

INTEGRATED SUSTAINABLE URBAN RECOVERY: SINJAR COMMUNITY PLANNING, IRAQ

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

Townships in Sinuni Sub-district, Sinjar, Ninewa Governorate and Northwestern Iraq

THEMATIC SCOPE

Emergency support linked to sustainable urbanization and long-term development, support to IDP returnees, shelter, basic services, community cohesion, security

TARGET BENEFICIARIES

Internal displaced populations from the Sinuni area; Local, regional and national authorities

PARTNERS

- Governorate of Ninewa
- Ministry of Planning and respective governorate directorates;
- Ministry of Municipalities and respective governorate directorates;
- Local municipalities and local neighbourhood planning structures;
- Ministry of Housing and Construction and respective governorate directorates;
- Ministry of Migration and Displacement and respective governorate directorates;
- Ministry of Interior respective governorate directorates;
- Local community structures

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Background: From January 2014 over 3.3 million persons have been internally displaced in Iraq. On-going conflict may result in new displacement but the most recent data indicates that over 90,000 IDP families across Iraq have spontaneously returned to their areas of origin. However, a number of factors prevent or delay the return of IDPs, including damage to housing; poor access to basic services; deterioration of community cohesion and security; limited economic opportunities and disputed land and property claims.

According to rapid damage assessments conducted by UN-Habitat and the Ninewa Governorate in 2015, a devastating proportion of public infrastructure, including health facilities, schools, water and electric infrastructure, have been damaged or subject to looting. Many villages in the northern districts of Ninewa have experienced almost near total destruction of private properties as a result of the conflict and ongoing sectarian violence. Sinuni, a sub-district of Sinjar District in Ninewa Governorate with a high number of minorities, is one of the most affected districts with approximately 3,000 homes totally destroyed. In addition, findings show that minority groups have been subject to discriminatory policies predating the current crisis, compounding current social tensions, which is particularly the case in Sinjar. Migration is likely to increase as families are faced with deteriorating conditions and urgent steps that support both IDPs and host community services need to be taken to build resilience. Faced with deteriorating conditions, families could choose to migrate as opportunities and assets contract.

Typically, emergency urban responses have been ad-hoc and not linked to the overall development objectives of the country. Lessons learned demonstrate that the community develops its own coping mechanisms, which, when supported, lead to sustainable change, and that the potential for development gain is highest in the immediate aftermath of a crisis. These are key principles underlying this project response in recently liberated areas in Iraq. Given UN-Habitat's long-term experience in Iraq and globally, the project provides a comparative advantage for a holistic approach to urban recovery and stabilizing fragile communities.

Goals and objectives: The overall goal is to establish an integrated urban recovery programme in 7 townships in the Sinuni Sub-district (Sinjar area) through the support to national and local authorities and incorporating a participatory community planning approach.

The objectives are to:

- support the IDPs return to their original areas (newly liberated and retaken from ISIL); stabilize the Yazidi community in Sinjar and eliminate migration of families from the country, enhance livelihoods, economic opportunities and sustainable development in affected areas
- assist national and local authorities to adequately address sustainable urban recovery, recognizing that responsibility for recovery rests with the families and local communities with the support of the authorities

Impact: The project will build self-reliance of target beneficiaries, local communities and authorities, will enhance security, protection, and rights; generate a process that would allow families in need to overcome obstacles preventing return; cultivate a spirit of peacebuilding and community cohesiveness; and design the recovery investment to remain within the community including required public service infrastructure (shelter, municipal basic services), and community identified social, health or economic development proposals .



**UN-HABITAT
ROLE**

UN-Habitat promotes community-based reconstruction in crisis-affected countries, implementing projects in places such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The agency's experience shows that engaging community members themselves in recovery/reconstruction activities empowers them socially and economically, enabling them to plan and manage their own activities for more peaceful and stable community.

In Iraq, UN-Habitat has worked closely with governorates and local community members to support reconstruction and rehabilitation of housing and infrastructure in areas hosting refugees and internally displaced persons, which gives UN-Habitat a comparative advantage and technical expertise to plan and implement this project.

In 2013-2015, UN-Habitat implemented a project titled *Shelter and Infrastructure Support for Non-Camp Syrian Refugees in Kurdistan Region of Iraq* to support vulnerable refugee families as well as host communities living in substandard conditions by rehabilitating their housing and upgrading community infrastructure including water, sanitation and hygiene facilities. Other projects using the same approach include *Enhancing Health and Dignity of Displaced Women in Iraq* (2014-2015) and *Improving the Housing Delivery System in Erbil* (2012-2015). Lessons learned from these programmes suggest that effective interventions require responsiveness to local conditions including cultural considerations and respect to gender sensitivities based on community involvement in planning and implementation. This project builds on these lessons learned, and ensures local conditions, cultural considerations and gender sensitivities are taken into consideration in project design and implementation, for example, by establishing women's groups within the community council to ensure their voices are reflected in planning and implementing of the project activities.

UN Habitat will:

- conduct assessments to ascertain a more complete picture of the context in Sinjar, for example physical damage, institutional gaps, local authority capacity, community dynamics and asset mapping, income generation opportunities and the availability of personal documentation.
- facilitate participatory community planning process in order to identify the needs and priorities of communities

develop Community Action Plans to define the recovery



**MAIN
OUTPUTS**

The main outputs of the programme:

- Community identification and awareness building: identification of communities and decision makers
- Awareness-raising campaigns on the concept of Community Councils (CCs)

- Establishment of Community Councils with support of local authorities
- Meetings to discuss communities' problems and resources
- Community plans at the local level
- Detailed physical and socio-economic surveys
- Project proposals to be endorsed by the CCs for infrastructure projects and community identified social, health or economic development
- Pilot Projects by the communities or through contractors, monitored by the project team
- Joint evaluation of completed projects

 **MAIN RESULTS / IMPACT**

The project is expected to achieve the following outcomes for the existing population and IDPs returning to the townships of the Sinuni Sub- District in the Ninewa Governorate in Iraq:

- effective community planning
- improved public service infrastructure
- strengthened resilience and economic development
- enhanced security and social cohesion.

Humanitarian and developmental work in newly retaken areas (from ISIL) in Iraq are an opportunity to address long standing developmental concerns at the national level, which, if dealt with at this stage, could reduce some of the root causes and drivers for conflict in the country.

 **PROGRAMME DURATION**

2 years

 **TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET**

US\$ 1,106,000