

Consolidation and Nexus project for the Improvement of Basic Public Services for the Vulnerable Population in Northern Iraq (ConNex)

Enhancing the resilience of returnees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and host communities in Northern Iraq

Challenge

Iraq remains a fragile state in an unstable region, which has been affected by the Syrian crisis since 2014. The conflicts in the region have resulted in a high number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, thus increasing the population of the autonomous Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) by almost 40% since 2014, and Duhok Governorate alone accommodates over half a million IDPs and refugees in 27 camps. A return of the majority of IDPs and refugees is unlikely in the foreseeable future, and the administrations of the host communities in KRI, even after the official defeat of the so-called Islamic State, are still largely overloaded with the provision of basic public services.

The project at a glance

GIZ supports Duhok Governorate in the provision of health, water, education, and social services since 2015. 56 schools were constructed or renovated, 6 primary health centres and 6 community centres were built, a water treatment plant and water networks were installed, and the Azadi Teaching Hospital (ATH) in Duhok city is extended by an emergency care unit.

To ensure the sustainability of the achieved results, the project aims at supporting the local administrations further. This is done by providing trainings for managers and technical specialists, supporting the improvement of the management and the administrative structures and facilitating operational processes.

Project Name	ConNex – Consolidation and Nexus project for the Improvement of Basic Public Services for the Vulnerable Population in Northern Iraq
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and co-funded by the French Development Agency (AFD)
Project Region	Duhok Governorate, and Nineveh Governorate
National Partner	Ministry of Planning, Kurdistan Region of Iraq
Duration	07/2019 – 07/2023

Increasing medical know-how

In order to sustainably strengthen structures in the health sector, treatment capacities of the ATH and primary health centres are restored. This is done by improving the qualifications of the health personnel through providing training measures.

In close cooperation with the Directorate of Health (DoH) in Duhok, an existing building was converted into the first training and simulation centre of its kind in Iraq which is called the Clinical Skills Training Centre (CSTC). In addition to that, a comprehensive training plan is developed to target medical students, including doctors, nurses, engineers, technicians, and managerial staff. Furthermore, the centre will accomplish Training of Trainers (TOT) sessions for the Emergency Medicine staff in the ATH Extension and the hospital management with the objective of providing a strategic plan, different manuals, SOPs and more operational efficiency.

To improve the health services in Talafar, Sinjar districts, and Yazidi communities in Baa’j district, the capacity and skills of the



Photo left: Construction phase of the new Emergency Wing at the Azadi Teaching Hospital in Duhok city

Photo right: Faida Water Plant in Faida town, that provides clean drinking water to more than 200.000 people in Duhok

medical staff are strengthened by providing necessary medical courses and supplies depending on the needs and gaps. Also, a mobile medical team in Sinjar, and the Yazidi communities in Baa'j districts has been activated.

Providing water and sanitation services

Co-funded by the French Development Agency (AFD), local administrations and technicians are provided with the necessary trainings, tools and materials to ensure smooth operations and professional maintenance of the installed wastewater treatment plant and the water network. Such as using digital technologies that support the local authorities to use Geographic Information Systems for monitoring, developing robust water safety plans according to local needs and raising consciousness for water-saving through awareness campaigns. Relevant partners are introduced to the Smart Sanitation Concept, and school administrations will be supported to improve water supplies, sanitation, and hygiene through the "Fit for School (F4S)" approach, thus providing a learning environment for school children. Additionally, a monitoring system for better water management for the General Directorate of Water and Sanitation is developed. Simultaneously, the relevant authorities are advised on the reduction of water losses in the host communities and camps.

Supporting quality education

In cooperation with the Directorate of Education (DoE), a facility management system for the 57 constructed or renovated schools is ongoing to ensure that buildings remain in a good condition and are managed sustainably. To improve the quality of education itself, trainings are conducted, and a quality assurance system will be established to ensure that the teaching of over 27,000 educators reaches and maintains a steady high level.

Social support

The Directorate General of Care and Social Development (DoLSA) in Duhok, strives to independently run 6 community social centres which have been established in camps by the predecessor project. The project aims to strengthen the technical and managerial capacities of DoLSA in expanding social programs.

This includes the development of a general concept, improving operational management structures, personnel strategy, technical supervision and internal communications policies. Furthermore, the project supports DoLSA to strengthen its external communications mechanism, to ensure that financial resources are allocated to run the centres.

Impact

Through different trainings provided to the public authorities, as well as empowering the managerial and the technical staff at schools, hospitals, and the water networks, operation and maintenance is ensured. Already today, more than 300 daily patients benefit from improved medical services at ATH; a number which is likely to increase after the new Emergency Wing becomes operational.

With the opening of the CSTC and in cooperation with the DoH, more than 9,061 employees (49% female) of the health sector, including groups of selected health staff from the neighboring province of Nineveh, received trainings.

Furthermore, by improving water supply infrastructures and sanitation services in Duhok city and its subdistricts, access to drinking water and sanitation services is stabilised for the most vulnerable people. The new water supply project serves more than 220,000 people in the Faida district, and the refugee and IDP camps by supplying 2,500 m³/h to the existing network.

So far, 185 teachers and principals have received trainings under the F4S approach to introduce healthy habits into their schools. Further, 58 teachers and 308 supervisors were trained to enhance the quality assurance system in their facility management, and 34 DoE staff and principals were trained.

In six community centres located inside IDP camps, different measures are ongoing to improve the psychosocial well-being of IDPs through formal and informal educational courses, basic skills trainings, sports, art, awareness-raising, and case management activities. Also, since 2020, 10,617 IDPs participated in the activities of these centers.

To support DoLSA, 78 members of their staff members received trainings. Financial, procurement and M&E systems were developed for them and they were supported to refine their visibility and develop a fundraising strategy and plan to find potential donors.

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