



SWEDO

THE SWEDISH DEVELOPMENT AID ORGANIZATION - SINCE 1991



2021
ANNUAL REPORT





SINCE 1991

SWEDO The Swedish Development Aid Organization is a not-for-profit, non-governmental, non-political, and non-religious humanitarian aid organization that was founded in 1991 in Stockholm, Sweden.

COVER PHOTO

Roseem is a young Syrian refugee enrolled as a Youth Volunteer in SWEDO's Community Outreach Programme in Iraq's Erbil. Underlined the power of inclusion in this year's activities, reflected in the themes of sports, education and health. Roseem, and more than 800 Persons of Concern joined to commemorate the World Refugee Day in June 2021.

For inquiries regarding the report, contact
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Acronyms

Caritas	Caritas Czech Republic
CAU	Cooperative Administrative Units
CBI	Cash Based Intervention
CBP	Community Based Protection
CBT	Cash Based Transfer
CFFM	Child-Friendly Feedback Mechanism
COOPs	Cooperatives
COVs	Community Outreach Volunteers
CRI	Core Relief Items
DCM	Data Capturing Module
DPP	Data Protection Policy
DSY	Digital Safety for Youth
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Organization
EIIP	Employment Intensive Investment Programme
EPCA	Emergency Protection Cash Assistance
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FHH	Female Headed Households
FHoH	Female Head of Household
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HLP	Housing, Land and Property
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFP	Information Feedback Point
ILO	International Labor Organization
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
IT	Information Technology
KI	Key Informant
KMP	Knowledge Management Platform
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoLSA	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPCA	Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance
MTC	Mechanization and Training Centers
NFI	Non Food Item
NGOs	Non Governmental Organization
NPC	National Protection Cluster
NUNGO	National Union for Palestinians
PARC	Protection Assistance and Reintegration Centre
PDS	Public Distribution System
PMS	Protection Monitoring System
PoCs	Person of Concern
PSEA	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
PwSN	Persons with Specific Needs
RPM	Remote Protection Monitoring Tool
SCM	Supply Chain Management
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SEVAT	Social and Economic Vulnerability Assessment
SRTF	Syria Recovery Trust Fund
ToT	Training of Trainers
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VTC	Vocational and Training Center
WFP	World Food Programme
WGSS	Women and Girl Safe Spaces
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation

Management Review & Outlook

During 2021, SWEDO has worked intensively to implement all the commitments the organization has had, to support, help and protect over 1 million refugees and IDPs in the Middle East.

SWEDO's team has worked intensively and under difficult pandemic rules but have nevertheless been able to implement what the organization has undertaken to do together with our partners and donors.

During the year, SWEDO updated its governance and strategy documents and began working with the consensus method to adopt a new directional and organizational goal expected to reflect halfway through the subsequent year.

In our surrounding world, an aid debate has taken place during the year, about how much resources should be set aside for aid. SWEDO has taken part in and influenced this debate through its network organizations: Concord and ForumCiv, of which we are members, all to ensure that Sweden's and the EU's aid is effective and reaches those who need it most.

SWEDO's development cooperation increased this year, through cooperation with, and among others; ForumCiv, ILO, WFP, UNFPA, UNHCR, SecDev foundation and SRTF. SWEDO is a leading partner with UNHCR in the protection cluster, and provides legal aid, cash assistance and protection services to those who are vulnerable to access safety and secure existence. SWEDO's activities include community outreach projects to support communities' resilience and awareness. SWEDO works safely and intensively with disseminating information and education on gender-based violence (GBV) to prevent violence that is based on gender. SWEDO's partnership with ILO and the UN agencies is about what we

provide in terms of sustainability and long-term impact projects. SWEDO has vocational training projects in the agricultural sector in Iraq to support local resilience. Our projects support small businesses in the agricultural and food sector. SWEDO works on democracy development projects in Palestine and Jordan. Our projects are diverse and depending on each country's context and needs. SWEDO's projects also include construction of mechanization centers to provide the required training in machines' operations and maintenance for agricultural cooperatives in addition to management training for cooperative heads and training of administrative staff for cooperatives.

SWEDO has also had projects on digital security and the use of secure online education and social platforms in collaboration with the Canadian organization SecDev in Jordan.

SWEDO is what we all make it to be in cooperation to strive for peace, democracy, security and equality for all.

SWEDO's board of directors appreciates and would like to thank all staff for all their efforts during the year for people in need in the Middle East. We all look forward for a peaceful coming year.

On behalf of SWEDO board of directors

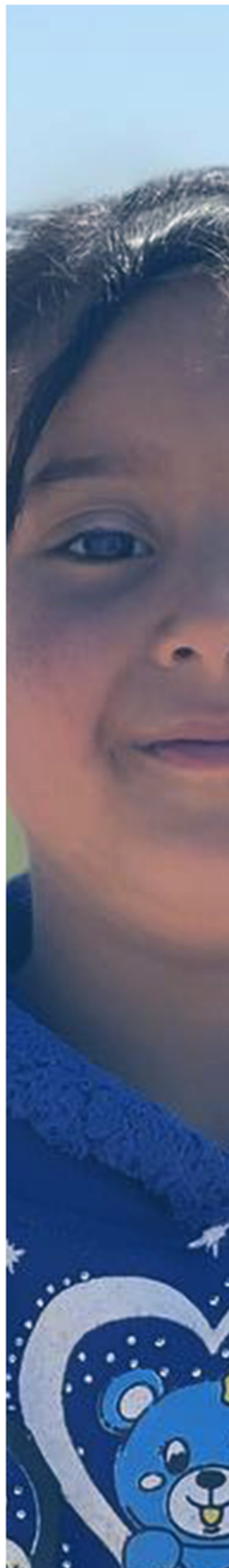
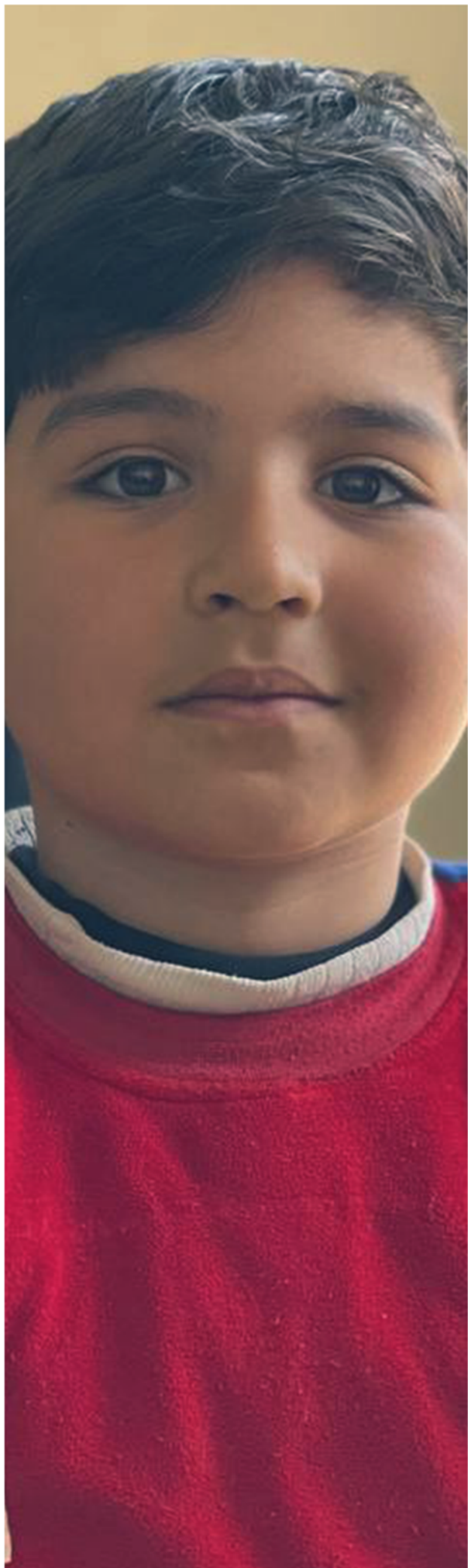


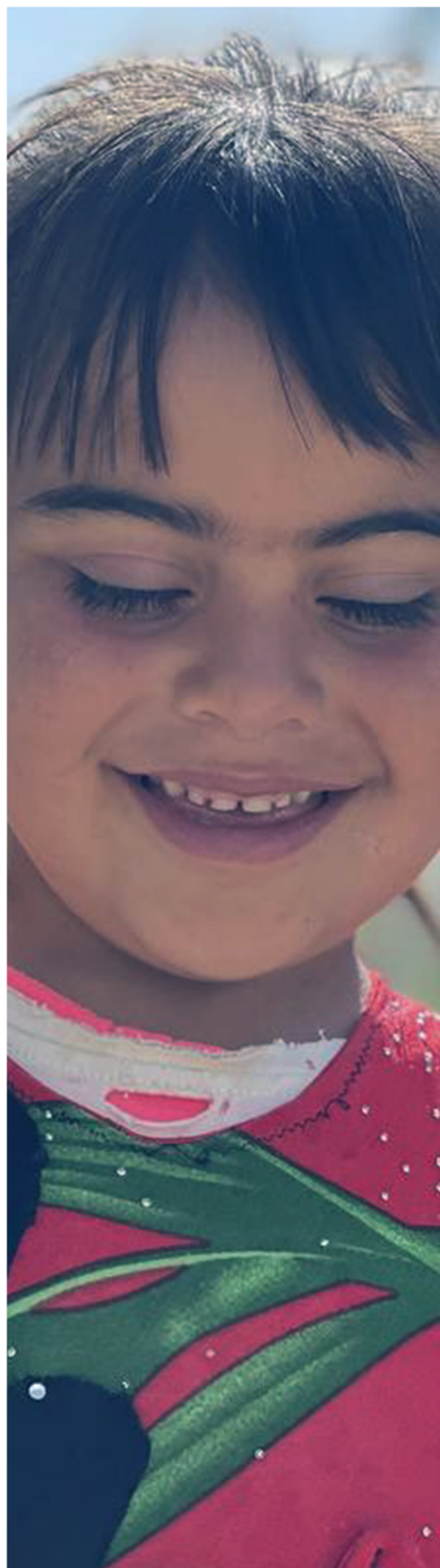
Carina Eriksson
President

Faces of the wind...

Abdulrahman, 7, was not able to get enrolled in school as he lacked necessary civil documents. He approached our teams to gain access to Education, May 2021, Ninewa, Iraq.







1991

30 YEARS

Founded in Sweden

1999



Construction of shelter and WASH facilities in remote areas of Iraq

2005



Healthcare in Remote Areas of Iraqi Kurdistan

2014



Cash Assistance in response to the Syrian refugee Crisis in Iraq

2016



Protection and Legal Assistance for IDPs in Iraq

2018



Livelihoods and post-conflict recovery aid in Syria

2020



On the ground during the COVID-19 Pandemic, and expanding into southern Iraq through Livelihoods Programme.

2021



Socio-economic pre-study in Ramallah, Palestine.



HIGHLIGHTS

YEAR IN REVIEW | SWEDO



**ELEVEN OFFICES
FOUR COUNTRIES**



**379
EMPLOYEES**



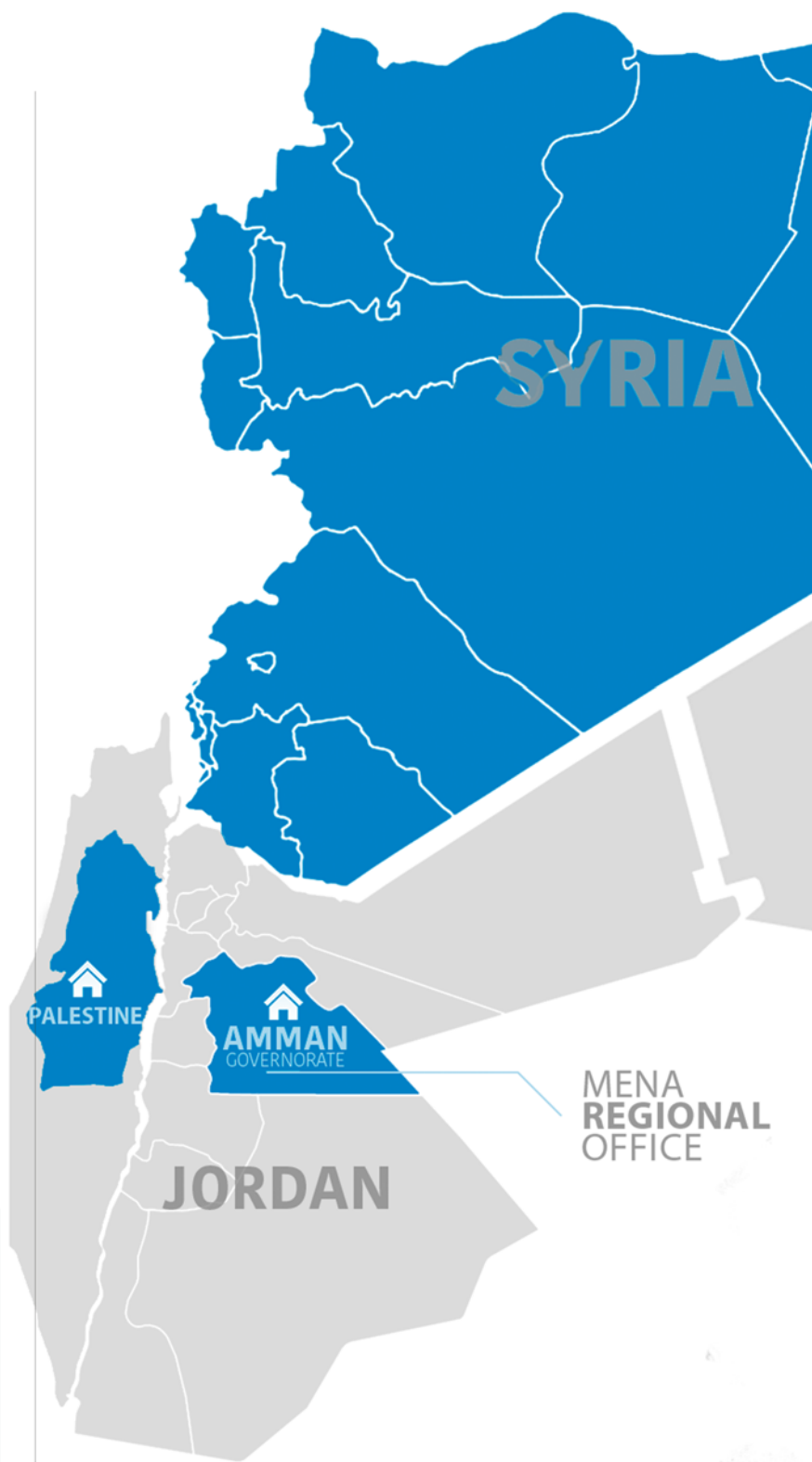
**Eight
FUNDING SOURCES**



1,264,382
Total Aid Provision

AGD		
Female	Unknown	Male
8743	609339	9226
93830	0-5	94399
179782	6-17	252383
10028	18-59	11442
	60+	

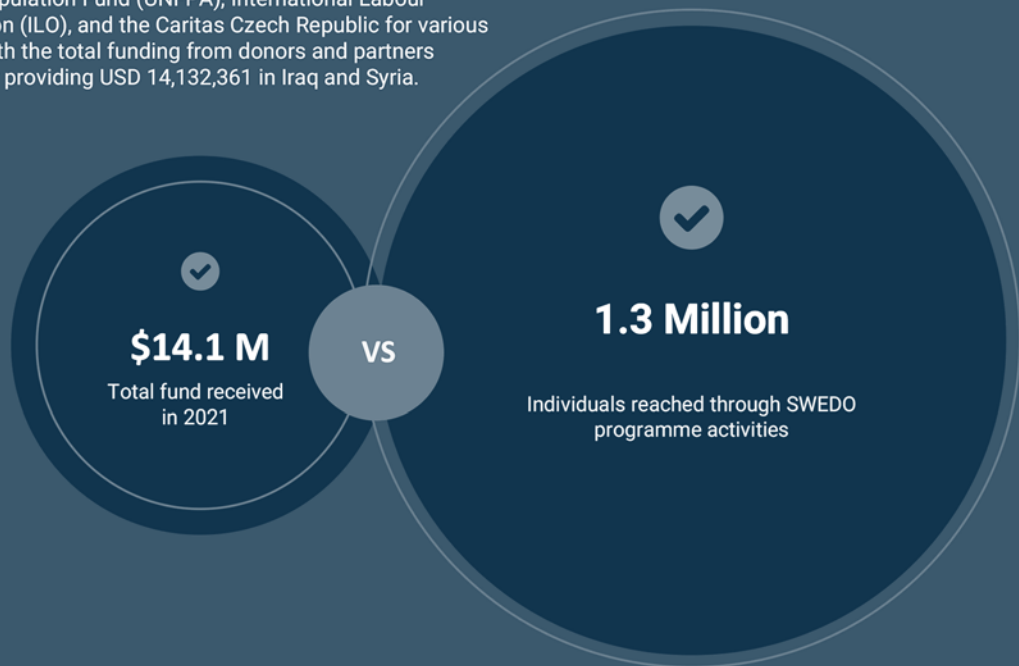
Service Provided	
General Protection	1160740
Education	64838
Shelter/NFI	30922
Livelihood/resilience	12135
PROSPECTS/ILO	512





2021 Funds

With donors and UN partners across Iraq, Syria, Jordan and Palestine were various, most prominently; the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Iraq and Syria provided the largest share of funding, responsible for USD 7,075,243. SWEDO also received substantial support and strengthened partnership with World Food Program (WFP) reaching five field level agreements to the equivalent of USD 3,732,429. Funding of the Syrian Relief Trust Fund (SRTF) reached USD 2,895,752. SWEDO also partnered with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Caritas Czech Republic for various projects with the total funding from donors and partners collectively providing USD 14,132,361 in Iraq and Syria.



Total Beneficiaries Reached

2021 AGE & GENDER DIVERSITY

55%

SWEDO has reached out to its beneficiaries through more than 1 million individual assistance deliveries and outreach of whom 55% were male.



VS

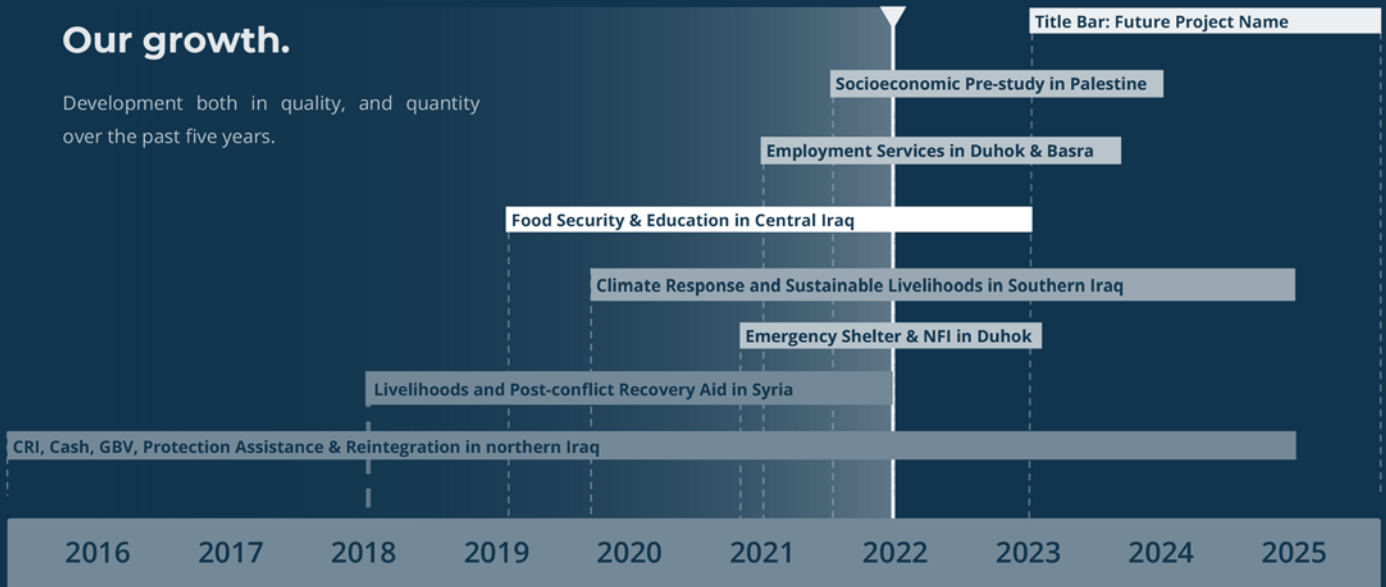


45%

And 45% were female. Our work demonstrates the versatility of the communities reached while highlighting the gender equality aspect as a priority to ensure in SWEDO's work.

Our growth.

Development both in quality, and quantity over the past five years.



Duty of Care

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, SWEDO has had a major focus on the safety, health and wellbeing of its employees and those we help with adjusted procedures and mitigation measures to address the new risks. Awarded the ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System for our efforts in ensuring the highest standards of humanitarian and development aid implementations, which includes: the development of contingency plans; promoting COVID-19 vaccinations for both staff and persons of concerns across urban locations, camps in Dohuk, Erbil, and Thi Qar Governorates and the dissemination of information about COVID-19 and vaccination. In Erbil, The Protection Assistance and Reintegration Center (PARC), offers a variety of services and SWEDO ensures the center is well ventilated and disinfected regularly.

In 2021, SWEDO reviewed HR and health, safety and security standards and procedures; made adjustments to medical criteria; and reviewed insurance packages, medical evacuation plans and medical services. SWEDO updated health guidelines, and ensured information is provided to staff including social distancing, mask usage, regular disinfection and touchless attendance. Duty of care will continue to be at the center of SWEDO's work in 2022, with an even greater focus on employee health and wellbeing.



SWEDO



Human Resources, Finance & Procurement

SWEDO’s financial, procurement, and human resources internal processes are driven by key principles that are embedded in the organization’s financial regulations based on ethical considerations, best value for money, fairness, integrity, transparency, and effective international competition. These processes are managed via Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) along with Digital Archiving System to meet the requirements of donors, partners, and governmental requirements for the document storage rules and regulations. SWEDO complied to numerous project audits, verification visits, and organizational assessments conducted by donors and partners such as UNHCR, UNFPA, WFP, ECHO and external auditors.

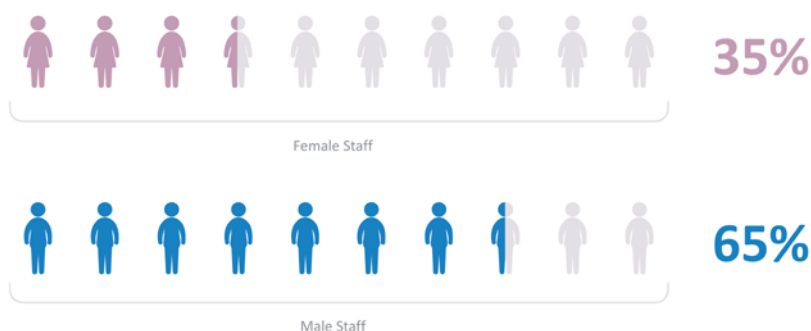
SWEDO’s HR department manages SWEDO employees and related activities with respect to the three pillars of the human resources strategy: attracting talent, retaining talent, and fostering an enabling working environment.

Talented employees with special needs were hired with plans for further hires in 2022. SWEDO organization was among the torchbearers in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) to hire female drivers in Erbil with other NGOs following suite. As of 31 December 2021, the total number of SWEDO staff members was 351 and 300 volunteers across Iraq.

Women were hired and trained at SWEDO in an attempt to improve gender parity. Efforts continue through career counseling and mentorship to build the capacities of female staff members to prepare them for higher-level managerial positions.

Human Resources

SWEDO Personnel



2021 AGE & GENDER DIVERSITY

SWEDO’s commitments to ensure that all of the work includes an explicit focus on gender equality and women’s empowerment, not only through its program activities, but also within its teams and role divisions. In 2021, 34% of SWEDO personnel consisted of female professionals. Women’s labour force participation in Iraq is low: as of 2018, only 12.3% of women of working age in Iraq were either employed or looking for work (Source: REACH: Assessment on Employment and Working Conditions).

Performance management is essential to building a workforce of excellence, which is required to achieve the ambitious goals set out by the organization. Orientations including but not limited to; protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) sessions and complaint feedback mechanisms sessions were conducted for staff. Effective performance management is based on a strong performance culture and a healthy workplace ecosystem, supported by individual and management capability and accountability. These initiatives are focused on developing competencies, preparing staff members to undertake higher-level responsibilities, and ensuring that the right attitudes and mindsets are in place to ensure optimal performance. SWEDO's human resource and administration department complies with local labor laws and established internal policies and procedures, enhancing the implementation of effective workforce management and employee development.

In accordance with Swedish laws and regulations, SWEDO exercises professional skepticism and maintains professional skepticism and transparency regarding financial, procurement, and human resources internal processing.

Finance

Extensive engagement and consultation with funding partners and donors enabled SWEDO's continued services through the efficient safeguarding and management of donor funds entrusted to it. Central to this goal was SWEDO's secure financial management and control structure used to maintain financial integrity and transparency. The finance department is managed by the head of finance based in Sweden whom is also responsible for the financial bookkeeping for the Jordan and Palestine offices and the finance director based in Iraq leading a team for implementation of risk assessment and frameworks for compliance and safeguarding, and internal audit activity, all regulated through structured standard operating procedures.



Women Drivers: SWEDO does not only believe in gender mainstreaming and equal opportunities for all, but also acts accordingly. SWEDO celebrates the addition of two female staff members to its fleet department. SWEDO had over 40 drivers of which none were women. In 2021, we broke the all-male occupancy and welcomed two female drivers joining our team.

In 2021, The use and integration of the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution to supply chain management (SCM) automated the process and achieved optimal operational efficiency and increased performance. Procurement processes are governed by SWEDO's procurement manual containing essential information and brief step-by-step procedures for procurement. The manual provides guidance of procurement and contractual actions in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, standards and sound business practices. We provide fairness, transparency and integrity of practices and outcomes, to secure the best interest of SWEDO and its partners/ granting agencies.

Procurement & Supply Chain

Information and communication play an increasingly important and sophisticated role in humanitarian-service activities involving organizational learning, assessment, and capacity development. This role is impacted by important trends and environments within which the humanitarian sector operates. These include a shift of focus from providing direct aid to capacity building, empowerment, and sustainable development; a shift in project focus from technical solutions to broader strategic planning; and increased emphasis on demonstrating effectiveness, improving efficiency, and collaborating with other organizations.

Knowledge Management

In 2021, SWEDO shifted towards utilizing more efficient information technologies by launching its Knowledge Management Platform (KMP), which enabled staff customized access to a diverse range of up-to-date information, including live dashboards and file spaces demonstrating the status and procedures of finance and budget tracking, procurement, human resources, program activities, training and learning, key performance indicators, travel and security, as well as reporting and communications libraries.

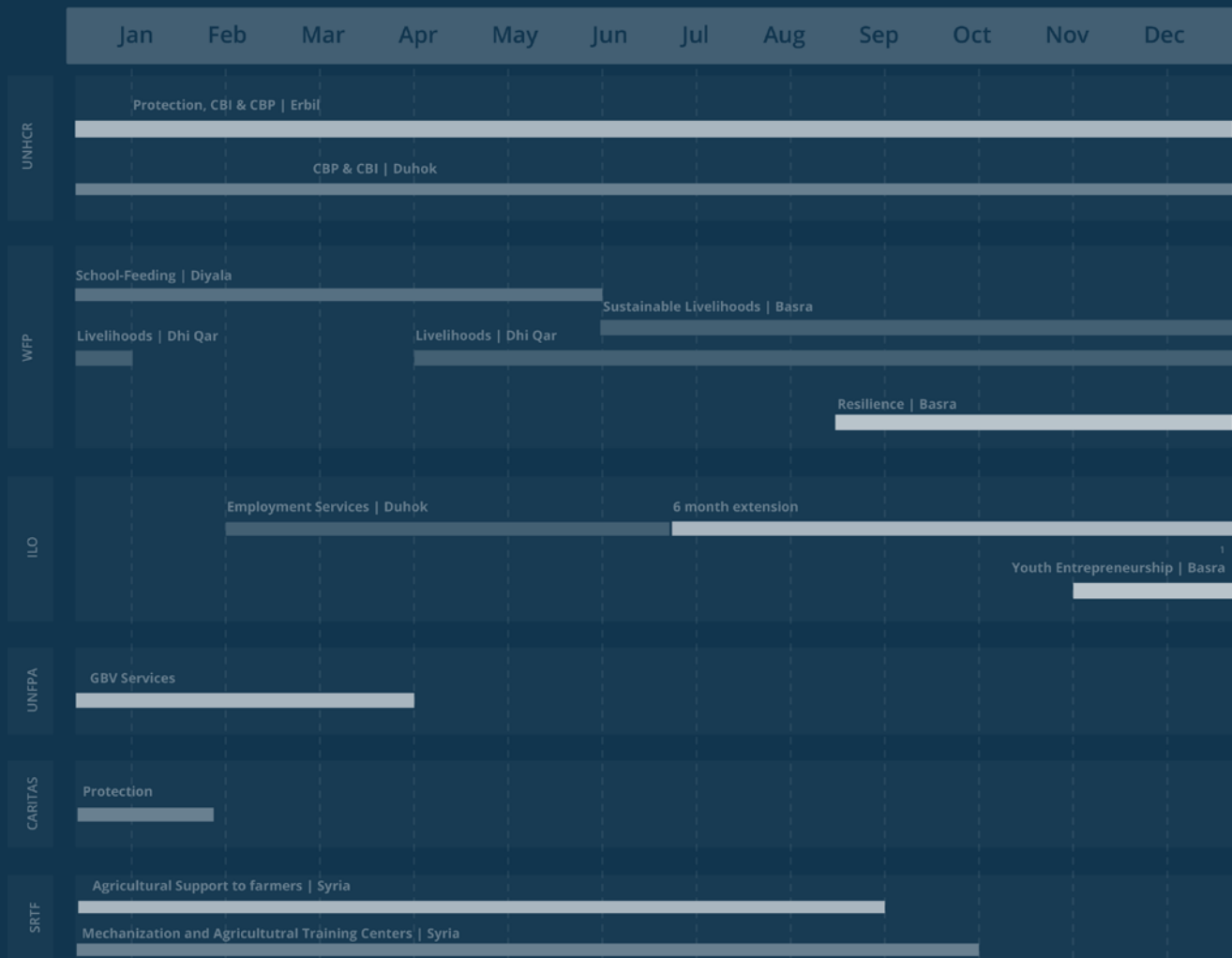
In pursuit of aligning with the data protection policies of UN partners such as UNHCR, WFP and UNFPA, SWEDO stepped forward in developing a data protection policy (DPP) protecting the rights of data subjects including IDP, host community and refugees. Protecting an individual's personal data is a vital part of protecting their integrity and dignity, illustrating the importance of data security and protection principles that protect the interest and lives of persons of concern. The data protection policy ensures precise measures to harmonize the data collection, information management and quality assurance approaches throughout all SWEDO offices which are intended to ensure that personal data are kept secure and are protected against misuse and unauthorized access.



The KMP is defined as a space dedicated to everything SWEDO in one place. The flexibility offered in its features allows for active participation from everyone in its development, and consistent information sharing. Regular backups on safe and secure internal servers allow the organization to practice proper archiving mechanisms, making today's experience available for tomorrow's use.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

2021 kick-off



Protection

Project Goals & Achievements

We believe that humanitarian protection is about improving safety, well-being and dignity for crisis-affected populations. With the aim of protecting those who went through war and crossed borders to access safety and a secure existence, SWEDO provides protection assistance to respond to the needs of Syrian and non-Syrian refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Iraq living in camp and non-camp environments.

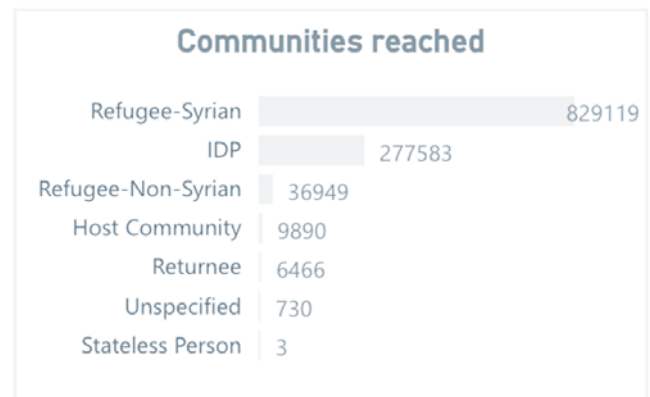
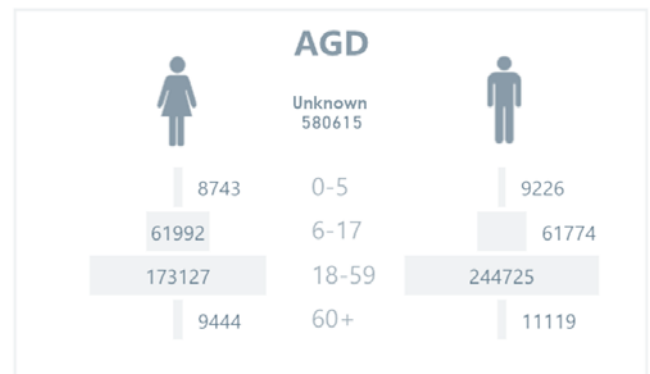
As UNHCR’s leading protection partner in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, a significant part of SWEDO’s protection activities are conducted and coordinated at Erbil’s Protection, Assistance, and Reintegration Centre (PARC). By 2020, the center became a “one stop-shop” for the provision of registration, legal aid, helpline for cash assistance, and protection assistance to Persons of Concern (PoCs). SWEDO has led community-based approaches in Duhok and Erbil governorates through its community outreach projects. The protection project aims chiefly to create an improved protection environment.

The main activities include protection monitoring, legal assistance, complaints and feedback, and community-based protection to support communities’ resilience and awareness. The purpose of these activities is to mitigate the risks caused by IDPs and refugees’ lack of capacity to overcome challenges faced during displacement. These hardships increase the likelihood of PoCs resorting to harmful coping mechanisms, fall into secondary displacement, or return to camps which is not sustainable, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2021, SWEDO extended its existing partnership with UNFPA to implement a project aiming to strengthen gender equality and youth sector response in addressing the humanitarian needs of IDPs and refugees while recognizing the capacity building needs across Duhok, Diyala, and Erbil governorates. Furthermore, in a collaboration with CARITAS, SWEDO implemented a comprehensive social and economic vulnerability assessment in Duhok Governorate, targeting Iraqi displaced communities who survived conflict with ISIL.



1,155,898
Total Aid Provision



Protection Monitoring

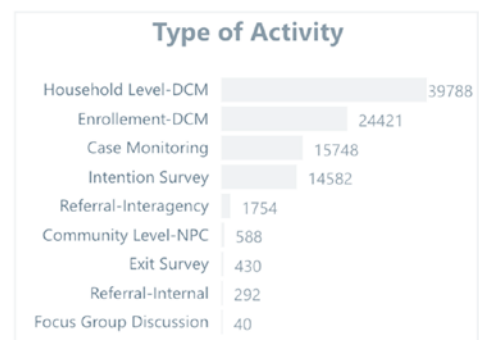
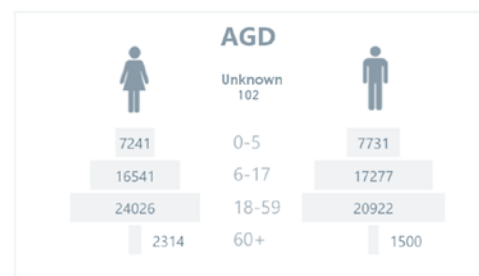
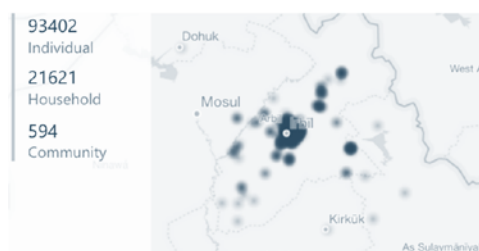
According to the Humanitarian Needs Overview published in February 2021, more than 590,000 IDPs and more than 1.7 million returnees require specialized protection services in Iraq. While Iraq continues to recover from years of conflict, thousands of vulnerable families across the country remain displaced in Duhok and Erbil governorates and in acute need of protection and assistance. According to the UNHCR Data Portal, a quarter of a million of Syrian refugees and at least 40 thousand refugees of other nationalities reside across Iraq. IDPs in and out of camps continue to report that they lack civil documentation, including birth certificates, and rely on negative coping strategies to meet basic needs. The latest intentions survey for in-camp and out-of-camp IDP showed that the great majority of the surveyed IDPs expect to remain displaced in the short term, which directly reflects the conditions and perceived conditions in the areas of origin/return like lack of livelihood opportunities, financial inability to return and inability to reconstruct damaged houses or sustain payments of rent, lack of rehabilitation activities, and absence of security actors.

During years of a post-conflict era in Iraq and the global pandemic, protection remains one of the top overarching humanitarian priorities. Means of safety and essential services like food and shelter, and health are among pressing issues that need urgent consideration.

As a vital protection actor, SWEDO’s protection teams have been operating in Erbil Governorate across urban, suburban, camp, and informal settlements, and the east-Ninewa camps. The activities such as protection monitoring (household visits), case monitoring, referrals, exit interviews for departed families, and intention surveys for camp residents have enabled SWEDO to identify vulnerable individuals among the IDP and refugee communities. Protection teams carried on with capturing and addressing the existing gaps through household-level assessments to address issues affecting safety, dignity, and rights of IDPs and refugees, particularly children, elderly, and female heads of household.

Through its specialized protection monitoring tools, SWEDO conducted household-level assessments. The targeted populations were mainly internally displaced Iraqis, Syrian refugees, and non-Syrian refugees. The assessments were conducted through digitalized questionnaires on hand-held tablets directly by visiting the field using UNHCR’s Data Capturing Module (DCM). With the emergence of movement restrictions in 2020, SWEDO was the first organization who shifted to a community-level approach by utilizing an internally developed, online questionnaire; the Remote Protection Monitoring tool (RPM), where information was collected from the Key Informants (KI) of the community and other organizations. The modality later influenced the National Protection Cluster (NPC) to create a similar tool; the Protection Monitoring System (PMS), used by all protection partners across Iraq.

Activity Description



The collected information was verified and analyzed on weekly, monthly, and quarterly bases and presented to UNHCR in the form of regular analytical protection reports, which identified key protection risks, gaps, and emerging trends in a given location resulting in the identification of vulnerabilities induced by various actors, including but not limited to COVID-19 movement restrictions, flash floods, and overall economic downfall. Additionally, the Protection Team identified and referred vulnerable individuals to a network of specialized service providers and partners through referral pathways.

Through an area-based approach for 6 IDP camps 4 refugee camps, urban areas as well as non-Syrian settlements, SWEDO engaged in protection monitoring, and mobile outreach providing quality counseling, interviews and referrals for identified cases at risk. Applying an area-based approach increased predictability, reliability and accountability in the services provided.

SWEDO also monitored the situation on the ground and gathered information through interviews and/or focus group discussions (FGDs) to understand the trends of population movements, emerging protection issues and risks, and vulnerable PoCs.



On the way to school, IDP children residing in Hasansham U2 Camp, November 2021, Ninewa, Iraq

The situation in Iraq remains unstable with widespread humanitarian concerns with more than 2.3 million individuals requiring protection services in 2021. Years of conflict uprooted millions of people, eroded social cohesion, disrupted access to basic services and destroyed livelihoods. With a weak central governance and limited progress towards recovery and development, the situation has become protracted, and millions of people across Iraq require humanitarian assistance. IDPs in and outside camps, and returnees, experienced a collapse of living standards and disrupted access to basic goods and services, exhausting their capacities to cope and frequently resorting to negative coping strategies, including child labor, missing rental payments, relying on debts, and liquidation of livelihoods assets.

Lack of secure employment is a main reason preventing IDPs from returning to their areas of origin, and returnees from reintegrating sustainably. Trauma, stress and anxiety continue to be serious protection concerns affecting communities, especially women, children and persons with disabilities. Vulnerable groups, including persons with perceived affiliation to extremists, remain those most at-risk of rights violations.

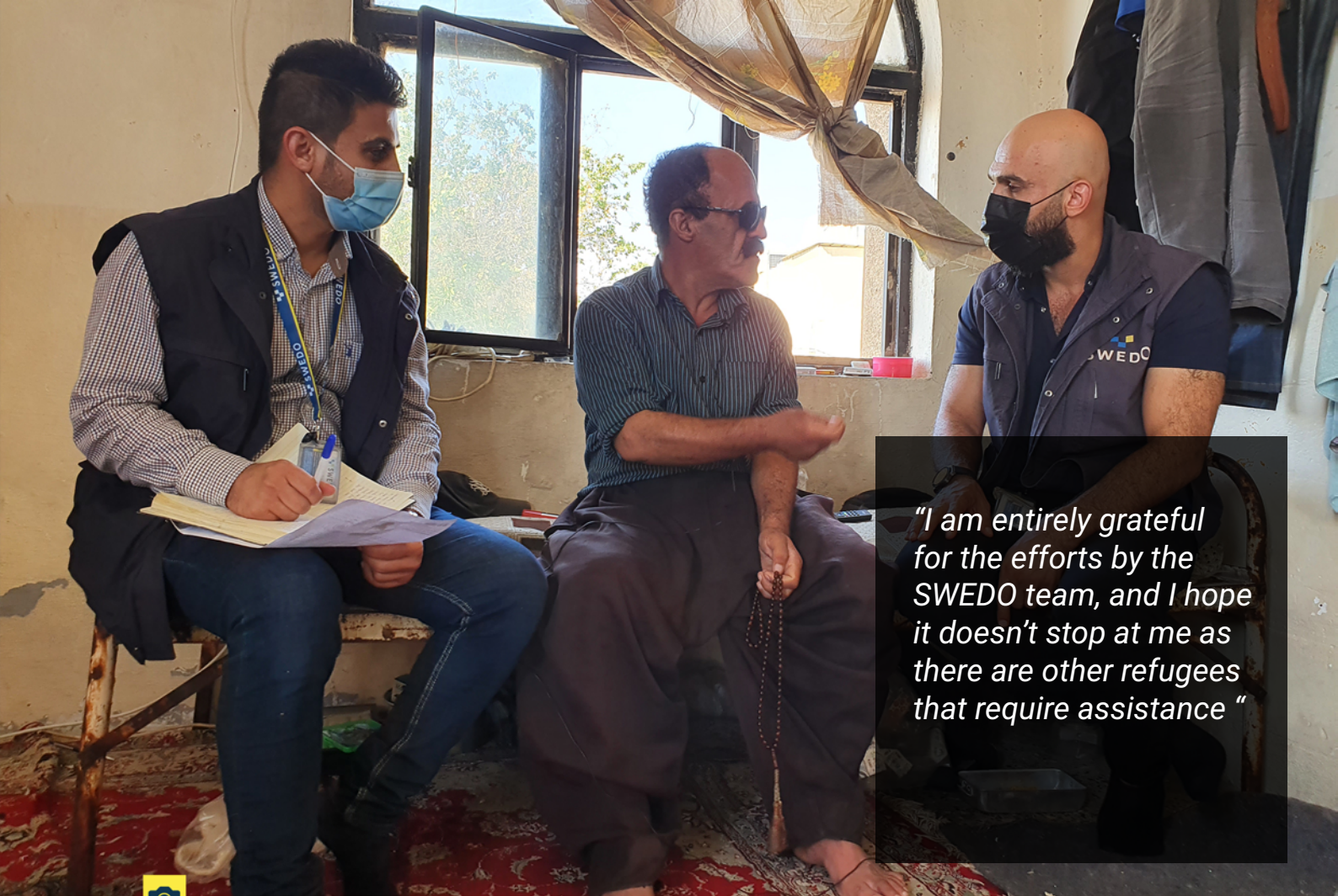
Protracted displacement is anticipated to continue into 2022, with numerous basic needs remaining unmet, inducing further vulnerabilities. The multi-factor economic hardship heavily impacts the already fragile situation which is further negatively affected by insufficient humanitarian assistance, especially across remote urban areas; for example, persons with disability and chronic illnesses lack access to specific treatment and specialized healthcare/medication, while children who lack proper documentation remain at significant risk of being denied access to educational facilities. Families are also challenged in enduring cold winters without adequate electricity and kerosene.

With reference to the gaps and vulnerabilities mentioned, protection monitoring activities will remain a priority in 2022. Displacement and deep-rooted gender inequalities, coupled with limited financial resources exacerbated by COVID-19, are likely to significantly increase the number of protection issues affecting communities, including child marriage and child labor. SWEDO recommends increasing services for disabled persons, supporting healthcare facilities by assessing their gaps, supporting education, including the provision of equipment for online education, and expanding the child protection services into remote areas.

SWEDO was among the few outstanding organizations that relied on its internal capacity by developing multiple remote protection monitoring tools, both on the household and community level.

Remaining Gaps

Key Recommendations



Omar's Story

2021, Erbil, Iraq

Omar is a 48-year-old Iranian refugee; currently living in Erbil after relocating to Kurdistan, 23 years ago. Omar suffers from multiple medical issues including hypertension, cataracts, diabetes and a severe injury to his leg leaving him physically disabled, and unable to work and no source of income. The cataract of his left eye was in such critical condition that urgent surgery was needed otherwise it would cost him his sight. SWEDO's refugee protection were informed that it would take up to a year of waiting for surgery. Omar at this point lost all hope of saving his eye, and hence loomed in suicidal thoughts. A breakthrough was made when SWEDO referred Omar's case to the Red Crescent Society, and together the surgery was made possible. Omar case was tracked by was followed up continuously by SWEDO throughout the whole process, including during the day of the surgery the day of his return home. SWEDO also ensured Omar received Emergency Protection Cash Assistance (EPCA) and Non-Food Items (NFI) provided by UNHCR, which covered his rental debts and covered his basic needs.

Legal Assistance

Accessing full legal protection is crucial for populations affected by humanitarian crises. The need for legal aid in such contexts is quite prominent, ranging from challenges linked to supporting survivors of conflict, sexual and gender-based violence (GBV), to lack of legal documentation, the denial of rights or of access to services, lengthy and costly and procedures related to status in host areas of displacement.

Civil documentation can facilitate access to fundamental rights and services, such as access to shelter, food, education, freedom of movement, and humanitarian assistance. In partnership with UNHCR - Erbil, SWEDO’s Legal Team provides direct support in issuing documents, and following up a broad range of lawsuit cases, while providing information, awareness, counseling and legal assistance on civil registration and representation before the court, and through mobile legal teams. SWEDO maintains strong coordination with local, regional and other governmental authorities to address IDPs’ multiple legal concerns.

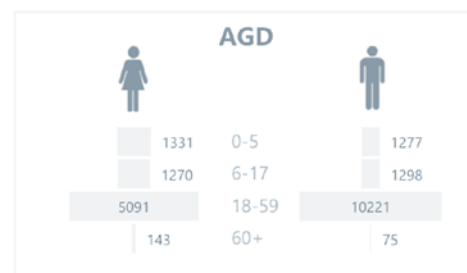
Lack of civil documentation is one of the major protection issues affecting IDPs and returnees and hampering their access to basic services, including health and education, freedom of movement, access to the social welfare system, and exercising their right to the full range of entitlements available to returnees. The Iraq Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment VII shows that 99% of surveyed camp residents reported at least one missing civil document. Similarly, 98% of out-of-camp IDPs, reported missing at least one civil document.

Due to the COVID-19 containment, the Legal Team ensured a tangible impact on the lives of many displaced families by growing its effective coordination with government authorities, including courts, notaries, personal status offices, nationality directorates, national ID offices, security and intelligence offices, and hospitals across and beyond its areas of operation. All of this resulted in the delivery of uninterrupted and life-saving interventions. For example, SWEDO carried out exclusive legal interventions for 32 female heads of household, including women who experienced domestic or GBV and marital neglect. Ensuring the rights of women through court decisions resulting in the issuance of proof of divorce/separation, custody, alimony, and children’s guardianship through lawsuits, proof of parentage, and proof of marriage. By obtaining such rights, women were provided conditions which enable self-reliance and independence. Moreover, children without proper documentation are exposed to numerous risks associated with access to education, freedom of movement, and food assistance, in response to this, numerous children obtained birth certificates through SWEDO.

Activity Description



20,585
Total Aid Provision



The widespread humanitarian concerns remain a chronic issue in Iraq with the need for sufficient personal documentation remains prominent. Despite the resumption of work at courts and governmental offices, follow-up on legal cases has been delayed due to case backlog and the government's limited capacity.

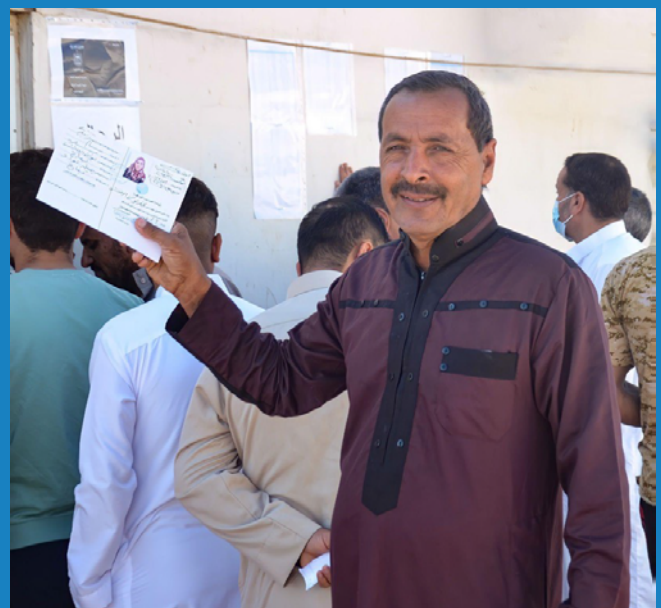
The lack of civil documentation prevent families from accessing certain services and re-establishing their lives. In Iraq, more than half of all in-camp households are missing at least one key household or individual document. Some 24% report missing two or more core documents, including identification cards, Public Distribution System (PDS) ration cards (entitling them to government food assistance), birth certificates or HLP documentation for property ownership. Among these households, 5% lack as many as three or more of their core documents. These households are in acute need of legal assistance. 45% of female-headed households reported missing at least one key civil and legal document, which is a barrier to accessing services (Source: Humanitarian Needs Overview 2021).

The nature of the judicial policies and the Iraqi Law requires higher advocacy and coordination with the authorities. This, in part, will accelerate the legal procedures by enabling collaboration across the multitude of political territories and administrations of Iraq.

SWEDO highlights higher levels' advocacy as the most effective solution to achieve more coverage in the delivery of legal assistance through a more effective targeting strategy in 2022, placing emphasis and allocating more time and resource on the above-mentioned cases.



Naktal is an IDP from Ninewa currently residing with his family in Erbil's Harsham camp. Due to health-related issues he has not been able to walk or talk properly for years. It was his priority to improve his health, but a lack of civil documents and certificates made it almost impossible for him to receive medical attention, or even travel abroad for treatment. Naktal was one of the beneficiaries of the documentation mission led by the Iraqi Ministry of Interior in collaboration with SWEDO and partners to support IDPs in Erbil and East Mosul through civil documentation. Naktal's files and documents were prepared by SWEDO's Legal Team. His case was successfully processed which led him to receive his Iraqi nationality certificate. Naktal now hopes his new documents will permit him the medical assistance he needs.



An IDP man who was able to obtain his Iraqi Nationality certificate through SWEDO's mobile mission with the Iraqi Ministry of Interior, October 2021, Ninewa, Iraq

Community-Based Protection

Human beings naturally form communities, and this remains true when they are uprooted, on the margins of society, living in camps or settlements, or in host communities. In 2021, SWEDO remained one of the best resources of developmental assistance and protection services to vulnerable populations in Iraq. SWEDO recognizes that some of the most important protection actions are those undertaken by people at risk themselves. Thus, SWEDO attempted to conduct sustainable protection outcomes by strengthening local resources and capacity, improving the two-way communication mechanism between persons of concern and service providers, and improve community capacity. Engaging with communities in this way not only strengthens their resilience by reducing their exposure to threats and harmful coping strategies. SWEDO's CBP component is also seen as a crucial element of SWEDO's commitment of being accountable to affected populations across Iraq.

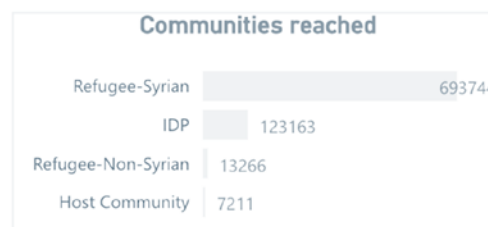
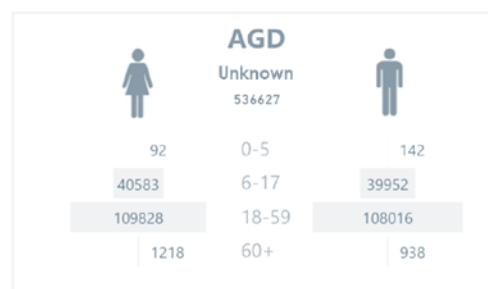
SWEDO's network of nearly 500 Community Outreach Volunteers (COVs) across urban, camp and settlement locations in Erbil and Duhok governorates are crucial in supporting UNHCR and SWEDO. They ensure the dissemination of essential and life-saving information to their communities, promotion and support of community engagement, resilience and active participation in social, economic and cultural life. The CBP unit has stood alongside the COVs and the IDP, refugee, and host communities they represent through community-led activities and initiatives in the form of recreational activities fostering social cohesion and peaceful coexistence among the various populations. COVs are well equipped in the identification of Persons with Specific Needs (PwSN), sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), UNHCR Code of Conduct, self-management and women empowerment.

In 2021, SWEDO community-based protection component collaborated with countless stakeholders for provision of precise, accurate information on rights and obligations, accessible services and available assistance. Awareness campaigns were themed on fraud and corruption, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), COVID-19 and vaccinations, child protection, fire prevention, seasonal disease prevention, education, and legal rights increasing knowledge among PoCs, thereby increasing self-efficacy and facilitating more informed perspectives of PoCs. Remote modalities for the purpose of awareness and sensitization were another aspect of the activities, such as through the Yalla Sawa page on Facebook. The youth cohort benefitted from skills development, educational and recreational activities aimed at enhancing their talents and areas of interest which could further be pursued to form a base of livelihood and self-dependence. It also served as an avenue of enhancing peaceful coexistence and cohesion involving youth from IDPs, refugees and host communities united through the activities. These included the identification of PwSNs and referral.

Activity Description



837,981
Total Aid Provision

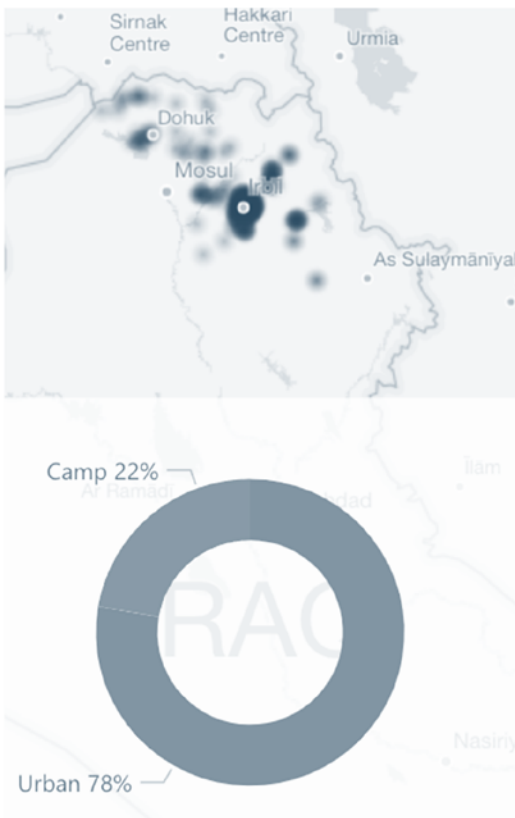


Implementation

Existing gaps in protection and service provision, combined with a lack of information among communities about available services can be highlighted as gaps that need to be addressed. Lack of safe spaces for women and children and specialized services for PwSNs continue to manifest as chronic challenges.

Considering the mentioned gaps, SWEDO explores possibilities to cover the shortage in the required assistance for the vulnerable groups by expanding its community centers to remote urban areas. Implementation of activities related to promotion and creation of new economic activities and income would benefit as there is a direct correlation between unemployment, low levels of education and lack of adequate skills to access the labor market.

PoCs require an increase in provision of information of their rights in order to sufficiently participate in self-management activities.



Muhammed, a 28-year-old Iraqi male from Batifa, Duhok Governorate graduated from Zakho Polytechnic Institute with a diploma in accounting. Muhammed comes from a low-income family and during his studies, he used to work as a laborer to support himself and provide for his family. Muhammed sought an appropriate job after graduation, but the scarcity of job opportunities in the Batifa district meant that he had to look into alternatives. He decided to start up his own business, but lacked capital. After learning of the men's barbering course, announced by SWEDO's community center. He saw this as an opportunity to learn a new skill; one that would later enable him to open his own barbershop.

“The barbering course gave me confidence, ability and courage to open my own business. I want to thank SWEDO for this opportunity;”

Supporting young people; whether within the displaced or local communities – in starting their own businesses is a crucial step towards self-employment. This can be made possible by opening doors of opportunities through vocational skill development in various fields.



"You should always think of the positive outcomes when you face challenges and try to gain more strength."



Sowing seeds of positive change - Shahinaz's story

December 2021, Erbil, Iraq

Shahinaz is a Syrian refugee, she first arrived to the KRI in 2013 and settled in Kawergosk Refugee camp in Erbil. The initial few months were very challenging for her as she was alone and had trouble coping with the new environment and had financial and social difficulties. But with the support of her family and her strong will, she managed to get back on her feet and started to do volunteer work with different aid organizations present in the camp.

Volunteering was her way of integrating with her community and helped her overcome the obstacles she faced. At the beginning she started volunteering with the public school in the camp, and helped the students with their studies after school hours eventually becoming a volunteer teacher there. Being an artist, Shahinaz also gave the students drawing lessons and bought the tools with her own money with the little income she had.

She was then recruited by different organizations, utilizing her skills to work in different areas with different age groups and genders. During this period, she started a volunteer project to work with young people with disabilities after her working hours, giving art lessons in drawing and music, and aimed to improve their social skills.

Shahinaz is now a Community Outreach Volunteer with SWEDO at Kawergosk community center, she gives art lessons on a daily basis, and also supervises and helps with other educational training and courses available at the center. She organizes art exhibitions in the center for her students, including a group of young artists with disabilities, where they can sell their products and make a small income.

Shahinaz loves volunteering with SWEDO and working at the community center where she is able to help other members of her community. She is also loved back by the community looked up upon by her friends and family, they trust her to raise their voices to service providers.

“Volunteering with SWEDO helped me widen my perspective and be able to reach more people and help them with different things”

Gender Equality & Women’s Empowerment

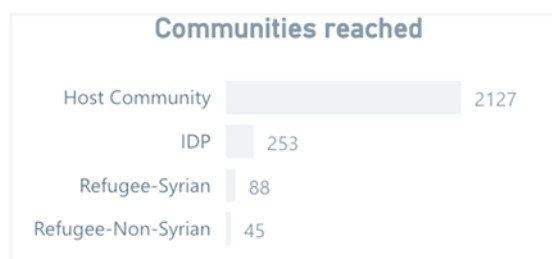
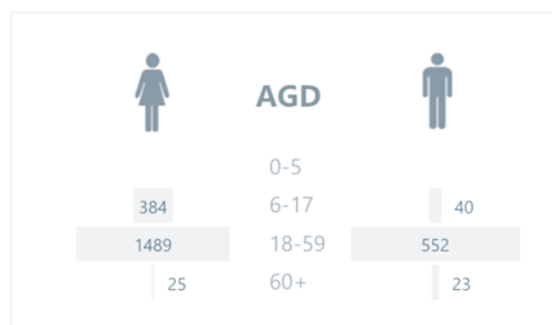
Times of conflict see increases in gender-based violence and women and adolescents often get the brunt of it, through sexual violence and exploitation. GBV is considered one of the main challenges facing affected populations as their vulnerability is exacerbated in the chaos of a crisis. Being separated from one’s family and community, or undertaking certain roles can put them at even greater risk of exploitation and abuse preventing women and girls from reaching their full potential. Tackling GBV requires both preventative and response approaches; realizing that survivors need support while simultaneously working to prevent the same things from happening to other females with interventions such as psychosocial support, legal assistance and healthcare access.

According to the Iraq Humanitarian Needs Overview 2021; women and girls, especially female-headed households (FHH), remain the most vulnerable to GBV. For example, 63% of FHH reported that they were unable to meet their basic needs and were resorting to negative coping mechanisms, including child marriage and transactional sex. Pre-existing gender and social inequalities detrimental to females as well as abuse, violence and neglect within households contribute to the GBV rampant in Iraq. In response to the domestic violence accounting for four-quarters of reported GBV incidents, SWEDO delivered key messages on GBV services, child marriage, honor killings, female genital mutilation (FGM), and COVID-19 information to more than 2,513 IDPs, host community, and refugee beneficiaries benefited from awareness-raising sessions. Female GBV survivors registered their incidents and were provided case management services.

SWEDO’s UNFPA project is spearheading efforts to provide services for GBV survivors and case management to end GBV and harmful practices like child marriage, honor killings and FGM whilst strengthening gender equality in addressing the humanitarian needs of beneficiaries in KRI. Establishment of women support centers and mobile teams, tackled these issues through capacity-building for stakeholders and community leaders through provision of services with a focus on advocating for women’s leadership in decision-making processes. The project moderated the gap in GBV services needs and created a dialogue to activate stakeholder’s role in combating GBV. A toolkit for adolescent girls was included to target unmet needs and the engagement of men and boys were integrated into activities to understand their point of view and ideas on combating violence against women.



2513
Total Aid Provision



Despite the significant progress made by SWEDO/UNFPA, acknowledgement of persistent gaps needs to be addressed to ensure that the voices of females and GBV stakeholders are accurately represented. The global pandemic manifested clear linkages to increasing cases of GBV. These issues were met with disapproval from targeted communities acting hostile upon the mention of sensitive issues including honor killings, and FGM and GBV services. The concern that girls do not feel safe disclosing violence to certain stakeholders holding conservative or patriarchal views and consider the GBV as the girl's fault is also prevalent. Lack of confidentiality and stigma associated with sexual violence (for many girls either leading to a lack of marriageability or even forced marriage to the perpetrator of the rape) also prevents females from seeking services. Access to survivor-centered services and women's shelters were refused until intervention from SWEDO/UNFPA was also quite common. The role of authority and media still has not been activated in terms of combating GBV.

The above-mentioned gaps can be confronted through the awareness of services through peer educators, community-based mechanisms and community leaders that act as first points of contact for females who require services. The availability of women and girls' safe spaces (WGSS) with health programs and staff to support survivors is recommended. This service would act as a point of entry to the case management/referral system and provision of healthcare for survivors of rape and sexual assault. The available of services targeting mental health for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression that occur as a result of GBV as well as focused and non-specialized support, including activities delivered through WGSS, support groups would provide opportunities to build skills, share knowledge and engage in recreation activities.



"This opportunity has changed my life, I'm able to support myself and my children through the current economic difficulty," She said.

A 30-years-old divorced mother of three; Srwa is an Iraqi living in the governorate of Erbil. Married off at the young age of 20, she claims she and her young children were victims of repeated violence by her husband for eight years. After marrying another woman, Srwa's husband left her and their children divorcing her without paying any marriage settlement fee or alimony. Receiving Srwa's case as a referral as she required financial and psychosocial support due to her severe mental health resulting in suicidal thoughts. SWEDO was promptly provided with much needed psychosocial support and as her condition improved, she was enrolled in a livelihood support program for survivors of GBV. As she learned dress making and marketing skills, her mental health improved.

The program enabled her to take the first step of providing for herself and her children. After completion of the program and the development of her skills, she received a kit of sewing equipment and an open market was arranged for the program participants, where Srwa could sell the clothes she made and earn money for the very first time in her life. Now, Srwa lives in a house close to her parents, and has arranged a place dedicated for her work.

Accountability to the affected population

As an international developmental organization, with a protection program at its core, SWEDO is devoted to ‘putting people first’ and is committed to being accountable through listening and responding to people’s needs and priorities. SWEDO’s accountability unit in Duhok and Erbil governorates addresses the use of resources and decisions by SWEDO and those we coordinate with, in real-time. This year witnessed the expansion of SWEDO’s accountability unit to include the child-friendly feedback mechanism (CFFM) in Erbil. CFFM acknowledges and ensures children have direct access to remedies for issues in their lives and recognizes children are full citizens and actors of their own lives. The right to a remedy is particularly important for children who are marginalized, have experienced crises and at risk of having their rights violated.

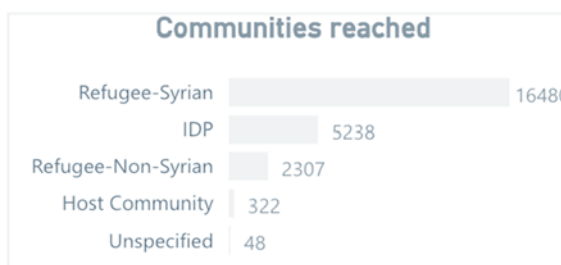
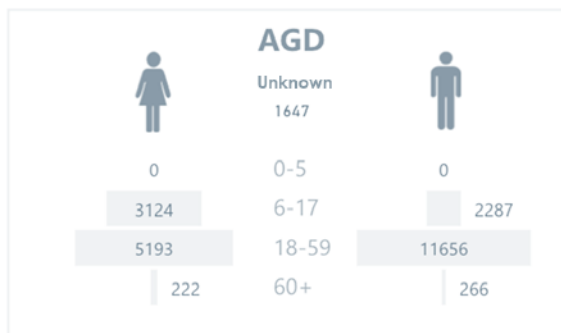
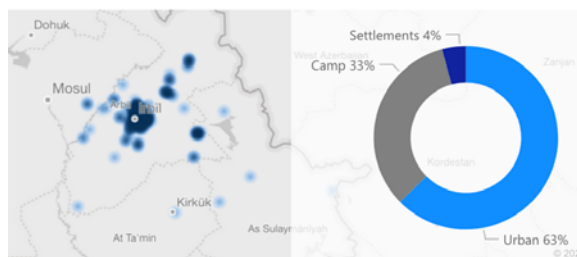
In Erbil, the UNHCR/SWEDO accountability team running the Information Feedback Point (IFP) mechanism regularly received complaints and queries from 4 refugee camps, 6 IDP camps, 5 Iranian refugee settlements and PARC office through the IFP desk and complaint box modalities. Throughout 2021, a total of 23,316 complaints, suggestions and information requests were received through the complaint desks and boxes.

The child-friendly feedback mechanism covers 16 schools across the refugee camps, urban areas and settlements in Erbil and surrounding areas where it manages the mechanism specifically for children and parents. In 2021, the child-friendly feedback mechanism received concerns through suggestion boxes and weekly consultations with primary and secondary school students and monthly consultations with parents.

In Duhok, complainants and PoCs with inquiries were reached through suggestion boxes, help desks and mobile teams in urban and camp settings. POCs were able to put across their issues and were connected with various service providers through the established referral pathway and ensuring the feedback loop is closed. SWEDO referred vulnerable cases for cash, legal, food and health assistance.



23316
Total Aid Provision





“Joy has filled our home; she now has the same opportunities as other girls her age”



Meet Ruqaya

2021, Erbil, Iraq

Ruqaya is a 6-year-old Syrian refugee girl living in Erbil with her family. After several attempts to enroll her in school, her parents were deeply saddened when they found out Ruqaya could not be enrolled due to limited seats at the crowded schools and the family's lack of needed documents.

Her father contacted SWEDO's CFFM team dedicated to providing accessible channels for concerns about children. SWEDO's team coordinated with UNHCR and INTERSOS on the child's enrolment issue by raising the case to the Department of Education and school management and Ruqaya was finally enrolled as a student. SWEDO also provided Ruqaya with stationary kit for her first day at school.



Food Security & Livelihoods

National School Feeding Programme

Nutrition is crucial in encouraging children to continue with their education. School feeding programs are vital for achieving academic success and maintaining children's enrolment in schools through strengthening children's focus and mental capacity. The program facilitated hundreds of livelihood opportunities in areas where the programme was implemented, invigorating local food systems whilst improving the economy in the Baladruz district, Diyala Governorate.

Starting in December 2020; SWEDO initiated the Iraqi National School Feeding Programme in the Diyala Governorate, through coordination with the Iraqi Ministry of Education (MoE), and funded by World Food Programme (WFP) providing up to 28,000 children across numerous schools with a daily meal. Meals were distributed once a week for each grade by an established school distribution committee.

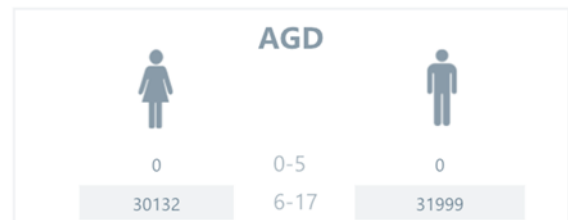
Awareness sessions revolving around personal hygiene, waste management, food safety, environment protection were promoted by qualified hygiene promotion teams. The programme also provided monitoring of school attendance; reducing the risk of child school dropouts and capacity building for women in the education sector as well as and Training of Trainers (ToT).

The school feeding programme enabled the female school staff to represent 50% of the established school distribution committee across the targetted schools and distributing up to 62,000 meals to students. Considering the dire situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, awareness sessions pertaining to COVID-19, food handling, food quality control and warehouse management, provided an added value to the hygiene component, and were greatly appreciated by students and school management. The conducted hygiene promotion involved exercises such as playing and dancing; teaching students how to correctly wash their hands and adding a sense of graveness to COVID-19. Purchasing food supplies from local bakeries, greengrocers and small businesses, the programme strengthened the capacity of small business owners, and created hundreds of livelihood opportunities. The weekly attendance sheets that were submitted to SWEDO identified potential dropout cases leading to an overall reduction of school drop-outs.

The contingency plan positively impacted the procedures and increased the efficiency of sources utilization. The school feeding programme was highly dependent on student attendance and therefore, virtual classes online would have an unfavorable impact on the programme, therefore suggestions for door-to-door hygiene sessions and door-to-door hygiene kit distribution would be beneficial to implement in the case of increased restrictions in the future.



62,131
Total Aid Provision

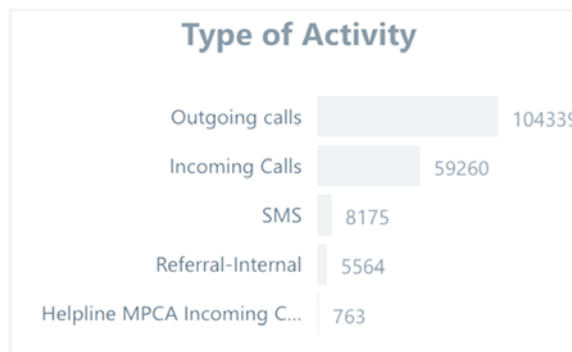
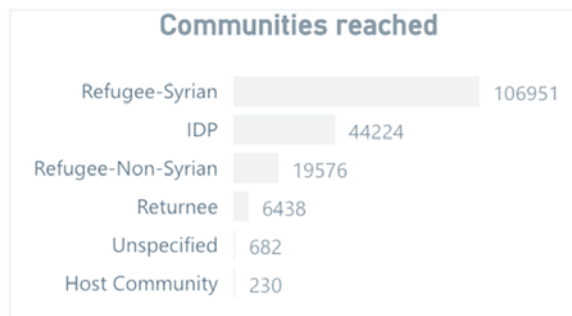
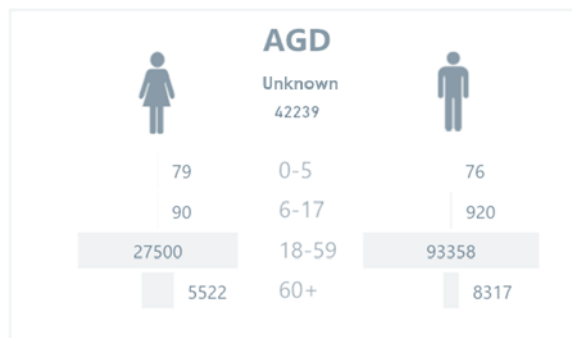


Non-Food Items

Cash-Based Intervention

Throughout 2021, UNHCR implemented Cash-Based Intervention (CBI) through the support of SWEDO and through a signed framework agreement with the Iraqi mobile money transfer agency to distribute cash assistance across Iraq. SWEDO, with its primary role to ensure accountability to the affected populations, notified approved beneficiaries through mobile phone text and follow-up phone calls to sensitize beneficiaries about registration with cash transfer agencies.

The establishment of a two-way communication with communities enabled SWEDO to coordinate the delivery process proactively. Our staff worked with third parties to coordinate beneficiary identification, harmonize referral pathways, and organize community-based post-distribution monitoring missions. Our teams of distribution and helpline operators handled the collection of feedback and complaints regarding mobile money transfers and registration challenges.



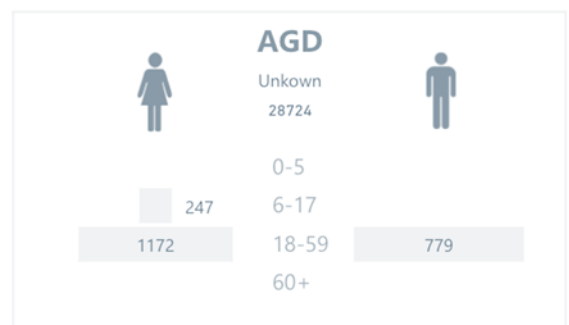
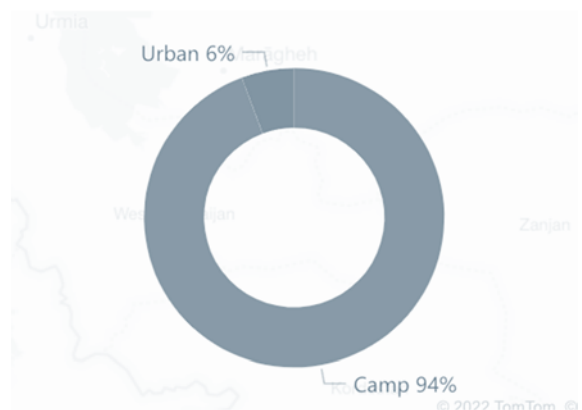
Core-Relief Items

Cash assistance and seasonal support transfers are targeting the most impoverished refugee and IDP households. The aim is to increase recipient households' ability to procure basic necessities, such as food, shelter, and medicine, without resorting to negative coping mechanisms, like withdrawing children from school, early marriage, not seeking health care, child labor, or incurring unsustainable levels of debt.

In addition to food, conflict-affected families require certain non-food items to survive, including items for shelter (tents, plastic sheeting, blankets, sleeping mats), cooking (stoves, pots, fuel), and health and sanitation (buckets, soap, jerry cans, clean cloths, mosquito nets). In partnership with UNHCR, SWEDO carried out distribution activities in Erbil and Duhok governorates targeting Syrian refugees, non-Syrian refugees and IDPs. A distribution process was preceded by assessments to identify the exact needs of the targeted population. SWEDO conducted needs assessments of refugee and IDP families in 17 IDP camps and 4 refugee camps as well as urban areas and settlements in Duhok Governorate.

SWEDO's assessment team carried out assessments; in urban and camp locations and based on specific needs, vulnerable PoCs successfully received Core Relief Items (CRI). In 2021 CRI distributions have been delivered to 31,511 cases based on lifesaving needs. NFIs provided families a semblance of a normal life and the opportunity to improve their living conditions. The deteriorated economic situation lack of livelihoods faced in KRI, has affected displaced communities and decreased their income. The distribution of NFIs ensures the resilience and cohesion of vulnerable community members by meeting their basic needs.

Years of conflict and regional dispute have deteriorated the socio-economic structures in Iraq leading to further strains on the host community and the capacity to accommodate, especially during harsh seasonal conditions. A significant portion of refugee and displaced communities still reside in tents or inappropriate shelters requiring continuous maintenance. Provision of proper shelter and housing equipment, such as cooling and heating items, will minimize associated risks.



Livelihoods & Resilience

Agricultural Support to Farmers, Syria

Since the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011, over 6.6 million people have fled the country. 6.7 million people are internally displaced inside Syria. In early 2021, According to UNHCR, 3.7 million Syrian refugees reside in Turkey, 844,000 in Lebanon, 672,000 in Jordan, and 252,000 in Iraq. As of May 2021, at least 282,000 self-organized returns have been registered, the majority of which are described as premature due to the lack of livelihood opportunities, public healthcare, infrastructure, damaged housing, as well as degraded agricultural lands due to years of conflict. In the past, the North-East Syria (NES) produced a large share of Syria’s cereal crops until its agricultural productivity came to halt as a result of its fight for liberation from ISIS. Currently, NES’s community, and its returning population, still need support to restore their means of livelihood.

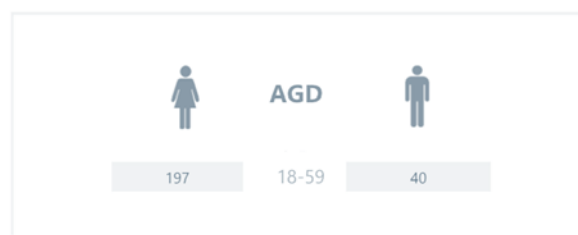
Supported by the Syria Recovery Trust Fund (SRTF), SWEDO extended its partnership to implement two additional projects in 2021. The first one being the establishment of Mechanization and Training Centers (MTC) for agricultural equipment with the objective of strengthening the resilience of eight farming cooperatives. The second project involved provision of technical capacity support for farmer’s Cooperative Administrative Units (CAU) with the objective of boosting the administrative capacity of nine farming cooperatives.

The target farming communities had received a number of agricultural machinery from SRTF, but they did not yet have the technical capacity to operate and maintain this machinery efficiently. SWEDO built MTCs and provided mechanic workshops with all the necessary tools and spare parts, and trained the target community members on proper operation and maintenance of the machinery. This allows the machinery to operate more efficiently, thus serving a higher number of beneficiaries and contributing to increased food production.

The Agricultural Support intervention provided sustainable solutions to underserved and recovering farming communities. The farmers of these communities were very pleased to have the MTC built in their villages as these centers safeguard the agricultural machinery. The centers also contain the needed facilities and tools to maintain and repair the machinery.



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Total Aid Provision



With a particular emphasis on women who suffer from neglect, the CAU project paved the path for empowering women in nine targeted villages. The project engaged women from different societal backgrounds to contribute to administrative works, boost their self-confidence, and to become income providers, and an essential part of an institutional success. The project also contributes to improved roles of women through education and job placement. The services provided by the cooperatives (COOPs) where the assistants work and function reached out to the farmers in these villages and their families, as these cooperatives facilitated and improved the farming process throughout the whole year supporting livelihoods and improving living conditions for many.

Overall, the projects have complemented the agricultural support SRTF is delivering to these cooperatives and with the completion of these interventions the cooperatives are ready to resume local agricultural activities and food production. All in all, the interventions have paved a path for the cooperative's sustainable food security.

SWEDO delivered technical support to the local farming communities through:

- Construction of eight Mechanization and Training Centers;
- Provision of tools, spare parts, furniture, IT equipment to fully furnish these centers;
- Introduction of technical advisory services;
- Provide operational and management support to the target farming COOPs;
- Conducting training / workshops for selected members of the COOP communities;
- Training young community members on operation and maintenance of tractors and harvesters.
- Establishment of Cooperative's Administrative Units CAUs in nine different locations, and identifying and training twenty-seven capable administrative women.

Enhancing livelihoods remains at the core of recovery & stabilization strategies that require attention & resources, both in terms of expanding the geographical scope of work and the type of services. SWEDO's extensive field observations refer to the need for more diversified trainings, more investment in agricultural machinery, seed production facilities, and clean energy sources for the farming communities.



Hasan, a 26 year-old Syrian farmer, married with two children. He and his family live in a village located in Syria.

Hasan was going through straitened circumstances with no stable income with which he could support his family. The aftermath of the war and the drought in Syria had an adverse effect on his livelihood as they were no longer able to cultivate their farmlands. These difficult circumstances were exacerbated by the difficult situation of labor in Syria due to many reasons that include: security instability, drought, lack of investments, the drop in Syrian pound currency value, and other reasons that were a result of the ongoing war in Syria which started around 10 years ago.

Hasan received Tractor Driving training from SWEDO's project and was hired as a tractor driver in his village to practice his newly-learned skills for one month. Due to his diligence and dedication to work, he was immediately hired as a tractor driver by the local authority afterwards, and he found work opportunities in the private sector as a tractor driver. The skills he learned from the vocational training provided by SWEDO created a livelihood opportunity for Hasan as he was found two job opportunities. These jobs have helped him increase his income and better support his family.

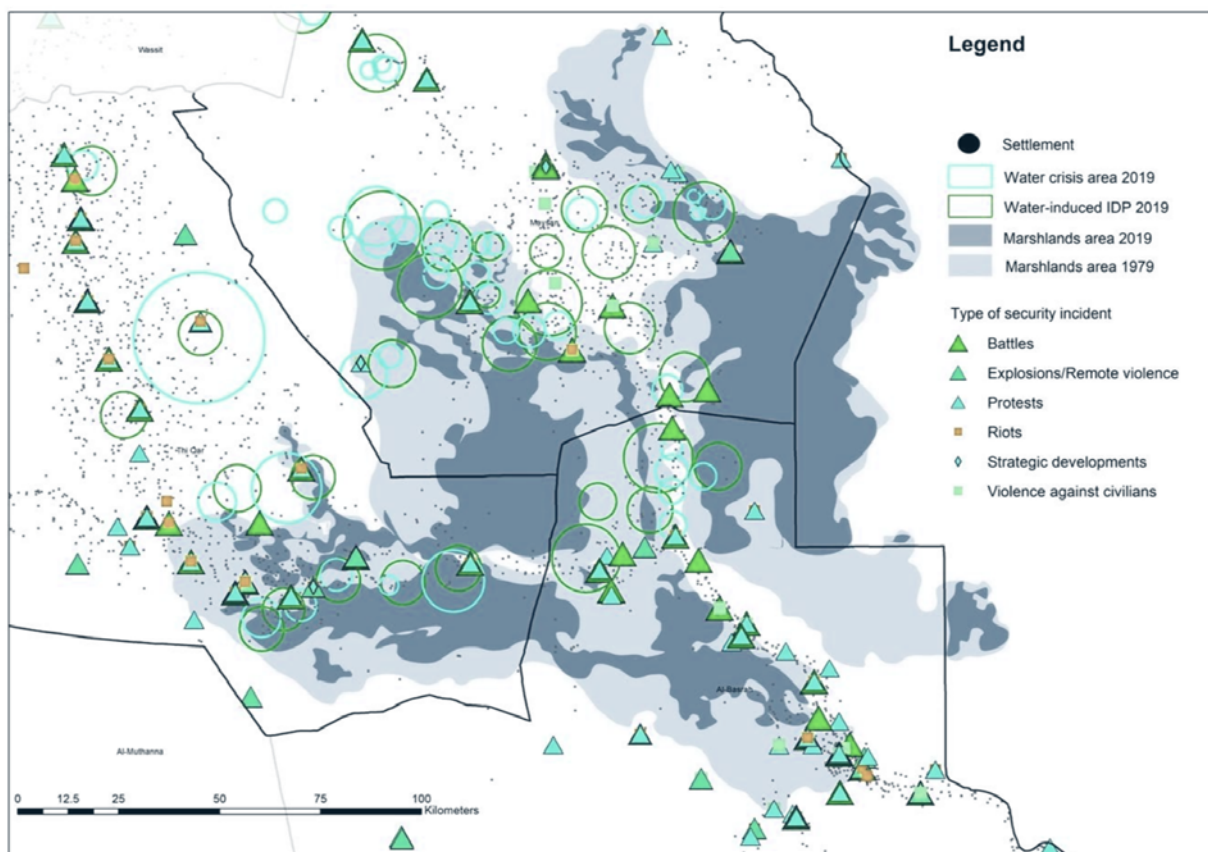
"This opportunity helped me start over again, gave me the technical experience needed to work in the agricultural sector, and helped me broaden my livelihoods network"

SWEDO Programming in South Iraq: can UN System and NGO do more to untap Green Financing as phasing strategy?

In South Iraq, SWEDO provided the UN community with a strong vision for phasing from emergency livelihoods interventions to build assets for community resilience to climate change and ultimately to establish a large-scale green financing facility to sustain long term investments in resilience communities using funds pledged in COP26 and to be mobilized in COP28 in Dubai.

WFP invited SWEDO for a bilateral memorandum of understanding (MoU) directly funded to establish an advisory program to untap the potential of the local Iraqi marshland ecosystem to generate livelihoods and help vulnerable communities to cope with climate change, displacement and conflicts.

Factors such as climate change, displacement and conflicts are usually interconnected and exacerbated by the continuing draining of the water resources, large dam constructions in the upper reaches of the Euphrates and Tigris as well as uncontrolled and incorrect practices of restoration such as the re-flooding initiated by local inhabitants in the attempt to preserve their livelihoods.



Visualization of the spatial distribution of main drivers of change affecting Iraqi marshlands: reduction in marshland area, conflict and displacement

Displacement: In a survey conducted by IOM in 2019, a total of 5,347 families were displaced from the four governorates of Missan, Muthanna, Thi Qar and Basra. Analysis of the governorates of origin of these IDPs indicates that Thi Qar Governorate is the most affected by water-induced displacement and hosts the largest share of IDPs. Majority of the displaced families originally from Missan, Basra and Muthanna are intra-governorate IDPs. In 2021, 3,031 families remain displaced due to adverse climate conditions, mostly drought, across five governorates of Thi Qar, Missan, Qadissiya and Basra.

Green Financing strategy based on Iraqi marshlands Carbon Credit marking: Globally, wetlands cover 9% of the planet's land surface, yet are estimated to store 35% of terrestrial carbon, which translates into a large capacity to sequester atmospheric CO₂ up to five times than terrestrial forest. Undisturbed wetlands act as powerful 'carbon sinks' due to their dense vegetation and algal activity. They regulate processes such as anaerobic decomposition generating methane and nitrous oxide. These gases have more global warming impact compared to carbon dioxide over a 100-year timeframe. As wetlands generally act as carbon sinks, their destruction can result in substantial carbon emissions. Restoring and protecting wetlands presents an important opportunity for mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and human-made wetlands mostly rice paddies and reservoirs are gradually replacing natural wetland. In the 2020/2021 implementation period, SWEDO documented comprehensive lessons observed in the implementation of programs that are paving the way to establish a long-term green financing operation in South Iraq.



SWEDO and Information Hub conducting a participative mapping to identify emerging conflicts affecting natural resources and livelihoods with community women in Thi Qar Governorate, December 2021.

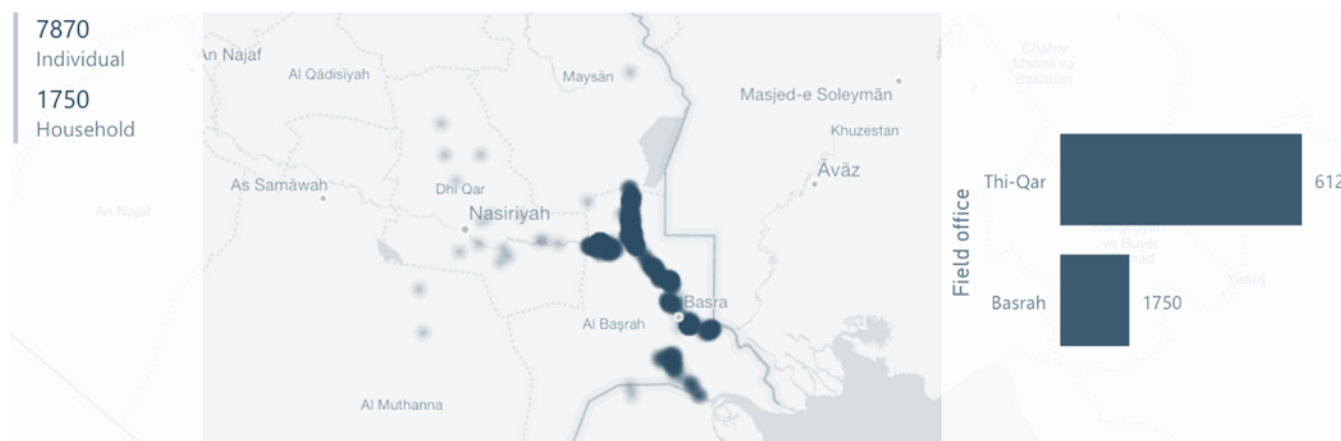
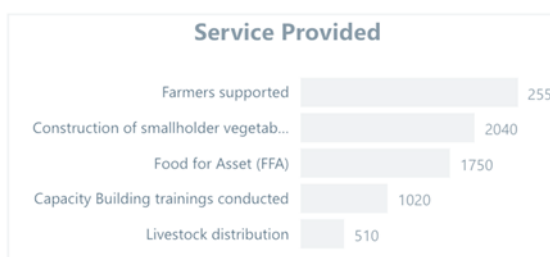
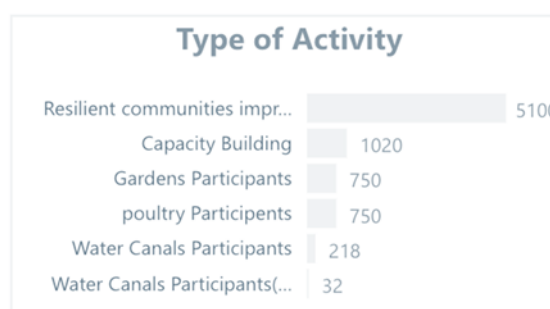
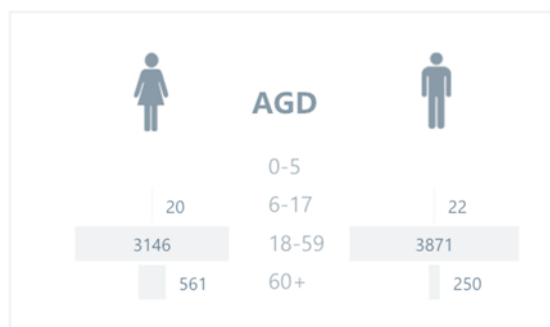
Sustainable Livelihoods for Resilient Communities in Thi Qar and Basra governorates, Iraq

Thi Qar Governorate is one of the most underdeveloped governorates of Iraq, with a mostly rural economy, yet not sufficient enough to ensure food security for its communities due to the widespread environmental degradation and loss of livelihoods. The project aimed at enhancing the resilience of food-insecure individuals through ecological and social activities. These activities included strengthening water resources, crops production and protection, and small livestock, created by Cash-Based Transfer (CBT) community beneficiary workers. The program improved the communities' social cohesion and governance of the assets with an innovative women-led hub established in Al-Nasiriya at the center of knowledge management, community-based monitoring, inclusion and beneficiaries' complaint mechanisms.

Our involvement enhanced the resilience of food-insecure women, men, girls and boys through activities that tapped the potential of sustainable livelihood from water resources, small livestock value chain and conservation farming. These activities aligned with priorities identified by communities and benefitted 65,280 indirect beneficiaries in Thi Qar Governorate. SWEDO coordinated with the local authorities and communities to map out areas of concern, which followed by the numerous project activities, namely:

- Construction, rehabilitation, and improvement of water canals;
- Small livestock distribution and construction of smallholder livestock units;
- Training 510 community members on crop production and protection, small livestock management, health, nutrition, commercialization, sustainable farming, and conservative agriculture;
- Capacity building for 1,020 beneficiaries on water management, commercialization and rural markets;
- Capacity building of the women-led initiative with technical inductions.

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Displacement: In a survey conducted by IOM in 2019, a total of 5,347 families were displaced from the four governorates of Missan, Muthanna, Thi Qar and Basra. Analysis of the governorates of origin of these IDPs indicates that Thi Qar Governorate is the most affected by water-induced displacement and hosts the largest share of IDPs. Majority of the displaced families originally from Missan, Basra and Muthanna are intra-governorate IDPs.

In 2021, 3,031 families remain displaced due to adverse climate conditions, mostly drought, across five governorates of Thi Qar, Missan, Qadissiya and Basra.

Green Financing strategy based on Iraqi marshlands Carbon Credit marking: Globally, wetlands cover 9% of the planet's land surface, yet are estimated to store 35% of terrestrial carbon, which translates into a large capacity to sequester atmospheric CO₂ up to five times than terrestrial forest. Undisturbed wetlands act as powerful 'carbon sinks' due to their dense vegetation and algal activity. They regulate processes such as anaerobic decomposition generating methane and nitrous oxide. These gases have more global warming impact compared to carbon dioxide over a 100-year timeframe.

As wetlands generally act as carbon sinks, their destruction can result in substantial carbon emissions. Restoring and protecting wetlands presents an important opportunity for mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and human-made wetlands mostly rice paddies and reservoirs are gradually replacing natural wetland.

In the 2020/2021 implementation period, SWEDO documented comprehensive lessons observed in the implementation of programs that are paving the way to establish a long-term green financing operation in South Iraq.

Hadiya Mohammed Dhahi, WFP, Thi Qar, Iraq

Hadiya, faces the responsibility of taking care, teaching and taking her five kids to school every day, finding enough food to feed them was a challenge every morning. Her family was dependent on her husband's daily earnings which was unreliable since COVID-19. SWEDO identified her and enrolled her in the livelihoods program where she was trained on vegetable cultivation and production, turning her kitchen garden into a farm where she could grow crops and enable her to secure fresh produce for her family. Hadiya was also able to sell her produce and generate income.

Despite facing struggles such as water scarcity and loss of crops, she refused to give up and overcame her struggles by drilling boreholes close to her land.

After many attempts, Hadiya mastered skills in agriculture, enabled her to pay off her family's debts and now the family's land is their main source of living. This year she was able to obtain a yield of aubergine and cucumber. SWEDO's project has enabled Hadiya to turn her kitchen garden into something that her family can rely on. The project provided her with nine types of seeds. She also used her cash-based transfer to buy more types of seeds for an increased profit.

" All I ever want is a better life for my family and proper education for my children"

Sustainable Urban Livelihoods for Community Resilience in Thi Qar Governorate

COVID-19 severely impacted small businesses in Thi Qar governorate, with vulnerable business owners forced to either close the activity, temporarily or permanently or adopt extreme coping strategies to secure income for their families, including contracting financial debts and reducing costs related to hygiene and safety practices. While the short-term impact of COVID-19 includes the reduction in food security and nutrition for small-holder business owners, the medium to long term exacerbates the situation of vulnerable groups, especially women and forces rural communities to move to cities. The project aims at providing the most vulnerable and impacted small-holders businesses with tools and capacity to recover, improve their household livelihoods as well as the standards of hygiene and safety for the products commercialized among local communities, strengthen community resilience and linkages between urban economy and rural livelihoods.

Enhancing the resilience of food insecure men and women in urban settings of Thi Qar governorate through the strengthening of the urban economy-rural livelihood linkages according to shared priorities identified by communities and authorities. Approximately 4,160 households indirectly benefitted from the project.

From technical standpoint, SWEDO carried out the following activities:

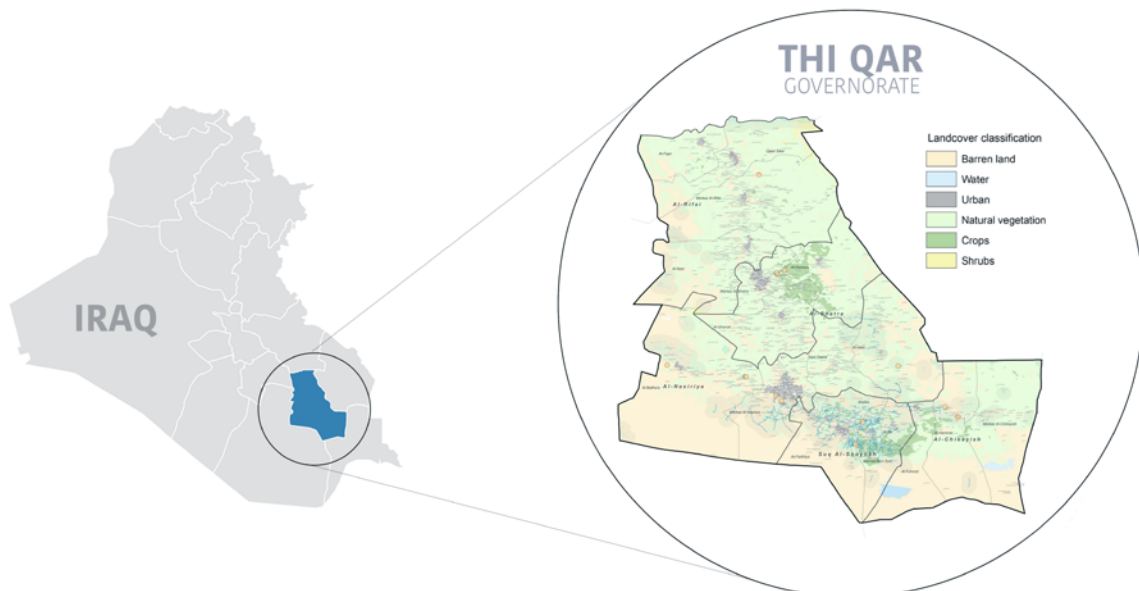
- Community mobilization, and basic needs assessment;
- Coordination with local communities, authorities, governorate and stakeholders;
- Preparations to support 510 operating small businesses (half in the food chain and half in the non-food chain) to revitalize income generation and adopt sustainable practices for supply, hygiene, safety, storage and commercialization;
- Training of 510 smallholder business owners of food and non-food small business for product processing, waste management, hygiene, supply of raw produce, conservation and commercialization;
- Vocational training and skills development for 260 smallholder businesses impacted by COVID-19 and providing goods in the food sector, and 260 in non-food sector;
- The complaint and feedback mechanisms established in vocational and training centers (VTC).

Implementation

The lack of legal protection determines the underlying causes of vulnerability and the outcomes of the impact of COVID-19: employed women and marginal groups were dismissed from work with limited or no social protection. Child labor is also prevalent, especially in small food-businesses. To cope with the financial crisis resulting from COVID-19 restrictions, many business owners cut costs related to hygiene and food safety with an increased risk for health, injuries, and child labor.

To avoid creating undesired market competition small businesses, SWEDO acquired the methodology to link the promotion of legalization, women empowerment, contrast child labor, strengthen hygiene, safety and inclusive income creation. In such a context, the VTCs of the Department of Labor were identified as entry points to ensure the rehabilitation and improvement of small businesses.

Outlook



Employment Services

One of the main challenges of the displaced and local community in Iraq is the lack of livelihoods. Access to adequate employment for vulnerable populations has become critical to recovery, particularly during the current period of political instability made complex by a deeply entrenched economic and financial crisis and the severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The proposed ILO/SWEDO project targeted the most vulnerable job seekers and intended to effectively link accelerated livelihood recovery to improve local business, employment, and market climate significantly.

The project aimed to provide employment services to vulnerable households and increase economic self-reliance in Iraq’s Duhok Governorate which started as a six-month pilot project for the refugees of Domiz 1 camp who were registered and referred to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA) for job placement. The project provided employment services through an employment center located within Domiz 1 camp in Summel district, Duhok.

The project was extended for an additional six months in which the activities and objectives of the project were expanded to include camp and non-camp IDPs, refugees and host community. Activities expanded to include registration of job seekers and finding job opportunities within the private sector through a mobile project team that sought these opportunities through field visits. Job seekers’ qualifications were matched with job posting with the best matches forwarded to employers for interviews and selection of the best candidate.

SWEDO attempted to secure job opportunities for vulnerable individuals through its linkages between job seekers and employers. Many job seekers were between 16 to 60 years and ranged from no basic skills to highly skilled job seekers.

The project’s activities were and are continued to be implemented through coordination with several stakeholders, including MoLSA, and five other camps. The community outreach teams within these respective camps were part of the entities that supported the employment center team in disseminating information and reaching job seekers. Various registration mechanisms were enhanced through promotion of the employment center registration.

Job seekers referrals were made to employers where candidate qualifications and employment requirements were matched and the best candidates were interviews and job placement in addition to dissemination of information about the labor law and CV development.

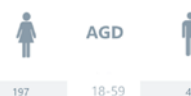
The need for livelihood support remains a challenge for SWEDO and Iraq as the unemployment rate is remains high. Currently, SWEDO database of over 2,000 job seekers are pending work placement. The job seekers’ skills and qualifications require improved to fit the current market’s needs and keep pace with the local markets’ new job opportunities. Vocational training and on-the-job-trainings in which the skills of the job seekers are improved to fit the market gap can counteract these concerns. Livelihoods assistance including employment opportunities, and cash grants to start small businesses can also be of benefit.

Connecting hundreds of vulnerable individuals with job opportunities

SWEDO currently seeks possibilities of expanding its livelihoods services for the vulnerable communities through the provision of several livelihoods’ services, including cash/ assets grants, vocational trainings, cash for work, and apprenticeship programs. The provision of such livelihood assets through projects of over a period of one to three will enhance the livelihoods status of the population and increase their skills and resilience at the same time.



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Service Provided





"I feel extremely happy to be part of this activity and would like such activities to be continuously initiated from NGOs so that vulnerable persons like myself can become financially independent."

*Said Piroza Shikhmous Alhusseiny,
November 2021, Duhok, Iraq*

Digital Safety for Youth, Jordan

Over 750,000 Syrian refugees are registered in Jordan according to UNHCR. This vast number reflects the country’s substantial humanitarian needs. The Syrian crisis has exacerbated the situation in recent years, increasing the burden on Jordanian society and emphasizing the role of the international community to respond to the developmental needs. This situation drove SWEDO to expand its footprint into Jordan to provide humanitarian and developmental aid under the impulse of building community resilience, improving the capacity of the displaced and host communities to overcome social, health, economic and environmental challenges.

In 2021, SWEDO reached eight cities in Jordan through launching its Digital Safety for Youth (DSY) initiative as a pilot project in collaboration with SecDev Foundation through online and ground sessions. The need for digital safety education becomes essential as traditional education methods transitioned to online methods due to COVID-19 restrictions. It is important to empower youth with information on protection and privacy when using the internet who can quickly become vulnerable to exploitation.

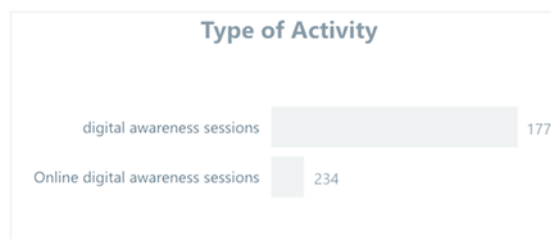
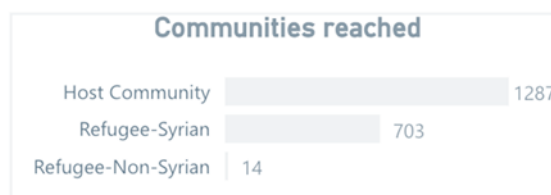
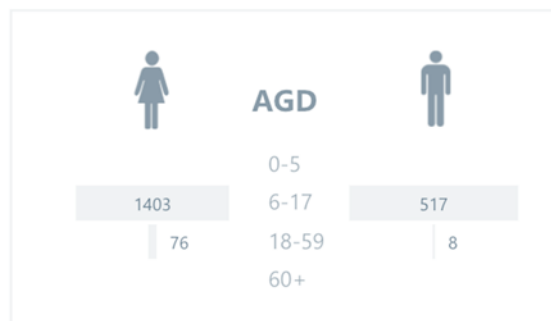
DSY project set up an important step in supporting youth to be safely engaged on social media and educational platforms. Furthermore, it aimed to increase public consciousness of women, young people and civil society groups to promote digital protection and to change social norms revolving around online platforms. Lack of digital awareness can lead to restrictions imposed by the community that prevent the platforms being used in a valuable manner.

The project was implemented in most of the Jordanian governorates, namely Amman, Aqaba, Irbid, Ajloun, Jerash, Madaba, Zarqa, Mafraq, via online and on-ground sessions and reached refugees and locals. Digital interests were identified and beneficiaries were keen to learn about the basics of digital safety including phishing attacks, social networking, antivirus and malware programs, privacy settings and securing accounts.

The programme context



2,004
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DSY ensured beneficiaries acquire the skills and knowledge they need to protect themselves from digital attacks and online abuse; assisting youth in understanding their digital vulnerabilities and enhancing their digital resilience through personalized and responsive sessions; empowering future generations to preserve their online identities, information, and networks; and increasing the community's awareness on safety and security while surfing on internet.

SWEDO's small scale intervention revealed another set of realities linked to further needs and vulnerabilities. The diversity of remote geographical areas, combined with poverty, makes digital education a significant challenge, owing to the digital abuse that continuously occurs. New methods of phishing attacks for social media accounts and cyber-crimes, often referred to as cyberbullying, target youth and their psychosocial status.

An increase of scale of activities both through reaching a broader range of targeted populations as well as through establishing further coordination networks is necessary, as well as expansion of activities in remote urban and rural areas. An emphasis on collaboration with donors and digital local civil society organizations who share the same passion and are active in promoting traditional and digital education, preventing online violence and work on cyberbullying would lead to the growth of the project.



Yaser is a 16-year-old from Jordan. The young man has about 20,000 followers on TikTok. Due to his online popularity, Yaser's account was hacked and was asked for a ransom in return for getting his account back.

Attending the training programs on Digital Safety for Youth in Jordan, Yaser stated it was his desire to learn about protecting his social media accounts, his privacy and safety of his information.

"Being on social media is a double-edged sword, especially for young people,"

Yaser said. He added that young people need to be extremely attentive and observant of their online privacy, especially that social media has become a vital part of their lives and their need for it even for school.

Socio-economic prestudy, Palestine

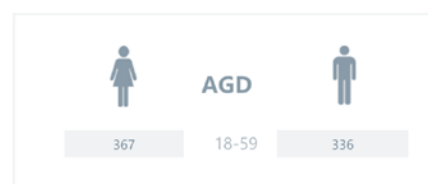
According to the 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview, at least 2.45 million Palestinians require some form of assistance. Assistance can be grouped into three categories, according to the underlying problems including lack of protection and displacement, limited access to essential services; and erosion of resilience. These problems require multi-sectoral responses to mitigate the risk and suffering they entail for affected people, many of which face multiple humanitarian challenges and are, therefore, included in more than one of the three categories. Across these critical problems, the following groups have been identified as most vulnerable: people living in poverty, FHH, Palestine refugees living in camps; children, particularly those under five; the elderly; pregnant and lactating women; PwSN; small-scale farmers, herders and fishers.

In 2021, SWEDO expanded its presence to Palestine. A pre-study focusing on conflict-prone areas, under a consortium including the local organizations; Shoruq and the National Union for Palestinians (NUNGO). The conflict impact assessment contributes to peaceful dynamics in the area through a pilot project aiming at empowering the socio-economic aspects, gender perspectives and conflict sensitivity. The pre-study outcomes will optimize need-oriented approaches that will bridge the gaps in the needs under the umbrella of current regulations and networks. In this vein, 9 workshops were conducted via ground and online sessions, reaching out to 706 beneficiaries in Ramallah, Bethlehem and other governorates. The consortium conducted surveys, FGDs and personal interviews to leverage the impact of the discussion and the planning for future interventions to step forward in bridging the gap between the community needs and civil society and governmental organizations.

The programme context



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Type of Activity	
Socioeconomic pre-study, worksho...	497
Online Surveys	142
Human Rights & Media – Hum...	23
Awareness session about media as a...	21
Main Societal Challenges for Media ...	20



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