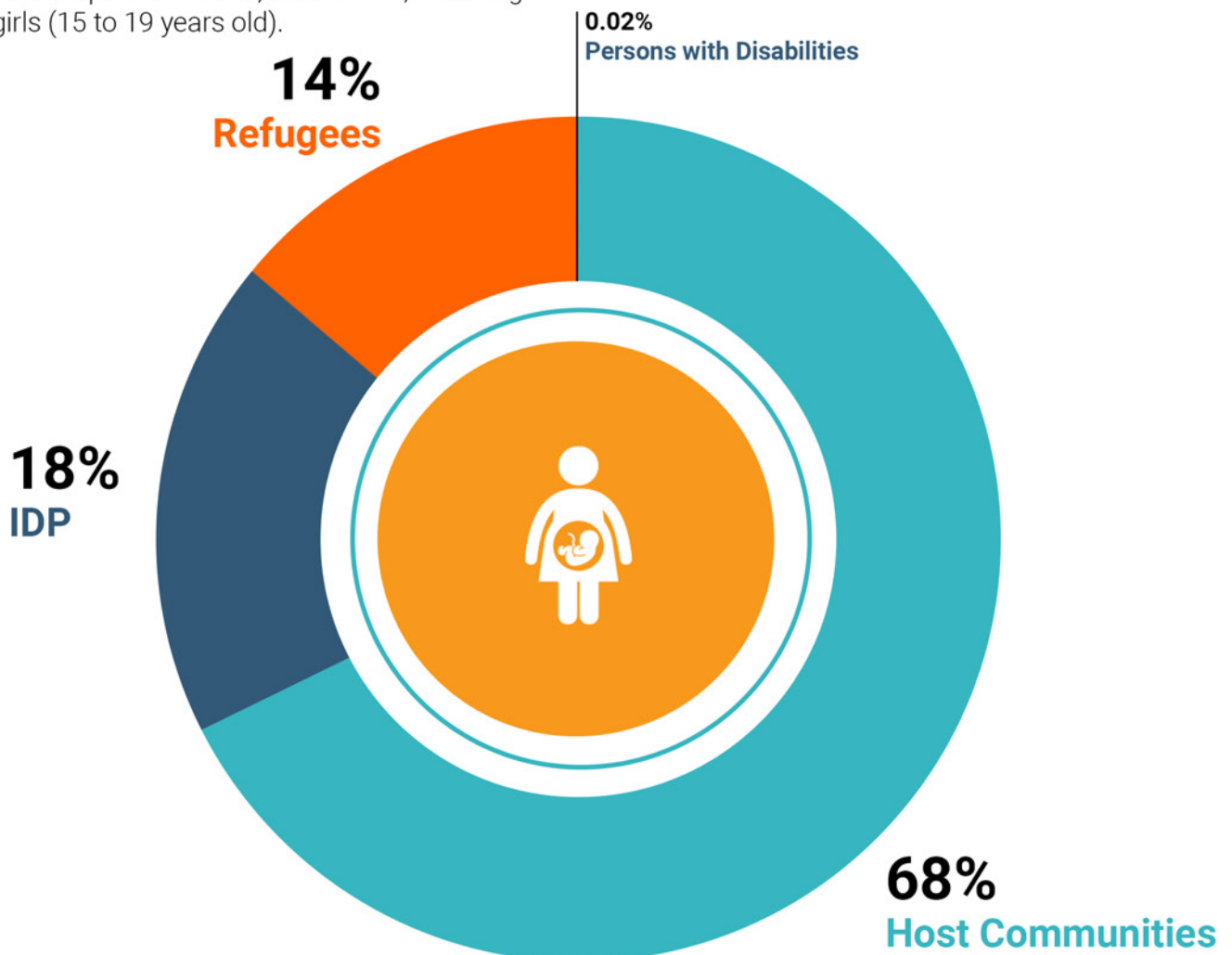
UNFPA led the Interagency RH Working Group for coordination among all stakeholders working on maternal and reproductive health.

In 2020, the reproductive health programme targetted 373,595 women and girls (15-49 years old).

With UNFPA support, 601,491 beneficiaries received reproductive health services and family planning consultations. The majority of beneficiaries were women and girls 92% and men 8%.

Population groups were: Host community and IDPs 86%, and remaining 14% refugees and 0.02% persons with disabilities.

Beneficiaries who received the services



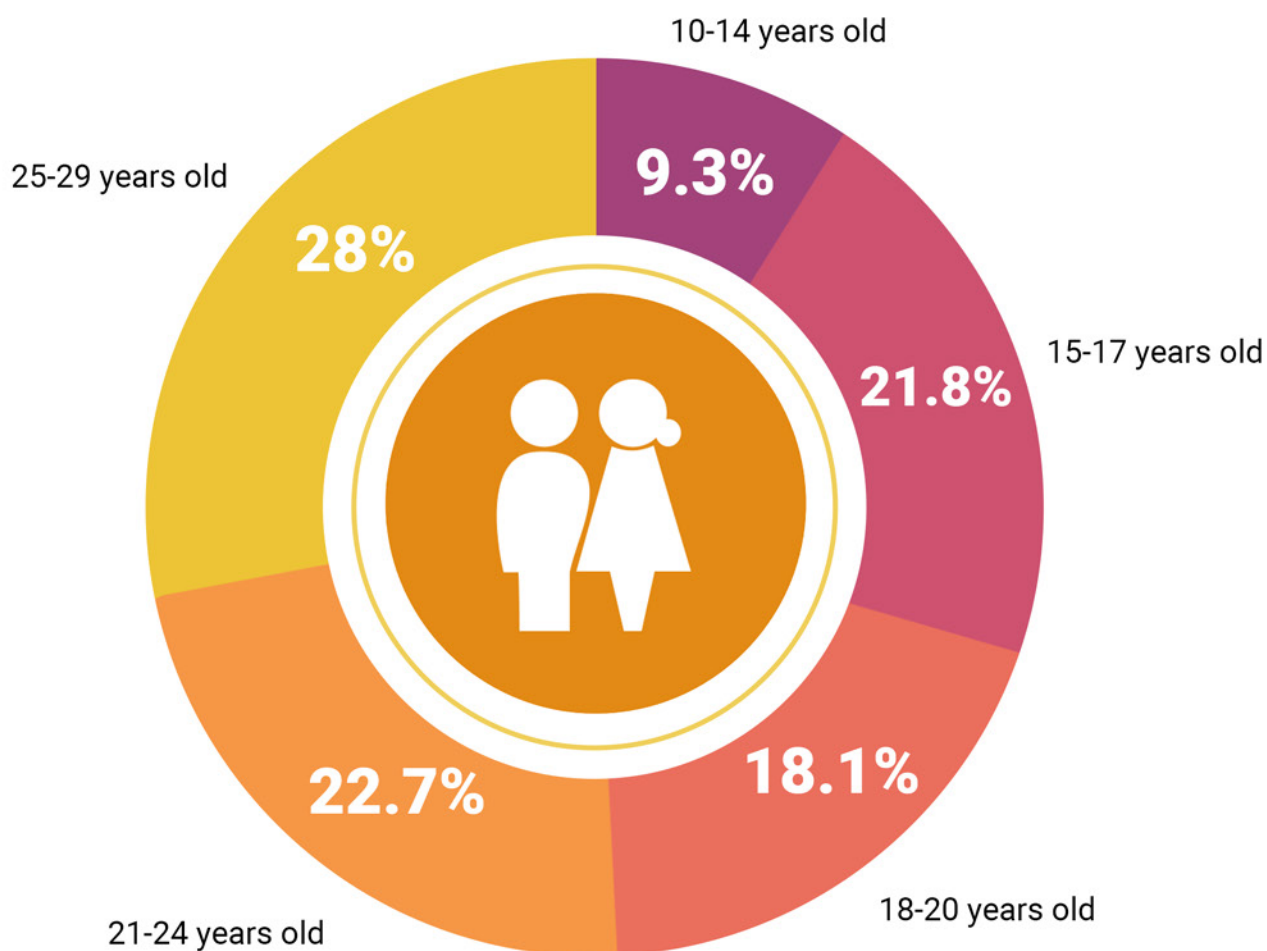
Adolescent and youth

UNFPA empowered adolescents and youth in the host community and refugee camp in Dohuk governorate and IDPs camp in Anbar governorate. The young people received life skills education, counseling services via a national helpline covering the entire country, and built skills in peace building and social cohesion.

55% of youth reached in 2020 were boys while 45% were girls.

17% of the youth reached in 2020 are among refugees while 83% were among the host community.

In 2020, the Adolescent and Youth programme reached **115,870** Beneficiaries, **77%** of the targeted population.



And I was Born Again

Noora was only 12 years old when her family fled Al Hassakah, Syria, looking for shelter in the Duhok governorate of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The living conditions at the camp were difficult and her father could barely make ends meet. He took Noora out of school and sent her younger brother to work to support the family. Three years later, the situation worsened as her father became unemployed.

One day, he received an offer he thought he could not refuse: marry off his daughter to a man 25-years her senior in exchange for a given fee. She was only 15 at the time. Luckily, Noora was a regular at the UNFPA-supported Adolescent Toolkit Programme and was aware of the dangers of child marriage. She begged her father not to give her away to a man she knew was not going to be kind to her. He cried and told her he had no other choice.

“I was desperate, so I decided to get the social worker at the women’s centre to help me”, she explained. Past experiences would prove her right; engaging men and boys in awareness programmes on child marriage and gender-based violence are one of the most effective ways of promoting social progress. The next day, the social worker conducted a home visit to Noora’s family and discussed the dangers and risks of child marriage. She told Noora’s father of her daughter’s immense potential and that she was a gifted artist whose work has amazed plenty at the centre. She told him that if he helps nurture her talent, she would sell her paintings and help him with some income. Towards the end of the conversation, he reluctantly agreed, choosing to invest in his daughter’s future and wellbeing.

Today, Noora takes art classes at the youth centre and, when opportunities arise, she displays and sells her art at various exhibitions.

“Had I been married, my life would have ended, but now, I can see a bright future and dream big,” said Noora.

Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic

The Impact Of COVID-19 on SRH and GBV:

In 2020, UNFPA conducted a Rapid Assessments Survey to identify the impact of COVID-19 on access to SRH services and GBV.

COVID-19 impact on GBV:

- **94% reported an increase in domestic violence perpetrated by a spouse or other family members within the household.**
- **Reduction in GBV response services: 50% for case management, 60% for psychosocial support, and 50% for awareness raising activities, delay of referrals and distribution of dignity kits during lockdown and curfews**
- **Loss of income, harmful social norms or traditional practices**

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) worth US\$ 357,007 were delivered to the Ministry of Health in the Kurdistan Region. This equipment enabled front line health workers to maintain the quality of services while protecting themselves.

Two isolation units were built in Soran and Zakho Maternity Hospitals. These isolation units provide a safe space and quality care for pregnant women with COVID-19 to give birth.

In Garmian and Sulaymaniyah, maternity wards were equipped to improve access and quality of maternal health services.

Response to COVID-19 by UNFPA

300

More than 300 women with COVID-19 received services in the isolation units within three months

124,086

124,086 women and girls received PPE

73,000

73,000 hygiene kits were distributed (masks, gloves and hand sanitisers)

92,932

92,932 young people received information and awareness on COVID-19 and the prevention measures.

Ensuring reproductive rights for all



420

Averted maternal deaths

919,000

Averted unintended pregnancies

203,000

Averted unsafe abortions

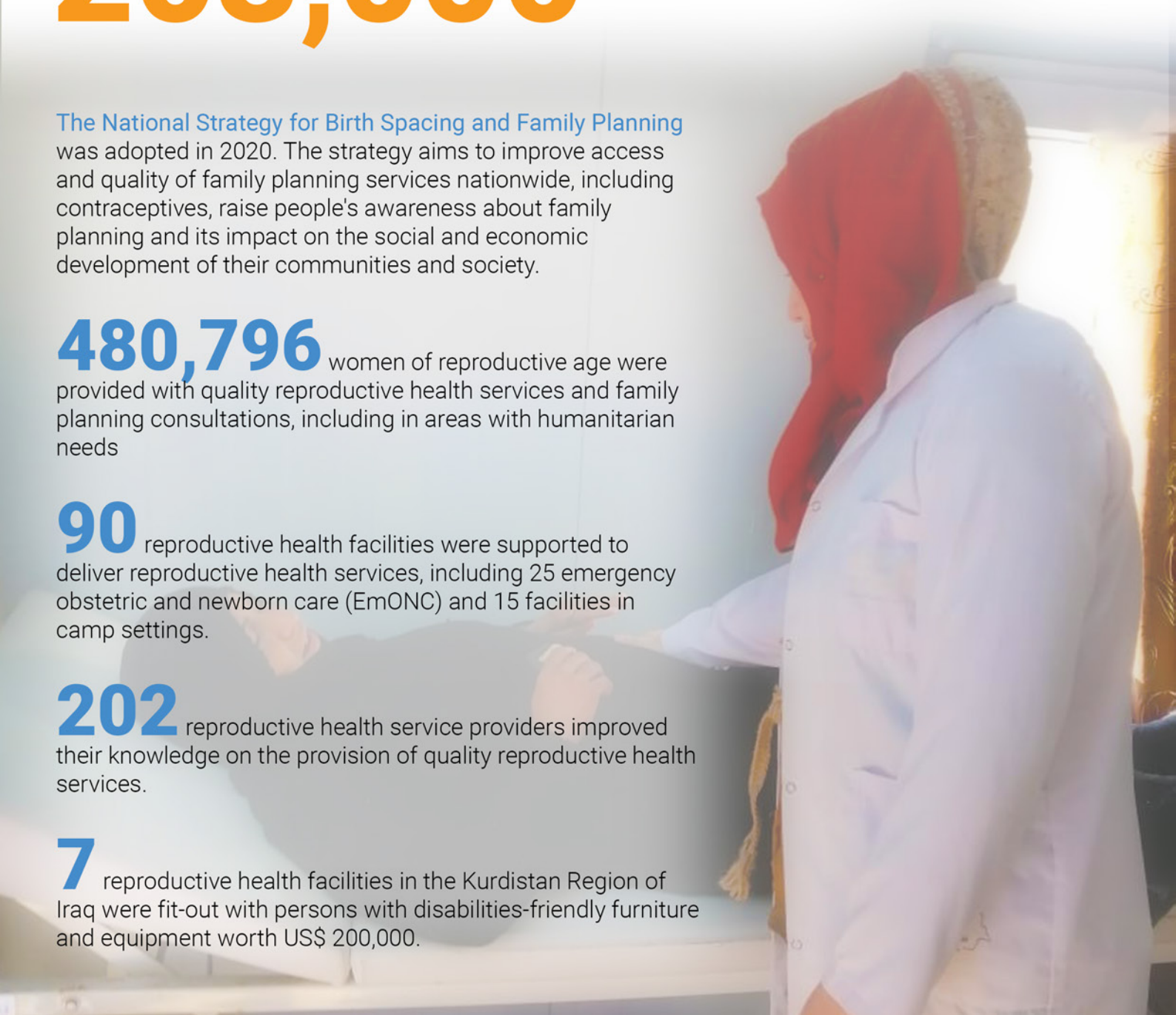
The National Strategy for Birth Spacing and Family Planning was adopted in 2020. The strategy aims to improve access and quality of family planning services nationwide, including contraceptives, raise people's awareness about family planning and its impact on the social and economic development of their communities and society.

480,796 women of reproductive age were provided with quality reproductive health services and family planning consultations, including in areas with humanitarian needs

90 reproductive health facilities were supported to deliver reproductive health services, including 25 emergency obstetric and newborn care (EmONC) and 15 facilities in camp settings.

202 reproductive health service providers improved their knowledge on the provision of quality reproductive health services.

7 reproductive health facilities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq were fit-out with persons with disabilities-friendly furniture and equipment worth US\$ 200,000.



A close-up photograph of a midwife wearing a blue protective suit, a white face mask, and a clear face shield. She is holding a newborn baby who is wearing a white and blue patterned hat and a blue and white outfit. The background is dark and out of focus.

Meet Hawrin, the superhero midwife

“Being a midwife is my calling. I always knew I wanted to help women and girls understand their reproductive rights and help them receive proper reproductive health care, starting with menstruation, pregnancy and reaching menopause,” she said.

“In 2020, a 35-year old pregnant woman comes to our clinic with abdominal pain. After conducting a medical check-up, I understood that she was going through early labour for the last 5 hours and urgently needed to be taken to the maternity hospital in Erbil for an emergency delivery”, she explained.

Hawrin accompanied the mother while she was being transported in the ambulance. On the way, the pain got worse and to save the mother and child’s lives, she needed to conduct a natural delivery inside the ambulance.

“My heart was beating fast. I knew that these lives were at risk and I had no option but to save them. I was working against the clock, so I used the equipment available with me and I conducted the delivery,” she continued.

“The mother was so scared and she kept begging me to bring her baby to life safely: Don’t let him die - don’t let my baby die, please. This could have gone wrong but I knew that woman was counting on me and I could not disappoint her,” she added.

Hawrin safely delivered the newborn baby and the ambulance continued its way to the Erbil maternity hospital where mother and son received proper health care.

“I was thrilled and overwhelmed by the feeling of accomplishment. I saved two lives who were in critical condition that day... A day I will forever remember,” she concluded.

Ending gender-based violence



4,055

GBV cases managed

7,440

people reached with Mental Health
Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

318,679

beneficiaries supported by UNFPA GBV

47,035

women received dignity kits



As part of activities marking the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV), UNFPA and UN Women painted 15 graffiti art on murals in Erbil, Baghdad, Mosul, Kirkuk and Basra! Each mural portrays positive images of women empowerment, gender equality and the need to eliminate GBV.

FGM: an infringement on morals and rights

"Come with me, we need to go to the bakery - my mother told me one morning," said 53-year-old Dania. "That day, I experienced fear, deception, and excruciating pain. I was only seven," she recalls of the day she underwent Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).*

Dania was seven years old when she was circumcised in her native Sulaymaniyah. It is a day she has not forgotten: "I remember everything: the smell, the pain, the screams, the blood that was coming down on my thighs," she says of the traumatic experience and unbearable pain.

"We arrived at the bakery, my mom took me to the back room where there was an old stove. I saw an old woman holding razor blades. I remember that old lady and my mom holding me down. Words cannot express the pain and confusion I felt. It took a few seconds and I saw blood coming down my thighs. The lady then put coal on my genitalia", she explains.

"To date, I don't understand why I had to go through this experience. My mother never justified her actions and felt the need to guide me through this painful process. FGM is not a religious act, nor a medical one... it is just a baseless cultural practice that aims at shaming women since their young age based on their sex", she adds. "I will never do this to my daughter".

Dania is one of the hundreds of girls subjected to FGM on a yearly basis in the Kurdistan Region. Today, 46 six years later, Dania is a vocal advocate for ending harmful practices in the Kurdistan Region. She continues to work tirelessly to change mentalities and perceptions: "FGM is child abuse and violence against women and girls. By conducting genital mutilation and other harmful practices, we are robbing our daughters of their right to their sexual and reproductive rights", she concludes.



Technical support to relevant authorities in drafting the anti-domestic violence law was provided. The Council of Ministers approved the draft and submitted it to the Iraqi Parliament for review and ratification.



Continued to support the "119" hotline managed by the General Directorate of Combatting Violence against Women (GDCVAW). A total of 7,440 beneficiaries received GBV referrals through the hotline.



79 facilities (two one-stop centres, four shelters and 69 women centres) were supported to provide essential GBV services to host community members, IDPs and refugees.



944 services providers built skills in case management, comprehensive management of rape (CMR) and provision of MHPSS



19 advocacy campaigns were conducted to raise awareness in GBV as part of the commemoration of 16 days on International days in 11 governorates of Iraq.



Empowering young people and adolescent girls

6,931

youth reached with peace-building and prevention of violent extremism programme

13,360

youth accessed with life-skills education

10,986

adolescent girls benefiting from the toolkit roll out



UNFPA provided technical support to the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and Ministry of Culture and Youth to develop an evidence-based Youth Vision 2030 addressing young people's current challenges and strengthening their role across all sectors.



In collaboration with Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), the Government of Sweden, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, UNFPA and young people in Iraq launched a National Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security in line with resolution 2250. More than 300 young people were involved in the formation of the Coalition.



UNFPA supported the Ministry of Culture and Youth in the Kurdistan Region to establish an Inter-Ministerial Committee that advocates for and coordinates youth-focused interventions among the line ministries within the Kurdish Government.



The Ministries of Health and UNFPA launched an adolescent and youth helpline where young people could receive reliable and age-appropriate information on mental health, reproductive health, adolescence and development, safe and healthy behaviours, nutrition and COVID-19 issues



With UNFPA support, the Youth Ministries developed an action plan on youth volunteering for civic engagement, enabling young people to build their leadership skills and become volunteers for various community initiatives.



UNFPA, in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth & Sports and the Ministry of Culture and Youth, assessed the capacities of all youth centres to provide quality edutainment services for young people in the country.

Promoting data and evidence-based programming



The capacity of CSO and KRSO are built to undertake e-census through various south-south cooperation exchanges and workshops related to the census' media strategy



UNFPA advocacy resulted in an increased commitment from the Government to the census and an allocation of US\$ 5 million



UNFPA supported capacity development of Central and Kurdistan Region Statistical Offices through provision of technical and expert assistance to produce, utilize and analyse population data



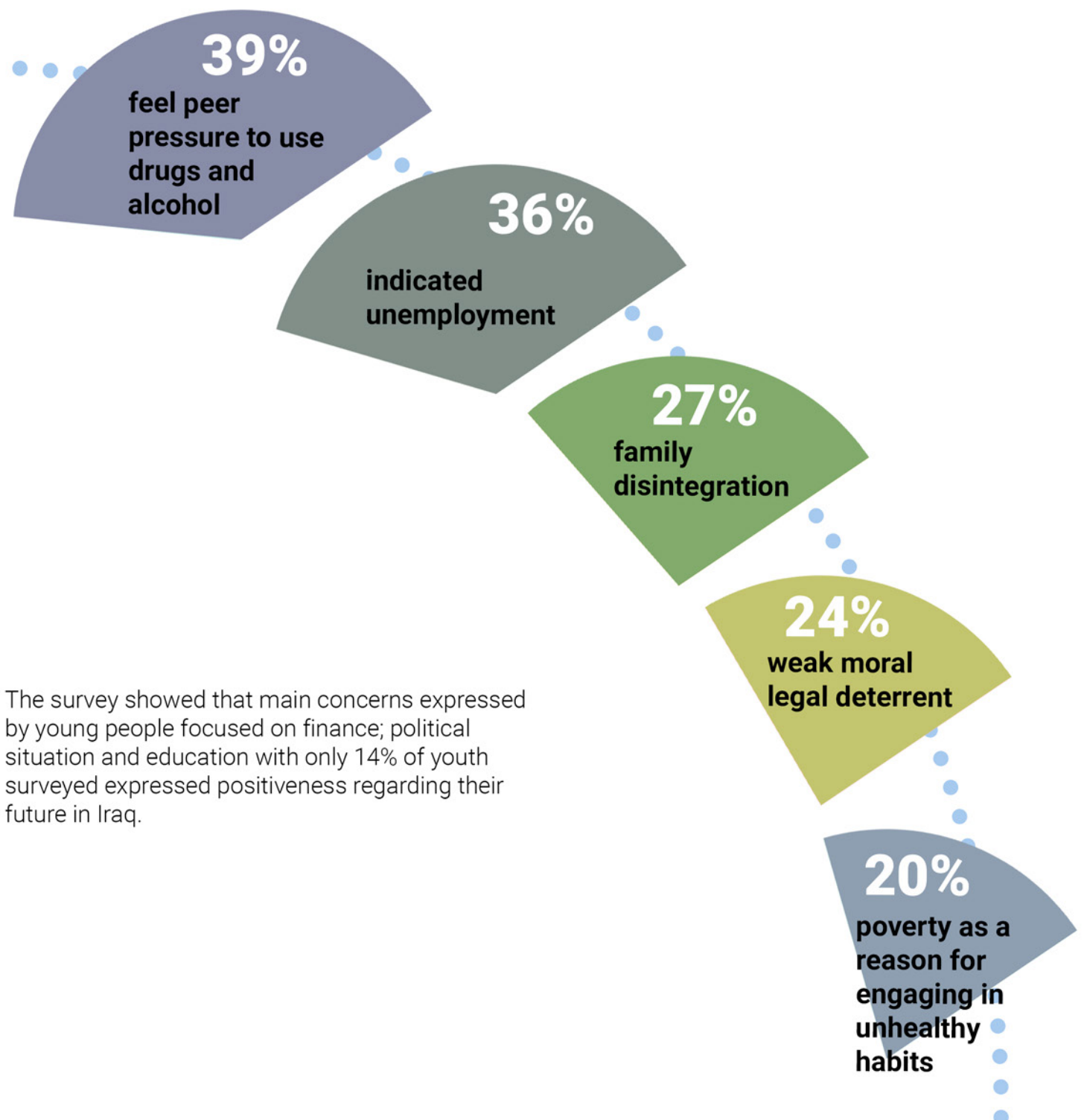
UNFPA supported availability of critical data on the impact of COVID-19 in Iraq with the conduct of two rapid assessment surveys on Impact of COVID-19 in reproductive health and social protection



Key findings of the National Adolescents and Youth Survey

Health

The Government of Iraq with the support of UNFPA and UNICEF unveiled the results of its National Adolescent and Youth Survey, conducted in 2019. The survey was the first of its kind in over a decade, with the last survey taking place in 2009. Its aim is to enable the Iraq Federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government to develop adolescent and youth-centred policies based on what adolescents and youth see as priorities.



The survey showed that main concerns expressed by young people focused on finance; political situation and education with only 14% of youth surveyed expressed positiveness regarding their future in Iraq.

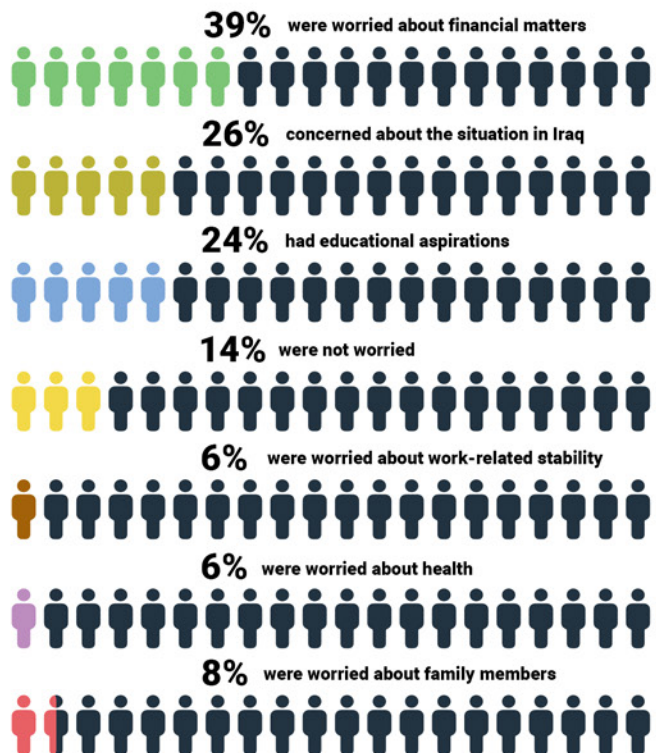
Gender-based violence

70% young men and women reject violence against women. This is higher in urban areas with 72% and lower in rural areas at 62% (out of which 69% are males, 66% are females).



Youth

In response to future related anxiety, young people have interpreted a set of reasons such as 39% are worried about the financial matters, 26% shown concerns about the situation of Iraq, 24% educational aspirations, 14% of young people did not express any worry about their future, 6% were worried for work-related stability and 6% were worried about health and 8% worried about family members.



Best practices & Innovation

First Virtual Monitoring Donor Visit in Iraq

With the COVID-19 pandemic spreading widely in the country, lockdown and curfew were imposed. This meant that field visits were halted for the majority of the year. Yet, at UNFPA, we remained true not only to the women and girls in Iraq but also to our monitoring obligations towards our donors. Therefore, to ensure that services provided through the UNFPA-supported facilities continued to be of quality despite the COVID-19 restrictions, we turned the field monitoring visits into virtual ones.

These visits were the first of their kind in Iraq. They included representatives of UNFPA biggest donors and allowed them to interact with both the service providers working at these facilities and women receiving services. By the end of 2020, we had conducted more than three monitoring visits across Iraq.

Online GBV Case Management

With movement restrictions imposed throughout 2020 and centres closed down as part of the COVID-19 prevention measures, the GBV team, with the GBV sub-cluster led by UNFPA, established an online GBV case management system operating 24/7.

UNFPA and partners trained GBV case managers and social workers from different governorates in Iraq, presenting the new guidelines and discussing how to conduct case management remotely during COVID-19. These staff work at targeted women space centres in both camps and non-camp areas, with internally displaced persons (IDP), refugee, and host community groups.

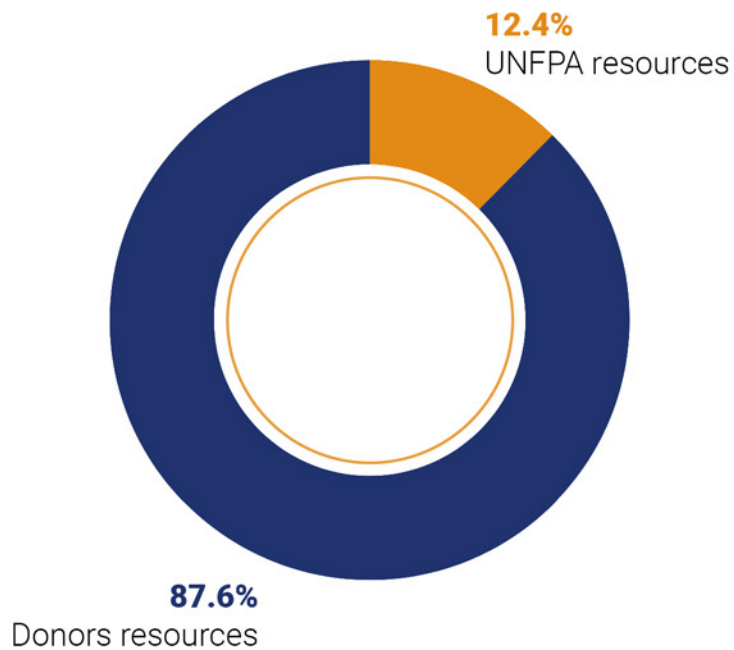
Real-time monitoring - WizMonitor

In 2020, UNFPA Iraq upgraded its M&E system to a cloud-based web application. This allowed UNFPA partners and staff to submit information and data on the programme implementation and achievement of its milestones in real-time without delays. The technology significantly improved monitoring of the programme implementation, use of evidence for effective resource management, mitigation of risks and knowledge management.

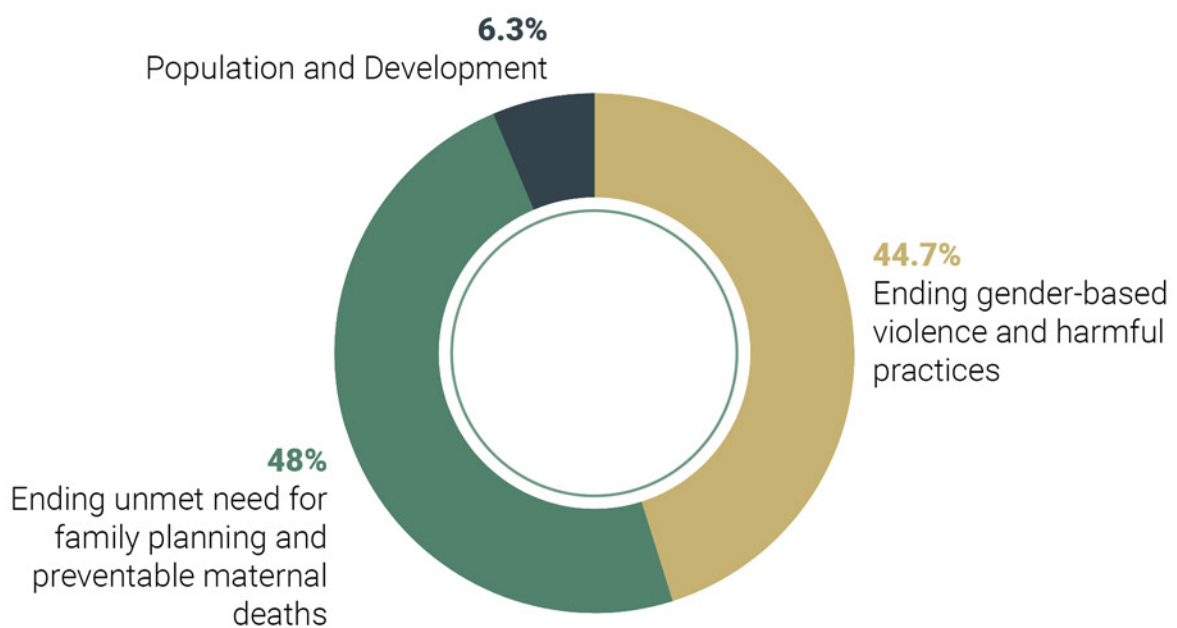


UNFPA Iraq Resources for 2020

Total budget: **US\$ 23.4 million**



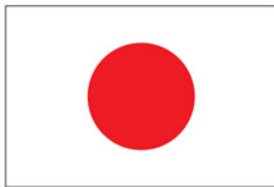
Expenditures by Transformative Results



UNFPA Partners & Donors for 2020



Canada



From
the People of Japan



السويد
Sverige



Funded by:



Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs

With funding from

 **Austrian
Development
Cooperation**



**United Nations
MPTF Office**



**Funded by
European Union
Humanitarian Aid**

LUXEMBOURG
AID & DEVELOPMENT



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF DENMARK**

Government

Central Statistical Organization (CSO)
General Directorate for Combatting Violence Against Women (GDCVAW)
Kurdistan High Council for Women Affairs (KHCWA)
Kurdistan Region Statistics Office (KRSO)
Ministry of Culture & Youth at the Kurdistan Regional Government
Ministry of Health & Environment at the Federal Government
Ministry of Health at the Kurdistan Regional Government
Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs at the Federal Government
Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs at the Kurdistan Regional Government
Ministry of Planning at the Federal Government
Ministry of Planning at the Kurdistan Regional Government
Ministry of Youth & Sports at the Federal Government
Women Empowerment Department (WED)

Private partnership

Center of Gender Development and Studies (CGDS) at the American University of Iraq Sulaimani (AUIS)
Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA)
SEED Foundation

Implementing partners

Al Mesalla Organization for Human Resource Development
Dary Human Organization
HARIKAR NGO
Iraq health Access Organization (IHAO)
TAJDID Iraq Foundation for Economic Development
The Swedish Development Aid organization (Swedo)
The United Iraqi Medical Society (UIMS)
Un Ponte Per (UPP)
Zhian Health Organization (ZHO)



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