

Livelihoods and economic growth for Anbar

Supporting peacebuilding, reconstruction and the restart of agricultural livelihoods

The challenge

The Anbar Governorate in western Iraq still suffers from security threats by remnants of the so-called 'Islamic State' (IS). The occupation and the fight against the terrorist group has led to widespread destruction of infrastructure and large-scale internal displacement of the population. The productive and social infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed in rural areas, as well as semi-urban and urban centres: streets, electricity, water supply, waste water systems, irrigation, hospitals and schools suffered immensely from the fighting. As the security situation is improving, more and more internally displaced people (IDPs) return to Anbar, adding to the strain on public infrastructure that is already overburdened with the basic needs of the present population. As of early 2020, about 1.3 million IDPs have returned to Anbar, making up about 80 per cent of the total number of displaced persons from the province. However, more than 4,000 families are still living in camps in other parts of Iraq, because they are lacking the funds needed to return home and rebuild their houses.

Anbar has historically been Iraq's breadbasket, due to good, cultivatable land and a sufficient water supply from the river Euphrates and surrounding lakes. Agriculture has been the main provider of jobs and livelihoods for the (semi-) rural population before the war, especially for Anbar's women, of whom more than 40 per cent earned their income in agriculture.

Due to the destruction of infrastructure and outdated farming methods, Anbar's agricultural sector is currently not able to compete with cheaper, imported goods from Iran and Turkey. Job opportunities in agriculture are sparse and many people leave the rural areas to seek employment in the cities of Fallujah and Ramadi. Both cities have grown significantly over the last five years and are overwhelmed by the demand for jobs and basic social services, which they cannot provide sufficiently.

Apart from physical destruction, the war has also left marks on the population of Anbar itself. The experience of renewed conflicts,

targeting of civilians by IS terrorists, and displacement, has led to widespread psychological, traumatic stress symptoms among them.

Our approach

In cooperation with the Ministry of Planning (MoP), the project aims at empowering the local population to improve their economic productivity and livelihoods, while creating and restoring sustainable economic cycles in the communities.

Project name	Restoration of Peace, Livelihoods, and Economic Cycles in Anbar
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Anbar
National partner	Ministry of Planning, Iraq
Duration	12/2019 – 06/2022

To achieve this, the project builds on four strategic pillars:

- Target communities benefit from the reconstruction of productive infrastructure, such as irrigation systems and greenhouses, to enable agricultural activities.
- Relevant local institutions receive trainings and subsidies to improve the framework conditions for rural development.
- Small-scale farmers and cooperatives are trained in modern production methods to improve their ability to earn a sustainable income. Additional employment promotion activities and subsidies create livelihood opportunities for vulnerable, rural households.
- The reconstruction and livelihood activities are accompanied by peacebuilding activities to improve social cohesion.

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