

Children of Iraq



UNICEF AND UNHCR OPEN JOINT OFFICE IN BASRA



On 22 January UNICEF and UNHCR opened a joint office in Basra city to expand support to the most deprived and vulnerable populations – children, internally displaced persons and refugees – in the southern governorates of Basra, Missan, Muthanna, Najaf, Al-Qadissiyah and Thi-Qar.

UNICEF's Representative to Iraq called the opening of the Basra office a "historic day for UNICEF in Iraq", adding "this office will enable us to work more closely with all local partners to help respond to the most urgent needs of the 1.5 million children across Iraq's south who are deprived of many of their fundamental rights."

The inauguration event was attended by the Governor of Basra, Dr. Khalaf Abdulsamad, local government officials and representatives of Basra's NGO and diplomatic communities.

KRG ADOPTS STANDARDS TO ENSURE SCHOOLS BECOME OPTIMUM LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR STUDENTS



As part of a European Union funded project to improve access to basic education in Iraq, 10 key standards to ensure that schools provide the best learning environments for students have been adopted by the Kurdistan Regional Government. UNICEF and the EU are working with the National and Kurdistan Ministries of Education to roll out a Child-Friendly School programme to over 600 schools in Iraq.

The 10 standards include aspects related to the school building, school management, the capacity of teachers and the involvement of local communities in the schools. Upon the launch of the document by the KRG later this month, UNICEF will work with the local Ministry of Education to implement these standards in schools across the Kurdistan Region.

REHABILITATION OF WATER AND SANITATION FACILITIES IN OVER 240 SCHOOLS CONCLUDED



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UNICEF and the Government of Australia have concluded a \$3 million project to provide water and sanitation facilities to more than 100,000 students in 240 schools across Iraq. The project included training teachers and children on better hygiene practices and ensuring that all of the rehabilitated facilities are properly maintained.

Improved water and sanitation facilities in schools are a component of a larger initiative UNICEF is supporting to make schools more child-friendly so that all students have a better learning environment.

UNICEF IRAQ'S REPRESENTATIVE VISITS UNICEF-SUPPORTED PROJECTS IN BASRA

Dr. Marzio Babilie, UNICEF's Representative to Iraq, visited a number of UNICEF-supported projects in Basra during his visit to the southern Iraqi governorate from January 21-23, 2013. During these visits, Dr. Babilie had discussions with high level Governorate officials regarding further cooperation on issues related to health, education and child protection as well as on focusing interventions on the governorate's around 300,000 most disadvantaged children.



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Joined by Dr. Makki Hawash, Director General of the Basra Department of Education, the UNICEF team visited Accelerated Learning Classes at the Basra Correctional Facility that were recently opened by UNICEF and the local Education Department. Dr. Marzio Babilie congratulated the students on recently sitting their first mid-year exams at the school and encouraged them to use the unique opportunity of receiving a quality education to improve their lives. The success of the school has encouraged local authorities in other governorates to approach UNICEF for support in starting similar initiatives.

UNICEF's team also visited Basra's Nutritional Rehabilitation Centre, which specializes in treating children with severe malnutrition, as well as the Basra Department of Health's Training Centre. Both institutions have been supported by UNICEF with capacity building activities and provision of equipment. The team also met with Dr. Riyadh Abdul-Ameer, Director General of Basra's Department of Health, to discuss the planning of joint activities in 2013.



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Syria Crisis



As violence in Syria endures, thousands of people continue to flee to Iraq. Over 81 thousand Syrian refugees have crossed over to Iraq in the last year, including over 60,000 since September 2012. The majority of refugees reside in two refugee camps - Al-Qaim in Anbar governorate and Domiz in Dohuk governorate.

Children make up roughly half of all refugees in the camps. While the Government of Iraq and UN agencies have provided many essential services to meet their basic needs, the demands continue to increase with the arrival of new refugees as well as the cold and rainy winter months.

OVER 800 CHILDREN AT AL-QAIM REFUGEE CAMP RETURN TO SCHOOL



On the 15th of January, teaching started at Al-Qaim refugee camp's second school. UNICEF and the local Department of Education worked together to ensure the school is functioning so Syrian refugee children do not miss out on their right to education while they are displaced from their homes. More than 600 primary school aged children already go to school in Al-Qaim's first school but with new refugees arriving daily more space was needed. Thirteen mobile classrooms were provided by UNICEF while the local Department of Education placed 27 teachers and staff to work in the school.

OVER 4,000 CHILDREN UNDER-FIVE RECEIVE WINTER CLOTHES IN DOMIZ REFUGEE CAMP



Since the onset of winter in December, UNICEF has been working to ensure that children are warm during the coldest part of the winter that lies ahead. In mid-January, UNICEF distributed warm clothes to children under-5 at the Domiz refugee camp in northern Iraq in addition to supporting flu immunization campaigns, installing water boilers to heat communal bathrooms and ensuring that children go to school in warm and dry spaces. These responses are all designed to ward off illness during winter, especially acute respiratory infections which are the greatest killer disease of children in Iraq.

