



Transition and Recovery Division (TRD)

GRADUATION APPROACH CONTEXT ANALYSIS - KIRKUK AND MOSUL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	3
2. Overview of IOM's Graduation Approach	3
3. Overview of Poverty in Iraq	5
4. Some Lessons Learned and Limitations of Graduation Approaches	5
5. Methodology and Methods	8
6. Sampling	10
6.1 Limitations	10
7. Findings	11
7.1 Background	11
7.2 Social Protection	11
7.3 Livelihoods	15
7.4 Financial Inclusion	17
7.5 Social Empowerment	17
8. Conclusions and Recommendations	18
8.1 On Social Protection	18
8.2 On Livelihood	19
8.3 On Financial Inclusion	19
8.4 On Social Empowerment	19
8.5 On eligibility and graduation criteria	20
8.6 On Monitoring	20

1. INTRODUCTION

IOM has identified major gaps in how livelihoods services are provided in communities across Iraq. More than five years since the liberation of Iraq from ISIS, there remains significant protracted displacement; for these individuals, poverty and lack of access to livelihoods remain a key concern. For those who have managed to return, many remain in poverty and are unable to find decent work. This is particularly the case for marginalized groups such as female-headed households. Traditional livelihoods services are not designed to meet the needs of these groups.

IOM is piloting a Graduation Approach (GA) to support the most vulnerable households on a trajectory out of poverty and extreme poverty towards self-sufficiency, resilience, and economic well-being. The GA is a sequenced and time-bound intervention that aims to help people living in extreme poverty build resilience and engage in sustainable livelihoods. The approach, developed by BRAC, has been implemented in different countries and contexts and includes a set of pillars that with combined targeting raise people out of poverty.

2. OVERVIEW OF IOM'S GRADUATION APPROACH

Existing IOM livelihoods services are like components of the GA and can be combined and carefully sequenced under the Graduation framework to meet the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable in communities. As such, IOM proposes to apply a "Graduation lens" to its existing livelihoods services to carefully sequence its existing interventions so the poorest people in communities who qualify for "Graduation" may receive the appropriate support at the appropriate points in their advancement to help them further their economic development and recovery. This support may include cash assistance in the early phase as participants get their footing and participate in skills training activities, seed capital grants or job placements to boost their income, and individualized mentoring throughout. Specifically, the approach incorporates four pillars of services: social protection, including consumption support and referrals to services; savings and financial management training; livelihoods promotion through asset transfers or job placement; and social inclusion.



As the context in Iraq shifts towards longer-term development approaches, IOM's approach will be implemented in coordination with other livelihoods actors including the Cash Working Group (CWG) and the Integrated Socio-Economic Vulnerability (ISEA).

- The approach to graduation approach developed by IOM proposes to identify individuals living in extreme poverty and provide them with basic resources, financial education, technical training, life-skill coaching, and social support so that they can 'graduate' from the programme with sustainable sources of income and be food secure. Possible intervention elements, based on BRAC, might include the following:
- **Consumption Support Grants (CSG):** support with cash grants for a period of up to six months.
- **Referral services & linkages:** while the beneficiaries benefit from the CSGs, IOM will look holistically into the needs of the targeted family and support all family members through referral system to IOM and non-IOM services, including but not limited to health, shelter, protection, legal, and other.
- **Saving plans and financial literacy:** Once food consumption stabilizes, head of households or bread winners of the family will be engaged in financial literacy trainings (FLT) and saving programs to promote a culture of saving towards specific goals including business engagement.
- **Business training:** IOM will engage individuals in a business brainstorming session using the International Labor Organization's Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) model, especially Generate Your Business (GYB) to understand beneficiaries' interest and technical abilities which will be the basis for future livelihood services provided by IOM.
- **Core Capacity Building:** One or two members of the family will be selected to enroll in technical capacity building activities including vocational trainings/on the job training to acquire necessary skills aiming to engage in the labor market.
- **Cash for Training:** IOM will facilitate the engagement of practical and on job-skills by linking the beneficiaries with IOM supported businesses (EDF/ILA). The linkage will consider skills pathways that the beneficiary has been trained on.
- **Business Support Package (BSP):** Once the training phase is completed, IOM will support the beneficiaries with a cash grant amounting to USD 2,000 to purchases necessary tools and equipment to start a business using IOM's ILA methodology for business start-ups.
- **Business Mentoring & Coaching:** IOM trainers will develop mentoring and coaching plans for the beneficiaries post the BSP support to ensure sustainability and success of the livelihood support.
- **Life Skill coaching:** IOM will engage the families with different life coaching activities linked to MHPSS.

Target beneficiaries: Ultra-poor families, especially female headed households. IOM will engage with the selected families until they graduate into a form of sustainable livelihood and ensure food stability. The pilot will target 40 families divided into two locations using a case management approach.

Target Locations: IOM will pilot the graduation approach in two locations to better understand the context and establish systems and tools that would enable programme expansion. The selection of the locations for the pilot is not yet finalized but some initial discussions determined:

1. Ninawa: Mosul city, West Mosul
2. Kirkuk: Kirkuk Center

3. OVERVIEW OF POVERTY IN IRAQ

Estimates of people, who are extremely poor and living under USD 1.25 per day – albeit dated since it is based on information from 2012 - was 3.9 per cent, rising to 21.2 per cent under USD 2 and almost 20 per cent for the individuals living under the national poverty line; other estimates included 23 per cent living under the poverty line (as of 2014) and even above 35 per cent (also referring to 2014).¹ Another study highlighted how male-headed households were, on average, poorer than female-headed ones, though again referring to pre-ISIL times. Female heads accounted for approximately 12 per cent of households, the majority of whom were widows. The lower poverty rate among female-headed households (16 percent versus 20 percent for male-headed households) was likely due to the additional assistance that they received from various sources.² Another more recent revision of poverty in Iraq suggested that single-headed households are, due to their lower income levels, at greater risk of poverty.³ A large proportion of women of working age in previously ISIL occupied areas are either widowed, divorced, separated or caring for a sick spouse, which situates these women in one the most vulnerable segments of the population. Female head-of-households represent 10 percent of Iraqi households, and 13 percent of IDP and returnee households, out of which 80 percent are widows.⁴

4. SOME LESSONS LEARNED AND LIMITATIONS OF GRADUATION APPROACHES

A set of factors were identified by some current revisions of GAs as limiting the effectiveness of the GA or severely constrain its ability to raise people out of poverty. The importance of **regular and predictable social security transfers** was highlighted since the assets given to families could be lost as a result of exposure to even relatively small shocks.⁵ Given that there is a great deal of evidence that providing families with regular and predictable transfers enables them to build productive assets and engage in the labour market, it is likely that the benefits of a long-term regular transfer would be significant.⁶

1 Rohwerder, B. (2015). Poverty eradication in Iraq (GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report 1259). Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham.

2 Brookings

3 SIDA, Multidimensional Poverty Analysis Iraq, 2020 2020, <https://cdn.sida.se/app/uploads/2020/12/01095835/mdpa-iraq-2020.pdf>

4 SIDA

5 The International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth, Debating Graduation, 2017.

6 Ibid.

Continued universal protection was also mentioned as important for ensuring a successful GA programme.⁷ Such continued universal protection through the social protection system (not necessarily through the same programme) is key to enabling people to engage in productive and decent employment (including entrepreneurial risk-taking) in a sustained way, to address poverty dynamics and prevent people from being pushed back into poverty due to a lack of social protection. The combination of non-contributory (tax-financed) and contributory (social insurance) mechanisms can play an important role in ensuring universal coverage—including poor people—through equitable and sustainable financing mechanisms. This would imply that people receive cash transfers and other benefits for as long as necessary, based on clear eligibility conditions, and continue to be protected by appropriate social protection mechanisms (including effective access to health care, income security in case of maternity disability, unemployment or loss of livelihood, as well as child benefits and old-age pensions) after having started employment or other income-generating activity.

The **Public Distribution System (PDS)** is a primary social protection system in Iraq, providing every Iraqi with a monthly food ration for a small nominal fee, and covering 99 per cent of the poor and its existence has resulted in the relative absence of extreme poverty in Iraq.⁸ However, it is expensive and very ineffective as a social security scheme as it does not target the poor or vulnerable households and has caused some distortions in the food market that have depressed food prices and hurt poor rural farmers.

The **Social Protection Net (SPN)** in Iraq targets individuals belonging to particular groups that are believed to be vulnerable including people with disabilities, orphaned children, divorced or widowed women, married male university students, families of the imprisoned and missing persons, those unable to work due to terrorism and the internally displaced; although reports indicate that the programme is ineffective in its targeting and only reaches less than 10 per cent of the poor.⁹ Iraq also distributes **Pensions** but it primarily assists those living above the poverty line¹⁰ and reaches only 20 per cent of the poor.¹¹

Additional forms of government assistance include **fuel subsidy programs, agriculture subsidy programs, migration and displacement assistance, housing assistance, employment assistance, microfinance programs**; although, currently inefficient, they do assist lower income households.¹² **Informal social protection or private transfers** include 'gifts from other households, remittances from abroad, alms, and assistance from other sources such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs)', which account for 17 per cent of all transfers.¹³ In general however, 'private transfers are distributed unevenly: their outreach is relatively small and cover a minority of poor households'.¹⁴

The same report also shed some light on the social safety nets (alone) impacts on poverty reduction in Iraq.¹⁵ The World Bank report looking at poverty in Iraq between 2007 and 2012 suggested non labor income components and public and private transfers including pensions and domestic remittances contributed to poverty reduction: domestic and international remittances contributed to 13 per cent of the total reduction in poverty, most from domestic remittances; pensions and other public transfers like social safety net compensations explained almost 7 per cent of the reduction in poverty.¹⁶ The widespread presence of food ration cards reduces poverty rates by more than 30 per cent with one explanation for the decline in poverty rates among very large households and households headed by

7 Ibid.

8 Rohwerder

9 The International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth

10 Rohwerder

11 WB, 2017, <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/54281148727729890/pdf/IRAQ-SCD-FINAL-cleared-02132017.pdf>

12 Rohwerder

13 Rohwerder

14 Rohwerder

15 Rohwerder

16 Rohwerder

women between 2007 and 2012 was suggested to be the Gol's social protection scheme which targets widows and divorced women, among others and where grants are increased with family size.¹⁷ A World Bank study indicated that improved targeting was required for social safety net programmes to benefit more of the poor with the 2014 Iraq Human Development Report also indicating that the social safety nets, social funds, and other welfare schemes were not enough to eradicate poverty.¹⁸

Some lessons learned from GAs point to the fact that interventions need to **change labour market activities people engage in** to raise them out of poverty and have a permanent effect on living standards.¹⁹ Poverty is associated with those labour market activities that require unskilled labour and no inputs of capital. In the examples provided, in order to sustainably raise women out of poverty women needed to devote a higher amount of time to livestock rearing rather than to occupations such as agricultural waged work or house cleaning.²⁰ A WB revision determined that the poor in Iraq are more likely to be distinguished by their sector of employment rather than by their employment status. Poor household heads tend to work in agriculture and fishing and in the construction, transport, storage, and communication sectors. Working in the construction sector, in particular, increased the risk of being in the bottom 40 percent by 8 percent in 2012. Employment of the household head in public administration, finance, and mining sectors, which are largely public sector jobs, lowered the odds of the household being in the bottom 40 percent by 11, 9, and 16 percent respectively, in 2012.²¹

Not all people are able or willing to engage in livelihoods. For example, disability and social norms might prevent some individuals from engaging in livelihood activities. Social norms represent a major limitation for women in Iraq, who tend to not work or work in specific occupations as IOM LMAs point out. Interviews with women also seem to indicate that some might not be willing to engage in livelihoods and would rather rely on social assistance programmes, relatives or their male family members, such as male children in the case of FHH, especially in more conservative areas of Iraq.

Resilience is important in maintaining graduation in complex risk environments. Studies have shown that falling back into poverty – namely, due to poor resilience – is 'massive', especially in light of the growing risk, frequency and intensity of shocks and stresses.²² Making this understanding more explicit in programming and measurement would only further enhance the contributions of GAs. The latter can include access to financial services, off-farm economic activities, employment, diversified livelihood risk, asset transfer or consumption support, and contributions to building social capital.

Graduation is also conditional on easing many of the meso and macro-level constraints. Market size represents an important bottleneck. Too many people pursuing the same microbusinesses or with the same employable skills will soon reach the absorptive capacity of the local economy and be out of work. Unless there are concomitant efforts to expand markets through value chain analysis, market studies or local economic investments, the GA will be ineffective for large numbers of the poorest people.²³

Natural resources, the local ecology, climate variability and physical terrain all represent other major constraints. Arid or semi-arid zones, mountainous or sparsely populated regions, droughts or flooding all create conditions for low economic dynamism and low livelihood opportunities. Droughts are specially impacting many

17 Rohwerder

18 World Bank

19 The International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth

20 The International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth

21 Rohwerder

22 The International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth

23 The International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth

areas across Iraq as a variety of studies have shown, which resulted in loss of livelihoods with areas such as -but not limited to - the South leading to reduced agricultural production and migration.

The **absence of basic social services such as health care facilities and schools** increases morbidity and mortality rates and restricts the possibilities of preventing the intergenerational transmission of poverty. In fact, due to the destruction of infrastructure due to the war on ISIL and the general neglect of the non-oil infrastructure,²⁴ access to basic services is greatly affected across the country. A low level of participation in local government also reduces the chances of local budgetary expenditures for poor people.

In addition, **economic mismanagement, corrupt governance, violence and conflict, as well as the vagaries of the global economy** contribute to the creation of fragile States and severely constrain possibilities for reducing extreme poverty through a GA, the same revision found. The WB suggested that the increased levels of violence in Iraq from 2013 onwards – albeit now reduced - combined with a legacy of severe economic and social fragmentation suggested that ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity is likely to be challenging.²⁵ Without growth and peace and security poverty reduction and broad-based prosperity will be difficult to sustain, yet these two- preconditions seem to be a challenge for Iraq.²⁶ Quantitative evidence gathered by the World Bank indicates that while development efforts by the government and other actors can mitigate the negative role of violence on economic growth, the required effort is substantial. Violence disproportionately affects growth in poorer parts of the country, the WB contends.²⁷

5. METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

At its core, the GA seeks to build the resiliency of the ultra-poor therefore understanding the local context is critical and demands a thorough political, social, and economic analysis of what is both appropriate and realistic in terms of programme design and implementation.

The assessment took a qualitative approach mainly and included interviews with key informants and vulnerable individuals. In addition, the assessment used secondary sources, especially data collected for the LMAs in the respective areas. The assessment informs how to design graduation interventions within social protection, livelihoods promotion, financial inclusion, and social empowerment. Key questions, adapted from BRAC,²⁸ for each pillar are outlined in the table below:

24 World Bank

25 Krishnan, 2014 cited in Rohwerder

26 Ibid.

27 Rohwerder

28 <https://bracupgi.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/WV-BRAC-Ultra-Poor-Graduation-Handbook-V2-July-19.pdf>

	Key Questions	KIs	Vulnerable individuals	Secondary sources
Social Protection	What is the food security and nutrition situation of the ultra- poor?	x	x	x
	What challenges related to education do the ultra-poor face?	x	x	x
	What are the challenges and trends related to housing/ migration/ internal displacement?	x	x	x
	What legal challenges exist for the ultra- poor?	x	x	
	What social protection and safety nets are available?	x	x	
	What are the health, education, and basic services available in the area?	X		
	How is social protection different for women and men?	X	x	
	How is social protection different for people living with disabilities?	X	x	
	What are income levels and purchasing power among the ultra-poor?	x	x	
Livelihoods promotion	What livelihoods do ultra-poor people generally have?	x	x	
	What assets do the ultra-poor have?		x	
	What are the natural resources available to the ultra-poor?		x	
	What are the risks and shocks in the area? What coping mechanisms do ultra- poor people engage in?	x	x	
	What market and business services are available?	x		
	How do ultra-poor people access markets and what barriers do they face in engaging markets?	x	x	
	How do livelihoods differ for women and men?	x	x	x
	How do livelihoods differ for persons living with disabilities?	x	x	x
	What are the saving patterns and average monthly savings of ultra-poor households?		x	x
Financial Inclusion	What are the vulnerabilities of the poorest with regard to finance, e.g. lack of secure way to save, debt?	x	x	
	What financial services are available to the ultra-poor? What terms and conditions do they have (e.g. interest rates, repayment period)?	x	x	
	What barriers prevent access to financial services?	x	x	
	What is the level of financial literacy of the ultra-poor?		x	
	What gender disparities exist in awareness, and financial service usage?		x	
	What structures or cultural norms exclude ultra-poor and marginalized groups?	x	x	

	Key Questions	KIs	Vulnerable individuals	Secondary sources
Social Empowerment	What gender norms, beliefs and practices affect ultra-poor households and communities?	x	x	
	What structures or cultural norms exclude ultra-poor and marginalized groups?	x	x	
	Are there social structures – religious barriers, prejudices – that prevent ultra-poor households from social empowerment?	x	x	

6. SAMPLING

The assessment was conducted in Kirkuk and Mosul and the locations were selected upon consultation within IOM. Interviews were conducted with different departments in MoLSA, civil society, and NGOs, along vulnerable men and women. Vulnerable individuals in Mosul were identified through a household profiling survey, which was recently undertaken (and therefore have not received any services from IOM) and were selected based on the vulnerability scoring. In Kirkuk, individuals were selected based on lists of vulnerable individuals but details on the latter were not provided from field teams.

Table 1: Sampling for the GA

	Kirkuk (Wastee, Al Jamea)	Mosul (Dakat Barka)
MoLSA (social protection, VT, disability)	5	3
Civil society, NGOs working on livelihoods	0	1
Consultation with IOM staff from the area	1	1
Women (head of households, disability, widows, etc.)	37	30
Men (head of household, disability)	33	30
Total		140

6.1 LIMITATIONS

Measuring vulnerability requires adopting quantitative methods and is based on well-established tools, which were developed and tested in different contexts. However, in consideration of the exploratory nature of the exercise the methods used are mainly qualitative since the latter are more appropriate for providing information for a potential refinement of the GA. A vulnerability assessment will be undertaken during the participant selection stage and the present exercise is going to provide some inputs for refining and adopting the most appropriate questions to be included in the vulnerability assessment or any tool for determining project participants intake.

7. FINDINGS

7.1 BACKGROUND

About half of the interviewed women are heads of household. Thirty per cent of respondents mentioned having a physical or mental health disability, a very small number mentioned the disability is not affecting their day to day activities with the remaining vast majority mentioning some disruptions to their activities with a small number mentioning a major effect on their daily tasks. A staggering 40 per cent of respondents mentioned having at least one member with a mental or physical disability; with 18 per cent mentioning having between 2 and 4 household members with a disability. The number of dependents is 5,3 individuals on average.

Informants were asked on who in their opinion could be considered vulnerable and who could be considered poor, and the majority mentioned IDPs, followed by HH who lost their breadwinner, widows, divorced women, single women without a source of income, people with disabilities without a source of income, all individuals without a source of income, HH with missing persons or family members in prison.

7.2 SOCIAL PROTECTION

4,110 individuals or 685 households have returned to Dakat Barka in Mosul based on DTM; 1,638 live in the residence of origin that is uninhabitable.²⁹ In Kirkuk, no information was found related to the target communities – Wastee and Jamea - in DTM. Educational levels among respondents are low with over a third without any type of formal education. Illiteracy is higher among female respondents (15% compared to men's, at 6%).

Table 2: Education among vulnerable individuals

Row Labels	Number	Percentage
Illiterate	14	11%
Some reading and writing	31	24%
Primary School	59	45%
High school/vocational	18	14%
Tertiary education (university/diploma)	8	6%
All	130	100%

While among the surveyed individuals only a small number reported **school-aged children not attending school** (4.6%), three respondents mentioned due to disability, one mentioned a lack of documentation, two mentioned lacking income and 'financial issues', and one mentioned 'not allowing them' to attend school. Overall, at least three responses could point to child labour. While the latter is complex to measure, in consideration of the high rate/prevalence of child labour in Iraq (4,8% of children aged 5 to 14 work and do not attend education in Iraq)³⁰, the latter is likely more prevalent in the area than the responses might suggest. In fact, while KIs confirmed that education is accessible in both locations, major challenges exist due to a poor financial condition and children will often have to drop out of school; some mentioned the risk affecting FHH in particular whereas another informant mentioned that in general poorer HH send their school-aged children to work.

29 DTM, 2022

30 Bureau of International Labor Affairs, Child Labor Iraq, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/iraq>.

When asked about basic needs, such as access to **food**, only 27 per cent of respondents have always access to sufficient food with 16 per cent who often lack it. The majority, 56 per cent think that sometimes they lack sufficient food. The explanations for not sufficient access to food is the lack of job opportunities and inconsistency of daily waged work along dependency on relatives, organizations, and governmental support as a source of income (without access to work), which is not sufficient to cover food-related expenses. Informants confirmed that access to food is limited among the poor. FHH overall report not having access to sufficient food in higher numbers compared to other households. See the table below for details.

Table 3: Access to food among FHH, non-FHH, and among all vulnerable individuals

Household access to food	FHH	Not an FHH	All
Often not sufficient	34%	9%	16%
Sometimes not sufficient	57%	56%	56%
Sufficient	9%	33%	27%
Don't know	0%	1%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Almost five per cent do not have access to **health-care** with the remaining mentioning having access. Almost a quarter of all the respondents who have access to health-care expressed dissatisfaction with it and these are all from Mosul. These explained lack of adequate treatment pointing to a lack of specialized health care service provision or lack of medicines (with a smaller number pointing to a lack of health staff or poor quality of health services) and poor access in terms of distance.

Eleven per cent mentioned requiring some **type of documents**, most commonly IDs followed by less mentioned examples such as passports. Respondents blamed it on the long procedures to obtain documents, some mentioned lacking connections or wasta, with one respondent mentioning an imprisoned husband. All were from Mosul with respondents from Kirkuk not reporting issues for accessing any type of documents. Informants from Mosul pointed to the absence of challenges for accessing documents where one added the need for 'time and money'. Informants from Kirkuk pointed to the challenges for accessing documents for PwD and IDPs only.

About a quarter of respondents – almost all from Kirkuk - receive (personal and not at household level) **financial support from the government**; women in higher numbers (33% compared to 18% among men). These include pensions, social welfare, and support for persons with a disability. Key informants from Mosul mentioned different types of governmental support being available, however, also pointed to some limitations in terms of funds availability and one mentioned 'many admission criteria' which was not further elaborated. Informants from Mosul also mentioned women having access to support, especially widows and divorced women. Informants admitted on the complex processes for obtaining governmental support, lack of sufficient funds coupled with the fact that working women are not accepted by the society of Mosul, which can leave women without any kind of income. Informants from Mosul also mentioned support for persons with disabilities (which can also target individuals responsible for PwD). Informants admitted that the sum received might not be sufficient (also depending on the type of disability) and the movements required for accessing MoLSA are out of reach for some.

In Kirkuk, informants mentioned the presence of social safety nets, which support both men and women; unemployed women, widows, divorced women, prisoner's wives and unemployed men. Informants admitted that often eligible individuals are not covered where two informants pointed to the transportation costs for accessing the social safety net, which is out of reach for many (the department is far from the respective communities in Kirkuk), which affects both

men and women. Persons with disabilities are also covered in Kirkuk, where limitations of coverage were highlighted along the issue of transportation fees.

Respondents were asked whether they felt they were entitled to support from the government by law but for some reason do not receive assistance. Many have applied but have not received the assistance, or have not received a response on their application. Many mentioned they do not have connections or wasta or the procedures are too complex and long so they did not even apply for assistance.

Table 4: Governmental support among vulnerable individuals

Government support	Women	Men	All
Not a beneficiary	67%	82%	75%
A beneficiary	33%	18%	25%
Total			100%

A regression was performed to explore what makes someone more likely to receive government support; being a woman (significant and negative for men); being a stayee (and not a returnee), and the presence of savings.

Overall, a high number of respondents mentioned deriving their household **income** from work with a marked difference between men and women. On other hand, government support is markedly higher among women since 69% mentioned it.

Table 5: Source of income among vulnerable individuals

Source of income	Mentions	Percentage reporting the source of income	Men	Women
Work	86	66%	63%	37%
Government support	39	30%	31%	69%
Family-friends	39	30%	51%	49%
Support NGOs	13	10%	62%	38%
Begging	1	0,7%	0%	100%

Income was not measured. Instead, participants were asked about monthly HH expenses and reported USD 261 on average, which likely matches their HH income since they do not have any savings. Expenses are much lower among the FHH, USD 183 compared to other HH measured at USD 290. Expenses are also dramatically lower in Mosul, USD 183 compared to USD 336 recorded in Kirkuk. A regression measuring what predicted higher spending found a significant and positive correlations with being a man, a stayee, having finished high school/vocational training, and having debts (and very weak and not significant with the number of dependents for example, which could be expected as having a major effect on HH spending).

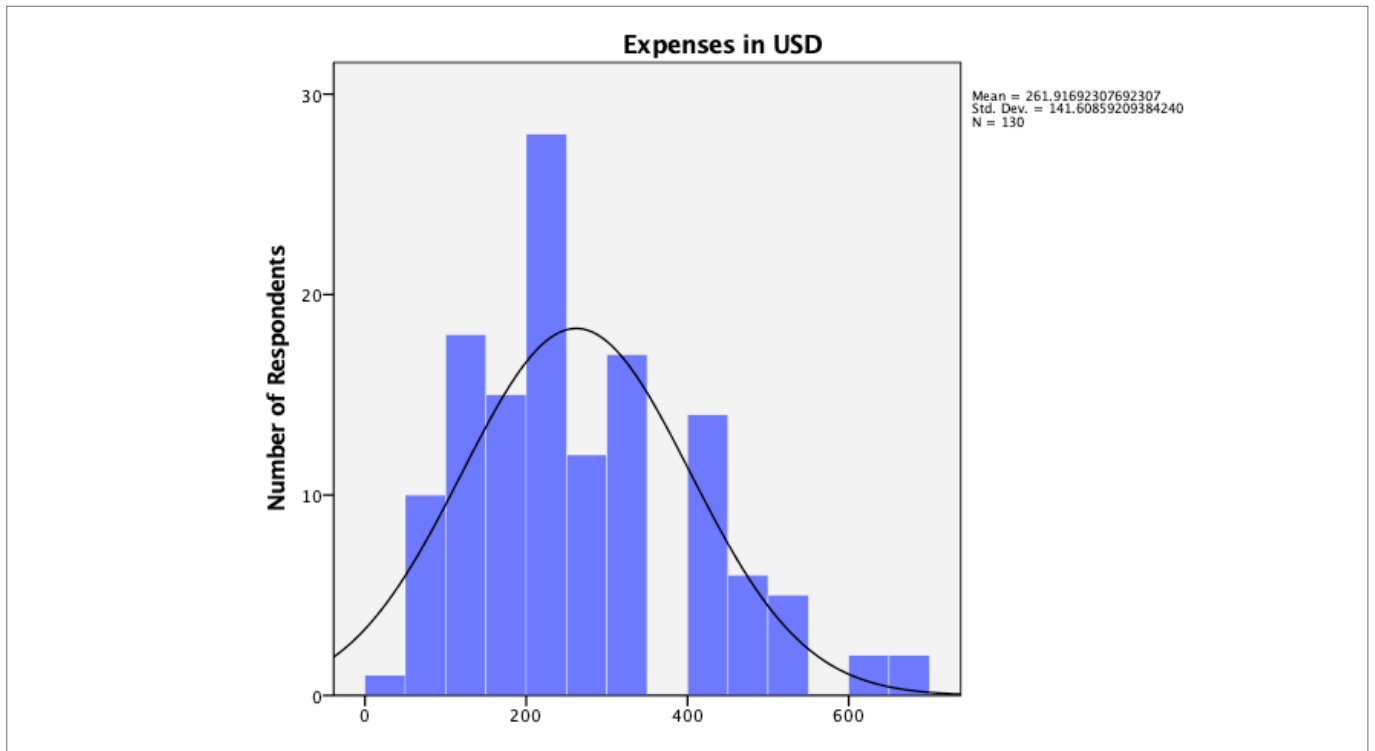


Diagram 1: Monthly household expenses reported by respondents

A regression model explored what makes someone more likely to derive income from work (alone or among other sources of income); a positive and significant relationship was established with having access to health-care, ability to voice an opinion in the community, and a higher value of assets owned.

While purchasing power in specific was not measured, based on LMA assessments, the latter is overall very low and reported by enterprise owners as a major concern with clients and therefore also affects the targeted communities, likely to a great extent.



7.3 LIVELIHOODS

Informants mentioned that vulnerable individuals in Mosul **work** as janitors, daily waged workers in restaurants, construction, or are self-employed (without further specifications). For women, KIs from Mosul mentioned receiving support from the government or support from organizations and relatives, or working in cooking, cleaning, personal care, and sewing, mostly from home. In Kirkuk, informants mentioned poor individuals working long hours and mainly in daily waged jobs, as receiving support from the government, engaging in more than one job (daily waged), in painting, in different service provision such as mechanic, in selling food and other items (on the street). Women experience challenges for accessing jobs; income generation is limited to sewing, baking, cleaning, and selling water and other smaller items on the streets, markets, or besides government offices. People with disabilities receive support from the government, informants explained, or they work in a sector that requires limited movement. In Kirkuk, informants raised the limited jobs available for people with disabilities and raised the issue of negative community perceptions, including among employers 'who do not give them a chance', selling water or smaller food items by checkpoints or markets along receiving government support.

Informants were asked what keeps people poor or why some struggle to escape poverty. Conflict, poor demand on products and services, lack of jobs, employers not giving chances to graduates (likely referring to nepotism in hiring), engaging in daily waged jobs (as opposed to more sustainable jobs), were all blamed. For women, respondents stressed the limited job opportunities that exist for women, which makes them less likely to escape poverty compared to men, some informants clarified.

Ten per cent of respondents are not interested in **working or running small businesses**. These are mainly women of whom almost half are FHH. Five out of 13 reported a disability but the impact on day to day activities – and therefore the ability to work - is small these have reported therefore disability is likely not the reason for not being interested in work. The remaining 90 per cent are interested in mainly opening their own businesses with work for others reported by only few respondents.

Thirty-six per cent require **vocational training**. Women mainly expressed the need for tailoring courses, followed by hairdressing and personal care with a small number mentioning food preparation and business management (the latter in Kirkuk). On the other hand, men mentioned barbering, smithery, computer programming, mobile maintenance, carpentry, and one mentioned mechanic, electrician, and photography. These reflect findings from other LMAs from the respective areas.

Participants do not own any land. While the questions on housing were not answered consistently, overall based on some lists of beneficiaries from different areas from Mosul (approved for IOM assistance) housing ownership is not common. Key informants in Mosul reported people dwelling in informal settlements and problems with housing due to high rent prices. Also for Kirkuk, informants mentioned that owning a house is out of reach for the poorest HH.

Field enumerators were asked to estimate the value of the assets among respondents. These showed great variety ranging from no assets owned to USD 25,000. However, the majority own assets estimated at slightly above USD 1,000 with assets above USD 2,500 being rare. A major difference was established between the assets of FHH and other respondents (who own twice as much). A major difference was also noticed between governorates (3 times higher in Kirkuk compared to Mosul). See the chart below.

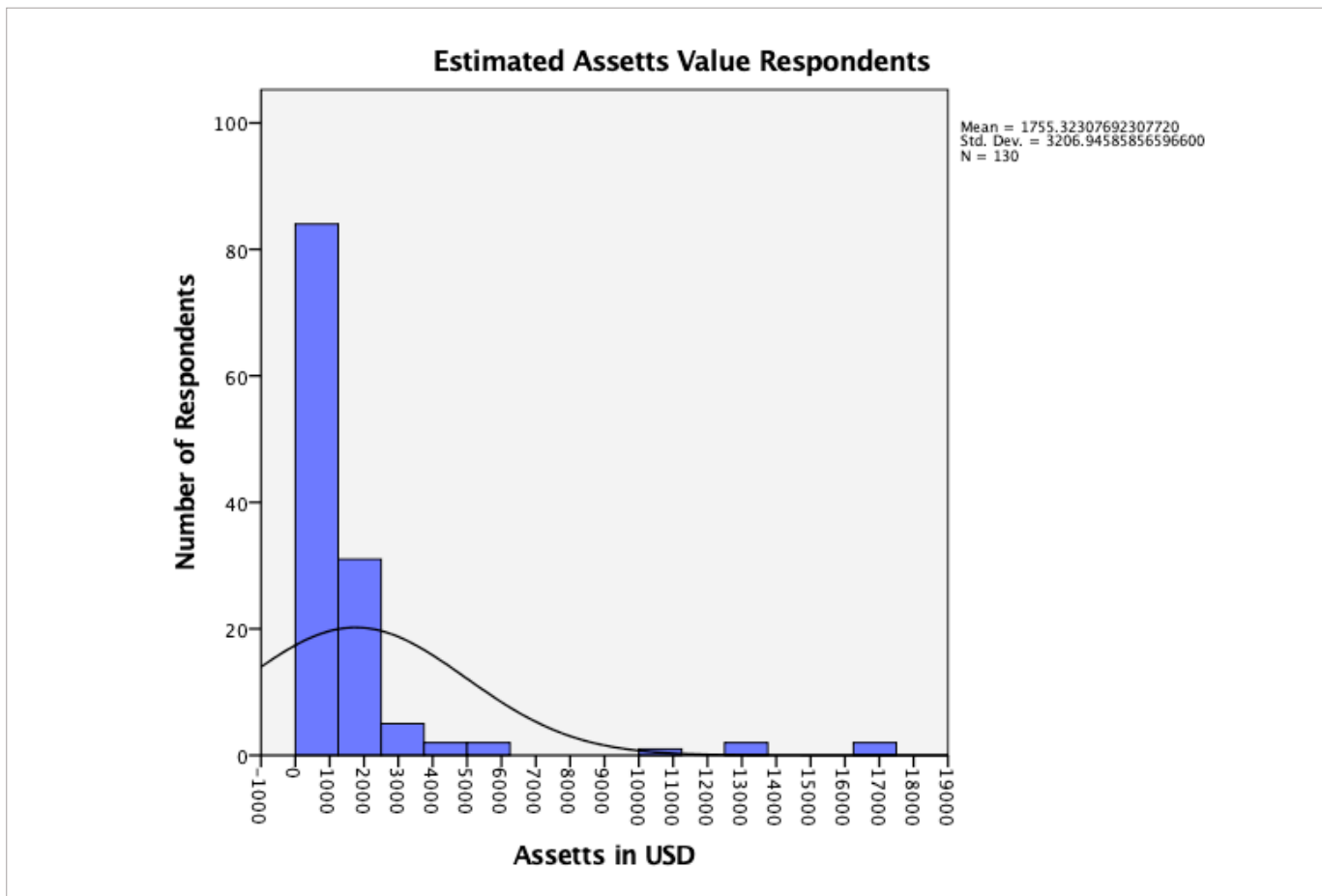


Diagram 2: Assets estimation by eumerators in USD

Respondents were asked about the **shocks and risks** they experience and about the coping mechanisms. They listed death of family members, including from Covid-19, disabilities of family members, including deterioration of mental health, deteriorated physical health, rising living costs, and many mentioned the risks associated with conflict and insecurity. Answers on the coping mechanisms were patchy, many mentioned not having a coping mechanism or ,doing nothing'; many mentioned praying with a small number mentioning taking loans. However, considering the high level of indebttness, resorting to loans seems a common coping mechanism. Savings are close to non-existent since only three per cent reported having any savings, which is common across the surveyed areas as established by LMAs.

Respondents were also asked about the challenges for engaging in the **market**. While only 13 per cent engage or a household member engage in the market, these reported findings common across Iraq established in LMAs such as low demand, low purchasing power, exchange rate, less competitive prices compared to imports, and lack of capital. Women mainly work from home as their ability to engage with markets is limited. Informants did not report challenges for engaging in the market.

7.4 FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Debt is high among respondents since 76 per cent reported it. The average debt is USD 1,465 with a higher average recorded among women, 1650 compared to 1262 among men and markedly higher in Kirkuk compared to Mosul. Respondents mainly mentioned incurring in debt to cover health care, followed by covering daily needs, paying rent, rebuilding their house with about 10 per cent mentioning to recover their productive assets or buy raw materials.

Access to financial institutions is limited in Iraq and close to non-existent for the poorest members. The majority of respondents can borrow money from family and friends with a small number who mentioned from a shop owner. About 10 per cent cannot borrow money from anyone. Aside the pressure and inability to pay off debt, 36 per cent do not report challenges for paying the debt off. Only a small number keep records of cash flows. These also run small businesses.

7.5 SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT

Respondents were asked whether they belong to any group, formal or informal and nobody mentioned belonging to any. When asked about voicing their opinion in the community, a fairly high number reported being able to do so (61%). The remaining - of whom the majority are women - think they are not allowed to raise their opinion. Women mainly mentioned they were not able to do so since women are not listened to whereas some mentioned they were poor and therefore lacking legitimacy or they did not know and therefore lacked any experience pointing to social structures and prejudices excluding poor individuals, especially women. Ten per cent of men are also not able to voice their opinion. However, the reasons provided are unclear and they mainly said they discuss with family and friends mainly or they do not know.

Another study determined how the lack of political transparency and accountability has spurred on ethno-sectarian elitism, mistrust and corruption in a mutually reinforcing fashion, which has deprived Iraqis of transparent and accountable political representation that can provide the power and voice and hence the opportunities and choice to move out of poverty.³¹ This has resulted in entrenched political disillusionment amongst the Iraqi population, largely reflected in the reoccurrence of popular protests demanding decent social services, adequate education and work opportunities.³²

31 SIDA

32 SIDA

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, respondents point to needs related to social protection, livelihoods, financial inclusion, and social empowerment, which all represent constitutive elements of successful GAs. In addition, and building on its various successes in different contexts, a variety of global lessons learned have emerged on the GA, which are also considered in the recommendations below.

8.1 ON SOCIAL PROTECTION

- In consideration of the inconsistent access to food, consumption support is highly needed. Factors that influence the duration of consumption support include the amount of time it will take for the household to begin earning enough from the selected livelihood activity to cover consumption needs and should be therefore adapted to the individual household. Nonetheless, the duration of consumption support should be specified from the outset.
- Consumption support should be also adapted based on a scoring taking into consideration the number of household members and the 'type' of household members such as children, elders, PwD, and the presence of pregnant mothers.
- While access to basic health-care somewhat exists but in consideration of the many complaints raised in Mosul, establishing links also with health-care providers is needed in order to lower the morbidity and mortality rates at large.
- Support for services such as legal assistance to access missing documentation is needed in Mosul and for specific groups such as PwD in Kirkuk.
- In order to prevent multi-generational poverty, ensuring school-aged children attend school is paramount and could be tied to consumption support services.
- Access to literacy courses should be also made available, especially for women.
- Social protection remains limited for some and is essential when shocks occur as HH get into debt and might sell productive assets too, which would make a GA programme less sustainable. Support HH in accessing social protection and ideally establish a component for working with the relevant governmental departments at MoLSA. While at pilot stage the latter might be less feasible due to the small number of cases targeted, the following phases should establish a social protection component targeting the government, MoLSA directorates in specific. The details on how to engage with MoLSA will require further elaboration.
- In consideration of the stability required for one to graduate, working with IDPs is not recommended and therefore working with returnees but also with those who stayed is recommended. Since supporting individuals in accessing social protection is important, the latter is less available and feasible for those who are still in displacement. Nonetheless, some exceptions might apply such as IDPs who do not intend to return to the area of origin, should be considered eligible and such exceptions should be clearly outlined in the programme documents.

8.2 ON LIVELIHOOD

- VT is required for women, especially in food preparation, personal care, and sewing. Men expressed more varied needs such as welding, barbering, smithery, computer programming, mobile maintenance, carpentry, mechanic, electrician, and photography.
- In light of the high interest in self-employment, BSP is recommended for both men and women, in the sectors specified by LMAs implemented in the respective areas.
- In consideration that social norms represent the major barriers to women's work, working more closely on changing such norms should be considered. Social marketing and similar approaches should be added to programming, especially when rolled out at a larger scale (and therefore less feasible during the pilot stage).
- As general findings pointed out that in the absence of concomitant efforts to expand markets through value chain analysis, market studies or local economic investments, the GA will be ineffective for large numbers of the poorest people, programming is recommended in EDF and similar programmes' localities.

8.3 ON FINANCIAL INCLUSION

- Considering the general lack of savings and its ability to raise people out of poverty, consider establishing savings for all beneficiaries, including men and women. Since the ability to save seems limited, savings could be drawn from the consumption support and since its purpose is to change habits, it should be implemented from the outset of the programme (and not after income generation is in place).
- Financial literacy is overall low and should be also provided.

8.4 ON SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT

- Considering the generally low social empowerment, especially noticeable among women, a series of interventions are required, including life skills trainings, community mobilization, and general linkages to existing community institutions. Admittedly, the latter is also easier to implement through a CRC and it is therefore recommended to establish the programme in areas with a functioning CRC.
- Mentoring is central to the GA and should not be limited to livelihoods and will depend on the challenges of the household in question. Therefore, discussing health, education, family planning (the latter is especially important in consideration of the high fertility rates), and other issues is also of importance. Staff orientation will therefore need to focus on all of these elements, livelihoods and non-livelihoods related and on establishing business and 'personal goals' with beneficiary HHs. Admittedly, the latter might be difficult to cover by a single individual considering the knowledge required and therefore the involvement in case management of relevant staff with the appropriate knowledge should be explored.

8.5 ON ELIGIBILITY AND GRADUATION CRITERIA

- Household profiling should determine the most appropriate individuals for accessing the project, including their probability in engaging in future livelihoods. These could represent separate exercises.
- The under USD 1,90 per day as threshold might be limiting programme intake since only 2,5 percent of the population was found living under the extreme poverty line. While the figures are dated and the number of people living in extreme poverty has increased, the bar should be set higher, for example at USD 3,20 (the Iraqi national poverty line). In addition, since poverty is multi-dimensional, other dimensions beyond resource poverty should determine eligibility.
- Also, in order to improve synergies with other programmes such as Facilitated Voluntary Return, consider including the same beneficiaries into the GA.
- Determine and make explicit in project documents when does one graduate from the project (along a set of clear quantitative and qualitative indicators to assess whether that definition has been met). An example: Graduating members have the skills and resources to sustainably provide for the needs of their families and the capacity to manage future economic shocks.
- In consideration of the importance in maintaining graduation in complex risk environments – such as the one in Iraq – ensuring the resilience of beneficiaries should be central to the GA, namely by making it explicit in programming and measurement too. Some known contributors to resilience include access to financial services, asset transfer or consumption support, contributions to building social capital, etc.
- Support in accessing health care services – one of the main contributors to the accumulation of debt among respondents - after the end of the programme is also important, especially to reduce the risk that health shocks will cause beneficiaries sliding back into poverty.
- Also, any community structures established during the programme – for example in case of group savings, any peer mentoring initiatives, or other – could also become the pillar for community support. Such groups should ideally become effective permanent resources in the communities after the project is closed.

8.6 ON MONITORING

- Monitoring should be conducted at programme but also at household-level. The latter is a beneficiary monitoring system that gauges household-level progress toward the goals established as graduation criteria. The latter could be included to the mentoring visits conducted by project staff and should be conducted more often than programme monitoring.
- Since sliding back into poverty is a major concern and tends to happen often, post-project monitoring is essential in this case in order to determine any services that might be still needed post-project and any changes to the pilot as a whole.
- The specific indicators and benchmarks vary but include both economic and social data on assets, income, food security, health, children's education, and other.

GRADUATION APPROACH CONTEXT ANALYSIS



Implemented by:

