

# External Evaluation of NRC Livelihoods Programmes in Iraq

STOOS Consulting



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# List Of Abbreviations And Acronyms

A4A	Alliances for Action
AMAL	Activating Market-Based Agriculture livelihoods
BDS	Business development service
CARM	Community Accountability response mechanism
CoC	Chamber of Commerce
CDC	Community development committees
CLCI	Cash and Livelihoods Consortium of Iraq
CSA	Climate-smart agriculture
DoA	Directorate of Agriculture
Dol	Directorate of Irrigation
EDF	Enterprise Development Fund
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and agricultural organization
FFS	Farmer Field School
GAP	Good Agriculture Practices
GIZ	Gesellschaft für International Zusammenarbeit
GORS	Global output and outcome reporting system
ICLA	Information, counselling and legal assistance
IDP	Internally displaced people
IEDs	Improvised explosive device
ILO	International labour organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPPM	Integrated production and pest management

IQD	Iraqi dinar
IS	Islamic State group
ITC	International Trade Centre
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoT	Ministry of Trade
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSMEs	Micro, small and medium enterprise
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
PDS	Public Distribution System
RePLECA	Restoration of Peace, Livelihoods and Economic Cycles in Anba
SAAVI	Strengthening Agriculture and Agri-food Value Chains and Trade Policy in Iraq
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SIYB	Start and Improve your business
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Training
TNA	Training Needs Assessment
ToR	Terms of reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UXOs	Unexploded Ordnances

# 1 Executive Summary

NRC has been implementing cash and livelihoods programmes in Iraq since 2010. Cash and livelihoods were implemented in Anbar, Basra, Dohuk, Ninewa, Kirkuk, Salah Al Din, and Thi-qar Governorates. NRC signed a contract with STOOS in December 2022, for the evaluation of NRC's Cash and Livelihoods programming in Iraq. The geographic focus of the evaluation is on governorates implementing livelihoods programme, namely Anbar, Dohuk, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Basra. The terms of reference were changed several times with emphasis shifting from durable solutions and MPCA to livelihoods pathways. Due to the large number of programmes that NRC has implemented in Iraq since 2019, the report provides an overview of pathway successes and failures, and considers which pathways continue to be effective in the future.

The terms of reference presented a set of core evaluation questions which are listed here alongside a summary of the findings of the review.



# 1.1 IMPACT

## 1- Which livelihoods pathways (Access to employment, Inclusive business development and Agriculture support) have contributed to the greatest impact/livelihood outcomes and how? What needs to be continued and adapted to inform NRC's future livelihood strategies?

Over 60 percent of SMEs surveyed during this evaluation reported increased sales and profits during NRC programmes and following NRC's exit. Micro grant and Small and Business Grants to businesses have been increasingly successful and sustainable. Of the 54% who found employment following NRC TVET training in Basra, 75% were self-employed, (SME).

NRC's focus on targeting and incorporating youth entrepreneurs in MSMEs engaging in agri-food value chains with private sector wholesalers and supermarkets is facilitating trade of local produce, and will contribute to inclusive economic growth and job creation. Agriculture and business development combined continue to expand.

Agricultural food chain MSMEs will also benefit from repairs to productive infrastructure which impact on the livelihoods of entire communities. MSMEs engaged in agri food value chains impact an entire community, through facilitating market demand for local produce in addition to processing and trade. NRC should continue to expand and strengthen access to productive assets. In the context of climate change, such interventions will have a sustained impact.

Facilitating IDP access to legal identity and civil documentation has an immediate impact on self-reliance opportunities, increased freedom of movement, access to return grants, and access to livelihood opportunities.<sup>1,2</sup>

NRC wage employment particularly urban wage and job employment had less impact with 90 percent of participants failing to attain employment following urban job placement schemes. However, in rural areas, agriculture and rural wage employment is an expanding sector.

NRC's focus on livelihood resilience in more remote rural resource-poor areas, including access to basic and productive services such as markets, water for production and irrigation have widespread impact on food security and livelihoods. Repair of rural productive infrastructure impacts positively on multiple livelihoods for multiple households.

### Unintended positive or negative consequences of the cash and livelihood interventions

There appear to be few unintended consequences. KIIs and FGDs were rarely able to identify unintended positive or negative consequences. One SME beneficiary advised that the large amounts of money being sanctioned off in Basra caused 'confusion' in Basra.<sup>3</sup> One small

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<sup>1</sup> HUMANITARIAN TRANSITION OVERVIEW IRAQ, FEBRUARY 2023

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR Moving toward a government-led IDP response and furthering refugee inclusion, 2022

<sup>33</sup> FGD Basra, 30/5/2023

unintended effect that one woman saved money from her job placement stipend and applied her vocational training and job experience to open a small nail salon business in her home, so that she could work from home and avoid paying for transportation. NRC received one complaint suggesting vouchers for agricultural inputs had led to increased prices in local markets.

## 1.2 COHERENCE

**2- What type of government engagement has taken place? How has NRC's engagement with government/line ministries/directorates been beneficial to achieving programme outcomes? What is the capacity and willingness of local government and local community structures to continue supporting the livelihoods participants after the NRC project phase-out from the area?**

NRC cooperates well with ministries and departments including Departments of Agriculture, Social Development, Economy, Water and Irrigation. Coordination efforts do however vary between different governorates. A number of NRC offices advised that, "Coordination efforts between NRC and relevant government agencies departments and institutions are essential to achieve common goals and promote sustainable development, and one of our most important strengths".<sup>4 5</sup> NRC observations included the need to continue to build better relations with federal government as otherwise challenges cause delay and confusion when trying to reach communities. "If we coordinate with higher authorities, we can negotiate solutions to avoid delays."<sup>6</sup>

In terms of supporting programmes after NRC phase out, in Nineveh, NRC advised that local government and local community structures will continue supporting livelihoods participants. NRC reported it has good cooperation with ministries and stakeholders, and this is very useful.<sup>7</sup> In Dohuk, coordination between NRC and line-ministries built harmony and consensus between the government and NRC.<sup>8</sup> "However, whilst coordination between NRC and relevant ministries, institutions, universities and the private sector was clear, coordination between ministries, government institutions, civil society and universities was absent."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> KII NRC Hawija office 10.07.2023

<sup>5</sup> NRC KII Nineveh Interview, 16/6/2023

<sup>6</sup> NRC KII Nineveh Interview, 16/6/2023

<sup>7</sup> NRC KII Nineveh Interview, 16/6/2023

<sup>8</sup> Duhok, KII, Mukhtar Warsity Complex, 8/6/2023, field researcher DM

<sup>9</sup> KII Dohuk, 6/8/23

**3- What are the current needs of displacement affected communities (IDPs, returnees, refugees) with regards to livelihoods? Are the current approaches and programme design fit for purpose to address the specific needs of each group?**

The needs of displacement affected communities vary greatly according to their location and to the status, i.e., whether IDPs, returnees, refugees. Returnees need strategic projects linked to the local economic development. Multiple key Informants advised that *the most strategic project with a secure future is agriculture*.<sup>10</sup> Smallholder farmers need capacity building.<sup>11</sup> *Facilitating agricultural production is a priority*.<sup>12</sup> *Displacement is no longer the main driver of needs as returnees are returning to agriculture*. Scaling up agriculture also allows for the creation of employment for those without land. It is logical to provide agriculture for returnees and remainees (hosts) and address the challenges they face.<sup>13</sup> Iraq's Humanitarian Response Plan cites focus supporting returnees with agricultural tools and equipment, as well as livestock inputs.<sup>14</sup>

Needs include assistance to address challenges such as loss of productive assets, damaged irrigation infrastructure, high post-harvest losses, and limited access to markets and inputs such as seeds, tools, feed and agro-chemicals. There is also need for advocacy for removal of unexploded ordinances to enable cultivation or grazing. *“Host communities and Returnees need support for agriculture and small projects such as fertilizer sellers, dairy production and blacksmithing, and water for agriculture.”* The natural resource base, i.e., the environment, ecosystem, terrain, soil, aspect, watershed, pests and hazards, present specific and localised production challenges and offer specific agri food system opportunities. NRC should continue to facilitate returnee agriculture, building on the comparative advantage of different geographical areas, focusing on key food security crops such as wheat, barley, livestock, poultry and horticulture.

***“The challenge we were facing was lack of finance to replant land. Through NRC's assistance, we were able to plough and replant our land and make a better living through the profits of the wheat harvest.”***<sup>15</sup>

IDPs living in informal settlements constitute one of the most complex caseloads in Iraq.<sup>16</sup> They are particularly vulnerable as the sites are not considered formal camps by the GoI and thus suffer from lack of services and disrupted livelihoods.<sup>17</sup> Their needs are Information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA), to enable access to legal identity and valid civil

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<sup>10</sup> NRC KII Nineveh Interview, 16/6/2023

<sup>11</sup> WFP, Iraq Annual Country Report 2022

<sup>12</sup> KII NRC Iraq JP

<sup>13</sup> KII NRC Iraq JP

<sup>14</sup> HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN IRAQ 2022

<sup>15</sup> FGD Returnees Anbar/Ramadi/Boutaiban, 30/5/2023

<sup>16</sup> NRC Twice displaced: The unmet needs of Iraq's children in informal settlements September 2022

<sup>17</sup> HUMANITARIAN TRANSITION OVERVIEW IRAQ, FEBRUARY 2023

documents which are crucial for accessing national social safety nets, social protection mechanisms and employment in the public sector.<sup>18</sup>

Women and girls in Iraq have limited access to housing, land and property rights. Female heads of household often experience obstacles when they try to prove the legality of their occupation of the land and property. They are still subject to discriminatory traditional and cultural norms, which exclude them from their inheritance of land. Women are often unable to replace missing ownership documents or reclaim possession of occupied property due to discriminatory barriers in accessing courts and are officially barred from accessing compensation claims from damaged/destroyed properties.<sup>17</sup> NRC ICLA's assistance enabling women and particularly female headed households to ascertain their legal documentation is particularly appropriate for this vulnerable group.

Rural IDPs also advised livestock farming is suitable for displaced farmers. In Sinjar they advised NRC to "Support people who have livestock with money to buy fodder, and veterinary assistance to examine livestock periodically, vaccinate them to avoid communicable diseases".<sup>19</sup> Provision of training of agri processing skills to IDPs will also enhance their employment prospects in agri processing which is a growing industry. This is supported by the HRP, which advises, for the most vulnerable out-of-camp IDPs and returnees, including female-headed households and those living in critical shelter, who have been found to be particularly vulnerable to food insecurity, there is need to improve food availability, access and stability through provision of agriculture-based income-generating activities, agricultural and livestock inputs, assets and training on crop and/ or livestock production, agricultural practices and food preservation. These activities will support the integration of poor vulnerable households into local agricultural value chains, increase their access to markets and services and reduce their reliance on negative coping mechanisms to meet basic food needs.<sup>20</sup>

NRC's pathways evolved in a logical way reflecting needs of beneficiaries and in response to challenges facing displacement affected communities. NRCs' response also reflected its mission statement and priority focus. Early support to encamped refugees IDPs focused on SMEs to ensure access to goods and services as well as household incomes. Urban job placements encountered multiple challenges.

NRC should seek to build resilience of agri-food systems. Adopt and scale up climate smart agriculture and innovation to increase water productivity. In dryer or more remote locations without irrigation canals, support improved livestock management practices via support for Pastoral Field Schools. Small ruminants are more resilient to climate hazards. Pasture rehabilitation through forage reseeding, haymaking, flash-flood water harvesting infrastructure will increase fodder cultivation which will contribute to increased milk productivity in quantity and quality. Facilitate access to veterinary supplies as healthy livestock survive drought.

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<sup>18</sup> Sources ECHO WFP Jul 2023 EU and WFP provide cash assistance to internally displaced

<sup>19</sup> FGD Sinjar, Displaced Farmers 19/06/2023

<sup>20</sup> HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN IRAQ 2022

## 1.3 Effectiveness

### 4- Do beneficiaries believe that the livelihoods activities and approaches have helped them become more self-reliant? If so, how? Which specific activities had the most significant impact toward this end?

NRC beneficiaries believe that the livelihoods activities and approaches have helped them become more self-reliant. Focus group discussions revealed some of the wider impacts that NRC programmes had on project participants. Farmers in Anbar advised, *“We are able to buy and provide for the basic and daily needs of families and children from food, drink, school supplies, house rent and others.”*<sup>21</sup> *“Farmers were able to increase production and incomes and provide for family's needs including medicine and other financial needs of the family”.*<sup>22</sup> *“Self-reliance and productivity increased due to the support provided because the wheat was of good quality.”*<sup>23</sup> *“Through cultivating land and selling crops, I was able to save money and re-cultivate increased quantities of production by cultivating larger areas.”*<sup>24</sup>

Facilitating IDP access to legal identity and civil documentation has an immediate impact on self-reliance opportunities, increased freedom of movement, access to return grants, and access to livelihood opportunities.<sup>25, 26</sup> Civil documentation also helps enable vulnerable IDPs to enroll in Ministry of Social Affairs’ social assistance programmes, i.e., monthly cash payments under the poverty alleviation scheme,<sup>27</sup> as well as strengthening access to national services including education and healthcare. In addition to promoting inclusion in social protection schemes, NRC has assisted IDP employment by promoting IDP local integration in small-scale infrastructure projects.<sup>28</sup>

### 5- To what extent have NRC livelihoods programmes enabled the participation of the people and communities we work with in support of effective, safe, and quality programming throughout the project cycle?

In terms of Safe and Inclusive Programming, affected communities were found to have been consulted during programme design and implementation. FGDs and KIIs confirmed that NRC engaged communities and partners during and throughout programme design. *Opinions were met with understanding and were welcomed by NRC and the people.*<sup>29</sup> *Mukhtars that NRC reached out to collect information about their villages and activities were organized with the participation of everyone.*<sup>30</sup> *Challenges facing IDPs and refugees are studied to address the problem strategically. The private sector also has a positive role in addressing and working with the*

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21 Anbar - Al Ramadi Anbar Agriculture Directorate KII, 10-6-2023

22 Anbar - Al Ramadi Anbar Agriculture Directorate KII, 10-6-2023

23 FGD Al-Basrah- Al-Nashwa district with farmers, 11/06/2023

24 FGD, Anbar/Ramadi/Boutaiban, 30/5/2023

25 HUMANITARIAN TRANSITION OVERVIEW IRAQ, FEBRUARY 2023

26 UNHCR Moving toward a government-led IDP response and furthering refugee inclusion, 2022

27 UNHCR Moving toward a government-led IDP response and furthering refugee inclusion, 2022

28 UNHCR Global Report Iraq, 2021

29 Duhok, KII, Mukhtar Warsity Complex, 8/6/2023, field researcher DM

30 30/05/2023 Anbar / Ramadi / Al-Butaiban Male Farmer Returnees

organization”.<sup>31</sup> Some exceptions to participation were noted in Basra where participants were unaware of how or why they had been selected.

Whilst participation of communities throughout the programming cycle is the norm, incidence where this had not taken place were also identified. Some training centres were located in areas that were not possible for displaced or women to travel to. Some rural trainings took place in urban centres as *there were no training facilities in rural areas*.

NRC should be more pro-active in ensuring NRC programmes are accessible to women. TVET programmes reached only 19 percent of the planned 50 percent women. As most women are unable to work outside of the home due to responsibilities in the home, 75 percent remained unemployed at the end of the project. In some agricultural programme, no women were included. NRC explain that cultural reasons prevent participation. In post war Iraq, female headed households (FHH) without male breadwinners are particularly vulnerable and greater efforts should be made to include them. Consultations with women should ensure culturally appropriate activities are identified in conservative contexts. There is also need for NRC to review itself internally to identify how and why women were excluded and to ensure women are not excluded from future programmes.

Incidence of women’s exclusion were not the norm however, and generally NRC strives to ensure that women (and youth) are represented and participate in programme activities. This study did not, however, identify incidence of engagement of women in decision making positions for programme design. It is noted however that NRC training frequently includes soft skills such as communication, leadership, negotiation skills and decision making.

NRC Iraq utilises two types of participatory approaches, direct participation of members of the affected population participating as individuals in various phases of programmes, and participation by representation, which involves representation of community views by informal and formal representation groups.<sup>32</sup> Most aspects of NRC programmes appear participatory, utilising feedback and learning, engaging with local leaders and key stakeholders. In terms of NRC’s Participation Ladder Table which articulate the degree of community participation and engagement, it is noted that the extent to which affected communities are given a voice and power to make decision related to programming has varied over time. Earlier humanitarian programmes adopted more functional participation (collaborate), score 4, whilst more recent programmes use interactive participation (joint decision making), score 5. The trend is positive with programmes increasingly engaging

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31 Duhok, KII, Mukhtar Warsity Complex, 8/6/2023, field researcher DM

32 TOOLKIT FOR NRC SAFE AND INCLUSIVE PROGRAMMING | FIELD-TESTING VERSION | September 2021 | NRC internal, p.1

affected populations in the analysis of needs, programme conception and decision-making though out implementation. The Participation Ladder score provided is therefore 5.

## 1.4 Sustainability

### 6- Which livelihoods interventions have been most sustainable after one year of NRC exit? What are the factors which contributed most to sustainability? What are the contributing factors to the livelihood interventions which failed to achieve sustainability after one year?

Following NRCs exit, a significant percentage of livelihood pathways continue to generate incomes, particularly in the field of agriculture and SMEs. Over 60 percent of SMEs reported a continued increase in sales and profits following NRC's exit.

Micro grant and Small and Business Grants to businesses were more successful than wage employment. NRC's efforts to focus on businesses that will not struggle to find a market, has generated more sustainable SMEs. Businesses are more likely to remain open and 98 percent of SME grant receivers who participated in NRC trainings believing the trainings helped them to stay in business.<sup>33</sup>

Urban wage and urban job employment activities were less successful and sustainable with 90 percent of participants failing to attain employment following urban job placement schemes. Job placements and recruitment into wage employment faced challenges relating to attitude, illiteracy, etiquette and absence of social capital. However, in rural areas, agriculture and rural wage employment is a growth sector as demand for food produce is growing. Unlike many urban wage employment positions, there is likely less focus on literacy working as an agricultural labourer.

Identifying SMEs and MSMEs which strengthen the productive capacities of Iraqi agriculture will impact structural poverty and food security. NRC programming involves government and private sector engagement, linking farmer associations with the private sector to ensure they can access market demand for their produce. NRC's focus on value chains, SMEs, Agri business and private sector engagement is appropriate, effective and sustainable if quality standards are attained.

Leveraging farm produce to the standards of supermarkets entails greater focus on quality and food safety. Reaching these standards using farmer field schools may be unrealistic for products other than grains. NRC should continue to work with the private sector, SMEs and brokers. Brokers absorb market risks and will support MSMEs to find markets of appropriate quality standards for value-addition produce. NRC could also consider piloting contract farming to help increase quality of production, reduce PHL and fill the void left by limitations of GoI extension system.

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<sup>33</sup> Sustainable livelihoods through small business development and job placement in Basra, Impact Assessment Report 2020

NRC interventions are increasingly reflecting the needs of the broader economy rather than specific individual interests when facilitating business and economic development. The Government of Iraq's economic focus is oil, agriculture and construction. NRC should liaise with large construction companies and identify the minimum vocational training requirements. There are many construction projects in Iraq and numbers of construction sites will continue to increase. The market needs employees with skills in the field of construction.”<sup>34</sup> This study did not look at oil but NRC could also consider if oil offers some unskilled labour opportunities.

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<sup>34</sup> I, Io Decent Work Country Programme in Iraq- Recovery and Reform Dr. Edrees Muhammad Harki, President of Erbil Polytechnic University



# 2 Introduction

## 2.1 Background

NRC has been implementing agriculture, cash and livelihoods programmes in Iraq since 2010. NRC's largest agriculture, cash and livelihoods portfolio, (approximately 65 million USD) implemented in the last 3 years (2019 – 2021), reached approximately 123,416 individuals (63,912M, 59,504F) with livelihoods activities and Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA). Implementation was affected by multiple challenges including the outbreak of Covid-19 in 2020, drought, insecurity, and displacements due to conflict, camp closures and protests in several cities in Iraq after the Central Bank of Iraq announced it would devalue the Iraqi currency against the US dollar by over 20 percent. Following the protest, heightened security measures were imposed in areas experiencing protest activities, resulting in localized transportation and business disruptions and further clashes with security forces.<sup>35</sup> During the Covid-19 pandemic, long-term activities were modified to life saving assistance mostly through Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) and cash for food because long-term activities could not be implemented. Despite these challenges, 47,303 individuals (26,128M, 21,175F) were reached with livelihoods activities including livelihoods activation grants, agriculture rehabilitation and value chain activities, micro/small and medium enterprises support, skills training and job placement opportunities. NRC also reached 76,113 beneficiaries (37,784M, 38,329F) through MPCA and cash for food. Cash and livelihoods were implemented in Anbar, Basra, Dohuk, Ninewa, Kirkuk, Salah Al Din and Thi-qar Governorates.

NRC signed a contract with STOOS in December 2022, for the evaluation of NRC's Cash and Livelihoods programming in Iraq. STOOS submitted a first draft inception report in January 2023. Several changes in staff took place within NRC which shifted the focus of the terms of reference, which were consequently changed several times. Emphasis shifted away from durable solutions and MPCA to livelihoods pathways. The terms of reference were eventually replaced with a set of core evaluation questions provided by NRC:

## 2.2 IMPACT

1. Which livelihood pathways (Access to employment, Inclusive business development and Agriculture support) have contributed to the greatest impact/livelihood outcomes and how? What needs to be continued and adapted to inform NRC's future livelihood strategies?

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<sup>35</sup> NRC 2020 Final Report: Building Resilience through Entrepreneurship, Agricultural Support and Job Placement for Vulnerable Communities in Basra Governorate

2. Were there any unintended positive or negative consequences of the cash and livelihood interventions?

## 2.3 COHERENCE

3. What type of government engagement has taken place? How has NRC's engagement with government/line ministries/directorates been beneficial to achieving programme outcomes? What is the capacity and willingness of local government and local community structures to continue supporting the livelihoods participants after the NRC project phase-out from the area?

## 2.4 RELEVANCE

4. What are the current needs of displacement affected communities (IDPs, returnees, refugees) with regards to livelihoods? Are the current approaches and programme design fit for purpose to address the specific needs of each group?

## 2.5 Effectiveness

5. Do beneficiaries believe that the livelihoods activities and approaches have helped them become more self-reliant? If so, how? Which specific activities had the most significant impact toward this end? Note – to share SRI and see whether there are specific indicators from the SRI we want to measure.
6. To what extent NRC livelihoods programmes have enabled the participation of the people and communities we work with in support of effective, safe, and quality programming throughout the project cycle?

## 2.6 Sustainability

7. Which livelihoods interventions have been most sustainable after one year of NRC exit? What are the factors which contributed most to sustainability? What are the contributing factors to the livelihood interventions which failed to achieve sustainability after one year?

The primary users of the evaluation are the NRC Iraq Country programme team, specifically the Livelihoods programme team. The evaluation will help inform the country management team on the strategic directions of NRC's livelihoods and Economic inclusion programme in Iraq. The evaluation will also be of use to partners and agencies implementing Livelihoods activities in the MERO region. The evaluation was conducted remotely with the assistance of in-country enumerators hired and trained by STOOS.

# 3 Methodology

The evaluation used a mixed methods evaluation. The evaluation was conducted remotely using hired enumerators to conduct in-country interviews and focus group discussions. The rationale for this evaluation approach was based on budgetary limitations.

Desktop Review of programme literature covered NRC programmes over the past five years. Some projects had minimum reports and information whilst others, were far more substantial. This has resulted in greater focus on certain programmes.

The geographic focus of the evaluation is on governorates implementing livelihoods programme, namely Anbar, Dohuk, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Basra. STOOS employed enumerators to conduct FGDs with 225 programme participants from Anbar, Basra, Dahuk, Kirkuk and Ninawa governorates covering the three livelihood pathways, Agriculture, SMEs and Wage Employment. STOOS advised on the number of participants and NRC arranged and invited former programme participants for the FGDs. STOOS employed enumerators to conduct the FGDs.

Key Informant Interviews (KII) were held with NRC at country and local office level, as well as local government. STOOS employed enumerators to conduct KIIs in person in country, and by phone. Ten KII were held with NRC. Five KII were held with local government or key local institutions.

The qualitative data collection was followed by a survey of 225 former programme participants from Anbar, Basra, Dahuk, Kirkuk and Ninawa. NRC arranged and invited former programme participants for the survey. Survey numbers were limited by the budget awarded to cover this evaluation.

Enumerators were selected and trained by STOOS over a period of three days. They consisted of five males and five females, two for each site. Selection was based on their experience in collecting data and educational background. Training included one day of general training and two days of technical training by a STOOS livelihoods expert. Training also included pilot testing of tools. Following the pilot testing the forms used for the enumerators were amended. The forms were then translated into Arabic. Answers provided by beneficiaries and project participants were given in Arabic and translated into English. The selection of beneficiary participants was by NRC.

### **3.1: Challenges and Limitations**

A review of this size would normally involve a team of consultants in country, interrogating all programmes, interviewing key informants, and holding FGDs. As per management requirements, the consultant did not travel to Iraq or engage directly with the enumerators

# 4 Findings

## 4.1: Current needs of displacement affected communities (IDPs, returnees, refugees) with regards to livelihoods.

Employment and livelihood opportunities are the most frequently reported priority need.<sup>36</sup> At the lower end of the labour market, the majority of available jobs and livelihood opportunities do not generate enough income for households to cover expenses without continuous debt.<sup>37</sup>

### 4.1.1: Refugees

Iraq hosts some 300,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, mostly Kurdish Syrians (some 270,000) residing in the KR-I. They face limited immediate return prospects, particularly in view of the deteriorating security situation in north-east Syria, where most of the refugees originate from. Some 70 percent of Syrian refugees live in urban areas, while the rest reside in nine refugee camps and one transit facility.<sup>38</sup> Refugees need multi-purpose cash assistance, (MPCA). With limited immediate return prospects, refugees need assistance for engaging in land share agreements and rental agreements between refugees and host communities.

Compared to IDPs, there is far lower demand for livelihood assistance from refugees (including encamped or self settled). This correlates to a very high level of economic participation among refugees, compared to returnees and IDP populations who have fewer economic opportunities and a higher dependency on aid.<sup>39</sup> Among refugees, 89 percent are economically active, though only 15 percent are self-employed or have MSMEs. Only 20 percent of self-settled refugees listed livelihoods, jobs or income as a priority.<sup>40</sup>

### 4.1.2: IDPs

Iraq has an internally displaced (IDP) population of 1.2 million, some of whom face significant barriers to return or to effective local integration. Most of the 5 million IDPs

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<sup>36</sup> IOM Iraq Location Assessment (Informal Settlements 2022 Displacement Tracking Matrix

<sup>37</sup> ILO 2023 Advancing livelihoods through financial inclusion in Iraq

<sup>38</sup> UNHCR IRAQ FACTSHEET August 2023

<sup>39</sup> ILO 2023 Advancing livelihoods through financial inclusion in Iraq

<sup>40</sup> ILO 2023 Advancing livelihoods through financial inclusion in Iraq

that have already returned exercise similar rights to the rest of the Iraqi population but also face similar challenges. IDPs report insecurity, lack of livelihood opportunities and financial resources, combined with damaged housing in areas of origin and perceived affiliation with extremist groups as the main return barriers.<sup>41</sup>

Among IDPs, 10 percent of encamped and 22 percent of self settled self-employed or have MSMEs and among returnees, 25 percent are self employed or have MSME's.<sup>42</sup> Of encamped IDPs, 64 percent cited livelihoods, jobs and income as their priority need, whilst 51 percent of self settled IDPs and 52 percent of returnees cited livelihoods, jobs and income as their priority need.<sup>43</sup>

A REACH MSNA found 64 percent of households reported relying on *unsustainable* income sources such as debt and irregular employment. Reliance on at least one emergency strategy was identified among 9 percent of in-camp IDPs and returnee households; but increased from 13 percent to 21 percent among out-of-camp IDP households<sup>44</sup> Reliance on negative coping strategies to cope with a lack of resources to buy food entails severe protection implications including child labour and engaging in harmful activities.

The decision taken by the Government of Iraq (GoI) to move toward the closure and reclassification of IDP camps as informal sites in all affected governorates except for the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) has led to the departure of IDPs from camps.<sup>45</sup> Secondary displacement to non-camp informal settlements stretches the absorption capacity of already vulnerable host communities and jeopardizes social cohesion.<sup>46</sup> Approximately 1.2 million Iraqis remain displaced in informal settlements.<sup>47,48</sup> Barriers preventing return to homes are listed below.<sup>49</sup>

1. House in Area of Origin has been damaged/destroyed.
2. Lack of livelihood/income generating activities in Area of Origin.
3. Fear/trauma associated with returning to place of origin.
4. No financial means to return and restart.
5. Lack of security.
6. Lack of functional infrastructure and markets<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> UNHCR IRAQ FACTSHEET August 2023

<sup>42</sup> ILO 2023 Advancing livelihoods through financial inclusion in Iraq

<sup>43</sup> ILO 2023 Advancing livelihoods through financial inclusion in Iraq

<sup>44</sup> REACH 2022 MCNA IX Brief Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment

<sup>45</sup> IOM Iraq Crisis Response Plan 2022-2023

<sup>46</sup> IOM Iraq Crisis Response Plan 2022-2023

<sup>47</sup> NRC report inputs and UNHCR, IRAQ FACTSHEET | September 2022

<sup>48</sup> CCCM Cluster Iraq: Technical guidance on Informal Site definition (September 2020): An informal settlement is defined as a site where five or more families have settled collectively where the land use is not in accordance with approved urban master plans and authorities have not assumed responsibility for its management or administration

<sup>49</sup> HUMANITARIAN TRANSITION OVERVIEW IRAQ, FEBRUARY 2023

<sup>50</sup> NRC report inputs, 2023

## 7. Lack of civil documentation - without which IDPs cannot access public services.<sup>51</sup>

IDPs need access to legal identity and civil documentation to enable increased freedom of movement, access to return grants, and access to livelihood opportunities.<sup>52, 53</sup> The needs of displacement affected communities vary greatly according to their location and to the status, ie whether IDPs, returnees, refugees.

IDPs living in informal settlements constitute one of the most complex caseloads in Iraq.<sup>54</sup> They are particularly vulnerable as the sites are not considered formal camps by the GoI and thus suffer from disrupted livelihoods and lack of services.<sup>55</sup> IDP needs include Information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA), to enable access to legal identity and valid civil documents which are crucial for accessing national social safety nets, social protection mechanisms and employment in the public sector.<sup>56</sup> IDPs who meet MoLSA's vulnerability criteria benefit from monthly cash payments to help meet their basic needs (an average of US\$85/IQD 125,000 per person per month. Vulnerable families and individuals, including female-headed households and individuals with disabilities also receive cash top-ups.<sup>57</sup>

For many IDPs, going to their place of origin to apply for a new national ID card is also not a feasible option. A 2021 Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment estimated that 18 per cent of, or 1 million, IDPs and returnees in Iraq are missing at least one key identity or civil document, such as their birth certificate, PDS card, Civil Status ID card, Iraqi National Certificate, or Unified ID Card.<sup>58</sup>

Focus group discussions with displaced farmers found those with livestock require cash assistance *to buy fodder and veterinary assistance to examine livestock periodically, and vaccinate them against communicable diseases*.<sup>59</sup> *Water harvesting infrastructure is also required. It is noted that* Pastoral Field Schools can improve livestock husbandry, haymaking, nutrition, health and fertility.

### 4.1.3: Returnees

Returnee farmers need to rebuild former farming livelihoods. **Returnees** need strategic projects linked to the local economic development. Multiple key Informants, advised, *the most strategic project with a secure future is **agriculture*** and that smallholder farmers need capacity

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<sup>51</sup> NRC report inputs, 2023

<sup>52</sup> HUMANITARIAN TRANSITION OVERVIEW IRAQ, FEBRUARY 2023

<sup>53</sup> UNHCR Moving toward a government-led IDP response and furthering refugee inclusion, 2022

<sup>54</sup> NRC Twice displaced: The unmet needs of Iraq's children in informal settlements September 2022. In addition, NRC KII.

<sup>55</sup> HUMANITARIAN TRANSITION OVERVIEW IRAQ, FEBRUARY 2023

<sup>56</sup> Sources ECHO WFP Jul 2023 EU and WFP provide cash assistance to internally displaced

<sup>57</sup> UNHCR IRAQ FACTSHEET August 2023

<sup>58</sup> Iraq Missing Documentation MCNA IX Factsheet 2022

<sup>59</sup> FGD Sinjar, Displaced Farmers 19/06/2023

building.<sup>60 61</sup> *Facilitating agricultural production is a priority.*<sup>62</sup> *Displacement is no longer the main driver of needs as returnees are returning to agriculture.* Scaling up agriculture also allows for the creation of employment for those without land. It is logical to provide agriculture for returnees and remainees (hosts) and address the challenges they face.<sup>63</sup> Iraq's Humanitarian Response Plan cites focus supporting returnees with agricultural tools and equipment, as well as livestock inputs.<sup>64</sup>

Returnees require assistance to replace productive assets, repair damaged irrigation infrastructure, reduce post-harvest losses, and improve access to markets and inputs such as seeds, tools, feed and agro-chemicals. There is also need for advocacy for removal of unexploded ordinances to enable cultivation or grazing. *“Host communities and Returnees need support for agriculture and small projects such as fertilizer sellers, dairy production and blacksmithing, and water for agriculture.”* The natural resource base, i.e., the environment, ecosystem, terrain, soil, aspect, watershed, pests, and hazards present specific and localised production challenges and offer specific agri food system opportunities. NRC should continue to facilitate returnee agriculture, building on the comparative advantage of different geographical areas, focusing on key food security crops such as wheat, barley, livestock, poultry and horticulture.

Around 22 percent of the land in Iraq, (9.5 million hectares), is suitable for agricultural production, yet only about 5 million hectares are currently cultivated. The entire sector needs restoration of degraded agricultural land and higher productivity of water resources in agriculture combined with climate change adaptation. The natural resource base, i.e the environment, ecosystem, terrain, soil, aspect, watershed, pests and hazards present specific and localised production challenges and offer specific agri food system opportunities. Small-scale farming dominates the sector.<sup>65</sup> Strengthening sustainable smallholder agricultural productivity for improved food security and nutrition is a priority.<sup>66</sup> Key food security crops include wheat, barley, livestock, poultry and horticulture.

#### 4.1.4: Women

Female-headed households (FHH) have lower incomes than male headed households. A higher proportion of female headed households (78%) report a monthly income from employment and pensions of less than 480,000 IQD, compared to 60% of male-headed households. Female-headed

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<sup>60</sup> NRC KII Nineveh Interview ,16/6/2023

<sup>61</sup> WFP, Iraq Annual Country Report 2022

<sup>62</sup> KII NRC Iraq JP

<sup>63</sup> KII NRC Iraq JP

<sup>64</sup> HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN IRAQ 2022

<sup>65</sup> FAO. (2021). Agricultural value chain study in Iraq: Dates, grapes, tomatoes and wheat.

<sup>66</sup> [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WFP\\_0000125470.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WFP_0000125470.pdf)

<sup>66</sup> FAO: The Government of Iraq and FAO developed Country Programming Framework (CPF) 2018 – 2022 to guide policies and programmes



households are also more likely to be struggling to meet basic needs.<sup>67</sup> Women and female headed households need Information, counselling and legal assistance.

Women and girls in Iraq have limited access to housing, land and property rights. Female heads of household often experience obstacles when they try to prove the legality of their occupation of the land and property and are still subject to discriminatory traditional and cultural norms, which exclude them from inheritance of land. Women are often unable to replace missing ownership documents or reclaim possession of occupied property, due to discriminatory barriers in accessing courts. Women are also officially barred from accessing compensation claims for damaged/destroyed properties.<sup>68</sup>

Rural women need assistance to purchase productive assets such as cattle, seeds, and machines. They need technical assistance and training to address water scarcity and adapt to climate change.<sup>69</sup> Specific livelihoods listed by women during focus group discussions included *livestock*, dairy and sheep breeding, jam and tomato paste<sup>70 71</sup> Iraq's Humanitarian Response Plan advises that the most vulnerable out-of-camp IDPs and returnees, including female-headed households need assistance to improve food availability and access through provision of agriculture-based income-generating activities, agricultural and livestock inputs, assets and training on crop and/or livestock production, agricultural practices and food preservation. These activities will support the integration of poor vulnerable households into local agricultural value chains, increase their access to markets and services and reduce their reliance on negative coping mechanisms to meet basic food needs.<sup>72</sup>

### 4.1.5: Youth

Lack of skills among youth remains a barrier to employment.<sup>73</sup> Unemployment is disproportionately higher among youth, at 35.8 percent. More than a third of youth are neither in employment or education or training.<sup>74</sup> Youths are more likely to migrate to urban centers. An NRC Labour Market Assessment in February 2019 in Abukhaseeb and Alzubair districts, found 97.6 percent had not received technical or vocational training.<sup>75</sup>

Youth need training in skills pertinent to construction or agriculture (including processing and value addition) for employment, entrepreneurship or self-employment.<sup>76</sup> Youths requires skills

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67 REACH 2022 MCNA IX Brief Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment

68 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework UNSDCF Iraq 2020-2024

69 Oxfam, Unfarmed Now, Uninhabited When? Agriculture and climate change in Iraq, March 2022

70 After Action Review (AAR): Livelihood and Agricultural Value Chain Activities in Anbar Province (IQFM1956 GIZ)

71 Women FGD, Anbar/Ramadi/Boutaiban, 30/5/2023

72 HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN IRAQ 2022

73 Enhancing Conditions for Durable Solutions for Displacement Affected Communities (DACs) in KRI," in partnership with the non-profit Iraqi NGO Rehabilitation, Education and Community Health (REACH)-Iraq

74 IRAQ Economic Monitor: A New Opportunity to Reform, Nov 2022

75 Supporting livelihoods recovery and enhanced resilience of affected households through access to skills-development and sustainable income-generation opportunities in South Basra, 2019

76 REACH 2022 MCNA IX Brief Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment

that economic and employment analysis have concluded are most readily in demand. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, (MOLSA) is working on the development and implementation of vocational training programmes in 13 market-relevant occupations including agriculture, construction, services, handicraft, green jobs, crafts and related trades at Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) in Mosul and Duhok.

NRC could facilitate youth access to vocational training in agriculture, construction, services, handicraft, green jobs, crafts and related trades to ensure youth skills are appropriate to the needs of the economy. Damage to housing or need for housing rehabilitation is the most reported barrier for returns, the most commonly reported primary community need, and the most needed activity to encourage further returns to the sub-district.<sup>77</sup> The construction needs in Iraq are colossal. In Ninewa and Kirkuk governorates, sub-standard living conditions led to more than a fifth of returnee households reporting that they do not intend to remain in their current location. Youths require tools in addition to training to find employment as labourers.

#### **4.1.6: Physical or cognitive disability**

Households with at least one member with a physical and/or cognitive disability were more likely to report that at least one member is unemployed while seeking work (40%), compared to households without such disability (24%), potentially indicating limited inclusive employment opportunities.<sup>78</sup>

#### **4.1.7: Financial Inclusion and Multi-purpose cash assistance**

IDPs and returnees borrow to meet daily essentials (food, rent, basic needs). Multi-purpose cash assistance enables recipients to make debt repayments and thus keep critical lines of credit open. Of those that saved, 90 per cent saved in cash or gold at home and primarily for emergencies. 12 per cent used Rotating Savings and Credit Associations (RoSCAs) and only 1 per cent saved with Financial Service Providers.<sup>79</sup> Among small, informal and family-run businesses, (workshops, food shops, carpenters, stationery and clothing shops), 83 per cent of traders purchase their stock on credit from wholesalers.<sup>80</sup>

In locations such as Anbar, where between 70 and 80 per cent of businesses were reportedly damaged by conflict, there is need for affordable small-value loans that are issued quickly and with minimal procedures, utilising digital financial services to providing conventional personal and business loans for informal micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and the agricultural sector.<sup>81</sup> Access to finance and financial literacy are cited as major constraints faced by Iraqi entrepreneurs who also lack the basic financial knowledge to understand financial services.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Returns and Durable Solutions (ReDS) Assessment REACH 2022

<sup>78</sup> REACH 2022 MCNA IX Brief Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment

<sup>79</sup> Financial Inclusion in Fragility: Wealth, Saving, Borrowing and Lending Among Conflict-affected Populations in Iraq, 2021

<sup>80</sup> Financial Inclusion in Fragility: Wealth, Saving, Borrowing and Lending Among Conflict-affected Populations in Iraq, 2021

<sup>81</sup> Financial Inclusion in Fragility: Wealth, Saving, Borrowing and Lending Among Conflict-affected Populations in Iraq, 2021

<sup>82</sup> LO's Financial Inclusion Strategy in Iraq 2020 - 2023

### 4.1.8: Climate Change and Water Harvesting

Rural communities need continued **restoration of irrigation infrastructure for livelihoods such as** cash for work or contractor modality rehabilitation projects in Anbar which repaired 116,340 meters of irrigation canals in 2019-2021).<sup>83 84</sup> **Water harvesting infrastructure and irrigation repair have far reaching effects and impact livestock, crops and food security.**<sup>85</sup> Iraq is considered the fifth most vulnerable country globally to decreased water availability and extreme temperatures.<sup>86</sup> Climate-related factors are more impactful than economic factors in some returnee districts in northern districts compared to southern districts which have irrigation.<sup>87</sup> Climate change has contributed to Iraq's rapidly drying south and declining agricultural and livestock productivity. Water shortages are compounded by increased salinity of water sources.<sup>88</sup> NRC has undertaken rainwater harvesting feasibility studies in Ninewa governorate. There is need for **continued analysis of the dynamics of** water, agriculture and poverty for informed programming in light of climatic variability.

In 2021, even irrigated areas suffered from drought and low water levels. GoI approved an agricultural plan to reduce annual winter crops in "irrigated areas" by 50 percent because of "water scarcity and low water revenues."<sup>89</sup> Increasing and stabilizing water availability will enhance the climate resilience of returnee and farming communities.

While the agriculture sector provides an opportunity for economic growth, climate change, water scarcity and suboptimal quality impose significant risks to Iraq's water availability and crop yields. As extreme temperatures and frequency and intensity of droughts are projected to increase, crop cultivation in the absence of irrigation will entail increasing risk.<sup>90 91</sup> NRC's survey of 1,341 households across five governorates revealed a 90 per cent decrease in wheat production as a direct result of water shortages.<sup>92</sup>

**Farmers need training in Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA)** to manage cropland, livestock, forests and fisheries and the interlinked challenges of climate change. CSA can reduce vulnerability to drought, pests, diseases and other climate-related risks and shocks; and improve capacity to adapt and grow in the face of longer-term stresses like shortened seasons and erratic weather patterns.<sup>93</sup> CSA is **particularly pertinent for food and nutrition security of resource- poor returnees in resource poor remote locations.**

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83 After Action Review (AAR): Livelihood and Agricultural Value Chain Activities in Anbar Province (IQFM1956 GIZ)

84 United Nations Country Team Annual Results Report Published in April 2023

8585 FGD Al-Basrah- Al-Nashwa district with farmers, 11/06/2023

8686 Global environment outlook: Regional assessment for West Asia, UN Environment Programme, Sept 2017.

87 ILO, The Impact of Conflict, Climate and the Economy on Agriculture in Districts of Return in Iraq, 2023

88 International Bank for Reconstruction and Development International Finance Corporation Country Partnership Framework for The Republic of Iraq 2020 WBG Doing Business report

89 Iraq to reduce winter crops area by half: ministry 18-10-2021 <https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/18102021>

9090 Global environment outlook: Regional assessment for West Asia, UN Environment Programme, Sept 2017.

91 Climate Risk Profile Iraq Analysis Jul 2022

9292 NRC Iraq: A Rapidly Changing Climate, and imperative for coordinated action

93 World Bank Climate Smart Agriculture <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/climate-smart-agriculture>

## 4.2: Extent that current approaches and programme design are fit for purpose to address the specific needs of each group

NRC livelihood pathways have evolved in a logical way in reflection of needs and in response to challenges facing displacement affected communities. Programmes were tailored to address the needs of specific displacement communities reflecting displacement challenges and contexts such as landlessness, lack of vocational, business and technical skills. Focus has increasingly shifted towards early recovery, long-term solutions and sustainable development, with programmes reflecting context and environment in which displacement-affected populations live. NRC approaches and programme design are appropriate to address the needs of different groups. The inclusion of women and female headed households could however be strengthened. NRC approaches and programme design also reflects NRC's mission statement and priority focus, i.e., Emergency Response, Displacement, Acute Needs, Early Recovery, Resilience and Sustainability.

Earlier interventions included multi-purpose cash assistance through one-time or multi-month cash transfers to displaced and returnee families. NRC also provided access to emergency livelihoods support in the form of Cash for Work and asset restoration and livelihood activation grants. NRC was one of the largest cash assistance providers in Iraq. In the context of initial displacement, NRC MPCA remains an appropriate and effective means to enable displacement-affected communities to address their needs.

### 4.2.1: Technical Vocational and Education Training – Urban Youth

NRC employment-support interventions included technical, vocational and education training (TVET), apprenticeships, and job placement programmes which provided skills and experience in the job market. NRC short term vocational skills training to youths helped to bridge skills gap between education and local labour markets, and helped prepare young adults for low-skilled labour.<sup>94</sup> Labour Market Assessments identified welding, electrical establishment and tailoring and sewing as most preferred courses in the urban market.<sup>95</sup> Whilst these skills are listed as key priorities by government of Iraq, outcome monitoring conducted two months later found 56 percent were still looking for employment.<sup>96</sup>

In other surveys of NRC TVET graduates, 54% found employment immediately after training. Of those who reported being employed, 75% were self-employed, 12.5% were permanently employed and 12.5% were employed as daily workers. These findings suggest that the type of training provided was relevant to the needs of the labour market. NRC also provided support

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<sup>94</sup> Emergency Livelihoods Cluster, 2022, Standard Operating Procedures Vocational Training Interventions for Livelihoods Iraq. Strong risks lie ahead for Iraq's economy, due to unaddressed structural challenges rendering it highly vulnerable to oil shocks, inflationary pressures, heightened climate change impacts and commodity price volatility which will intensify existing poverty trends

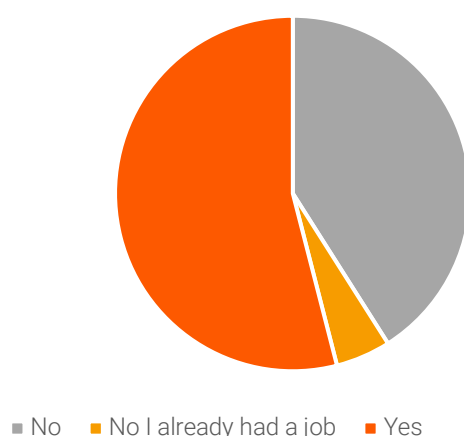
<sup>95</sup> Supporting livelihoods recovery and enhanced resilience of affected households through access to skills-development in South Basra, NRC 2019. The results of the LMA informed TVET courses delivered in partnership with Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and Vocational Training Centers (VTC) in Basra. NRC completed TVET and graduated 150 beneficiaries (55 in Basra VTC, 58 in Abukhaseeb VTC, 37 in Al Zubair youth center) in sewing, welding, electrical maintenance and repair.

<sup>96</sup> Supporting livelihoods recovery and enhanced resilience of affected households South Basra

kits for welding, tailoring, and electrical beneficiaries which have increased the chances of finding employment. NRC have since modified TVET curricula to incorporate specific skills sets required by the main employers for each course. Adopting curricula specified by main employers for each course will strengthen employment opportunities of trainee graduates.

Figure 1: Percentage who gained Employment following Training.

## Did you get any employment after receiving the training



As trainees cited lack of experience as one of the challenges in finding a job, NRC adopted job placements approach to enable TVET graduates to gain relevant work experience. **Apprenticeships programmes enabled beneficiaries to be trained on-the-job and gain relevant experience required to be competitive in the job/labour market.**<sup>97</sup> NRC identified relevant companies who were willing to employ graduates from welding, tailoring and electrical repair training courses.<sup>98</sup>

*FGDs with programme participants found strong support for NRC vocational training programmes.*

- *“Vocational training helps you get experience in order to get a job - if I did not have experience or training, I would not get a job in the field, (agricultural pesticides).”*
- *Vocational Training is one of the most important things that employers are looking for because companies employ experienced people.*
- *Skills remained useful and suitable for recruitment and is required by companies.*
- *Training enabled unemployed youth to acquire skills and experience at work, including women who entered sewing courses.*<sup>99</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Supporting livelihoods recovery and enhanced resilience of affected households through access to skills-development South Basra

<sup>98</sup> Supporting livelihoods recovery and enhanced resilience of affected households through access to skills-development and sustainable income-generation opportunities in South Basra. Out of 65 companies approached, 11 companies were willing to employ 36 graduates from the welding course, 16 businesses were willing to employ 64 graduates from the sewing course, 11 businesses willing to employ 28 graduates from electrical installation

<sup>99</sup> FGD Wage workers, Hawija/Yarmouk neighbourhood near the court

Whilst NRC's training in welding and electrics is relevant to the construction sector, NRC did not develop linkages with the construction industry or survey construction industry labour demand. In 2022, non-oil industries recorded growth of 28 percent which was largely attributed to the construction sector.<sup>100</sup> World Bank data reveals 37.9 percent of employment is in the public sector whilst 54.9 percent of total employment is in the informal sector.<sup>101</sup> In 2021, jobs comprise of construction (16.3 percent), public administration and defence (15.9 percent), and wholesale and retail trade (14.2 percent).<sup>102</sup> **NRC has not specifically targeted the construction or oil sector, despite it being a large source of livelihood. A specific focus on construction sector skills would likely strengthen employment opportunities.**

KIIs advised participants should possess relevant basic skills prior to embarking on vocational training courses. Ensuring possession of relevant basic skills, as an essential criterion for beneficiary selection would increase the possibility of successful acquisition/upgrade of skills and employment or entrepreneurship. An end of training TVET examination would also help confirm quality of training. To ensure subjects reflect economic gaps, (rather than trainee personal interests), closer linkages with government institutions could help ensure trainings are relevant to local economic gaps.<sup>103</sup>

A survey of project participants in Basra undertaking Small and Medium Business Training Sessions identified personal skills and skills specific to the job as being more useful than ITC and language skills. 70 percent recognized that soft skills training was helpful and aligned to their needs whilst 67 percent reported it would improve their chances to find jobs.<sup>104</sup> The interest among youths in learning personal skills and soft skills suggests a more wholistic approach to youth empowerment is required. NRC have since modified training courses such that they include soft and employability skills.

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<sup>100</sup> This was also supported by the central bank development initiative of IQD18 trillion in June 2022, to finance housing complexes for low-income classes. Iraq Economic Monitor: A New Opportunity to Reform Nov 2022

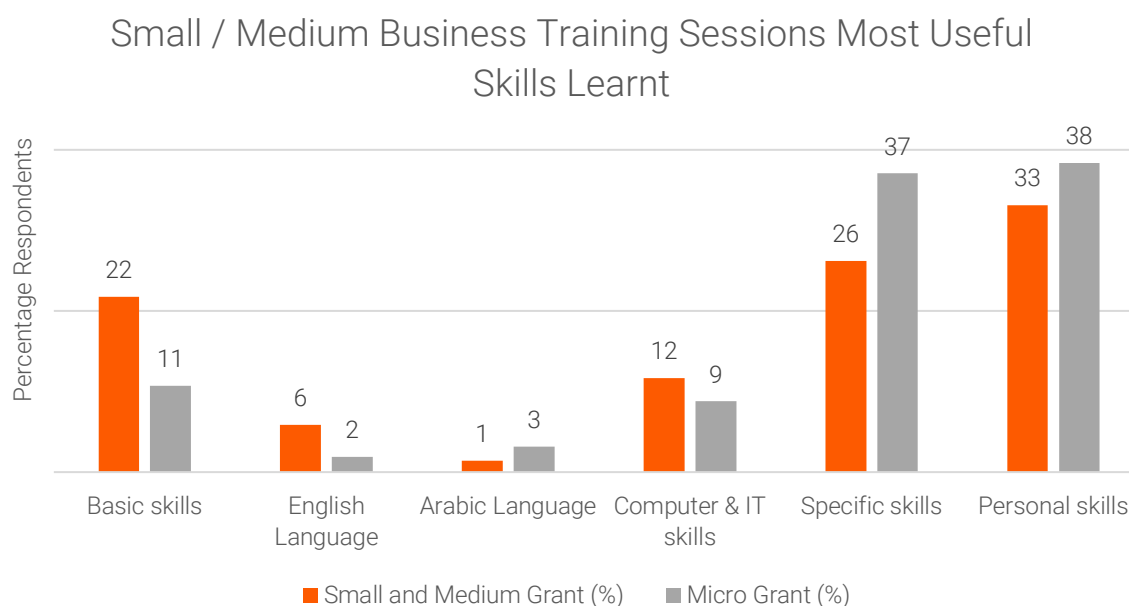
<sup>101</sup> IRAQ ECONOMIC MONITOR: A NEW OPPORTUNITY TO REFORM Nov 2022

<sup>102</sup> IRAQ ECONOMIC MONITOR: A NEW OPPORTUNITY TO REFORM Nov 2022

<sup>103</sup> KII NRC Iraq 14.06.2023 TL AC

<sup>104</sup> <sup>104</sup> Supporting livelihoods recovery and enhanced resilience of affected households through access to skills-development and sustainable income-generation opportunities in South Basra

Figure 2: Most Useful Skills Learnt<sup>105</sup>



**NRC TVET programmes reached only 19 percent of the planned 50 percent of women.**

There is need for more consultation with women to ensure culturally appropriate activities are identified in conservative contexts. NRC's vocational training focus expected beneficiaries and women to travel long distances, engaging trainees from 40 km away from training centres. Women, female headed households and PWD cannot travel long distances to work.<sup>106</sup> NRC advised that this was because there was no vocational training in rural areas. This is a questionable excuse for failing to provide training in appropriate locations for rural women.

NRC also provided technical agricultural and innovation training with business skills training. Over 70 percent of agricultural trainees improved access to sustainable and consistent income as a result of the intervention and 97 percent of agricultural trainees apply acquired skills.<sup>107</sup> Women were not targeted for the agricultural training in Basra as *NRC targeted head of households only*. Women were reported to be involved at the harvesting and marketing stages of the production. NRC KIIs are aware of the need to provide vocational training in rural areas in order to target rural women.<sup>108</sup> It is a lost opportunity that NRC did not enable women to participate in agricultural business training. This appears to be a limitation in Basra only as elsewhere, NRC targeted women farmers, and distributed equipment to women farmers in rural areas in convenient and suitable locations for women. Whilst former programmes did not address the needs of women, rural women and youth presently access all components of NRC livelihoods programming.

<sup>105</sup> Sustainable livelihoods through small business development in Basra Impact Assessment Report NRC 2

<sup>106</sup> KII, Duhok, August 2023

<sup>107</sup> Training was delivered by the Basra Association of Agricultural Engineers delivered by Basra Chamber of Commerce for 350 beneficiaries

<sup>108</sup> NRC KII Basra Interview Date: 13/6/2023



## 4.2.2: Job Fairs and Placements

NRC organised job fairs and job placement services linking trainees and apprentices to employers and self-employment opportunities. The process allowed private sector actors and target groups to integrate economically.<sup>109</sup> Following the end of the job placement however, 90 percent of job placement participants were not hired. Of those that received contracts, all were for less than three months, and 85 percent of those who were hired, were uncertain of what incomes would be provided in the six months following their job placement.<sup>110</sup>

Iraqi social networks are powerful such that refugees were unable to compete in the job markets. Whilst job fairs helped expose refugees to employers, their lack of social capital meant that results in terms of recruitment were limited. Iraq's private sector is weak, ranking 172nd out of 190 economies.<sup>111 112</sup> Competition for private-sector jobs is high and social capital and social networks play a significant role in securing employment. It is noted that creating jobs and employment in urban contexts, (in any part of the world), is exceptionally challenging, including for wealthy governments. Job fairs were not successful for securing urban employment.

KII with business owners identified several challenges regarding recruitment of NRC participants:<sup>113</sup>

- Lack of basic skills was the main reason limiting the hiring of the apprentices
- Educational levels of participants were low, which limits the effectiveness of training.
- Lack of specific and social skills such as etiquette when dealing with clients.
- Illiteracy, inability to communicate, poor attitude.
- Inability to use modern technology.
- Preference for male employees over females.<sup>114</sup>
- Displaced participants frequently lack certificates or documents.<sup>115</sup>
- Companies participate in job fairs purely to promote their own company rather than provide job opportunities.<sup>116</sup>
- Job placement locations were too far away from the homes of beneficiaries.<sup>117</sup> Transportation was an obstacle for refugees and IDPS living in camps due to distances.
- NRC's stipend was higher than salaries offered by local businesses. Programme participants were less likely to accept the lower salary, particularly given transport costs. NRC should consider which recruitment challenges utilise NRC's comparative advantage.

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<sup>109</sup> Emergency Livelihoods Cluster, 2022, Standard Operating Procedures for Vocational Training Interventions for Livelihoods

<sup>110</sup> Sustainable livelihoods through small business development & job placement in Basra Impact Assessment Report NRC 2020

<sup>111 1111</sup> Iraqi private sector comprises mainly of individuals, micro and small companies in addition to a number family-owned business groups mainly operating in construction, transportation, trade, and services, as well as light industry. Most private businesses are owned by sole proprietors and family partnerships. Large private businesses are emerging in ICT, World Bank

<sup>112</sup> International Bank for Reconstruction and Development International Finance Corporation Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency Country Partnership Framework for The Republic of Iraq for The Period FY2022 - FY2026. Historical governance related influences, knowledge gaps, limited access to finance, shortages of skilled labour combined with insecurity, have limited private sector micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) capacity to operate and expand

<sup>113</sup> Sustainable livelihoods through small business development & job placement in Basra Impact Assessment Report NRC 2020

<sup>114</sup> KII, Duhok, August 2023

<sup>115</sup> KII, Duhok, August 2023

<sup>116</sup> KII, Duhok, August 2023

<sup>117</sup> Evaluation of NRC's Enhancing Conditions for Durable Solutions for Displacement Affected Communities 2022



- Targeting employment for displaced or refugees may be too optimistic and ineffective given cultural and industry norms of recruitment based on social networks

NRC reports focus on beneficiary *perceptions* rather than employment. Changes in youth *perspectives* regarding employability skills from vocational skills training recipients. Consequently, reports are positive despite 90 percent failing to ascertain employment.

Significant numbers did not find wage employment following the end of the NRC job placement scheme. Increases in wage employment in 2023 reflect NRC's shift in focus to agricultural value chains which provide jobs and labour.

The chart below shows 56 percent of surveyed wage employment beneficiaries continued to ascertain incomes following NRC's exit in 2020 though this had reduced to 15 percent in 2021.

Figure 3: Wage Employment During NRC Project

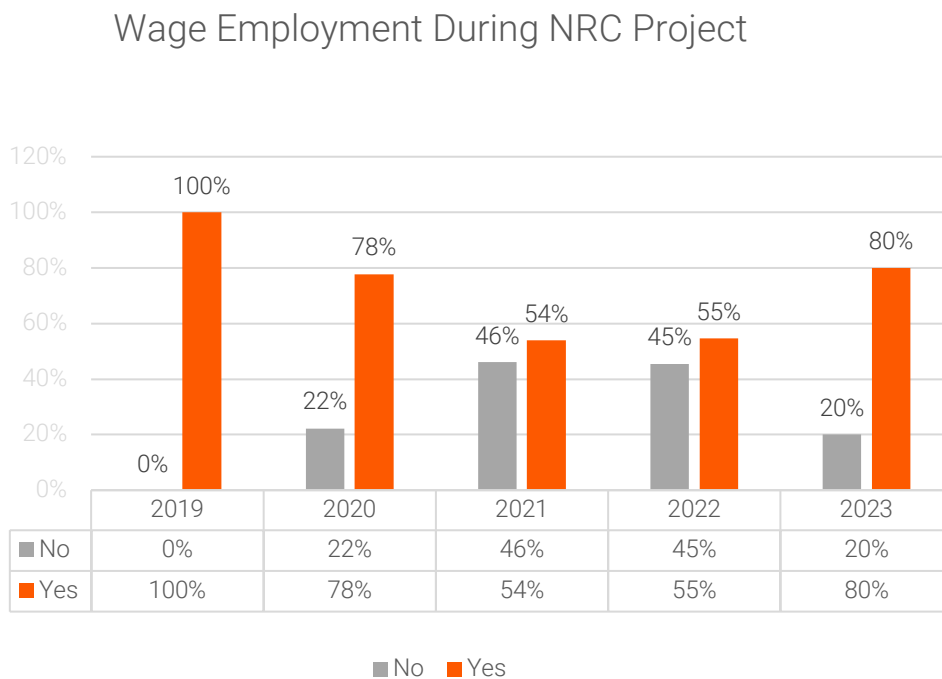
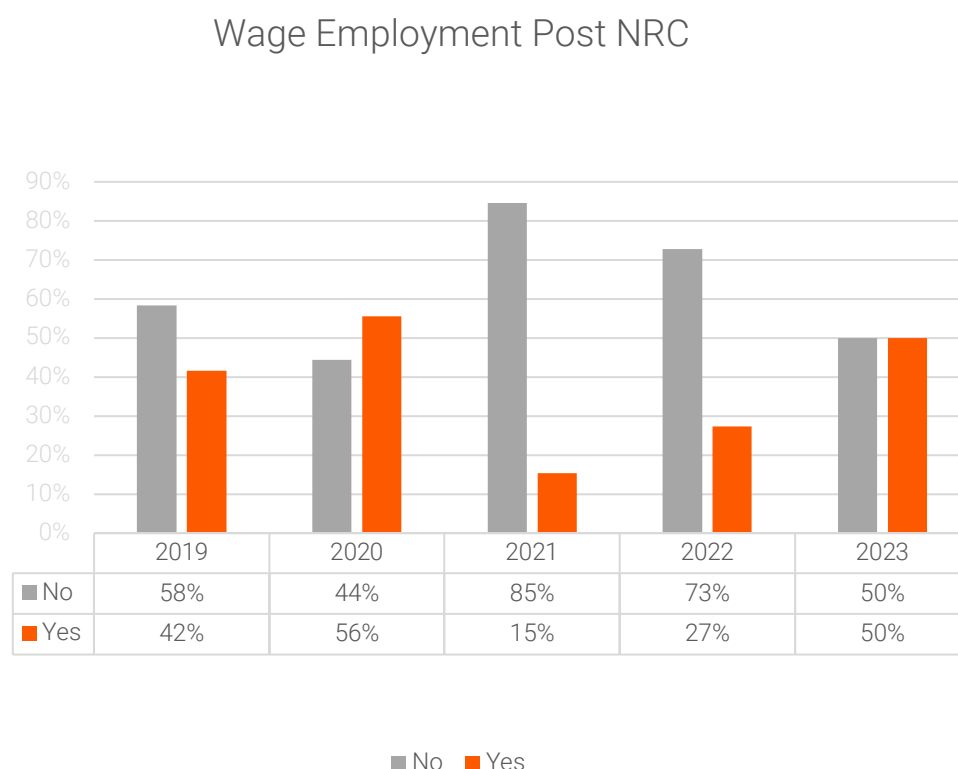


Figure 4: Wage Employment Post NRC Project



### 4.1.1 4.2.3: SME

Within the confines of camp economies, NRC initially focused on SME start-ups. SME support to refugees and youth initially worked well. Grants supporting the creation or scale-up of MSMEs provided immediate employment and earned the highest income increase amongst all pathways and activities. It also allows the beneficiary with the most flexibility regarding location.<sup>118</sup> In 2020, grants receivers reported a significant increase (27 percent micro grants; 37 percent small to medium grants), or a slight increase (58 percent micro grants; 53 percent small to medium grants).<sup>119</sup>

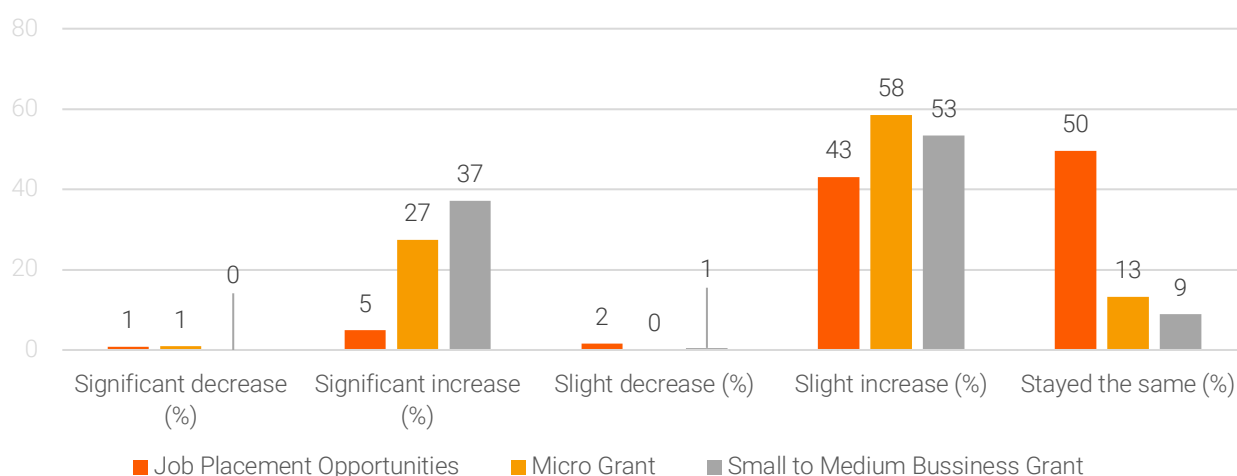
<sup>120</sup>.

<sup>118</sup> Evaluation of NRC's Enhancing Conditions for Durable Solutions for Displacement Affected Communities (DACs) in KRI Project, 2022

<sup>119</sup> Sustainable livelihoods through small business development & job placement in Basra Impact Assessment Report NRC 2020

<sup>120</sup> Sustainable livelihoods through small business development & job placement in Basra Impact Assessment Report NRC 2020

## Variation of Income



The protracted nature of the refugee response in Iraq eventually resulted in camp economies over time becoming saturated with SMEs,<sup>121</sup> NRC concluded that establishing more SMEs in an environment where competition between SMEs was already strong, was commercially undesirable.<sup>122</sup> This was particularly pronounced in camps which had limited customer numbers. “Established SMEs already faced too much competition and developing more SMEs to compete against each other would not be commercially viable.”<sup>123</sup> FGDs advised, “*The large number of competitors were the most important challenges facing small enterprises.*” FGDs also referenced lack of social capital of IDPS and Refugees advising *their inability to adapt within the community is the reason for SMEs faced challenges.*

### 4.2.4: Promoting SMEs during Global Recession

FGD participants advised that project timing was inappropriate because Covid negatively affected many businesses. NRC research showed 78 percent of displacement-affected population lost work due to Covid containment measures.<sup>9</sup> Only one-third of SMEs surveyed were operating as usual; half had reduced capacity, whilst 15 percent closed down.<sup>8</sup> A Multi Sector Needs Assessment noted that 93 percent of refugee households reported experiencing a reduction in income from employment compared to pre-COVID-19 (before March 2020). In addition, 88 percent of refugee households reported having fewer daily labour opportunities

<sup>121</sup> KII NRC Iraq JP

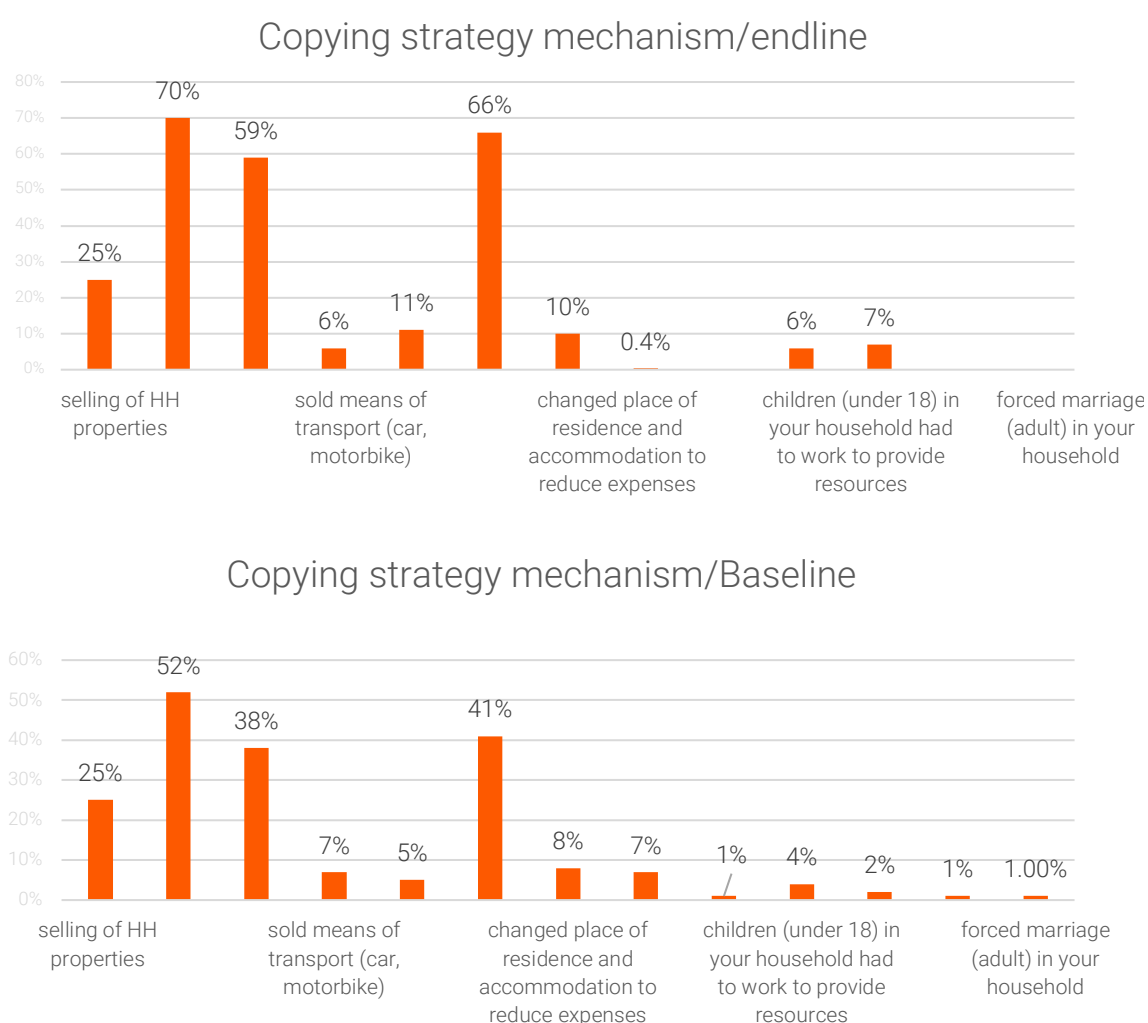
<sup>122</sup> KII NRC Iraq JP

KII NRC Iraq

than pre-COVID-19. In the context of COVID-19, NRC's decision to promote self-employment through the provision of business grants for youth to start their own businesses seems extraordinary. **NCR should consider broader economic trends when attempting to generate business development.** Rising unemployment rates and global recession should signal alarms for NRC.

**The tables below illustrate how coping strategies of SME programme from baseline to endline did not significantly change.**

Figure 5 : Coping Strategies Baseline and Endline



More recently, NRC has reorientated its SME focus, and rather than assisting SMEs to compete against each other, NRC now assists them to identify aggregated market demand beyond the immediate community such as wholesale aggregation traders. As we see later, this has been an effective path to take.

#### 4.2.5: Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance - ICLA

Integration of Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance (ICLA) activities into livelihoods programming has been essential to increase access to legal identity and civil documentation, land and property rights, as well as employment rights of IDPs, returnees and refugees. ICLA interventions also support access to government social assistance.

Civil documentation in particular addresses the needs of vulnerable IDPs by enabling them to enroll in Ministry of Social Affairs' social assistance programmes, i.e., monthly cash payments under the poverty alleviation scheme.<sup>124</sup> Civil documentation also strengthens IDP access to national services including education and healthcare. In addition to promoting inclusion in social protection schemes, NRC has assisted IDP employment by promoting IDP local integration in small-scale infrastructure projects.<sup>125</sup>

ICLA also works with administrative and judicial officials to facilitate IDP, returnee and refugee access to legal and civil documentations for reclaiming housing and land.<sup>126</sup> This is particularly important for women. Female heads of households often experience obstacles when they try to prove the legality of their occupation of the land and property and are still subject to discriminatory traditional and cultural norms which exclude them from inheritance of land. Women are often unable to replace missing ownership documents or reclaim possession of occupied property, due to discriminatory barriers in accessing courts. Women are also officially barred from accessing compensation claims for damaged/destroyed.<sup>127</sup> NRC's ICLA work is essential and very much fit for purpose addressing the needs of women, and in particular, women IDPs.

NRC interventions such as agriculture input package (seed and fertilizer provisions have enabled returnee farmers to cultivate their abandoned unproductive lands and expand production in successive years. Scaling up agriculture also enables those with land to employ those without land.<sup>128</sup> NRC sought to understand land ownership dynamics. A majority of 61 percent reported permanently owning the land, while 30 percent rented at a fee, 7 percent were offered the land by relative or friend, and 3 percent were offered land by local authorities.<sup>129</sup> This helped ensure NRC were fully cognizant of community dynamics.

For Returnee farmers, NRC's focus on wheat production was particularly relevant given the context of rising food prices and disruption to agricultural imports which will exacerbate pre-existing poverty trends and increase food security risks.<sup>130</sup> Supply-side disruptions driven by the war in Ukraine and resulting higher global demand for wheat pushed cereal prices up by almost 6 percent in Iraq.<sup>131</sup> **Enabling returnee and displacement affected communities**

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124 UNHCR Moving toward a government-led IDP response and furthering refugee inclusion, 2022

125 UNHCR Global Report Iraq, 2021

126 NRC Operations in Iraq, May 2022

127 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework UNSDCF Iraq 2020-2024

128 KII NRC Iraq TL RW

129 Supporting livelihoods recovery and enhanced resilience of affected households through access to skills-development and income-generation opportunities in South Basra

130 The World Bank in Iraq: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/iraq/overview>

131 IRAQ ECONOMIC MONITOR: A NEW OPPORTUNITY TO REFORM Nov 2022

**to engage in agricultural production is an effective and sustainable intervention to support.**

*Returnees in Anbar advised, “the challenge we faced was lack of finance to replant land. Through NRC’s assistance, we were able to plough and replant our land and make a better living through wheat harvest profits.”*<sup>132</sup> In south Basra, farmers advised agricultural productivity and incomes had improved.<sup>133</sup> *“Through cultivating land and selling crops, I was able to save money and re-cultivate increased quantities of production by cultivating larger areas.”*<sup>134</sup> *“Farmers have not stopped generating incomes. They provide local products for local markets at suitable prices for everyone.”*<sup>135</sup> *I was supported with 75 kilograms of wheat seed, and after planting it, the harvest was 1,500 kilograms.*<sup>136</sup> *Self-reliance and productivity increased due to the support provided because the wheat seed was of good quality. My 200 kilograms of seed achieved 3000 kilograms of wheat.*<sup>137</sup> In other areas, farming activities which entailed training and agro-input grant were mixed in their success, limited, in part, by the size of the grant awarded by NRC, combined with increased prices for agricultural inputs. Vouchers or cash grants must keep abreast of inflation. Inputs such as fertiliser are significantly higher following the Ukraine war.

In terms of livelihoods context and environment, agriculture is the second biggest contributor to Iraq’s economy after oil. Crop production constitutes the largest subsector within the agricultural sector and provides 75 percent of all agriculture-related incomes, with wheat and barley being the dominant crops.<sup>138</sup> Iraq’s conflict-affected governorates have historically been among the highest producers of crops, with Salah al-Din and Ninewa governorate producing over one-third of Iraq’s annual wheat and barley.<sup>139</sup> The Government of Iraq, (GoI) and the World Bank advise agriculture has potential for sustained growth, private sector investment and rapid job creation.<sup>140</sup> Iraq’s economic policy priorities detailed in the GoI White Paper, emphasizes productive sectors and green job creation including climate-smart agriculture, food security, and development of the private sector.<sup>141</sup> NRC’s support to SMEs and Job Creation in the agricultural sectors clearly reflect government priorities for development and are fit for purpose to address the needs of displacement affected communities. Agri-food systems consist of ‘the entire range of actors, and their interlinked value-adding activities, engaged in the production of food and non-food agricultural products, as well as in storage, aggregation, post-harvest handling, transportation, processing, distribution, marketing, disposal and

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132132 FGD Returnees Anbar/Ramadi/Boutaiban, 30/5/2023

133 Supporting livelihoods recovery and enhanced resilience of affected households through access to skills-development and income-generation opportunities in South Basra

134 FGD, Anbar/Ramadi/Boutaiban, 30/5/2023

135 Anbar - Al Ramadi Anbar Agriculture Directorate KII, 10-6-2023

136136 FGD Al-Basrah- Al-Nashwa district with farmers, 11/06/2023. 59 percent planted 4 donums. (2,500m<sup>2</sup>), whilst 34 percent planted between 2-4 Donum, and 7 percent less than 1 Donum

137137 FGD Al-Basrah- Al-Nashwa district with farmers, 11/06/2023

138138 Strengthening the Agriculture and Agri-Food Value Chain and Improving trade policy in Iraq (“SAAVI”)

139 Iraq Agriculture and Livelihoods Needs Assessment in Newly Liberated Kirkuk, Ninewa, Salahadin. FAO 2016

140 World Bank How the agri-food sector can turn Iraq’s economy around, December 9, 2020. Agriculture’s value-added increased from \$2.5 billion in 2003 to \$11.5 billion in 2014. The agriculture and agri-food sector in Iraq have significant potential for growth by supplying to the increasing domestic demand that currently relies on imports.

141 iraq\_vision\_2030

consumption of all food products including those of non-agricultural origin.<sup>142</sup> NRC's focus on agricultural value chains has embraced an agrifood systems approach which fit for purpose.

#### 4.2.6: Effectiveness of Agriculture in Context of Climate Change

Crops and livestock were adversely affected by drought. Whilst programme participants in Al-Basrah- Al-Nashwa reported good wheat harvests, wheat production failed in other NRC operational areas including Amal and Sinjar due to drought. NRC's drought impact assessment reports that 37 percent of farmers suffered wheat crop failure.<sup>143</sup> Returnee districts in northern districts of Sinjar, Shirqat, Hamdaniya and Telafar depend more heavily on rainfall than other areas which have access to irrigation. NRC provided drought tolerant seed varieties to smallholders in Hawija, Sinjar, Baaj, and Hammam al-Alil. to ameliorate crop losses.<sup>144</sup> Focus group discussions with displaced farmers in Sinjar reported that livestock support would have been more appropriate and effective than wheat seeds.<sup>145</sup> Climate change is a feature that farmers in Iraq have to adapt to.

NRC's use of climate resilient adaptations such as rainwater harvesting, drip-irrigation are highly pertinent, enabling producers to mitigate some of the impacts of drought. Climate smart agriculture can reduce vulnerability to drought, pests, diseases and other climate-related risks and shocks; and improve capacity to adapt to shortened seasons and erratic weather patterns.<sup>146</sup> Climate smart agriculture is particularly pertinent for food and nutrition security of resource-poor returnees in resource poor remote locations.

#### 4.2.7: Livestock

Following the 2021 drought, NRC prioritised support packages to livestock farmers.<sup>147</sup> Displaced and returnee farmers frequently mentioned livestock, advising livestock are suitable for both displaced farmer and Returnees. *"Livestock are more sustainable and suitable to the conditions of the region". "Livestock produce is easier to sell as people consumer dairy and meat daily."*<sup>148</sup> In Anbar, farmers advised, *"Cash to buy sheep is most beneficial for milk and meat production, and generates great profits".*<sup>149</sup> Other farmers advised, *"Dairy is successful because it provides a cheap local product and has a large number of consumers."*<sup>150</sup> Returnee farmers in Kirkuk and Hawija advised, *"Livestock is better than agriculture, because agricultural projects have 90*

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142 FAO, 2021 State of Food and Agriculture

143 Activating Market-based Agricultural Livelihoods – AMAL 1, 2021

144 NRC Iraq's drought crisis and the damaging effects on communities supported 1,019 households in Hawija, 735 households in Ninewa, and 257 households in Ramadi with drought-tolerant wheat seeds

145 FGD Sinjar, Displaced Farmers 19/06/2023

146 World Bank Climate Smart Agriculture <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/climate-smart-agriculture>

147 AMAL Annual Report 2021

148 FGD Sinjar, Displaced Farmers 19/06/2023

149 30/05/2023 Anbar / Ramadi / Al-Butaiban Male Farmer Returnees

150 Anbar - Al Ramadi Anbar Agriculture Directorate KII, 10-6-2023

percent expenses and only 10 percent benefits.”<sup>151</sup> *“Livestock, bee-keeping and poultry-breeding are better than the plastic houses project.”*<sup>152</sup> For landless returnees, livestock are also appropriate.<sup>153</sup> *The most effective agricultural activities are providing cash to buy sheep because they are profitable by selling milk and selling their meat.*<sup>154</sup> *“Raising livestock is better than crops as agriculture requires land for cultivation.”*<sup>155</sup> *“Cash support for livestock purchase will generate more profits than cultivation”.*

In Mosul, male and female programme participants used cash grants to purchased livestock.<sup>156</sup> Project participants advised dairy and sheep breeding were particularly appropriate for women. The resilience of livestock (compared to rainfed cultivation), helps resilient incomes for women and landless farmers. There is opportunity for greater support to women engaged in livestock and livestock value chains.<sup>157</sup> NRC can encourage greater engagement by women in the decision-making process to help re-establish women’s role in the agricultural sector.

Livestock are more resilient to drought than crops and contribute to food security, nutrition and incomes and are culturally appropriate for women. In drier regions, livestock are frequently more resilient than crops. Unlike crops, pastures and grass do not require timely rain. Small ruminants have multiple nutrition options when grazing or browsing. Over millennia, livestock have adapted to their environments. Livestock breeds which originate from drought prone environments are more likely to survive drought than those introduced from more fertile environments.

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151 FGD Kirkuk Hawija/Al-Yarmouk 18/06/2023 Male Returnees, Hosts & Wage Greenhouse beneficiaries

152 FGD Kirkuk Hawija/Al-Yarmouk 18/06/2023 Male Returnees, Hosts & Wage Greenhouse beneficiaries

153 Returnee farmer Anbar/Ramadi/Boutaiban

154 Returnee farmer Anbar/Ramadi/Boutaiban)

155 FGD Kirkuk Hawija/Al-Yarmouk 18/06/2023 Male Returnees, Hosts & Wage Greenhouse beneficiaries

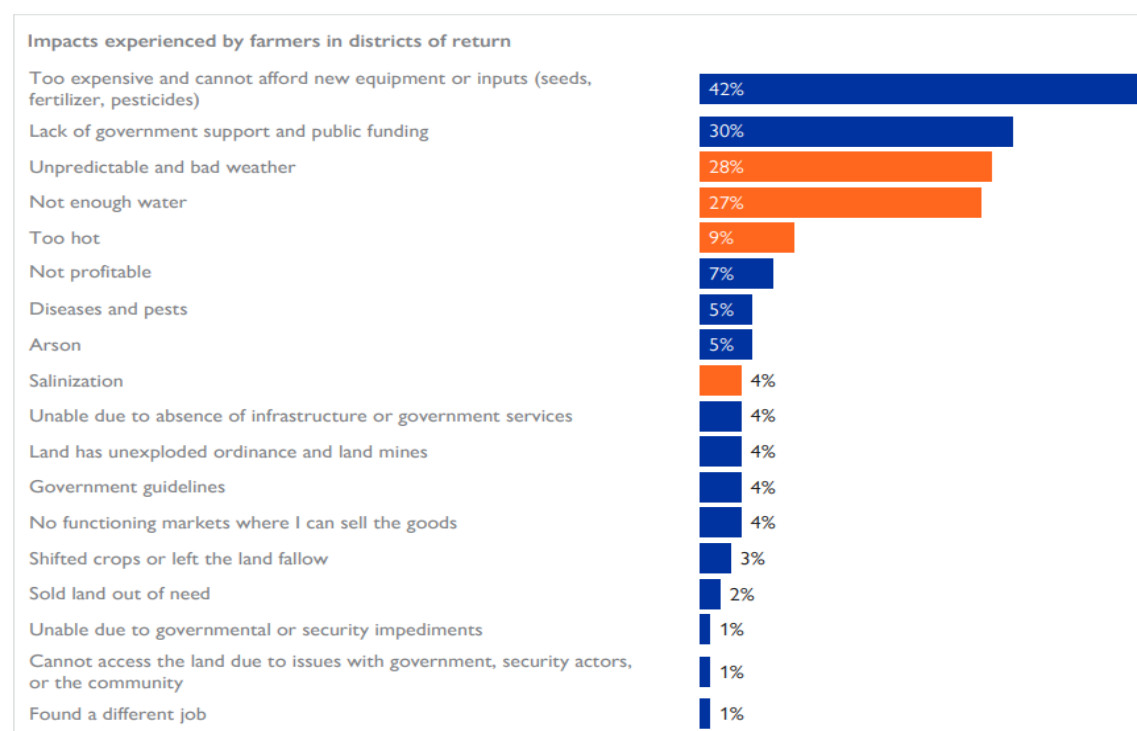
156 34 males, 19 female’ rural beneficiaries in Mosul purchased livestock with one-off transfer 2445 / household

157 After Action Review (AAR): Livelihood and Agricultural Value Chain Activities in Anbar Province (IQFM1956 GIZ)



The charts below illustrate reasons why farmers are not cultivating. It is noted that *significant* production constraints for cultivation relate to climate change, whilst by comparison, in the livestock chart below, production constraints relate more to financial barriers than climate change.

Figure 6: Why Farmers are not Cultivating

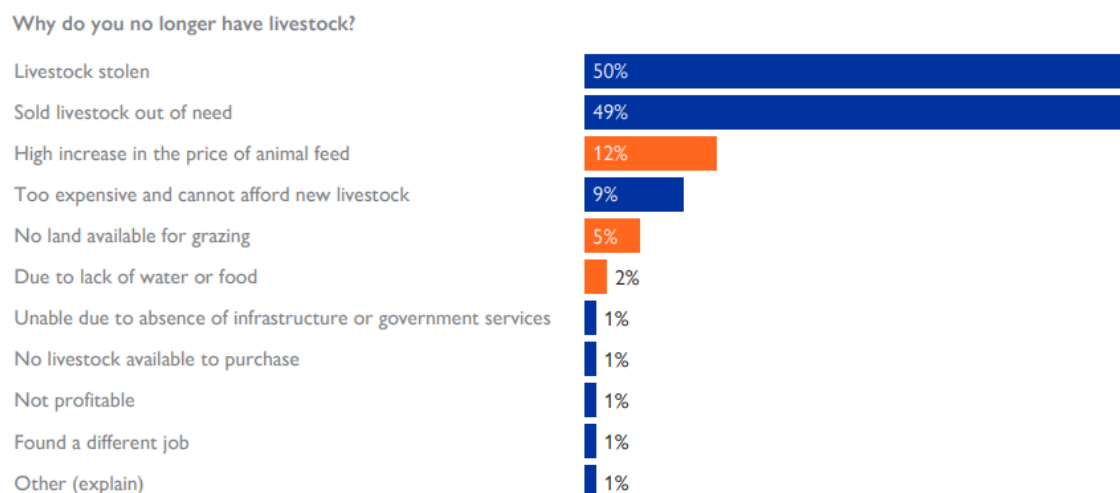


#### Reasons Livestock Farmers are not farming Livestock.<sup>158</sup>

The survey found less than 15 percent of livestock farmers reported production constraints relating to climate. Supporting livestock-based livelihoods will enhance climate change resilience and is fit for purpose in the context of climate change.

<sup>158</sup> ILO, The Impact of Conflict, Climate and the Economy on Agriculture in Districts of Return in Iraq, 2023

Figure 7: Reasons Livestock Farmers are not farming



#### 4.2.8: SMEs, Processing and Value Chains

NRC has shifted its SME focus away from those SMEs competing with each other, to SMEs engaging in value addition, targeting aggregated and wholesale markets. NRC's shift in focus to SMEs engaging in value addition complements NRC's agricultural programming and reflects government and IFI development priorities and is already generating employment and encouraging SME growth. NRC's use of an agrifood systems approach is particularly appropriate in the Iraqi economy. The GoI White Paper identifies agricultural activities, and small and medium enterprises and professional skills development as critical for enabling wide-scale job creation in the short term and successful reconstruction.<sup>159</sup> Wholesale markets provide greater effective-market-demand for produce. Processing or value-addition extends shelf-life and therefore reduces post-harvest losses. Engaging farmers with wholesale markets will increase sales beyond the immediate community.

NRC used competitive business grant application processes to attract applications from interested traders in downstream and upstream agricultural value chains and supported 24 agro-businesses with business management training and business grants.<sup>160</sup> **NRC's focus on value chain competitiveness with emphasis on the improvement of knowledge and skills for employment among youth reflects government priorities for economic growth and is thus an effective strategy.**

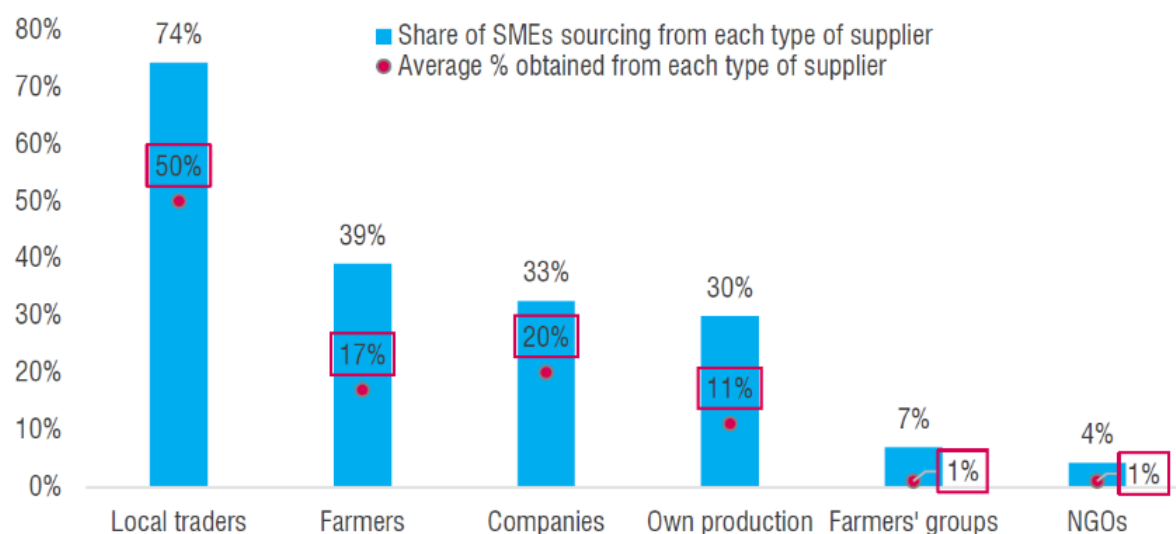
The figure below illustrates the inter-connectiveness of agriculture, the private sector, companies and wage labour. It illustrates the share of suppliers that SMEs use to source their supplies, i.e., local traders, farmers, companies and own production.

<sup>159</sup> iraq\_vision\_2030

<sup>160</sup> Progress Report: Livelihood and agricultural value chain activities in the Anbar Province

## Share of SME sourcing from different suppliers<sup>161</sup>

Figure 8: Share of SME sourcing from different suppliers



NRC has increased its focus on high value produce. NRC economic analysis of the competitiveness and profitability of value-chains identified vegetable as having higher profit margins than potatoes and thus prioritised its focus on vegetables over potatoes.<sup>162</sup> Higher value produce typically incurs higher costs of production, greater production risks and shorter shelf- life. Short shelf-life in the absence of immediate effective market-demand is risky. Analysis of local supplies identified competitive cheap imports. Some project participants struggled to make profits; *“The financial benefit is little because imported crops affect market prices”*.<sup>163</sup> *We invest so much in cultivating tomatoes, but we cannot find a way to sell our products for reasonable prices. We’re losing money.*<sup>164</sup> A study is required to identify the marketing bottleneck. It is not clear if higher Post Harvest Losses, (PHL), pestilence, labour requirements, shorter shelf-life, perishability, freezer requirements, or effective market demand for higher value vegetables were considered when selecting new crops. NRC have not presented calculations demonstrating local production can undercut cheap imports in terms of costs and market prices. Potatoes are a cheap food staple, with a long shelf life and are consumed locally. NRC should be cautious or avoid introducing new high value production for local consumption, i.e., within the immediate community. Resource-poor farmers are frequently risk averse, i.e., they prefer to secure a lower income than adopt riskier profit-maximising production strategies. *The charts below illustrate farmer estimates and opinions of percentages of annual costs.*

<sup>161</sup> Assessing the competitiveness of farmers and agrifood SMEs in Iraq – SAAVI, December 2021

<sup>162</sup> Progress Report: Livelihood and agricultural value chain activities in the Anbar Province

<sup>163</sup> FGD Kirkuk Hawija / Al-Yarmouk district, 18/06/2023 Male Returnees and Host Farmers Wage Greenhouse

<sup>164</sup> Tomato farmer Basra, SAAVI From Farm to folk

Figure 9: Examples of processes involved in Cultivation and Livestock Production.

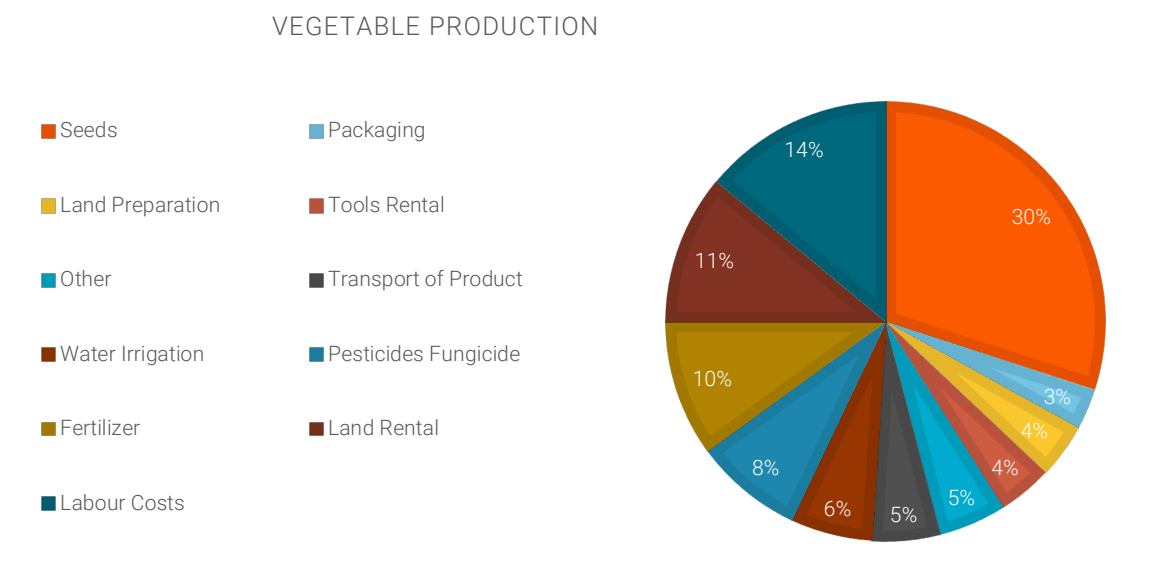
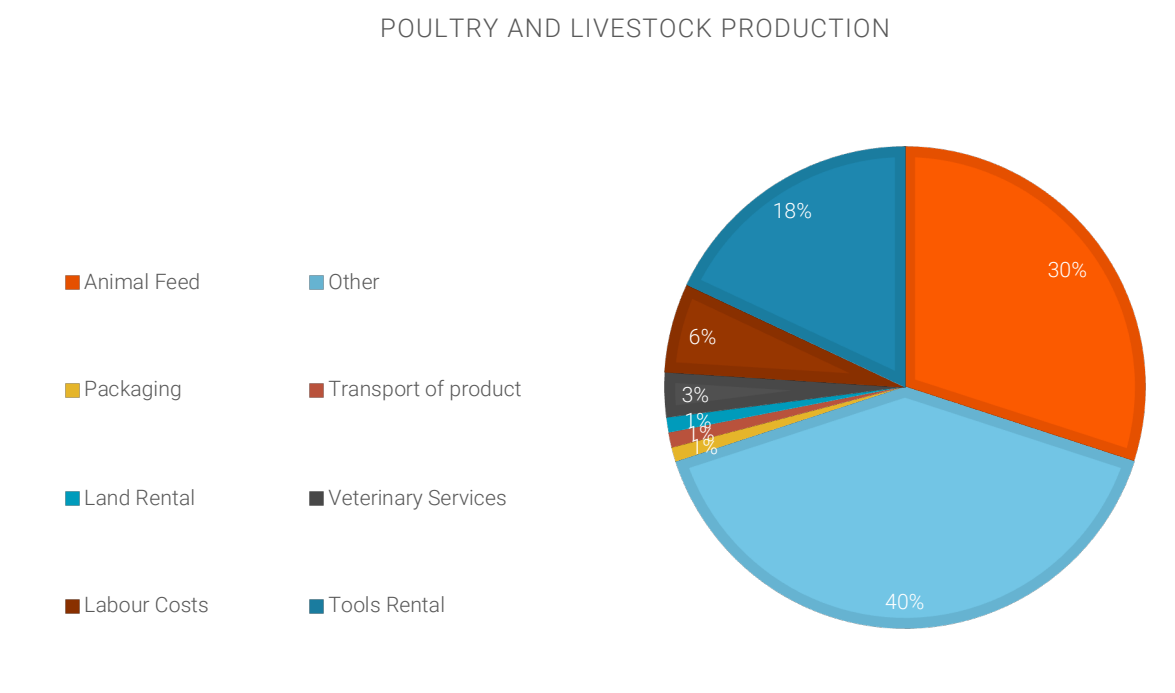


Figure 10: Source: ITC farm survey



NRC uses Farmer Field Schools, (FFS) to reach an increased number of farmers with practical training on improved production techniques and practices. Training attendance rates were 63

percent.<sup>165</sup> Topics include Integrated Pest Management (IPM), land preparation, planting and harvesting, improved harvest and post-harvest handling to reduce post-harvest losses, business development and improved cultivation practices and Irrigation. Field monitoring results show a 60 percent increase in the number of farmers applying new technologies and management practices including use of hybrid seed, seeding rates, use of agrochemicals and early planting.<sup>166167</sup> Whilst FFS are effective and fit for purpose for upgrading production and strengthening resilience, it is not clear if they will be able to address quality compliance training needs required for supermarkets. Challenges identified of farmer produce include 32 percent being unsatisfactory or of inconsistent quality, 20 percent were found to be in insufficient volume and 12 percent too scattered for suppliers.

#### 4.2.9: Risks Associated with Engaging with Commercial Markets

NRC has attempted to link farmer alliances directly with supermarkets. This may be an unrealistic relationship to attempt to build. In addition to quality control and compliance challenges, supermarkets have very long supply chains, and multiple supply options, including international trade. Selling produce directly to supermarkets rather than brokers is risky. Whilst commission to the broker diminishes farmer profits, brokers are also risk takers. They sort and grade for different markets, own specialised storage units and have multiple buyers to sell to. It is unclear if NRC-supported farmers will reach the standards required by supermarkets. Representatives from Carrefour estimated that 90 percent of the produce seen failed to meet their standards.<sup>168</sup> Compliance with quality standards and food safety of vegetables including in post-harvest handling remains a challenge. Approximately 89 percent of farmers said their products were rejected by supermarkets due to poor quality.<sup>169</sup> Whilst the markets present infinite demand for produce, the challenges of meeting quality standards will determine success or failure of incomes. Carrefour results were not successful. Globally, it is more common to use brokers who know minimum quality standards of different markets.

Leveraging farm produce to the standards of supermarkets entails greater focus on quality and food safety. Reaching these standards using farmer field schools may be optimistic. NRC should consider working with brokers as they absorb market risks and will support MSMEs to find markets of appropriate quality standards. NRC could also consider piloting contract farming to

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165 FFS groups were formed in Kirkuk 2021 FFS training methodology utilised training by doing, through season long practical two-hour farmer-to-farmer information sharing sessions held bi-monthly.

166 Soil analysis results from 11 samples collected from the demonstration plots show that has a basic pH (>7.3) between 7.4 and 7.9. The results also show the insufficiency of macronutrients (Phosphorus and Potassium). The project works closely with DoA will design a soil amendment plan and recommend nutrient management activities to farmers through the FFS sessions

167 Ninewa, Farmer Field Schools in Hamam Al Alil delivered extension sessions related to the summer season crops, which are eggplants, peppers and okra and 64 farmers graduated (22 female, 42 male). Seven FFSs finalized delivering sessions on wheat for 108 (89 male/19 female) farmers in Sinjar and Baaj

168 Quarterly Narrative Report NRC SAAVI ITC 2022

169 Assessing the competitiveness of farmers and agrifood SMEs in Iraq – SAAVI, December 2021. NRC reduced the size of each FFS from 50 to 25. 638 (78Female, 540 Male)

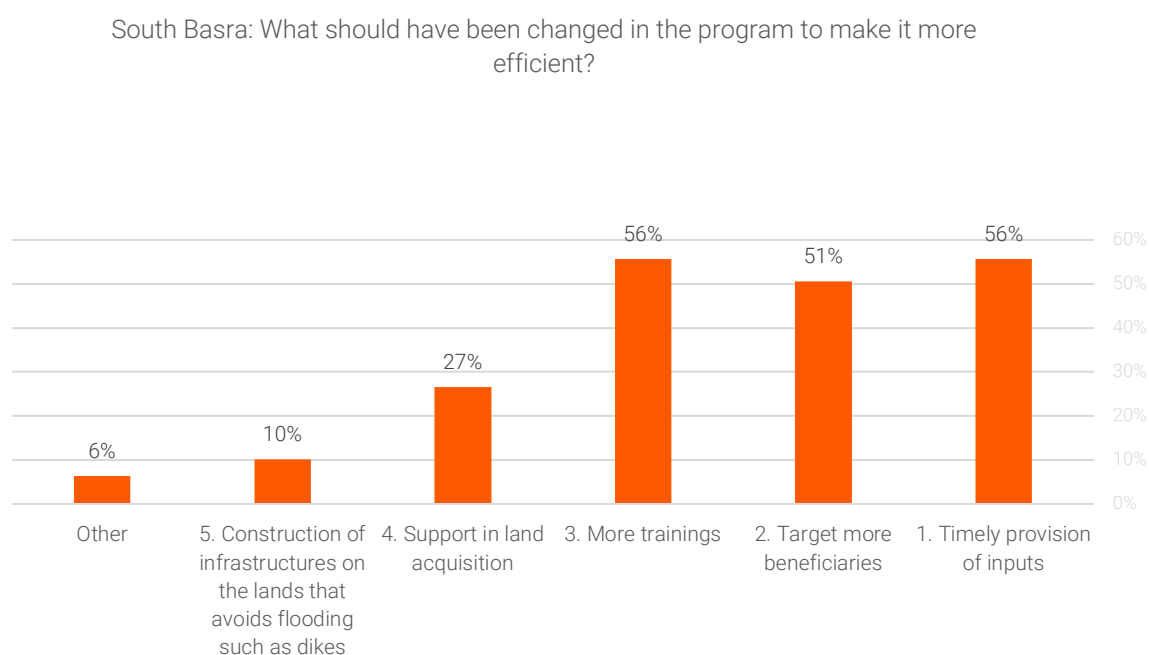
help increase quality of production, reduce PHL and fill the void left by limitations of GoI extension system.

### 4.2.10: Programme Design Provision in Kind

NRC initially provided agricultural inputs in kind. NRC also targeted women farmers, distributing equipment to women farmers in rural areas in convenient and suitable locations for women. PDM surveys identified several issues including lack of timeliness for seed distributions.<sup>170</sup> Late distribution of seeds has detrimental impact on crop productivity as late sowing compromises seed germination, seedling establishment and yield. Grain yields decline by 1 percent per day that sowing is delayed.

Whilst distributions in kind encountered a number of challenges, NRC advised that given the multitude of needs and challenges facing beneficiaries, cash would likely be diverted to meet other pressing needs. Distributions in kind were considered the most effective way of ensuring seeds and inputs reached programme participants.

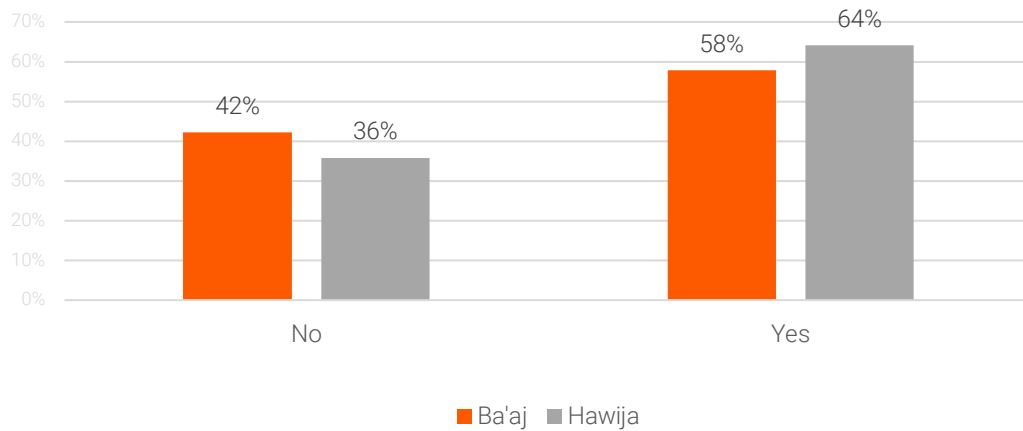
Figure 11: Perceptions of Quality of Distributions in kind<sup>171</sup>



<sup>170</sup> Supporting livelihoods recovery and enhanced resilience of affected households through access to skills-development and sustainable income-generation opportunities in South Basra, delivered to delivered between the 1st and 20th May 2019 for 350 beneficiaries

<sup>171</sup> Increased seeding rates can help minimize negative impacts of delayed sowing, but beyond more than two weeks, increased seeding rate fail to compensate yields. European Journal of Agronomy, Volume 119, Sept 2020

### Kirkuk Was NRC assistance timely?



#### 4.2.11: Vouchers for Returnees

Following the challenges encountered with distributions-in-kind, NRC switched to cash and voucher assistance. NRC was also active in the Iraq Cash Consortium. NRC KIIs reported that *vouchers provided greater impact as beneficiaries will not sell the goods they procure with vouchers, but if they have cash, they will spend the cash on other pressing needs.*<sup>172</sup> NRC work in remote hard to reach areas where other agencies were not operating and where needs are multiple. NRC's PDM of 293 farmers found 70.65 percent beneficiary farmers reported vouchers met their needs, whilst 29.35 percent reported it was insufficient.<sup>173</sup> NRC Voucher PDMs shows farmers utilizing vouchers accordingly.<sup>174</sup>

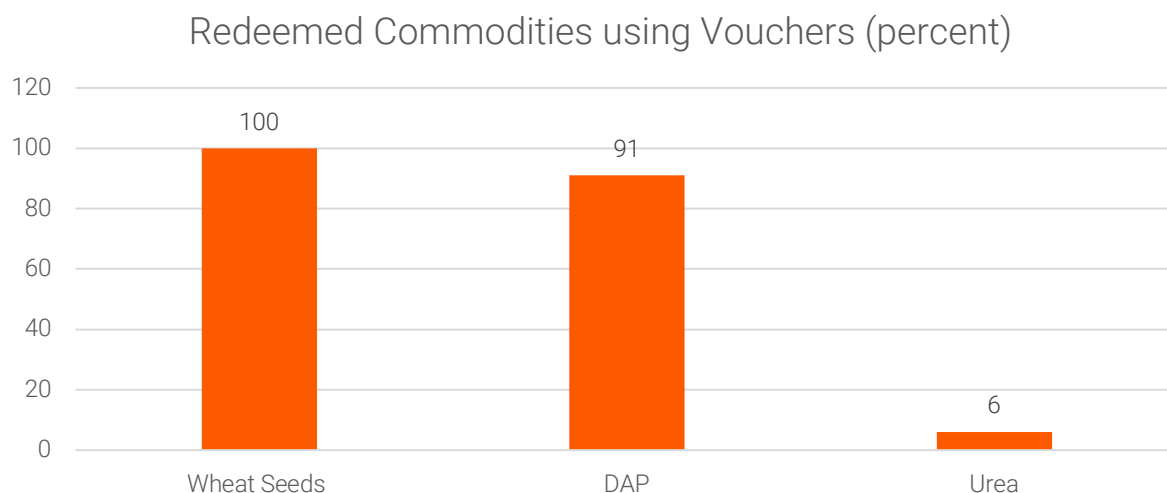
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172 KII NRC Iraq JP

173 NRC Agri Inputs PDM Report 2022 M&E team conducted Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) by interviewing 293 farmers

174 NRC Agri Inputs PDM Report 2022 M&E team conducted Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) by interviewing 293 farmers

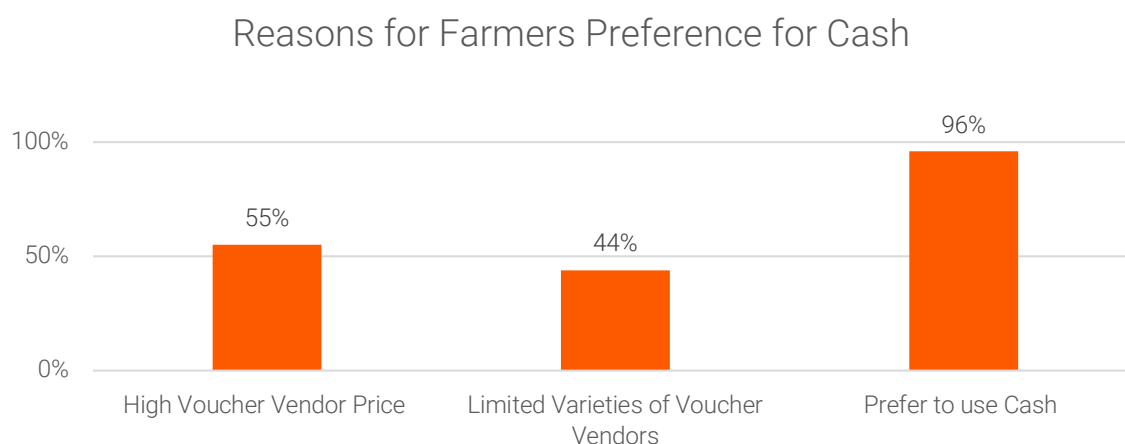
Figure 12: NRC Voucher PDM of 293 beneficiaries to illustrate voucher utilisation



#### Challenges faced by returnee farmers with input vouchers<sup>175</sup>

- Not being able to use known and trusted vendors caused concern regarding seed quality.
- Limitations in terms of spending money: items not available,
- Limited time frame/window of redemption. Farmers need to buy over multiple seasons if vouchers arrive too late or seasonal hazards render cultivation inappropriate.
- Vendors were suspicious of repayment. Price variations and inflation.
- Vouchers do not allow for operational costs of farmers<sup>176</sup> vouchers limit the number of vendors.

Figure 13 NRC Farmers Preference for Cash over Vouchers



175 After Action Review (AAR): Livelihood and Agricultural Value Chain Activities in Anbar Province (IQFM1956 GIZ)

176 After Action Review (AAR): Livelihood and Agricultural Value Chain Activities in Anbar Province (IQFM1956 GIZ)



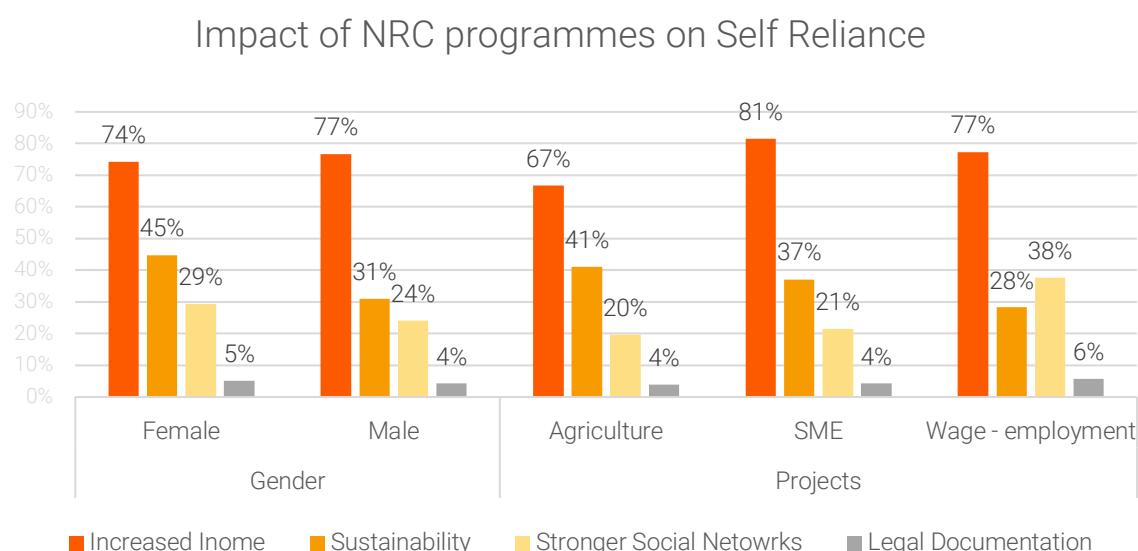
Additional opportunity cost of distributions-in-kind is the absence of interaction that farmers have with input suppliers. Input suppliers in Anbar were identified as the main actor for provision of technical advice and access to credit in the form of inputs. While businesses were initially targeted as a means to access to agricultural inputs, NRC are now leveraging private sector relationships to access technical capacity of input suppliers through collaboration with partners such as the University of Anbar.<sup>177</sup> This approach maximises access to technical know-how.

## 4.3: Beneficiary perspectives on livelihoods activities, approaches and self-reliance.

By raising household incomes and boosting economic resilience while lowering threats against at-risk and displacement-affected households through several interrelated initiatives, NRC's programming clearly strengthens the self reliance of displacement affected communities.

The evaluation conducted telephone surveys with 225 beneficiaries of NRC programmes including agriculture, SME and job placement schemes. The survey asked if NRC projects had increased incomes, created stronger social networks, strengthened sustainability, assisted legal processes, or facilitated financial inclusion. The chart below shows results of the survey showing a majority of surveyed beneficiaries engaged in NRC over the past five years advised incomes had increased. NRC selected survey participants. Project impact on sustainability and social networks is less pronounced.

Figure 14: Impact of NRC programmes on Self Reliance



177 After Action Review (AAR): Livelihood and Agricultural Value Chain Activities in Anbar Province IQFM1956 GIZ

Whilst NRC has not engaged in strengthening beneficiary financial inclusion, it is noted that Iraq's banking system is highly concentrated and dominated by seven state-owned banks. Only 23 percent of Iraqi's have a formal bank account.<sup>178</sup> Financial inclusion creates data trails which can enable MSME access to financial credit for business expansion. In the context of the present financial landscape, NRC's focus on ascertaining civil documentation appears to be more effective.

Did your business expand during NRC project?	Agriculture	SME	Wage - employment
Higher income / profit	67 percent	81 percent	77 percent
More Sales	61 percent	74 percent	26 percent
Diversified production / sales	35 percent	54 percent	25 percent

Following NRC's exit, does it still generate income? 2023		
	NO	YES
Agriculture	41 percent	59 percent
SME	13 percent	87 percent
Wage - employment	63 percent	37 percent

Evaluation survey respondents advised that incomes and sales increased during the NRC interventions. Over 60 percent of all programme participants in SME and wage employment and agriculture advised incomes increased during the project implementation and continued to increase following the project's exit. The seasonality of agriculture, late distribution of seeds, (which deferred planting by a year) and extensive drought, may have deferred changes in income to beyond the life-time of the project.

<sup>178</sup>Promoting financial inclusion in Iraq, Financial Inclusion for Economic Restart and Integration in Iraq, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Figure 15: Incomes during NRC programming

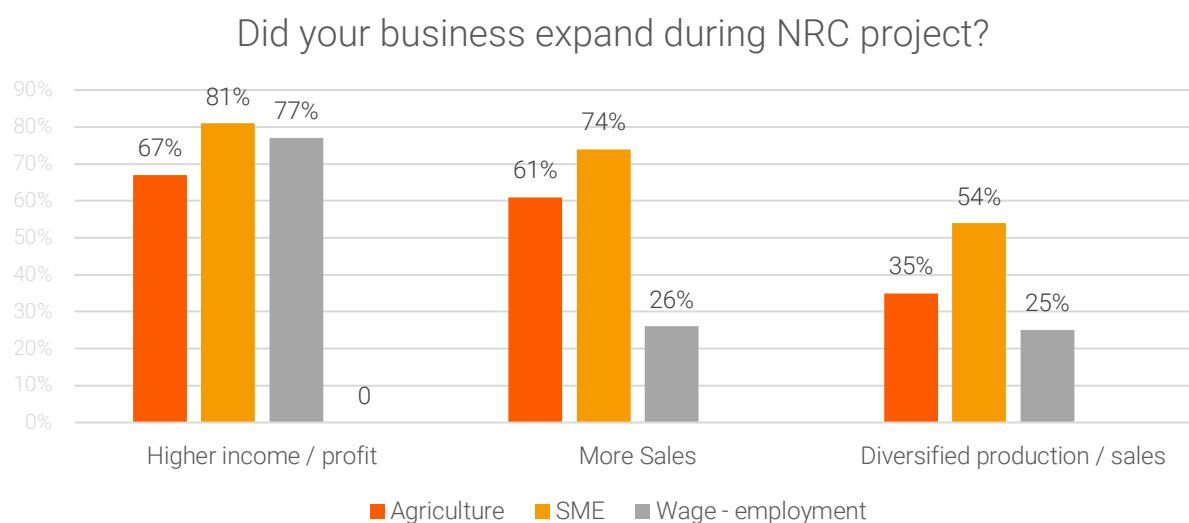


Figure 16: Incomes after NRC programming



Some positive environmental sustainability observations were noted. *“Replanting the area positively affected the environment, increased the number of green areas in the region and reduced desertification that occurred due to leaving these lands barren.”*<sup>179</sup> NRC’s rural water management and environment conservation programming in Anbar impacted positively on environmental sustainability. Impact on agricultural production and incomes, would have been more sustained had interventions focused on paving earth irrigation canals rather than cleaning.

179 Anbar - Al Ramadi Anbar Agriculture Directorate KII, 10-6-2023

Focus group discussions revealed some of the wider impacts that NRC programmes had on project participants. Farmers in Anbar advised, *“We are able to buy and provide for the basic and daily needs of families and children from food, drink, school supplies, house rent and others.”*

<sup>180</sup> *“We were able to increase production and incomes which made him able to provide for his family's needs including medicine and other financial needs to the family”.* <sup>181</sup> In Al-Basrah and Al-Nashwa district, farmers advised, *“Self-reliance and productivity increased due to the support provided because the wheat was of good quality.”* <sup>182</sup> In Anbar, Ramadi and Boutaiban, they advised, *“through cultivating land and selling crops, I was able to save money and re-cultivate increased quantities of production by cultivating larger areas.”* <sup>183</sup>

NRC's impact on interventions designed to address challenges and create an enabling environment for youth and entrepreneurs for sustainable income generation were likely not reflected in the charts above.

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180 Anbar - Al Ramadi Anbar Agriculture Directorate KII, 10-6-2023

181 Anbar - Al Ramadi Anbar Agriculture Directorate KII, 10-6-2023

182182 FGD Al-Basrah- Al-Nashwa district with farmers, 11/06/2023

183 FGD, Anbar/Ramadi/Boutaiban, 30/5/2023

## 4.4: Impact and outcomes of Livelihood pathways. Adaptations to inform NRC's future livelihood strategies

Different locations in which livelihood pathways took place faced different environmental, economic and security challenges over the five years. Programme design varied greatly even within each pathway. It is evident that one pathway does not fit all contexts.

### 4.4.1: Jobs and Wage Employment

Urban wage / job employment was less successful as 90 percent failed to ascertain employment following urban job placement schemes. Employees KIIs gave several reasons regarding challenges including illiteracy, inability to communicate, poor attitude, etiquette, and inability to use modern technology.<sup>184</sup> NRC has no comparative advantage in addressing the above challenges. NRC administrative costs and time spent finding jobs for individuals represents questionable value for money. Given Iraq's cultural norms which utilise social networks in formal employment, attempting to find employment for IDPs or refugees is optimistic and ineffective. NRC's stipends were also higher than local salaries, which did little to encourage uptake of jobs following the end of the job placement. NRC should not distort labour wages.

NRC's TVET courses provided appropriate skills for the urban market and companies expressed willingness to employ graduates from the TVET courses. NRC has not targeted the oil or construction sector. As construction is a growth sector, NRC could target large construction companies and identify training requirements to ensure TVET training reflects company priorities and requirements. NRC could also consider training courses targeting the oil sector. TVET course curricula should incorporate specific skills sets required by the main employers to increase employability of NRC trainees and project participants.

Data on female headed households (FHH), in Dohuk who participated in MSME projects revealed that most of women were unable to work outside of the home due to responsibilities in the home; 75 percent remained unemployed at the end of the project. The issue of not being able to work outside the home affects many women, not only FHH, particularly those far from urban centres. FHH without male breadwinners are particularly vulnerable. Providing business grants for FHH to set up home-based businesses would ensure women earn an income. Business and vocational trainings for FHH should be appropriately located. include childcare and, if needed, transportation costs to cover children.<sup>185</sup> The table below lists types of employment which are considered respectable for women to engage in.

Table 1 Types of employment reportedly perceived as respectable or not for women. NRC could consider adapting vocational trainings for FHH to ensure greater success.

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<sup>184</sup> KII, Duhok, August 2023

<sup>185</sup> Evaluation of NRC's Enhancing Conditions for Durable Solutions for Displacement Affected Communities (DACs) in KRI Project, 2022

#### Types of employment considered respectable

- NGOs
- Public sector (education or health)
- Home-based livelihoods
- Agriculture, livestock
- Gendered vocational jobs such as: tailoring/handcrafting, beauty salons
- Managerial positions in the private sector
- Sex-segregated jobs

#### Types of employment considered not respectable

- Private sector
- The service industry: hotels, restaurants, cafes, gyms
- Bars, nightclubs, or other places that sell alcohol
- Beauty salons (for some communities)
- Non-sex-segregated jobs<sup>186</sup>

### 4.4.2: SMEs

The GoI White Paper identifies small and medium enterprises and professional skills development as critical for enabling wide-scale job creation in the short term and successful reconstruction.<sup>187</sup> Of the 54% who found employment following NRC TVET training in Basra, 75% were self-employed, (SME). This evaluation found SME incomes increased during NRC programming but also continued to rise following NRC's exit. Over 60 percent reported an increase in sales and profits, both during NRC's project and following NRC's exit.

Examples of success include one woman who saved money from her job placement stipend, and whilst she did not ascertain a job, she utilised her vocational training and job experience to open a small nail salon business in her home. This enabled her to work from home and avoid paying for transportation and illustrates the flexibility of SMEs allowing women to work from home.

NRC's shift in market-focus for SMEs, from beyond the provision of goods for the local immediate community, to wholesale markets has been successful shown positive SME results. NRC has successfully leveraged private-sector relationships with SMEs and MSMEs thought processing and value addition which extends shelf life, reduces spoilage and increases market opportunities. NRC's focus on enabling productive and commercial value chain alliances is capacitating MSMEs to compete effectively in an enabling business environment. This will likely have a profound impact for all those engaged along the value chain. NRC should continue to build capacities of value addition, processors, and SMEs to transform food systems.<sup>188</sup>

Engaging with supermarkets and wholesale markets for higher value produce requires tight quality control. Support to MSMEs acting as intermediaries between multiple farmers and supermarkets is a win-win for all. The development of market-led strategies to improve the competitiveness of high potential sectors such as poultry and tomatoes via the development of farmer linkages to MSMEs for processing, quality control and to act as intermediaries to supermarkets will strengthen private sector MSMEs and create rural wage employment.<sup>189</sup>

<sup>186</sup> United Nations Development Programme's Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS) Gender Analysis on Women's Economic Empowerment – July 2022

<sup>187</sup> *iraq\_vision\_2030*

<sup>188</sup> WFP, Iraq Annual Country Report 2022

<sup>189</sup> United Nations Country Team Annual Results Report Published in April 2023

### 4.4.3: Agriculture

In the context of rising food prices and disruption to agricultural imports, NRC's focus on wheat production is effective as supply-side disruptions driven by the war in Ukraine and resulting higher global demand for wheat will continue to push up wheat prices.<sup>190 191</sup> *"Farmers have not stopped generating incomes. They provide local products for local markets at suitable prices."*<sup>192</sup> NRC has successfully engaged refugees and host communities in agricultural production. Host communities rent out small pieces of land to refugees. This has helped social cohesion. NRC should continue to enable returnees, IDPs and refugees to engage in agricultural production. Production of food staples (if local climate or irrigation infrastructure permit) entails less risk. Staple foods such as wheat have long shelf lives and effective market demand will enable sales.

Agriculture is key to addressing employment challenges, particularly among returnees. More than 170,000 additional jobs could be created by 2030.<sup>193</sup> Iraq's agricultural context is vast and heterogeneric. Whilst agricultural programmes require tailoring to reflect local environmental bio dynamics, it presents vast potential for utilising all three pathways (agriculture, labour and SMEs), across the panacea of production, processing and sales.

NRC should continue to expand and strengthen access to productive assets such as irrigation channels, livestock markets and sluice gates. In the context of climate change, such interventions will have a sustained impact. Repairs to productive infrastructure (such as paving canals, markets or enabling access to water for production) have a far reaching and sustained impact.

**Farmers need training in Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA)** to manage cropland, livestock, forests and fisheries and the interlinked challenges of climate change. CSA can reduce vulnerability to drought, pests, diseases and other climate-related risks and shocks; and improve capacity to adapt and grow in the face of longer-term stresses like shortened seasons and erratic weather patterns.<sup>194</sup> **CSA is particularly pertinent for food and nutrition security of resource- poor returnees in resource poor remote locations.**

NRC should continue to focus on where NRC has greatest impact on food security, resilience, and livelihoods. Assisting individually owned businesses such as photography or printing shops have a minor impact at community and household level compared to repairing productive infrastructure. Implementing longer term infrastructure solutions is more sustainable than supporting individually own SMEs. Infrastructure projects should also entail more permanent works that cleaning. Canals should be paved rather than merely cleaned. NRC should consider researching the costs and impact of interventions which enable access to water for production for a given region compared to urban interventions such as businesses which are standalone businesses.

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190 IRAQ ECONOMIC MONITOR: A NEW OPPORTUNITY TO REFORM Nov 2022

191 The World Bank In Iraq: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/iraq/overview>

192 Anbar - Al Ramadi Anbar Agriculture Directorate KII, 10-6-2023

193 Assessing the competitiveness of farmers and agrifood SMEs in Iraq – SAAVI, December 2021

194 World Bank Climate Smart Agriculture <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/climate-smart-agriculture>

Upgrading grazing lands will support returnee communities and IDP communities engaged in livestock farmers. Forage seeds will increase fodder cultivation and contribute to increased milk productivity in quantity and quality.<sup>195</sup> Pasture rehabilitation requires reseeded for restoration of degraded pasture.<sup>196</sup> Enhanced grassland will strengthen carbon sequestration. Flash flood water harvesting infrastructure can capture flash flood surface water run-off and facilitate livestock grazing in locations which have no permanent source of water.

Across all three pathways, effectiveness typically reflects the extent to which beneficiaries can reach a broader customer base, i.e., stronger effective market demand. Pathways which tap into and harnesses private sector demand, i.e., wholesale traders and value addition are more effective and likely to be more sustainable.

NRC could compare the impact of interventions which enable access to productive infrastructure for an entire community such as water for production, with supporting single, standalone privately owned businesses which may ultimately help one household compared to an entire community.

## 4.5: Unintended consequences of the cash and livelihood interventions

There appear to be few unintended consequences. KIIs and FGDs were rarely able to identify unintended positive or negative consequences. One SME beneficiary advised that the large amounts of money being sanctioned off in Basra caused ‘confusion’ in Basra.<sup>197</sup> NRC received one complaint suggesting vouchers for agricultural inputs had led to increased prices in local markets. Looking at the list of complaints below, there appears to be disharmony in some sectors generated by some elements of the programmes.

- NRC Community Development Committees select relatives and friends to receive assistance.
- Many people who received business grants from NRC belong to the same family.
- Farmers were not selected to receive cash for land preparation, due to tensions with Mukhtars.
- Selection criteria for cash for land preparation is not accurate as some beneficiaries are not farmers.
- Farmers wanting to redeem vouchers at contracted shops found only wheat seeds available.
- Agricultural input prices were too high as set by the contracted vendors. Contracted vendors agreed with each other to increase commodity prices. NRC caused harm to the market as distributing agricultural inputs through a voucher system led to increased prices in the market.
- NRC excluded many vulnerable farmers.
- Farmer markets are running out of fertilizers because of the distribution.

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<sup>195</sup>195 FAO 2022, FAO Supports livestock breeders and farmers with forage seeds

<sup>196</sup> Chang, J., Ciais, P., Gasser, T. et al. Climate warming from managed grasslands cancels the cooling effect of carbon sinks in sparsely grazed and natural grasslands, 2021

<sup>197</sup>197 FGD Basra, 30/5/2023



## 4.6: Extent to which NRC livelihoods programmes enabled the participation of people and communities in support of effective, safe, and quality programming throughout the project cycle

In terms of Safe and Inclusive Programming, affected communities were found to have been consulted during programme design and implementation. FGDs and KIIs confirmed that NRC engaged communities and partners during and throughout programme design. In Dohuk, KIIs advised *“There was consensus; NRC came and conducted awareness-raising sessions and we met. We benefited from awareness sessions.* In Anbar, KII advised, *“We met with NRC employees to tell them about the needs of agricultural land and the reality of agriculture in the region. Opinions were met with understanding and were welcomed by NRC and the people.”*<sup>198</sup> *Mukhtars that NRC reached out to collect information about their villages and activities were organized with the participation of everyone.*<sup>199</sup> *Challenges facing IDPs and refugees are studied to address the problem strategically. The private sector also has a positive role in addressing and working with the organization”.*<sup>200</sup> Some exceptions to participation were noted in Basra where participants were unaware of how or why they had been selected.

Whilst participation of communities throughout the programming cycle is the norm, incidence where this had not taken place were also identified. Some training centres were located in areas that were not possible for displaced or women to travel to. Some rural trainings took place in urban centres as *there were no training facilities in rural areas.*

NRC could be more pro-active in ensuring NRC programmes are accessible to women. TVET programmes reached only 19 percent of the planned 50 percent women. As most women are unable to work outside of the home due to responsibilities in the home, 75 percent remained unemployed at the end of the project. In some agricultural programme, no women were included. NRC explain that cultural reasons prevent participation. In post war Iraq, female headed households, (FHH) without male breadwinners are particularly vulnerable and greater efforts should be made to include them. Consultations with women should ensure culturally appropriate activities are identified in conservative contexts. There is also need for NRC to review itself internally to identify how and why women were excluded and to ensure women are not excluded from future programmes.

Incidence of women's exclusion were not the norm however, and generally NRC strives to ensure that women (and youth) are represented and participate in programme activities. This study did not however identify incidence of engagement of women in decision making positions

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198 Duhok, KII, Mukhtar Warsity Complex, 8/6/2023, field researcher DM

199 30/05/2023 Anbar / Ramadi / Al-Butaiban Male Farmer Returnees

200 Duhok, KII, Mukhtar Warsity Complex, 8/6/2023, field researcher DM

for programme design. It is noted however that NRC training frequently includes soft skills such as communication, leadership, negotiation skills and decision making.

NRC Iraq utilises two types of participatory approaches, direct participation of members of the affected population participating as individuals in various phases of programmes, and participation by representation, which involves representation of community views by informal and formal representation groups.<sup>201</sup> Most aspects of NRC programmes appear participatory, utilising feedback and learning, engaging with local leaders and key stakeholders. In terms of NRC's Participation Ladder Table which articulate the degree of community participation and engagement, it is noted that the extent to which affected communities are given a voice and power to make decision related to programming has varied over time. Earlier humanitarian programmes adopted more functional participation (collaborate), score 4, whilst more recent programmes use interactive participation (joint decision making), score 5. The trend is positive with programmes increasingly engaging affected populations in the analysis of needs, programme conception and decision-making though out implementation. The Participation Ladder score provided is therefore 5.

Some exceptions to participation were noted in Basra where participants were unaware of how or why they had been selected. In Erbil, partners felt their participation would have been beneficial had they participated earlier on in programme design. *“Two perspectives are better than one, Local and national NGOs on the ground have experience, expertise and stronger connections and understanding of community dynamics”*.<sup>202</sup>

Respondents reported facing several challenges during voucher redemption. These included distance between the market and the target villages, long queues and delays, crowd control issues, and difficulties in staying in market due to being female or having disabled family member.<sup>203</sup>

NRC should consider travel times and training locations as women, Female headed households and PWD cannot travel long distances.<sup>204</sup> In one training programme, women were not targeted for the agricultural training as it ‘targeted the head of households only’. NRC should ensure training takes place in rural areas rather than expecting project participants to travel to urban centres.

NRC advised Community Accountability and Response Mechanism (CARM) were in place during NRC interventions, Hotline numbers were circulated to beneficiaries during M&E visits in case they have issues that needed the attention of NRC.<sup>205</sup> Whilst comments on communication were generally positive, ad hoc complaints were received during focus groups advising that NRC did

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201 TOOLKIT FOR NRC SAFE AND INCLUSIVE PROGRAMMING | FIELD-TESTING VERSION | September 2021 | NRC internal, p.1

202 KII Erbil NGO 13/07/23

203 AMAL November 2922 Exit Interview NRC, Agri Inputs Report

204 KII, Duhok, August 2023

205 PRM SPRMCO 18 NRC Final Report

not always answer or respond to beneficiary complaints.<sup>206</sup> The list below details complaints by beneficiaries. The number of complaints suggests beneficiaries were well aware of how to raise their concerns. This study did not follow up on NRC responses due to time constraints.

#### Complaints listed by beneficiaries to NRC

- Community Development Committee created by NRC select relatives and friends to receive assistance.
- Farmers were not selected to receive (Cash for land preparation) due to tensions with Mukhtars.
- NRC didn't reach out to all farmers' houses led to the exclusion of many vulnerable farmers.
- Selection criteria for cash for land preparation is not accurate as some beneficiaries are not farmers.
- Many people who received business grants from NRC belong to the same family.
- Farmers wanting to redeem vouchers at contracted shops found only wheat seeds available.
- Agricultural input prices were too high as set by the contracted vendors.
- Contracted vendors agreed with each other to increase commodity prices. Prices set between NRC and the vendors are higher than commodity prices in non-distribution times.
- NRC's market assessment is inaccurate,
- NRC caused harm to the market as distributing agricultural inputs through a voucher system led to increased prices in the market.
- Farmer markets are running out of fertilizers because of the distribution.
- Contracted vendors who provide agricultural inputs are selling the items with a price that differs from what is written in the receipt.
- Some complainants used CARM channel to report that the written test for the AMAL Infrastructure Assistant was hard and it wasn't related to the nature of the job.
- NRC should repeat the assessment as some households were left out<sup>207</sup>

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206 FGD Kirkuk Hawija / Al-Yarmouk district, 18/06/2023 Male Returnees Host communities. Farmers Wage

207 AMAL 2021 Annual Report

## 4.7: Government engagement: How NRC's engagement with government, line ministries and directorates were beneficial to achieving programme outcomes. The capacity and willingness of local government and local community structures to continue supporting livelihoods participants after the NRC project phase-out from the area.

NRC cooperates well with ministries and departments including Departments of Agriculture, Social Development, Economy, Water and Irrigation. Coordination efforts do however vary between different governorates. A number of NRC offices advised that, “Coordination efforts between NRC and relevant government agencies departments and institutions are essential to achieve common goals and promote sustainable development, and one of our most important strengths”.<sup>208</sup><sup>209</sup> NRC observations included the need to continue to build better relations with federal government as otherwise, challenges cause delay and confusion when trying to reach communities. *“If we coordinate with higher authorities, we can negotiate solutions to avoid delays.”*<sup>210</sup>

In terms of supporting programmes after NRC phase out, in Nineveh, NRC advised that local government and local community structures will continue supporting livelihoods participants after NRC project phase-out from the area. NRC reported it has good cooperation with ministries and stakeholders, and this is very useful.<sup>211</sup> In Dohuk, coordination between NRC and line-ministries built harmony and consensus between the government and NRC.<sup>212</sup> “However, whilst coordination between NRC and relevant ministries, institutions, universities, and the private sector was clear, coordination between ministries, government institutions, civil society and universities was absent.”<sup>213</sup>

In Dohuk, NRC advised that it coordinates with all appropriate stakeholders, consulting first with government agencies, community leaders, Department of Agriculture, Department of Horticulture, humanitarian livelihood networks and development actors. Dialogue, meetings and work are carried out with participating communities.<sup>214</sup> NRC has been an active member of the Cash Working Group Harmonized Joint Price Monitoring Initiative since it began in 2016.

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<sup>208</sup> KII NRC Hawija office 10.07.2023

<sup>209</sup> NRC KII Nineveh Interview ,16/6/2023

<sup>210</sup> NRC KII Nineveh Interview ,16/6/2023

<sup>211</sup> NRC KII Nineveh Interview ,16/6/2023

<sup>212</sup> Duhok, KII, Mukhtar Warsity Complex, 8/6/2023, field researcher DM

<sup>213</sup> KII Dohuk, 6/8/23

<sup>214</sup> Duhok, KII, Mukhtar Warsity Complex, 8/6/2023, field researcher DM

NRC also collaborates in cash and livelihoods policies through its membership in the Cash and Livelihoods Consortium of Iraq (CLCI). In Basra, NRC advised that communication with local authorities and international organisations has increased. NRC projects have developed partnerships with the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Basra, as well as the Ministry of Agriculture, Directorate of Agriculture, the Agricultural Engineers Syndicate, Chamber of Commerce, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs for vocational training projects.<sup>215</sup>

The capacity and willingness of local government to continue supporting livelihoods is variable and reflects funding that governorates receive. “Capacity and willingness of local organisations is not always linked to funding.”<sup>216</sup> Programmes which adhere to government priorities, however, are likely to be supported by government. Farmers adhering to the national annual agricultural plan for example, are eligible to receive subsidized inputs, such as seeds, fertilizers and pesticides. GoI further supports farmers through wheat procurement.<sup>217</sup>

NRC’s efforts to facilitate returnee wheat production is likely to be supported by the government and have positive impacts beyond the income generated by the farmer. As wheat is considered a strategic crop, MoA invest considerable resources in domestic production via subsidised inputs and direct purchase of harvests. The MOA determine wheat production areas through its National Annual Agricultural Plan. In previous seasons, farmers who grew wheat outside this plan failed to receive subsidised inputs, and had to sell their wheat at reduced prices, and were not eligible to sell their produce to Ministry of Trade (MOT) silos. This strategy has changed due to the global grain market crises, and GoI now allows all farmers to sell their grain to MOT silos.<sup>218 219</sup> The MOT mill and distribute wheat through the Public Distribution System (PDS), Iraq’s universal food subsidy programme, which buffers the impacts of displacement on households.<sup>220</sup>

In 2023, GoI increased domestic wheat production in light of elevated international prices and concerns about tighter availability on global markets. NRC should keep abreast of new developments in Iraq wheat production. The increase in wheat area is likely to be compensated for by a decrease in the area planted with barley.<sup>221</sup>

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215 NRC KII Basra Interview Date: 13/6/2023

216 NRC KII Nineveh Interview ,16/6/2023

217 FAO Iraq, 03-February-2023

218 USDA Grain and Feed Annual: Extreme Water Shortages and Policy Changes Impact Iraq Grain Production, April 15, 2022 The Ministry of Trade (MOT) in May 2022 increased the procurement price from IQD 560 000/tonne (equivalent to USD 386/tonne) to IQD 850 000/tonne (USD 578/tonne). In 2022, in an effort to rebuilt domestic stocks, MOT prices were applied to all locally produced wheat and not only to the production of farmers following the national annual agricultural plan, as it was the case in the past. Supported by high procurement prices, the MOT purchased about 2.5 million tonnes of wheat locally in 2022, about one-half of the amount purchased in 2020.

219 FAO GIEWS Country Brief: The Republic of Iraq 03-February-2023

220 Iraq’s Universal Public Distribution System Utilization and Impacts During Displacement, World Bank Group, 2020. Lokendra Phadera Dhiraj Sharma Matthew Wai-Poi

221 FAO Iraq, 03-February-2023

Examples of partnerships from project Activating Market-based Agricultural Livelihoods <sup>222</sup>—  
Directorate of Agriculture (DoA)  
Ninewa (DoA) [Kirkuk](#)

Consulted during market assessments, value chain assessments, planning for land preparation support

Directorate of Water Resources (DoWR)

Discuss irrigation canal network and Ministry in Baghdad for the rainwater harvesting feasibility study

Chamber of Commerce

Discuss the market system, gaps, challenges

General Company of Grains Trading (GCGT) Directorate of Trade

Wheat grain storage, distribution gaps. grain received from farmers during and after harvesting. grain grading.

Mosul Veterinary Hospital, Kirkuk Veterinary Hospital

reviewing livestock market design and types of activities to support livestock value chain. gaps in the clinic.

University of Mosul & Kirkuk University

sluice gate gearbox in cooperation with the College of Engineering, Mechanical department.

Mayors and Governors

NGO coordination. Rehabilitating agricultural extension and training farm - implementation of AMAL

Directorate of Civil Defence (DoCD)

UXO Due Diligence, iMMAP, who support the Directorate of Mine Action in Baghdad

UN and INGOs

Bilateral meetings with IOM, UNHCR plus 6 INGOs

Community

Tribal elders and mukhtars of target areas

## 4.8: Sustainability Livelihoods interventions which remained sustainable after NRC's exit. Factors which contributed most to sustainability.

Following NRCs exit, significant percentage of evaluation participants continue to generate incomes in the field of agriculture and SMEs. Over 60 percent of SMEs reported a continued to increase in sales and profits following NRC's exit. Micro grant and Small and Business Grants to businesses have been increasingly successful and sustainable. NRC's efforts to focus on businesses that will not struggle to find a market, has generated more sustainable SMEs. Businesses are more likely to remain open and 98 percent of SME grant receivers who participated in NRC trainings believing the trainings helped them to stay in business.<sup>223</sup>

Whilst urban job placements and employment faced challenges, rural wage employment is a growth sector as demand for food and agricultural labourers is expanding. Unlike urban wage employment positions, there is likely less focus on literacy working in agricultural labourer.

NRCs more recent approach to wage employment is market driven and sustainable. Supporting SMEs and MSMEs to engage in Iraq's growing agri food systems is strengthening demand for Iraqi agriculture, generating jobs in both production and processing. NRCs approach of linking farmer associations with the private sector including linkages with larger private and commercial sectors is helping to ensure farmers can access market demand for their produce, there by strengthening sustainability of all three pathways.

Following NRC's exit, does it still generate income?	No	Yes
Agriculture	41%	59%
SME	13%	87%
Wage - employment	63%	37%
	39%	61%

Do you continue to utilise skills learnt from NRC to generate income?	No	Yes
Agriculture	28%	72%
SME	11%	89%
Wage - employment	27%	73%
	22%	78%

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<sup>223</sup> Sustainable livelihoods through small business development and job placement in Basra, Impact Assessment Report 2020

NRC interventions which reflect the broader economy, rather than individual interests, have been more successful in generating sustainable livelihoods. The Government of Iraq's economic focus, in addition to the oil sector, is agriculture and construction.

NRC interventions which enabled farmers to restart production of crops, livestock, poultry, horticulture, or enabled value addition or aggregation of produce continue to expand and are sustainable. Agriculture and agricultural SMEs and wage employment are growth sectors. Facilitating returnee agriculture has been successful though clearly there is need for adaptation to droughts. NRC builds on the comparative advantage of different geographical areas, focusing on key food security enterprises such as wheat, barley, livestock, poultry and horticulture. Beneficiaries report successful and sustainable livelihoods which continue to expand. Demand for produce of the right quality will sustain as people will always need to eat.

NRC's focus on value chains, SMEs, Agri business and private sector engagement is appropriate, effective and sustainable if quality standards are attained. Given agricultural-development's pivotal role in allowing Iraq to achieve a more diversified economy, these sectors will continue to expand.

NRCs focus on MSMEs engaging in agri-food value chains with private sector wholesalers and supermarkets is a growth area. In particular, NRCs involvement with Strengthening the Agriculture and Agri-food Value Chain and Improving Trade Policy in Iraq (SAAVI) continues to contribute to inclusive economic growth and job creation, by improving Iraq's agriculture competitiveness and supporting trade development.<sup>224</sup>

NRC's focus on incorporating youth entrepreneurs into this sector complements the policy environment and reflects Iraqi youth interest in entrepreneurship. NRCs focus on value chains also harmonises well with the common agreement in 2022 by UN and donors which advocate for scaled down individualized programming whilst strengthening the capacities to deliver enhanced services to all Iraqis.<sup>225</sup> *"Interventions in the field of agriculture will last for years after NRC leave."* The interventions that will continue after the exit of NRC are the agriculture and trade.<sup>226</sup>

Government of Iraq's economic priorities detailed in the GoI White Paper, emphasises productive sectors and green job creation including climate-smart agriculture, food security, and development of the private sector.<sup>227</sup> Iraq's agriculture sector employs 20 percent of the country's workforce and is a key contributor to gross domestic product. NRC's support to SMEs and Job Creation in the agricultural sectors clearly reflect government priorities for development.

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224 ITC June 2023 SAAVI Newsletter

225 UNHCR Moving toward a government-led IDP response and furthering refugee inclusion, 2022

226 NRC KII Nineveh Interview ,16/6/2023,

227 iraq\_vision\_2030



Construction is a growth sector in urban areas. NRC TVET courses included welding and electrics which are utilised in construction. NRC could liaise with large construction companies and identify the minimum vocational training requirements. There are many construction projects in Iraq requiring employees with skills in the field of construction.”<sup>228</sup> This study did not look at oil but NRC could also consider if oil offers some unskilled labour opportunities.

NRC’s focus on livelihood resilience in more remote resource-poor areas including access to basic and productive services such as markets, water for production and irrigation continues to have a sustained impact on food security and livelihoods.

#### **4.8.1: Contributing factors to the livelihood interventions which failed to achieve sustainability.**

The evaluation found only 37% of those formerly engaged in wage employment continue to generate incomes in wage labour. Some training centres were located in areas that were not possible for displaced or women to travel to. Some rural trainings took place in urban centres as *there were no training facilities in rural areas*. MSME projects failed for 75 percent of women, as most women were unable to work outside of the home due to responsibilities in the home. NRC should be more pro-active in ensuring NRC programmes are accessible to women

Urban wage and urban job employment activities were unsuccessful with 90 percent of participants failing to ascertain employment following urban job placement schemes. Individual job placements and recruitment into wage employment faced challenges relating to illiteracy, attitude, etiquette and absence of social capital. Targeting of formal employment for IDPs or refugees is optimistic. Cultural and industry norms utilise social networks during recruitment which IDPs and refugees both lack. Provision of stipends higher than salaries offered by local businesses is also unsustainable as beneficiaries did not appreciate a reduction in the salary offered at the end of the job placement. As NRC is not a recruitment agency, finding jobs for individuals may not be its comparative strength.

Urban SME projects faced multiple challenges due to COVID-19 which negatively affected businesses. Over 78 percent of displacement-affected population lost work due to Covid containment measures. Only one-third of SMEs surveyed were operating as usual; half had reduced capacity, whilst 15 percent closed down. A Multi Sector Needs Assessment noted that 93 percent of refugee households reported experiencing a reduction in income from employment compared to pre-COVID-19 (before March 2020). In addition, 88 percent of refugee households reported having fewer daily labour opportunities than pre-COVID-19. In the context of COVID-19, NRC’s decision to promote new businesses through the provision of business grants for youth seems extraordinary. Broader economic trends should be considered for any livelihood development. Rising unemployment rates and global recession should have signaled alarm.

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228 ILO Decent Work Country Programme in Iraq- Recovery and Reform Dr. Edrees Muhammad Harki, Erbil Polytechnic University

# 5: Conclusion

The needs of displacement affected communities vary greatly according to their location displacement status. Returnees need strategic projects linked to the local economic development. Multiple key informants, advised, the most strategic project with a secure future is agriculture. Needs include assistance to address challenges such as loss of productive assets, damaged irrigation infrastructure, high post-harvest losses, limited access to markets and inputs including seeds, tools, feed and agro-chemicals. Businesses engaged in value addition, fertilizer, dairy, blacksmithing, feed and processing face growing demand and are sustainable. Water infrastructure for production remains a priority particularly in the context of climate change.

NRC's programme evolved in a logical way reflecting the needs of beneficiaries and in response to challenges facing displacement affected communities. NRCs' response also reflected its mission statement and priority focus. Early support to encamped refugees and IDPs focused on SMEs to ensure access to goods and services as well as household incomes. SMEs initially worked well in camps during the early stages of the emergency. Over time, camps became congested with SMEs. NRC thus refocused its efforts to a wider economic lens. NRC's adaptation to the changing context is commendable.

Enabling access to skills in the three government priority areas of oil, construction and agriculture makes sound economic sense. NRC has scaled down individualised programming such as urban job placements and recruitment where challenges such as literacy and attitude, or absence of social capital limit chances of success. NRC is focusing more on SMEs and MSME particularly those relevant to construction, such as welding and electrics, and agrifood system value chains.<sup>229</sup> Construction and agriculture are the growth areas for labour and MSMEs, though wage employment in agriculture may be seasonal.

NRC builds on the comparative advantage of different geographical areas, focusing on key food security enterprises such as wheat, barley, livestock, poultry and

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229 UNHCR Moving toward a government-led IDP response and furthering refugee inclusion, 2022

horticulture. Beneficiaries report successful and sustainable livelihoods which continue to expand. In more remote locations, where livelihood resilience for resource-poor communities is more precarious, NRC has focused on access to basic and productive services such as markets, water for production and irrigation. NRC should continue to expand and strengthen access to productive assets for youths in rural and urban contexts

NRCs focus on targeting and incorporating youth entrepreneurs in MSMEs engaging in agri-food value chains with private sector engagement, wholesalers and supermarkets is facilitating procurement and trade of local produce, which is contributing to inclusive economic growth and job creation. Repairs to productive infrastructure impact the livelihoods of entire communities will also benefit MSME agri food system value chains. NRC's engagement with ITC is an excellent example of having the government and private sector on board.

In terms of Safe and Inclusive Programming, affected communities were found to have been consulted during programme design and implementation. FGDs and KIIs confirmed that NRC engaged communities and partners during and throughout programme design. Opinions were met with understanding and were welcomed by NRC.<sup>230</sup> Challenges facing IDPs and refugees are studied to address the problem strategically. Some exceptions to participation were noted, where participants were unaware of how or why they had been selected. Whilst participation of communities throughout the programming cycle is the norm, incidence where this had not taken place were also identified. Some training centres were located in areas that were not possible for displaced or women to travel to. Some rural trainings took place in urban centres as there were no training facilities in rural areas. NRC should be more pro-active in ensuring NRC programmes are accessible to women. TVET programmes reached only 19 percent of the planned 50 percent women. As most women are unable to work outside of the home due to responsibilities in the home, 75 percent remained unemployed at the end of the project.

NRC cooperates well with ministries and departments including Departments of Agriculture, Social Development, Economy, Water and Irrigation. Coordination efforts do however vary between different governorates. A number of NRC offices advised that, "Coordination efforts between NRC and relevant government agencies departments and institutions are essential to achieve common goals and promote sustainable development, and one of our most important strengths.

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230 Duhok, KII, Mukhtar Warsity Complex, 8/6/2023, field resear

In terms of sustainability, it was noted that micro grant and small business grants to businesses continue to be successful. Beneficiaries of agriculture continue to generate incomes and livelihoods, whilst urban wage and urban job employment activities were unsuccessful with 90 percent of participants failing to ascertain employment following urban job placement schemes. Agriculture, Oil and construction are growth sectors in Iraq. NRC should facilitate youth engagement into these sectors.

Supporting MSMEs engaged along value chains provides a broader impact and outreach along the entire value chain, rather than supporting singular individuals engaging in exclusive businesses such as eg photography. The opportunity cost of helping one individual set up such a venture could be weighed against what could have been achieved with less capital intensive MSEMIS.

# 6: Lessons Learnt

Agriculture, oil, and construction are government priority areas for all three pathways.

Different locations in which Livelihood pathways took place face different environmental, economic and security challenges. Programme design varied greatly even within each pathway. Each pathway requires adaptation to fit each context.

It is difficult to create urban jobs and businesses during recession and lockdown. The sale of food is less affected by recession; thus, it is easier to generate incomes, SMEs and employment in agrifood systems.

Across all three pathways, the extent to which a pathway reaches a broader customer base, i.e., beyond the immediate community, determines the effectiveness of the pathway. Engaging youth in MSME value chains, linked to private sector, wholesale traders appears to be successful approach. MSMEs engaged in value chains, value addition and trade can impact entire communities through leveraging demand for local produce, processing, and sales.

Leveraging farm produce to the standards of supermarkets entails greater focus on quality and food safety standards which hitherto, farmers may not have had to consider. Reaching these standards using farmer field schools may be unrealistic for some foods. Working with the private sector, SMEs and brokers can help absorb market risks and support MSMEs to find markets of appropriate quality standards.

Lengthy travel times discourage engagement of women, IDPs, refugees and PWDs. Training located in urban centres rather than rural centres discourage engagement of women, IDPs, refugees and PWDs.

NRC initiatives have contributed to change ideas and behaviour regarding women's access to the labour market. This may contribute to a long-term behaviour change. Changes were noticed in conservative locations, where women were traditionally kept within the domestic life and are now reaching the labour market.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> Sustainable livelihoods through small business development Basra, Impact Assessment Report, NRC 2020

Trainings will have greatest impact if they reflect sectors relevant to government priorities in the broader economy.<sup>232</sup> Targeting employment through urban job placement fairs for displaced or refugees was not successful.

Repairs to productive infrastructure impact entire communities. Fodder cultivation contributes to increased milk productivity in quantity and quality. Pastures are productive assets and can be improved to improve food and nutrition security.

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<sup>232</sup> KII NRC Iraq 14.06.2023 TL AC

# 7: Recommendations:

1. The Government of Iraq's economic focus, in addition to the oil sector, is agriculture and construction. Construction is a growth sector in urban areas. Liaise with large construction companies and identify minimum vocational training requirements.
2. NRC has not specifically targeted construction or oil sectors, despite both being significant source of employment. Provision of training courses in construction skills and labour skills in the oil sector might strengthen employment opportunities. This study did not look at oil but NRC could also consider if oil offers unskilled labour opportunities.
3. Rural populations in Iraq depend on small-scale agriculture. Strengthen sustainable smallholder agricultural productivity and climate smart agriculture for improved food security and nutrition. Restore degraded agricultural land and facilitate higher productivity of water resources in agriculture.
4. NRC should continue to expand and strengthen access to productive assets. Repairs to productive infrastructure impact on entire communities. Expand and strengthen access to productive assets. In the context of climate change, such interventions have a sustained impact. Rehabilitation of infrastructure provides temporary employment. Pave earth irrigation canals rather than cleaning them. In addition to increasing production, incomes and food security, water infrastructure reduces water conflicts among farmers.
5. Continue to target and facilitate youth entrepreneurs in agri-food value chain systems. facilitating processing and marketing of local produce. Leveraging farm produce to food quality standards required by supermarkets entails greater focus on quality and food safety, which may be unrealistic if dependent on farmer field schools. Allow MSMES and brokers to absorb market risks. Consider piloting contract farming to help increase quality of production.
6. Digital financial inclusion may increasingly play a role in the MSME sector.
7. Focus on projects which benefit and reflect the broader economy and engage the broader community rather than individual interests.
8. Support improved livestock management practices via support for Pastoral Field Schools., pasture rehabilitation, forage reseeding, haymaking, and surface flood water harvesting infrastructure. increased fodder cultivation will increase milk productivity in quantity and quality. Facilitate access to veterinary supplies. Healthy livestock survive drought. Small ruminants are resilient to climate hazards.
9. NRC reports have a tendency to focus on beneficiary perceptions rather than actual outcomes.

Reports are positive even if results are not. NRC reporting systems should focus on actual outcomes such as rates of employment among beneficiaries rather than beneficiary perceptions.

10. NRC needs to be more pro-active in ensuring NRC programmes are accessible to women. There is need for more consultation with women to ensure culturally appropriate activities are identified in conservative contexts. There is also need for NRC to review how and why women are excluded and to ensure women are not excluded from future programmes.
11. Farmers need training in Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) to manage cropland, livestock, forests and fisheries and the interlinked challenges of climate change. CSA can reduce vulnerability to drought, pests, diseases and other climate-related risks and shocks; and improve capacity to adapt and grow in the face of longer-term stresses like shortened seasons and erratic weather patterns.<sup>233</sup> CSA is particularly pertinent for food and nutrition security of resource- poor returnees in resource poor remote locations.

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<sup>233</sup> World Bank Climate Smart Agriculture <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/climate-smart-agriculture>



# 5 : Annex 2 Tools

## 5.1 KII with NRC in Country

Begin by asking interviewee about their engagement with the programme and role within NRC with the programme.

### 5.1.1 Relevance

1. What are the **current needs** of displacement affected communities with regards to livelihoods? Should NRC focus on new SMEs? Agriculture Value Addition Rural SMEs Urban SMEs MSME Training Vocational Training Business Training Legal issues Financial Inclusion Other... Other..... Other.....

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| 1. Were NRC livelihood approaches and programme- <b>designs fit for purpose</b> to address the needs of returnees, IDPs and Refugees? How were NRC livelihood projects relevant to needs of Refugees? How were they relevant to IDPs? How were they relevant to Returnees? How were NRC livelihood projects relevant to needs of Remainee, Male/Female communities. Please explain why/how and give examples | R1 |
| <hr/>  |    |
| 2. What factors can <b>explain different achievement rates</b> for groups with different residency status?   | R2 |
| <hr/>  |    |
| 3. Do NRC livelihood programmes continue to <b>remain relevant</b> to needs of Returnees, IDPs and Refugees? Are emergency livelihood activities still appropriate or is rehabilitation a priority?  | R1 |
| <hr/>  |    |
| 4. Are any former livelihood programmes now <b>considered irrelevant/no longer appropriate</b> or unsuitable to the challenges facing Returnees, IDPs or Refugees, Remainees or women? Please explain why/how and give examples  | R4 |
| <hr/>  |    |
| 5. Are there examples of livelihood options being <b>inadequately tailored</b> to challenges facing Returnees, IDPs, and Refugees, Remainees or Women Please explain why/how and give examples   | R4 |
| <hr/>  |    |
| 6. What options were / are appropriate for <b>women &amp; youth?</b> rural and urban contexts? Please describe examples. Recommendations for improvement?  | R7 |

## 5.2 Impact:

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| 7. Did NRC livelihoods activities help them become more self-reliant? What changed as a result of participation in NRC livelihoods projects? Did incomes raise? What else changed?                   |    |
| 8. Did some pathways have greater impact for IDPs, Refugees or Returnees, Remainees or women? Please explain why/how and give examples? Explain why  | R3 |
| 9. Were there any unintended positive or negative consequences of the cash and livelihoods interventions whether directly or indirectly?   | I5 |
| 1. Do returnees, IDPs and refugees, Remainees or women demonstrate increased ability to sustain basic needs including legal, economic or social dimensions? Please explain why/how and give examples | I1 |

## 5.3 Effectiveness:

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| 10. To what extent did programme activities contribute to increased self-reliance of Returnees, IDPs: and Refugees:   | R1 |
| 11. Which livelihoods activities/approaches were most successful for which groups?  | E1 |
| 12. Did all NRC supported livelihoods increase incomes?   |    |
| 13. Are NRC supported livelihoods still effective and generating incomes? If not why not?   | E1 |
| 14. Did livelihood support-needs & outcomes differ according to displacement status? How? Were some programme activities more effective for particular groups? IDPs, Refugees or Returnees? | E5 |
| 15. How should future programmes be adapted to make them more useful for local businesses?  | E3 |
| 16. Were there any gaps in the livelihood portfolios that made programmes less effective for Returnees, IDPs, Refugees, Remainees or women?   | R4 |
| 17. Should NRC add or remove some livelihoods in future projects? Which approaches/activities were least effective?   | E2 |

If incomes did not increase, was it due to programme design error or factors such as?

- Saturated Markets/over-supply of your produce? Tick

- Decline in demand due to lower incomes/shift to subsistence 1 (this might be due to covid, insecurity or other reasons)

- Liquidity shortages? limited access to finance to expand

Can you provide details?

- Production constraints – electricity, water, internet, phone?

- Discrimination, Social cohesion barriers, confiscation of equipment

- Unfair competition? Eg ~~Dominance of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs)?~~

- Other

18. Could you provide comments on the following – did displacement category have any bearing?

#### 19. Wage Employment

- What were the key enabling factors/approaches in NRCs programme that enabled/encouraged beneficiary access to wage employment opportunities?
- Did other programme-design factors help access to wage employment / self-employment?
- Which specific approach/pathway e.g. job placement, transition to employment and vocational skills training contributed the most in securing wage employment opportunities?
- Which would you recommend or not recommend for future projects?

#### 20. Skills Training

- Do skills obtained in skills-training for income generation continue to generate incomes?
- What were the key enabling factors/approaches in NRCs programme that enabled skills training to continue to generate incomes?
- Do vocational training and job placements continue to enable employment opportunities?

#### 21. SME / Business support

- What were the key enabling factors/approaches in NRC programming that enabled business startups/ Self-employment /SMEs to generate incomes?
- Did any other programme-design factors, help ensure SMEs were successful?
- Did SMEs expand IGA/business after receiving NRC support? What types of business?
- To what extent was this due to NRC intervention?
- Have businesses remained profitable? Have they expanded?
- Which elements of the NRC programme were most helpful to success?

#### 22. Agriculture support

- Did farmer production/productivity incomes increase after receiving NRC support?
- Would production and productivity have increased even without the NRC intervention?
- What were the key enabling factors / approaches that enabled increased production?
- Have any particular approaches or activities been uniquely sustainable? Eg elements such as the focus on productivity, infrastructure, conservation, markets, value addition, storage?
- To what extent does NRC work through line ministries or government systems?

23. Were Returnees, Refugees, and IDPs involved designing and guiding activities? Is there evidence of decision making based on M&E findings and surveys from beneficiaries? Is there evidence that their participation improved programme design, and implementation?
24. Were there any negative consequences of participation practices? What are the internal and external barriers to NRC ensuring appropriate participation and how can NRC overcome these?
25. Was NRC engagement with line ministries and government services sufficient?
26. How Did NRC ensure safety, dignity and integrity of project participants? How?
27. What changes should be made to future SME livelihoods programmes to make them effective for present-day Returnees, IDPs, Refugees or Remainees?

## 5.4 Sustainability:

28. What should NRC change in future to ensure long term impact?

29. Which livelihood interventions/pathways continue to be sustainable a year after NRC's exit? S4
30. What are the contributing factors to the livelihood interventions which failed to achieve sustainability after one year? Could these have been avoided? S7
31. What approaches and modalities proved to be most effective in sustaining positive changes? S2
32. What is the capacity and willingness of local government and local community structures to continue supporting the livelihoods participants after the NRC project phase-out from the area?

## 5.5 Coherence

33. What was the level of stakeholder consensus on livelihoods priorities and needs during programme design – with stakeholders, and government and national analyses of livelihoods and needs?

34. How did the programme engage with government line ministries and was this useful?

35. Which NRC partnerships were more useful and why? Government/line departments? Formal private sector? / Informal private sector? Local training institutions? / Apprenticeship schemes with companies? Farmer groups? / Legal registration agencies? Do they continue to be useful?

36. Extent to which partnerships with Government, Civil Society, NGOs, academia, financial service providers and the private sector evolved strategically?

37. Is NRC the appropriate partner (mandate and expertise) to address capacity strengthening livelihoods and self-reliance?

38. Have you **any other recommendations** for future NRC livelihoods projects?  
For Returnees? For IDPS? For Refugees For women? For remainees?

39. Why Is NRC the appropriate partner (mandate and expertise) to address capacity strengthening livelihoods and self-reliance?

Have you any other recommendations for how NRC can assist in the strengthening livelihoods?

Priorities for Agriculture

Priorities for Urban SME

Priorities for Rural SME

Priorities for Youth SME

Priorities for women SME

Priorities for vocational training

Priorities for apprenticeships

Priorities for financial inclusion      Other gaps

1. Were beneficiaries or local stakeholders involved in the project design? Were vulnerable groups consulted or specific Age, Gender or Diversity groups?

2. Are these projects and approaches saleable?

3. What factors (**internal or external**) enhance or inhibit programme impact? How could this be encouraged/discouraged?

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## 5.6 KII with Local Authorities - major, governors, department heads of directorates

Begin interview by asking interviewee about their engagement with the programme; What sort of interaction or engagement did you have with NRC's livelihood programme?

### RELEVANCE

2.

1. Were NRC livelihood projects most relevant to the needs of Refugees, IDPs, Returnees or R1  
Remainee, Male/Female communities. Please explain why/how and give examples
2. Are NRC emergency livelihood activities still appropriate or should they focus on R2  
rehabilitation? How? Are there any other livelihood priorities in this area which we should include next time?
3. Were there examples of livelihood activities being unsuitable to the challenges facing R3  
Returnees, IDPs, Refugees, Remainees or women? Please explain why/how and give examples
4. Did you observe any gaps in NRC livelihood options? Please describe and give examples R3
5. Were programme options appropriate for women & youth? rural/ urban contexts Please R6  
describe and give examples.
6. Were programme options appropriate for rural and urban contexts and challenges? Do you R6  
have any Recommendations regarding rural – urban contexts? Please describe examples
7. Which institutions or category of beneficiary-representatives should NRC include in future 1.  
livelihood project design to ensure programmes remain relevant to context and challenges?
8. What changes should be made to future livelihoods programmes to make them relevant to R2  
the needs of present-day Returnees, IDPs or Refugees?

## Impact: The extent that the programme impacted on outcomes and self-reliance?

9. Did you observe any positive or negative impacts as a result of NRC livelihoods programme either at household, community levels? Can you give examples	I1
10. were livelihoods outcomes affected by external factors? Please explain how and give examples	I2
11. Did you notice any unintended negative impacts? Do you anticipate any long-term impacts? Please describe and give examples	I3
12. Do returnees, IDPs and refugees demonstrate increased ability to sustain basic needs including legal, economic or social dimensions? Please explain why/how and give examples	I1
13. Were there any unintended positive or negative changes directly or indirectly? Such as conflicts among beneficiaries, environmental changes, social and economic networks?	I3

## 5.7 Effectiveness:

14. Which NRC livelihoods activities were most successful for Refugees, Returnees or IDPs or Remeanees? Do success and failures differ by displacement status (IDP, returnee and refugee) Please explain why/how and give examples What about female IDPs, returnees or refugees?	E1
15. Were some livelihood activities more effective for addressing the challenges facing particular <i>groups</i> i.e., IDPs, Refugees, Returnees or remain communities. How and why? Please give examples. What about female IDPs, returnees or refugees or Remeanees?	E1
16. Did different displacement groups have varying levels of livelihood success? How and why? Please give examples. What about female IDPs, returnees or refugees or Remeanees? Please describe and give examples	E1
17. What were the biggest challenges for business development facing IDPs, returnees or refugees or Remeanees and women? Which approaches or activities were least effective or least helpful?	
18. How could future livelihood programmes be adapted to make them more useful for local businesses? How could they be adapted to make them more useful for women?	E3
19. What were the weaknesses in NRC livelihood pathways? Should NRC remove some livelihood interventions in future projects? Which approaches/activities were least effective? Please describe and give examples	E2

20. What were the biggest challenges facing business development and what kind of business development services is more effective now? Please describe and give examples E2

- If incomes did not increase, was it due to programme design error or factors such as?
- Saturated Markets/over-supply of your produce? Tick How could address?
- Decline in demand due to lower incomes/shift to subsistence (this might be due to covid, insecurity or other reasons)
- Liquidity shortages? limited access to finance to expand
- Devaluation and higher costs of production?
- Production constraints – electricity, water, internet, phone?
- Discrimination, Social cohesion barriers, confiscation of equipment
- Unfair markets? Such as Dominance of State-Owned Enterprises?
- Other

21. Were you or local stakeholders, Returnees, Refugees, or IDPs involved in designing project activities? Please describe how and give examples

22. Were there any negative consequences from stakeholder or beneficiary participation in project design? Please describe and give examples

## 5.8 Sustainability:

23. Do any NRC livelihood interventions continue to have a sustained impact? Do any livelihood interventions still exist? Why are they sustainable? Please give examples. S  
4

24. How could NRC make future livelihood projects more sustainable?

25. Were there other contributing factors which resulted in unsustainable livelihood outcomes? Could changes to programme design have averted such failures? S  
7

23. What approaches and modalities are most effective in sustaining positive changes? S  
2

24. Is there capacity and willingness of local government or community structures to continue supporting the livelihoods participants after the NRC depart? C3



## 5.9 Coherence

25. Did NRC programme engage appropriately and strategically with government line ministries C1 and adhere to government policies and priorities? Please describe how and give examples

26. Was there consensus on livelihoods priorities and needs during programme design

27. Did NRC work in harmony with wider humanitarian livelihoods networks, development C2 sector?

28. Were Government, Civil Society, NGOs, academia, financial service providers and the private sector strategically involved?

29. Have you any other recommendations for future NRC livelihoods projects?

For Returnees?

For IDPS?

For Refugees

For women? For remainees?

30. What is the capacity and willingness of local government and local community structures to continue supporting the livelihoods participants after the NRC project phase-out from the area?

31. Is NRC the appropriate partner (mandate and expertise) to address capacity strengthening livelihoods and self-reliance?

Have you any other recommendations for how NRC can assist in the strengthening livelihoods?

Priorities for Agriculture

Priorities for Urban SME

Priorities for Rural SME

Priorities for Youth SME

Priorities for women SME

Priorities for vocational training

Priorities for apprenticeships

Priorities for financial inclusion

Other gaps

## 5.10 FGD Wage Employment

2. Please briefly describe what livelihoods activities NRC performed with you

3. What are the current needs of displacement affected communities with regards to livelihoods? Should NRC focus on new SMEs? Agriculture Value Addition Rural SMEs Urban SMEs MSME Training Vocational Training Business Training Legal issues Financial Inclusion Other..... Other..... Other.....

## 5.11 Relevance:

4. Did the livelihood challenges facing Returnees, IDPs, Refugees or Remainers vary? Please explain how and give examples.

5. How did Returnee challenges differ from IDPs & Refugees Remainer challenges?

6. Were some livelihood activities more suitable and effective to remain community but less suitable to Returnees, IDPs or Refugees? How and why? Please describe and give examples

7. Were some livelihood activities more relevant and effective or less relevant/effective to women, youth, PWD, rural/ urban contexts? How and why? Please describe and give examples

8. Were there any gaps or weaknesses in the livelihood options and activities? Any recommendations to address them?

### Impact: Extent that the programme impacted on outcomes and self-reliance

9. Were your livelihoods more successful after receiving NRC support? How and why?/Why not? Please describe and give examples

10. What changed as a result of your participation in NRC livelihoods project? Did your income raise? What else changed? Please describe and give examples.

11. What aspects of the project could have been done differently to achieve a better impact? How could NRC do better next time with other returnees?

12. Have any positive or negative long-term effects on your legal, economic, social situation, or the local environment because of project activities? (Directly indirectly, intended/unintended. Please describe / Give examples

## Effectiveness: Extent that programme contribute to increased self-reliance

13. Are former NRC livelihood projects still fit for purpose to address the needs of displacement affected groups?
14. Are the net benefits of the NRC's intervention continuing?
15. Are you still engaged in wage employment? If not why not?
16. Do livelihood success and failures differ by displacement status (IDP, returnee and refugee) Were some programme activities more effective for particular *groups* i.e., IDPs, Refugees or Returnees? Eg to addressing the context and challenges facing Returnees, IDPs or Refugees? How? Please explain and give examples
17. Which specific approaches e.g. job placement, transition to employment, vocational skills training contributed the most in securing wage employment opportunities? Please explain why and give examples and why?
18. Do vocational training and job placements continue to enable employment opportunities now? Have the skills remained useful and appropriate for employment? Are the skills you learnt still in demand from employers / businesses?
19. Did NRC help remove any barriers (eg administrative / legal) to wage employment opportunities? Please describe and give examples
20. What kind of business development services would be more effective for you now?
21. Did NRC ensure safety, dignity and integrity of project participants? How?
22. Were beneficiaries involved in designing project activities? How? Did it improve the project?
23. Were there any negative consequences of participation practices? Please give examples
24. What changes should be made to future livelihoods projects to make them better for present-day Returnees, IDPs or Refugees?
25. Should NRC be working with both formal and informal private sector companies? Why?

## 5.12 Sustainability:

26. What livelihoods approaches or modalities were most effective in sustaining positive livelihood changes? Why were some livelihood projects more sustainable than others?
27. What were the challenges or contributing factors that limited the sustainability of the supported wage employment?
28. What should NRC do in future to ensure longer term impact?

## 5.13 Coherence

29. Did NRC programme engage with the private sector companies, other agencies or line departments and during implementation? Did this have any beneficial impact for you?

30. Is there capacity and willingness of local companies, local government or community structures to continue supporting the livelihoods participants after the NRC depart?

31. Were beneficiaries or local stakeholders involved in the design of NRC livelihoods project? Were any vulnerable groups consulted? Women/PWD/youth. How were they consulted?

## 5.14 FGD FARMERS

1. Please briefly describe what livelihoods activities NRC performed with you.

2. What are the current needs of displacement affected communities with regards to livelihoods? Should NRC focus on new SMEs? Agriculture Value Addition Rural SMEs Urban SMEs MSME Training Vocational Training Business Training Legal Issues Financial Inclusion Other... Other..... Other.....

## 5.15 Relevance:

3. Do the challenges facing Returnees, IDPs, Refugees or Remainer farmers effect their agriculture? Please explain how. Were agricultural interventions appropriately adapted to their challenges? Please explain how. R1

4. How did your specific agricultural context and challenges differ from other displacement groups and which activities helped overcome those challenges? R1

5. Were some agricultural activities more suitable to Remain community but less suitable for Returnees, IDPs or Refugees? How and why? Please describe R3

6. Were some agricultural activities more relevant or less relevant to women, Female Headed Households, youth, PWD, rural/ urban contexts? Please explain how and give examples. R6

7. What changes should be made to future agricultural projects to make them more relevant to the needs of Returnees, IDPs or Refugees? R2

## 5.16 Impact:

9.	What was the main impact after receiving NRC support? Was your agriculture more successful after receiving NRC support? How and why?	R1
10.	Did NRC livelihoods activities help you to become more self-reliant Were you better able to meet basic needs? How/why? Please describe how and give examples.	
11.	Did the agri support have any positive or negative long-term effects on your legal, economic, social situation, or the local environment because of project activities? (Directly indirectly, intended/unintended. Please describe / Give examples	R2
11.	What could have been done differently to achieve a better impact?	R3

### Effectiveness: Extent that programme contribute to increased self-reliance

12.	Are former NRC agricultural projects still fit for purpose to address the needs of displacement affected groups?	
13.	Are you still engaged in agriculture? If not why not?	
14.	Did your agricultural production/productivity/incomes increase after receiving support from NRC support? How/why? Please describe how and give examples.	E1
15.	Are agricultural activities more sustainable and resilient to climate change after NRC trainings? Please describe how and give examples.	E4
16.	Which agricultural activities/approaches would be effective for raising incomes/self-reliance e.g., improved seeds varieties, channel clearance, water irrigation, pipe lining, borehole rehabilitation, livestock structures, sustainable agricultural practices)	E1
17.	Were some agricultural activities more effective for particular groups i.e., IDPs, Refugees or Returnees? Eg to addressing the context and challenges facing Returnees, IDPs, Refugees or Remainees? Please describe how and give examples.	E1
18.	Which activities were more useful for particular displacement contexts? productivity, infrastructure, water canals, livestock, boreholes, irrigation, soil conservation, storage?	E4
19.	Was NRC engagement with line ministries and government extension services useful for IDPs, Refugees, Returnees or Remainees?? How? Please give examples	

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20. Did NRC ensure safety, dignity and integrity of project participants? How?

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21. Were there any gaps or weaknesses in the agricultural options and activities?

E2

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22. What changes should be made to future agricultural programmes to make them effective for present-day Returnees, IDPs, Refugees or Remainees

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23. Would your agriculture have increased even without NRC's intervention

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## 5.17 Sustainability:

24. Are the net benefits of the NRC's agricultural intervention continuing? Do the techniques provided by NRC continue to generate incomes or increased productive capacity of farmers?

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25. Why were some livelihood projects more sustainable than others?

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26. What should NRC change in future, to increase sustainability and longer-term impact?

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27. What are the contributing factors of the intervention which failed to achieve sustainability?

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28. Are stakeholders, farmer groups, and community structures that the project worked with willing and capable of continuing project activities? Recommendations

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## 5.18 Coherence

29. Did NRC programme engage with agricultural line departments? How? Will this have any beneficial impact in terms of your continued access to extension training?

C1

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30. Is there capacity and willingness of local government or community structures to continue supporting the livelihoods participants after NRC depart?

C3

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31. Were local stakeholders, Returnees, Refugees, or IDPs involved in designing project activities? Or in monitoring activities. Did it help improve projects?

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32. Were beneficiaries or local stakeholders involved in the design of NRC livelihoods project? Were vulnerable groups consulted or specific Age, Gender or Diversity groups?

Do you have Any other recommendations for how NRC should do to assist livelihoods in future?

Thank you so much for your time. Your answers will help NRC make more useful livelihoods programmes in Iraq

**Refugee / IDP / Returnee Men / Remainee / women Participants information:**

## 5.19 FGD SME

1. Please briefly describe what livelihoods activities NRC performed

2. What are the current needs of displacement affected communities with regards to livelihoods? Should NRC focus on new SMEs? Agriculture Value Addition Rural SMEs Urban SMEs MSME Training Vocational Training Business Training Legal issues Financial Inclusion Other..... Other..... Other.....

## 5.20 Relevance:

3. Describe How NRC SME support activities were relevant to the challenges faced by displacement affected communities

4. Did Returnees, IDPs, Refugees, Remainee and women face different SME challenges and what SME project activities helped overcome those challenges? (delete)

5. Were some SME activities more relevant to women, youth, PWD, rural/ urban contexts? Please describe and give examples

6. Were there any gaps or weaknesses in the SME livelihood options or activities? Please describe and give examples

7. Were Returnees, Refugees, and IDPs involved or local stakeholders involved in the design of NRC SME project? Were vulnerable groups such as women, elders, youth, PWD, Bedouins? Please describe and give examples

## 5.21 Impact

8. What was the main impact after receiving NRC support? Were your livelihoods more successful after receiving NRC support? How and why? Please describe and give examples
9. Did NRC livelihoods activities help them become more self-reliant? What changed as a result of your participation in NRC livelihoods project? Did your SME income raise? What else changed? Please describe and give examples
10. Did the SME support increase your ability to sustain basic needs including legal, economic and social dimensions? Please describe and give examples
11. Have any positive or negative long-term effects on your legal, economic, social situation, or the local environment because of project activities? (Directly indirectly, intended/unintended. Please describe / Give examples
12. What could have been done differently to achieve a better impact?

## 5.22 Effectiveness: Extent that programme contribute to increased self-reliance

13. Are former NRC livelihood projects still fit for purpose to address the needs of displacement affected groups?
14. Are the net benefits of the NRC's intervention continuing?
15. Are your SMEs still generating income? If not why not?
16. Would your SME have increased even without NRC's intervention
17. Were some NRC programme activities more/less effective for particular displacement categories? i.e., IDPs, Refugees or Returnees or Remainees, women? Eg to addressing their specific context and challenges? Please describe and give examples
18. Do SME challenges differ by displacement status (IDP, Returnee, Refugee or Remainee or women) How? What were the biggest challenges facing SME business development for IDPs, Refugees, Returnees, Remainees or Women? Please describe the challenges
19. Which types of SMEs continued to expand after receiving NRC support? Was expansion due to NRC intervention or were other factors influential? Which elements of



the NRC programme were most helpful for SME success? Please describe and give examples

20. Did NRC help remove any barriers (eg administrative / legal) to help SMEs?

21. What kind of business development services would be helpful now? Please describe and give examples

22. Did NRC ensure safety, dignity and integrity of project participants? How? Please describe and give examples

23. Were Returnees, Refugees, and IDPs consulted during project implementation? How? Did it help improve projects? Please describe and give examples

24. Were there any negative consequences of participation practices? Please give examples

25. What changes should be made to future SME livelihoods programmes to make them effective for present-day Returnees, IDPs, Refugees or Remainees?

## 5.23 Sustainability:

26. Do SMEs continue to generate incomes after NRC exit? Is this related to NRC's support? Please describe and give examples S1

27. What should NRC change in future to ensure long term impact? S3

28. What are the contributing factors of SME interventions which failed to achieve sustainability? S5

29. Why were some SME activities more sustainable than others? Describe and give examples S5

## 5.24 Coherence

30. Did NRC programme engage with line departments and the private sector during implementation? Will this have any beneficial impact for you? C1

31. Is there capacity and willingness of local government or community structures to continue supporting the livelihoods participants after the NRC depart? C3

## 5.25 Mini Survey

Did your NRC-assisted livelihood expand during the NRC project?

Would your livelihood have expanded even without NRC assistance?

Following NRC's exit, does it still generate income?

Do you continue to utilise skills learnt from NRC to generate income?

Other related changes resulting from NRC intervention

How? More Sales	Higher income / profit	Number of employees before NRC (including you)	Number of employees during NRC project (including you)	I diversified production / sales	I opened a bank account	NRC helped ascertain Legal Docs for business registration, land, ID	I developed stronger social networks	Environme ntally Sustainabl e
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