



EuroMed Feminist Initiative
المبادرة النسوية الأوروبية
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France



CASCADE FINANCING PORTFOLIO

Advancing the WPSA

Iraq and Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I)

"Strengthening feminist CSOs for the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPSA) in Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine" funded by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) through FSOF and the Minka Peace and Resilience Fund.

CASCADE FINANCING PORTFOLIO

IRAQ

National Consortium Design

Lead Organisation: EuroMed Feminist Initiative (EFI), providing technical guidance and support, progress follow-up, regional coordination, conflict-and gender-sensitive monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) and reporting.

National Partner Organisation: Women Empowerment Organisation (WEO), led in Iraq/Kurdistan Regional of Iraq (KR-I) project implementation, follow-up with funded feminist civil society organisations (CSOs) and women-led community-based organisations (CBOs), thematic capacity-building, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and national reporting.

Beneficiary Organisations

Feminist networks

- Women for Peace Network (WPN)
- Iraqi Women's Network (IWN)

Women-led CBOs

- Al Hub Wa Al Salam Iraqi Globally (ILP)
- Al-Wad Organisation for Women and Children (AOWC)
- Asuda Organisation for Combating Violence against Women
- Baghdad Women Association (BWA)
- Dreams Organisation for Sustainable Development
- People's Development Organisation (PDO)
- Nineveh Women's Organisation for Women's Affairs (NWO)

Advancing the WPSA in Iraq and Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I)

Iraq continues to face significant challenges linked to displacement, political instability, sectarian violence and economic pressures. Women, particularly those who are displaced or otherwise affected by conflict, face heightened vulnerabilities and multiple forms of violence.

Funded by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) through the Support Fund for Feminist Organisations (FSOF) and the Minka Peace and Resilience Fund, the cascade-financed projects contributed to advancing the WPSA through evidence generation and advocacy, including Iraq's participation in the Regional Index on VAWG. The Index helped identify gaps in laws, policies and services and created a practical evidence base for feminist CSOs and public institutions to strengthen dialogue and advocacy.

Projects also raised awareness of services for survivors of VAWG, strengthened capacities of service providers, supported dialogue on women's rights and positive masculinities, and promoted women's equal political participation and safer environments for women and girls.

Other initiatives addressed the economic participation of women affected by conflict, including internally displaced women, while feminist CSOs and networks strengthened coordination in response to pressure and defamation campaigns targeting women's rights actors.

1325

WOMEN, PEACE
AND SECURITY AGENDA
IRAQ

IRAQ CASCADE FINANCING PORTFOLIO

Presentation of Key Results

March 2023 - March 2026

National partner: Women Empowerment Organisation (WEO)

Geographic coverage: Anbar, Baghdad, Erbil, Diyala, Duhok, Nineveh and Salah al-Din.

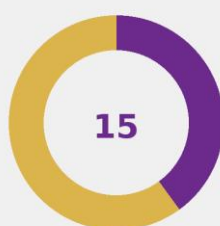
The project supported feminist networks and women-led CBOs to advance the WPSA through prevention and response to VAWG, women's political participation, livelihoods and resilience, evidence-based advocacy, peacebuilding and organisational strengthening.

Features of the supported organisations

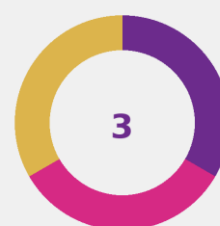
Who received cascade financing of and how the portfolio was distributed



■ Feminist networks: 2
■ Women-led CBOs: 7



■ Network projects: 6
■ CBO projects: 9



■ Call 1: 5 projects
■ Call 2: 5 projects
■ Call 3: 5 projects

BENEFICIARY ORGANISATIONS

Two national feminist networks and **seven** women-led CBOs

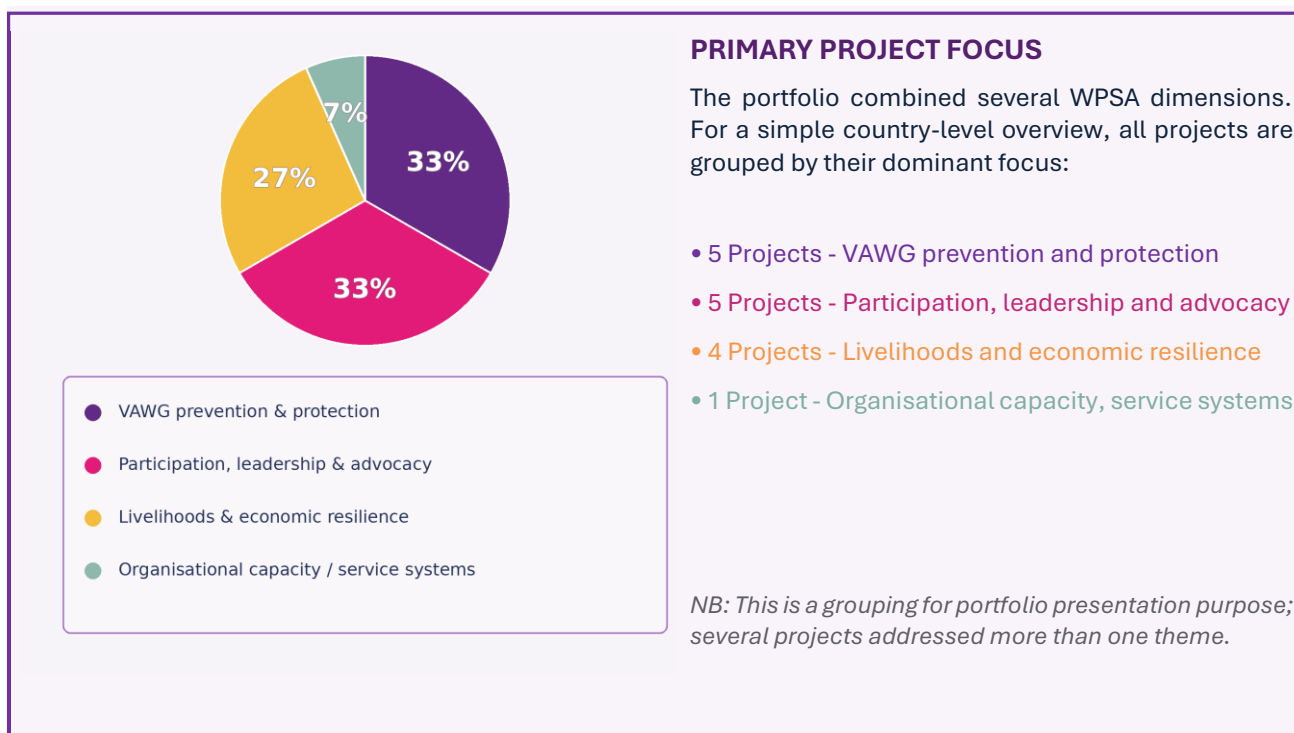
PROJECT PORTFOLIO

Six projects implemented by the two feminist networks and **nine** by women-led CBOs

THREE CALLS

Five projects supported in each call across the geographic areas

KEY RESULTS | IRAQ



Selected capacity-building and organisational strengthening results

Examples showing how cascade financing strengthened women, organisations and frontline actors

42 WOMEN 'S RIGHTS DEFENDERS Across four PDO capacity-building trainings linked to the WPSA in Erbil and Duhok	32 PROTECTION ACTORS From CSOs staff and volunteers strengthened in survivor-centred support and referral	20 STAFF & VOLUNTEERS AOWC participants trained on the WPSA and UNSCR 1325
3 INTERNAL POLICIES WPN developed HR, Financial and Logistics policies	10 WOMEN-LED INITIATIVES Dreams-supported local community initiatives funded and implemented across Anbar	2026-2029 WPSA STRATEGY WPN developed a three-year institutional strategy around the four WPS pillars

CAPACITY BUILDING AS A PORTFOLIO PILLAR Capacity strengthening was reached through training, mentoring, peer exchange, institutional policies, referral systems and support for women-led local initiatives.	CAPACITY BUILDING BENEFICIARIES Five thematic capacity-building trainings provided for 53 activists (42 women and 11 men) strengthened conflict and gender-sensitive MEAL and the collective influence in advancing the WPSA in Iraq/KR-I.
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Policy, advocacy and collective action results

Selected changes and outputs generated through feminist networks and women-led organisations

01

EVIDENCE FOR VAWG POLICY AND ADVOCACY

Iraq and KR-I **joined the 2024 Regional Index on VAWG**. Data were compiled across 49 indicators and reviewed by ministries, feminist CSOs, academics and practitioners during an Experts Roundtable at the Presidency Office in Baghdad.

02

WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

IWN developed and launched the *Ten Steps Guide* on balanced participation in political parties. A later project engaged nine political parties and produced three policy papers to strengthen women's representation, leadership and political parties' accountability.

03

COLLECTIVE ACTION AND NETWORK SUSTAINABILITY

WPN developed a 2026-2029 WPSA strategy and elected a new Board. Across its projects, the network strengthened coordination between Federal Iraq and KR-I and expanded the use of evidence for collective advocacy.

04

COMMUNITY-LEVEL CHANGE

Women-led CBOs projects combined sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) prevention, positive masculinity, legal and psychosocial support, livelihoods, climate-smart agriculture and peacebuilding, **linking national WPSA priorities** with **practical action in communities**.

Regional networking and exchange

PARTICIPANTS FROM FEMINIST CSOS, WOMEN-LED CBOS AND STAKEHOLDERS TOOK PART IN REGIONAL EVENTS AS PART OF THE PROJECT

32

They joined over 200 participants from Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, international actors, United Nations (UN) Agencies and decision makers through two regional forums. The forums examined shared regional challenges, country-specific gaps and barriers, and further identified policy recommendations for advancing the WPSA. These events strengthened collaboration among feminist CSOs and women-led CBOs, and with key stakeholders and decision-makers, enhanced learning and exchanged good practices for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the WPSA in the four countries and at the regional level.

Towards Enhancing Laws and Public Policies for Combating VAWG through the Inclusion of Iraq and Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I) in the 2023 Regional Index on VAWG

Beneficiary organisation: Women for Peace Network

Implementation period: 1 March 2024 - 31 August 2024

Location: Iraq, including KRI

Women for Peace Network (WPN) is an Iraqi feminist civil society network whose General Assembly brings together organisations working on the implementation and follow-up of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and the WPSA. Emerging from an initiative launched in 2011, the network connects women leaders and organisations across Federal Iraq and the KR-I and works to strengthen women's participation, protection, prevention and recovery, as well as coordinated advocacy on women's rights. The support to WPN contributed to Iraq's participation in the Regional Index on VAWG, strengthened legal and policy dialogue and women's leadership, and consolidated WPN institutional strategy and collective advocacy for the WPSA.



This project supported the inclusion of Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I) in the Regional Index on VAWG. It enabled the collection of information and data on legislation, public policies and services and brought together government bodies, women's rights experts and civil society to discuss and verify data. The process strengthened the evidence base for identifying gaps and informing advocacy, while also strengthening WPN's internal governance.

MAJOR RESULTS

- Data in Federal Iraq and KR-I for the 49 indicators of the Regional Index on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) were collected from relevant desk sources and institutions.
- The data were presented and reviewed with ministries, experts and feminist CSOs during an Experts Roundtable held at Presidency Office, Baghdad.
- The discussion strengthened evidence-based advocacy by identifying achievements and gaps in combating VAWG and called for stronger legislation, greater coordination, improved data collection, and sustained investment in preventive and support mechanisms to combat VAWG.
- WPN established three internal policies: Human Resources, Financial and Logistics. It revised its organisational structure to support sustainability and more systematic operations.
- Cooperation was strengthened with federal and KR-I civil society, women's networks and institutions.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

49 Indicators under seven categories of the Regional Index on VAWG reviewed, Data gathered, Gaps identified	30 Representatives from government, institutions, and civil society verify data and gaps in legislation, policies and services addressing VAWG	3 WPN internal policies developed, Sustainability enhanced, Cooperation strengthened
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“The Index gave us credible evidence we can use in dialogue with institutions and in our advocacy for women and girls.”

Dr. Asmaa Jameel – Academic, researcher in women's rights

Enhancing Women's Networks and Empowering Advocacy Capacities for Effective implementation of WPS agenda in Iraq

Beneficiary organisation: Women for Peace Network

Implementation period: 1 September 2024 - 30 April 2025

Location: Iraq, including KRI

This project combined legal dialogue, leadership development and evidence-based advocacy. It strengthened the capacities of women leaders, legal experts and CSOs to advocate for effective implementation of the WPSA in Iraq. Through targeted trainings, policy discussions and regional coordination, it supported the translation of evidence into policy recommendations and enhanced collaboration between feminist CSOs in Federal Iraq and KR-I.

MAJOR RESULTS

- A Baghdad workshop on Personal Status Law No. 188 engaged 32 participants, including retired judges, legal professionals and civil society representatives, and developed observations and recommendations on proposed amendments.
- Leadership capacities were strengthened for 27 women from the Ministry of Defence, with the aim of preparing them for more senior roles.
- Two workshops in Erbil engaged 72 participants, including 29 participants from CSOs from Federal Iraq and KR-I to present the updated 2024 Regional Index on VAWG.
- Technical knowledge was strengthened and feedback from the activities supported recommendations related to the Personal Status Law and the Ministry of Defence training.
- WPN printed and distributed 1000 copies of its introductory brochure and profile, while expanding cooperation with CSOs and women's networks.



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

131 Participants in 4 substantive workshops	29 CSO participants strengthened technical capacities on VAWG and expanded cooperation during 2 workshops in Erbil	1000 Brochure copies distributed
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“The workshops helped us translate research and experience into recommendations and stronger collective advocacy.”

Hanaa Hamoud - Civil society organisation representative

Enhancing Women's Networks and Empowering Advocacy Capacities for Effective implementation of WPSA in Iraq – Phase II

Beneficiary organisation: Women for Peace Network

Implementation period: 1 April 2025 - 28 February 2026

Location: Iraq, including KRI

The project focused on women's political participation, WPN's institutional strategy and coordinated advocacy among women's networks. It combined electoral education, strategic planning and multi-stakeholder coordination in Baghdad and Erbil.

MAJOR RESULTS

- An electoral education workshop in Baghdad engaged 31 women, including parliamentary candidates, leaders of women's organisations and female media professionals, strengthening awareness of political participation and voter education.
- WPN developed a three-year strategy for 2026-2029, structured around the WPSA pillars of Participation, Protection, Prevention and Recovery.
- A coordination meeting in Erbil brought together 68 participants and strengthened cooperation between civil society organisations in Baghdad and the KR-I, using the 2024 Regional Index on VAWG as a tool and the 2025 National Study VAWG to inform advocacy.
- A final coordination meeting with 41 participants reviewed WPN's performance and the three project phases, agreed future directions and elected a new Board of Directors for 2026-2029.
- Across the project, 158 participants were reached (138 women and 20 men) and strengthened networking and coordination around women's rights and the WPSA.



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

158 Participants network and strengthen coordination around women's rights and WPSA	3-year WPSA Strategy 2026-2029	31 Parliamentary candidates, leaders of women's CSOs and female media professionals increase awareness of women political participation
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“The project strengthened our network’s structure and linked advocacy, strategy and solidarity with other feminist networks and CSOs.”

Ferial Al-Kaabi - Board member of the Women’s Peace Network

Enhancing Women's rights to political participation in decision making and peace building in Iraq

Beneficiary organisation: Iraqi Women's Network

Implementation period: 1 March 2024 - 31 August 2024

Location: Baghdad



Iraqi Women's Network (IWN) is a national feminist civil society alliance established in 2004, bringing together more than 100 local organisations from across Iraq. It works to advance women's rights and gender equality through advocacy, legal and policy reform, political participation, action to combat VAWG, and engagement with public institutions and civil society. The support to IWN enabled them to mobilise community action to combat VAWG, to work directly with political parties on gender-inclusive policies and women's participation in decision-making and to develop the Ten Steps Guide promoting women's political participation.

This project promoted women's political participation in Baghdad through community awareness, engagement with political parties and a public media campaign. Consultations with political actors and civil society also informed a practical guide for more balanced participation of women and men in political life.

MAJOR RESULTS

- Sixteen civil society and feminist organisations implemented 16 community sessions reaching 142 participants (97 women and 45 men) and raised awareness of women's political participation and its long-term impact.
- Three consultation meetings with political parties, CSOs and official entities in Baghdad explored barriers to women's participation and practical mechanisms for their inclusion in party structures and decision-making.
- Drawing on the political parties' consultations, IWN developed the guide "Towards Balanced Participation of Women and Men and Decision-Making in Political Parties in Iraq - The Ten Steps Guide."
- A national conference in Baghdad brought together 73 participants (57 women and 16 men) and launched the Ten Steps Guide, discussing women's political participation, peacebuilding and the Personal Status Law.
- A public media campaign placed billboards in major locations in Baghdad to promote women's political participation.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

1 Ten Steps Guide developed and launched	3 Consultations with political parties, unions, NGOs and officials	16 Community events raised awareness of women's political participation	73 Stakeholders discuss women's political participation, peacebuilding	142 Participants reached and raised awareness
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"Women engaged in political life are always threatened; such events are really important to increase community awareness of women's rights."

Intisar Al Shawy – Participant, political activist

Combating Violence Against Women is a National and Community Responsibility

Beneficiary organisation: Iraqi Women's Network

Implementation period: 1 February 2025 - 31 October 2025

Location: Baghdad

The project strengthened dialogue on women's protection, expanded community awareness on VAWG, built the capacity of women's CBOs and created spaces for feminist coordination and collective learning.

MAJOR RESULTS

- Four dialogue sessions engaged 94 participants (85 women and 9 men) on protection mechanisms, the Regional Index on VAWG, sexual violence in conflict and the impact of the Personal Status Law amendment.
- Twenty-seven participants from 22 CSOs were trained on designing and implementing community events addressing women's and girls' rights and harmful gender norms.
- Sixteen community events reached 415 participants (277 women and 138 men) on issues including cyber blackmail, early marriage and pregnancy, workplace and domestic violence, political participation and the rights of displaced and returnee women.
- A publication was produced documenting civil society experience related to political participation, the Personal Status Law, gender-based violence (GBV), and peace and security.
- The two-day national conference "Rights, Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls in Iraq" brought together 149 participants (126 women and 23 men) from CSOs, political parties, government, media, unions and other stakeholders.



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

94 Participants in 4 dialogue-sessions on VAWG, sexual violence in conflict	415 Participants engaged in 16 community-based discussions	149 Participants from political parties, government, media, unions discuss women's right at a national conference
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"The community rejects violence against women, despite the incidents women face on a daily basis. These programmes can help draw the attention of communities and decision-makers and encourage action."

Wasan Khalid – Participant, stakeholder

Towards balanced participation of women and men and decision-making in political events

Beneficiary organisation: Iraqi Women's Network

Implementation period: 1 April 2025 - 28 February 2026

Location: Baghdad

The project built on the *Ten Steps Guide* and worked directly with political parties to strengthen gender-inclusive internal policies, support women's leadership and create stronger links between female candidates, civil society and communities ahead of elections.

MAJOR RESULTS

- A three-day training in Baghdad engaged 32 participants (25 women and 7 men) from political parties, CSOs and government on the Ten Steps Guide and practical measures for safe and equitable political participation.
- Nine political parties were engaged through work with three national experts to review internal regulations, policies and bylaws and identify gaps affecting women's participation.
- Three policy papers were produced, covering the nine parties and proposing measures on women's representation, anti-discrimination, leadership development, electoral support, data and accountability.
- Seven awareness sessions and candidate-community debates in Baghdad reached 156 participants (109 women and 47 men) and addressed women's electoral participation, leadership and protection from political violence.
- The process generated recommendations for a political-party code of conduct and technical support to strengthen women's inclusion, women's offices, monitoring and accountability mechanisms.



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

9 Political parties engaged	3 Policy papers produced	156 Participants in 7 awareness sessions and candidate-community debates
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“Having qualified women in government can contribute to better representation of women’s issues, and that is what this project aims to support.”

Hana Hammod – Participant, stakeholder

Women are Energy “Taqa”: To raise the status of women among the rural community in Anbar

Beneficiary organisation: Al Hub Wa Al Salam Iraqi Globally
Implementation period: 1 March 2024 - 31 August 2024
Location: Anbar

Al Hub Wa Al Salam Iraqi Globally (ILP) is a local Iraqi non-governmental organisation established in 2012, with its main office in Fallujah, Anbar. It works with conflict-affected communities, with a strong focus on women and youth, combining humanitarian support, livelihoods, protection and peacebuilding. The support enabled ILP to work with rural communities in Fallujah, Rawa, Anna and Haditha on SGBV prevention, women’s economic empowerment and leadership, community dialogue and climate-smart agriculture.

This project engaged women, teachers, community leaders and local institutions, and raised awareness on SGBV, gender roles, climate-smart agriculture and women’s economic empowerment.



MAJOR RESULTS

- 60 female teachers, women and girls strengthened their ability to identify, respond to and report SGBV and access available services.
- 104 community members (86 women, 18 men) were reached through awareness on SGBV, gender roles and women’s economic empowerment.
- Three FGDs engaged 30 rural women, while gender-dialogue sessions reached 47 community powerholders (22 women, 25 men).
- A workplace-equality workshop engaged 30 governmental and local stakeholders to discuss women’s roles and barriers in the workplace.
- 30 rural women received climate-smart agriculture training and inputs; three women-led tree-planting initiatives promoted leadership and environmental action.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

60 Teachers, women and girls strengthened their capacity to identify and respond to SGBV	104 Community members reached through SGBV and women’s economic empowerment awareness	30 Rural women trained in climate-smart agriculture and provided with practical inputs
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“The project proved to us that rural women are capable of managing businesses and take on leadership roles when they are given equal opportunities.”

Final beneficiary, Anbar

Improving advocacy to maximize harmony, empowerment, resilience, and equality for rural women in Anbar. “I Am Here - rural woman”

Beneficiary organisation: Al Hub Wa Al Salam Iraqi Globally

Implementation period: 1 September 2024 - 31 July 2025

Location: Anbar

The project built on the first phase and worked in Fallujah and Haditha on SGBV prevention, gender equality, women’s leadership and rural economic empowerment through awareness, dialogue, public events and climate-smart agriculture.

MAJOR RESULTS

- 60 teachers and community participants (37 women, 23 men) strengthened knowledge of SGBV identification, reporting and referral.
- 132 people (68 women, 64 men) joined SGBV and economic-empowerment awareness activities; two FGDs engaged 20 rural women.
- Gender-dialogue sessions reached 30 community leaders and gatekeepers, while workplace-equality workshops engaged 20 local stakeholders.
- An International Women’s Day event in Fallujah brought together around 83 participants (58 women, 25 men) around challenges facing women in Anbar.
- 30 women completed business/leadership training, and 30 rural women received climate-smart agriculture training and practical inputs.



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

132 Participants raised awareness through SGBV and women’s economic empowerment activities	83 Participants joined the International Women’s Day event in Fallujah	60 30 Rural women trained in climate-smart agriculture; 30 Women trained in business and leadership
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“The smart agriculture training completely changed the way I work. I learned how to turn household and agricultural waste into valuable organic fertilizer, and I used drip irrigation techniques to grow wheat. These technical skills not only helped me feed my family and support my daughter’s education but also transformed me from a woman waiting for assistance into a mentor who provides advice to farmers in my area.”

Khalouda - Woman beneficiary from Fallujah

Building Bridges: Positive Masculinity and Women’s Political Participation

Beneficiary organisation: Dreams Organisation for Sustainable Development

Implementation period: 1 March 2024 - 31 August 2024

Location: Anbar

Dreams Organisation is an Iraqi civil society organisation working in Anbar Governorate. The support enabled Dream to combine large-scale awareness on positive masculinity and VAWG with women’s political participation, leadership, advocacy and community initiatives. The activities in Ramadi and other Anbar districts engaged men and boys as allies while equipping women activists to design and lead local actions.

This project addressed VAWG and restrictive gender norms in Anbar by engaging men and boys in positive-masculinity awareness while creating a targeted mentorship opportunity for women interested in leadership and political participation. Activities focused primarily on Al-Ramadi and combined community outreach, school-based sessions and women’s leadership development.



MAJOR RESULTS

- Awareness sessions and door-to-door outreach on VAWG and positive masculinity reached 1830 men and boys in Al-Ramadi, exceeding the project target of 1800 beneficiaries.
- Of those reached through the awareness component, 1386 were aged 18 or above and 444 were boys under 18, with outreach delivered through schools and neighbourhoods across Ramadi.
- A VAWG specialist trained the outreach team and developed standardized awareness tools and materials to support consistent implementation.
- A brochure on VAWG and positive masculinity was developed, printed and distributed to awareness beneficiaries.
- Twenty women from Anbar participated in a five-day political-participation mentorship workshop with women leaders and influencers, encouraging them to pursue leadership roles and participate in politics and community decision-making.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

1830 Men and boys reached with VAWG and positive-masculinity awareness in Ramadi	20 Women from Anbar completed political-participation mentorship	5-day Mentorship workshop connected these women with leaders and influencers
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“The fund provided for the initiatives did help me to start working with my community which will get me more involved and I got noticed.”

Anfal Nofal Turki - Initiative leader, Anbar

Building Bridges II: Women-Led Community Initiatives, Positive Masculinity and Eliminating VAWG

Beneficiary organisation: Dreams Organisation for Sustainable Development

Implementation period: 1 September 2024 - 28 February 2025

Location: Anbar

The second phase built on the previous project by moving women from mentorship into practical community leadership. It trained women activists to design advocacy and lobbying initiatives, provided small grants for women-led local action, and continued large-scale outreach with men and boys on VAWG and positive masculinity in Ramadi.

MAJOR RESULTS

- Twenty women from Anbar completed a five-day workshop in Ramadi on designing and leading community engagement, advocacy and lobbying initiatives.
- 10 of the 20 women received grants and implemented ten women-led initiatives in Ramadi, Heet and Al-Tamim, translating training into practical community action.
- The ten initiatives addressed issues including digital blackmail, women’s mental health, women’s leadership, violent extremism, climate action, rural women’s empowerment and community perceptions of women.
- Awareness sessions and door-to-door outreach reached 2012 male beneficiaries in Ramadi (1122 men and 890 boys) on VAWG prevention and positive masculinity.
- The project reused the standardized awareness tools and brochure developed in the first phase, supporting continuity and consistent messaging across the two projects.



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

2012	20	10
Men and boys reached with VAWG and positive-masculinity awareness	Women trained to design and lead community advocacy initiatives	Women-led community initiatives funded and implemented across Anbar

“The mentoring workshop had opened my eyes on how women can participate in politics and I consider taking the initiative to go forward and try to represent my local community.”

Nadine Fawzi Abdullah – Participant, Anbar, Ramadi

Supporting Microfinance Initiatives of Women and Girls in the Rural Areas in Sulaymaniyah

Beneficiary organisation: Asuda Organisation for Combating Violence Against Women

Implementation period: 1 September 2024 - 31 March 2025

Location: Sulaymaniyah

Asuda Organisation is a women's rights organisation founded in 2000 and working across Iraq and the KR-I to combat VAWG. Through centres in Sulaymaniyah, Halabjah, Ranya and Baghdad, together with mobile teams, it provides survivor-centred legal aid and psychosocial support, awareness and advocacy, economic empowerment, emergency assistance and referrals. Its work also promotes women's participation and broader social, political and economic empowerment.

This project enabled Asuda to make a study and examine microfinance programs that assist women and girls in the Iraqi province of Sulaimani, document economic barriers and priorities among women and girls in Sulaimani and provide recommendations. This survey reveals a strong need for more comprehensive support in the areas of employment, financial services, and business development for women in Sulaimani. Women are eager to contribute to the economy through employment or entrepreneurship but face significant barriers related to access to capital, training, and job opportunities. The project also provided seed funding to small businesses of women.



MAJOR RESULTS

- The study found that 49% of respondents identified lack of capital or financing as a key barrier to economic activity, while 21% cited insufficient business knowledge or skills.
- Fifty-three percent of respondents reported no access to financial services such as bank accounts or loans, and 51% reported no access to business support services such as training or mentorship.
- Seventy-two percent of respondents had not received vocational training, highlighting a substantial skills-development gap.
- Fifty-nine percent of respondents expressed interest in starting their own business, indicating strong demand for entrepreneurship and microfinance support.
- When asked what support they needed to achieve their economic goals, respondents prioritized training (40%), financing (40%) and mentorship (20%).

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

49% Of study respondents identified lack of capital or financing as a key barrier	53% Reported no access to financial services such as bank accounts or loans	59% Expressed interest in starting their own business
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“Before receiving the grant, I was unable to expand my business on my own. With this support, I was able to grow my salon and hire two additional people. This opportunity not only helped me strengthen my business but also created employment opportunities for others.”

Berivan Abdullah Muhammad – Participant

Lean In: Women Leading Organisation's Capacity Building

Beneficiary organisation: People's Development Organisation (PDO)

Implementation period: 1 February 2025 - 30 June 2025

Location: Erbil and Duhok

People's Development Organisation (PDO) is an independent non-profit organisation established in 2007 and working in the Kurdistan Region and across Iraq. Its programmes focus on protection, development, youth and peacebuilding, with particular emphasis on women's rights and community resilience.

This project strengthened the capacity of feminist CSOs, community actors and frontline responders to identify and respond to VAWG, use feminist analysis, strengthen referral systems and communicate safely and effectively.



MAJOR RESULTS

- The project reports a total of 42 direct participants across four capacity-building trainings in Erbil and Duhok; gender-disaggregated totals were not provided in the narrative report.
- Eleven participants in Erbil strengthened safe identification of VAWG, survivor-centred communication, ethical principles and referral pathways.
- Ten participants in Erbil completed an advanced feminist-perspective and Training-of-Trainers (ToT) programme on community engagement and male participation in combating VAWG, creating a cadre able to cascade knowledge.
- Ten participants in Duhok strengthened safe referral and service mapping related to VAWG, improving practical knowledge of available support services and referral mechanisms.
- Eleven participants in Duhok strengthened management of VAWG media awareness and engagement activities, building communication capacity to challenge harmful narratives and support advocacy.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

42 Direct participants across the four capacity-building trainings	4 Complementary trainings delivered in Erbil and Duhok	10 Participants completed feminist-perspective ToT programme
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“This project didn’t just provide theoretical knowledge; It gave us actionable strategies to engage our communities and mentor others. I feel significantly more confident taking an active leadership role in advocating for women’s safety and rights.”

Gulan Faraj Ahmed - Civil society activist, workshop participant

#Together - Building a Strong Generation

Beneficiary organisation: Al-Wad Organisation for Women and Children

Implementation period: 1 April 2025 - 28 February 2026

Location: Salah Al-Din

Al-Wad Organisation for Women and Children (AOWC) is a women-led CBO working in Salah al-Din Governorate. Their approach links the WPSA and UNSCR 1325 with positive social upbringing, leadership and legal-rights awareness, protection of returnees and community cohesion.

The project supported displaced and returnee families in southern Salah al-Din, particularly Balad, Al-Ishaqi and Yathrib, through positive social inclusion and “parallel empowerment.” It combined capacity-building, teacher training, leadership and legal-rights awareness for girls and displaced women, awareness materials and engagement of male family and community members.

MAJOR RESULTS

- Twenty AOWC staff and volunteers (15 women and 5 men) were trained on the WPSA and UNSCR 1325 and increased their understanding of international protection standards.
- Twenty-five teachers from Al-Ishaqi and Yathrib were trained on positive social upbringing and reintegration of returnee children; 90% reported readiness to apply the modules and teachers began acting as protection focal points.
- Fifty girls and displaced women from returning families completed leadership, legal-rights and GBV self-protection activities, creating a core group of young women with stronger confidence and community leadership skills.
- AOWC produced and distributed 1000 brochures and leaflets on UNSCR 1325, women’s rights and positive social upbringing across Balad, Al-Ishaqi and Yathrib.
- Thirty male community leaders and heads of households joined “Parallel Empowerment” dialogue sessions; 80% showed positive support for women’s participation.



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

95 Direct beneficiaries: staff/volunteers, teachers, and girls/displaced women	50 Girls and displaced women completed leadership and legal- rights empowerment activities	1000 Awareness brochures and leaflets distributed in target communities
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“The dialogue sessions opened new horizons for us, helping us recognize the vital role women’s participation plays in strengthening peace within our communities. Empowering women and supporting their participation is no longer an optional consideration; it is a fundamental pillar for building a stronger future generation and fostering lasting social cohesion.”

Doaa Al-Janabi - Participant in the Parallel Empowerment sessions

Voices of Resilience: Empowering Displaced Women and Girls

Beneficiary organisation: Baghdad Women Association

Implementation period: 1 April 2025 - 28 February 2026

Location: Duhok

Baghdad Women Association (BWA) is an Iraqi women's rights organisation established in 2004. It works to combat all forms of violence against women and girls and advance legal protection, equality and human rights. BWA provides services for survivors, advocates for laws, policies and government programmes that protect women, and works to increase women's political participation through leadership and capacity development. It is headquartered in Baghdad and also has an office in Duhok.

The project provided integrated protection and empowerment support to displaced women and girls in Khanke Camp. It combined individual and group psychosocial support, legal consultations and awareness, recreational activities and stronger referral mechanisms, while building the capacity of frontline protection staff and volunteers.



MAJOR RESULTS

- The project reached 596 direct beneficiaries, all women and girls from Khanke Camp, including 25 participants under the age of 18. It strengthened 32 protection service providers through capacity-building and coordination.
- Individual psychosocial support was provided to 111 women and girls. Five group psychosocial support (PSS) sessions engaged 62 participants and strengthened emotional resilience and peer support.
- Individual legal consultations reached 108 women and girls, and group legal sessions reached 60, improving knowledge of rights related to marriage, divorce, custody, inheritance and protection from violence.
- Awareness sessions reached 155 women and girls, and recreational activities engaged 75 participants, contributing to stronger knowledge, social connection and reduced isolation.
- Thirty-two frontline protection staff and volunteers strengthened survivor-centred case management, referral pathways and coordination with specialized services.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

596 Direct beneficiaries - women and girls from Khanke Camp in Duhok	111 Women and girls received individual psychosocial support	108 Women and girls received individual legal consultations
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"These sessions opened my eyes. Before, I did not fully understand my rights or the support available to me. Now I have greater confidence in seeking help and sharing what I have learned with other women around me."

Khatun Haidar - Woman beneficiary, Khanke Camp

Empowering Women in Nineveh: Protection, Economic Resilience, and Leadership Development

Beneficiary organisation: Nineveh Women’s Organisation for Women’s Affairs (NWO)

Implementation period: 1 April 2025 - 28 February 2026

Location: Nineveh

Nineveh Women’s Organisation for Women’s Affairs (NWO) is a women-led civil society organisation working in Nineveh. It supports women, including refugee and returnee women, GBV survivors and female-headed households by providing legal aid, psychosocial support, livelihoods and financial skills. NWO also engages communities in GBV prevention and strengthening women-led peacebuilding and participation in local decision-making.

The project supported returnee women, GBV survivors and female-headed households in Nineveh through legal and psychosocial support, community awareness, livelihoods and women-led peacebuilding.



MAJOR RESULTS

- 180 women received legal aid, and 100 women received psychosocial support, strengthening rights awareness, coping and referral to specialized services.
- Community awareness activities reached 260 people on GBV prevention, women’s rights, legal frameworks and available support services.
- 30 vulnerable women completed sewing, financial-literacy and digital-marketing training, improving readiness for income generation.
- Three peacebuilding and decision-making workshops engaged 60 participants (30 women, 30 men), strengthening mediation and women’s participation.
- Five volunteer community peace teams were strengthened and developed sustainability action plans with local authorities and civil-society partners.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

180 Women received legal aid; 100 received psychosocial support	30 Women strengthened livelihood skills and opportunities	5 Community peace teams strengthened and continued local actions
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“Through the legal support, I learned about my rights, and through the psychological support, I regained some of my self-confidence. It was a very meaningful experience for me. I also benefited greatly from the sewing skills training and the financial grant, which had a significant impact on supporting me and encouraging me to become more self-reliant.”

Nabaa Ahmed Mahmoud - Woman beneficiary

