

Restoration of Peace, Livelihoods and Economic Cycles in Anbar (RePLECA)

Supporting peacebuilding, livelihoods, and agricultural value chains

The challenge

Historically, the largest Iraqi province of Anbar was the country's breadbasket, with its fertile farmland and water supply from the River Euphrates and surrounding lakes. Agriculture was the main provider of jobs and livelihoods for Anbar's rural and semi-rural population. This was especially so for women, with more than 40 percent earning their living in agriculture. The occupation and the fight against the so-called Islamic State (IS) have led to widespread destruction of productive and social infrastructure, including agricultural productive infrastructures and livelihoods, and large-scale internal displacement. The social upheavals resulting from the conflict and efforts to reintegrate formerly displaced population groups remain a major challenge for the communities and durable solutions cannot yet be provided for all people, especially returnees. For a large part of the population, essential basics for peaceful social coexistence, livelihoods and income generation are not met and many families are unable to meet their basic needs. The lack of employment and income opportunities and poor access to basic social services can result in conflict. Therefore, RePLECA seeks to strengthen the economic and social foundations for peaceful development in Anbar.

Our approach

The implementation areas of RePLECA are in the districts of Ramadi, Fallujah and Heet. RePLECA's strong service delivery is ensured through close and collaborative partnership with local administrations, especially the Governor's Office and relevant directorates. For the implementation of interventions, RePLECA

also draws on the strength of implementing partners such as the Norwegian Refugee Council (until end 2021), the Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (until end 2021), Mercy Corps, Near East Foundation (until beginning of 2024) as well as specialised international and Iraqi consulting firms.

RePLECA aims to improve livelihood prospects in the agricultural sector, following a value chain-oriented approach from seed to consumption. In addition, the project aims to strengthen social cohesion in the communities.

RePLECA implements activities towards four outputs: increasing the yields of smallholder households; promoting employment opportunities in the broader agricultural sector and agri-food-industry; strengthening the capacities of local peace actors; and improving the access to leisure activities with peace-education elements for school children and youth.

Project name	Restoration of Peace, Livelihoods and Economic Cycles in Anbar (RePLECA)
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Project region	Anbar
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Agriculture

So far, RePLECA has facilitated the rehabilitation and reconstruction of productive infrastructures, such as irrigation and drainage systems, providing greenhouses and agricultural inputs to smallholders. The project has rehabilitated nearly 1700 kilometers of irrigation canals, distributed or repaired about 60 irrigation and



Photo left: Training measure on gardening at a nursery in Ramadi

Photo right: Female local peace actors exchange views on promoting female participation in political decision-making processes.

drainage pumps and provided 300 greenhouses to beneficiaries.

To strengthen the relevant agricultural production systems in Anbar, RePLECA invests in trainings on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) as well as engaging in capacity development measures for agricultural extension workers in the Directorate of Agriculture. For that, the project has adopted the Farmer Field School Methodology and conducted training sessions on GAP for over 2,600 smallholder farmers to improve yields and maintain the fertility of farmers' land. These production methods aim to improve their ability to earn a sustainable income.

RePLECA also constructed the first Agricultural Training Centre and an administrative building for the Directorate of Agriculture's (DoA) sub-directorate in Ramadi and Heet, to further strengthen the state-extension services provided by the DoA. Both buildings are equipped with photovoltaic installations and were handed over to the Anbar Governorate. Additional construction measures, such as refrigerated and non-refrigerated storage facilities for agricultural products have been constructed and handed over to the partners.

Livelihoods

The project promotes employment in the processing, packaging, and marketing of agricultural produce to support the supply and consumption of local Anbari products. RePLECA developed a Business Activation Grant facility for approximately 350 small producers that includes trainings on sustainable business plans, business finance, and other aspects of entrepreneurial skills.

Furthermore, business development trainings targeted 900 female livestock farmers out of which 600 received loans to develop their businesses through a revolving fund facility.

In the Start Up Sector, 50 entrepreneurs received trainings and coaching to develop their business. After completing a round of competitive business development phases, 6 businesses will receive substantial seed funding. Being more centred on agricultural businesses in the first competition, the ongoing second iteration is focused on supporting agritech-entrepreneurs. RePLECA also supported vulnerable households to reduce hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 1,060 households received either multi-purpose cash assistance or were given access to temporary employment. These households were also trained in the prevention of applying negative coping mechanisms

such as indebtedness, sale of inputs, or child labour.

Strengthening local peace actors to improve social cohesion

With a long-term organisational and capacity development approach RePLECA supports local peace committees, the Central Reconciliation Committee, and civil society organisations in Anbar so that they can promote dialogue, conflict resolution and participation on their own responsibility. In this way, the project empowers local peace actors, especially young people and women, to actively contribute to peaceful and just communities.

RePLECA supports the creation of strong networks amongst the peace actors in Anbar to align approaches that foster social cohesion in the communities. This includes the implementation of peace initiatives that tackle identified conflicts in the communities. A Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Mechanism has been set-up to identify conflict drivers and to design respective response mechanisms.

Peace education in schools and youth facilities

Since late 2021, RePLECA supports access to peace education in schools as well as recreational activities that incorporate peace education elements in youth facilities.

More than 190 teachers and staff of the Directorate of Education were trained on peace education and supported to implement the curricular in schools. In 2023 the Directorate of Education took over the lead to supervise the peace education activities and to provide mentoring support to the trained teachers. By early 2024 more than 6,700 pupils have participated in peace education activities.

In cooperation with the Directorate of Youth and Sports, staff of youth centres, social facilities and CSOs were trained to offer recreational activities with peace education elements for youth. By early 2024 more than 4,750 youths have benefited from such activities.

To provide a positive learning environment and to create places for exchange for students, youth, and the whole community, RePLECA has already renovated and equipped five schools in Fallujah, Ramadi and Heet as well as Youth and Sports Centres in Fallujah and Ramadi.

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Contact person	Erik Mohns erik.mohns@giz.de

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Text	Salim Askar
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