

IRAQ

OUR WORK IN IRAQ

STATUS OF WOMEN IN IRAQ

IN IRAQ, WOMEN HAVE FACED SETBACKS IN EDUCATION, ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT, AND RIGHTS WITH EACH OUTBREAK OF VIOLENCE AND CONFLICT. WITH THE RISE OF SECTARIAN VIOLENCE AND TERRORIST GROUPS SUCH AS ISIS, THE RISKS FACING CIVILIANS AND AID WORKERS HAVE GROWN, AND MANY HAVE BEEN FORCED TO LEAVE OR SUSPEND THEIR WORK.

In this context, women face new constraints to their already limited access to opportunity. One in three girls aged 12-14 is not enrolled in school, and 28 percent of women age 15 and older are illiterate. These education limits, combined with restrictions on mobility exacerbated by instability and conflict, have a detrimental effect on their ability to find employment or create businesses in the struggling Iraqi economy. Currently, only 11 percent of women over age 15 are employed, compared to 60 percent of men. With women leading nearly 1 in 10 households in Iraq, many families are left even more vulnerable to poverty and marginalization.

Although gender equality is enshrined in Iraq's constitution, women continue to face high levels of violence and efforts to erode their rights. One in five women aged 15-49 has suffered physical violence from their husband, and 83 percent have been subjected to controlling behavior by them. In the Iraqi parliament, women hold 25 percent of the seats, as reserved by a quota. Recent attempts to pass laws that would legalize child marriage and legal interpretations that enable judges to give lighter sentences to men convicted of honor killings highlight the ongoing challenges women face to achieving full legal equality.

WOMEN FOR WOMEN INTERNATIONAL IN IRAQ

JOB SKILLS ALONE ARE NOT ENOUGH TO EMPOWER WOMEN: THEY MUST KNOW THEIR RIGHTS, BE ABLE TO SPEAK OUT ABOUT THEM, AND HAVE RESOURCES TO HELP THEM MAKE DECISIONS BEFORE THEY CAN USE VOCATIONAL SKILLS TO CREATE LONG-TERM ECONOMIC STABILITY IN THEIR LIVES.

Women for Women International first opened its doors in Iraq in 2003. Since then, we have trained 14,089 women. Today, our country office headquarters is located in Baghdad, with a satellite office in Karbala. Our work is concentrated in eight districts while the Baghdad office serves Sadr City, Al Shaab, and Karada. In 2014, an estimated 1,966 women in Iraq will be served through the Women for Women International program.

STRONGER
WOMEN,
STRONGER
NATIONS

OUR MISSION

In countries affected by conflict and war, Women for Women International supports the most marginalized women to earn and save money, improve health and well-being, influence decisions in their home and community, and connect to networks for support. By utilizing skills, knowledge, and resources, she is able to create sustainable change for herself, her family, and community.

WHAT WE DO: OUR PROGRAM

WOMEN FOR WOMEN INTERNATIONAL'S 12-MONTH TRAINING PROGRAM PROVIDES POLITICALLY, ECONOMICALLY, AND SOCIALLY EXCLUDED WOMEN IN COUNTRIES AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE WITH THE VOCATIONAL SKILLS, HEALTH INFORMATION, AND RIGHTS EDUCATION THEY NEED TO OVERCOME POVERTY, MAKE HEALTHY DECISIONS, AND BUILD LOCAL NETWORKS TO ADVOCATE FOR THEIR RIGHTS.

When women are able to sustain an income, be well, make decisions, and have social networks to support them, they develop the confidence they need to transform their lives, families, and communities. Our program promotes women's social and economic empowerment as the key to building more peaceful and stable societies.

Program participants are assigned to a group of 25 women who meet bi-weekly to engage in learning together. They receive life skills training, including lessons in health awareness, decision-making, negotiation, and civic participation. Women also learn business and vocational skills and gain access to income-generating activities that enable them to move towards economic self-sufficiency.

All of the trainings are led by local trainers and tailored to local contexts and markets. Prior to vocational training, numeracy training covering fundamental arithmetic skills is offered to participants identified as innumerate.

Every month during the training program, each participant receives a small cash transfer as a condition of participating in the program. Participants are free to use these funds however they wish. Many use them to purchase medicine, food, clothing, or transportation, to pay tuition fees for children, or to invest in starting a small business. Women for Women International also encourages participants to save a portion of their monthly training stipend.

IRAQ

COUNTRY OFFICE

STARTED: 2003

HEADQUARTERS: Baghdad

ADDITIONAL OFFICES: Karbala

PROGRAMS IN:

Baghdad: Sadr City, Al Shaab,
Karada

AVERAGE

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

AVERAGE DAILY INCOME: \$0.52

CHILDREN IN CARE: 3

ILLITERATE: 19 percent

ATTENDED PRIMARY SCHOOL:
59 percent

AGE: 18-50 years

VOCATIONAL

SKILLS & TRAINING

Community Schooling

Date Canning

Hairdressing

Screen Printing

Tailoring

Food processing

Candle-making

OUR IMPACT

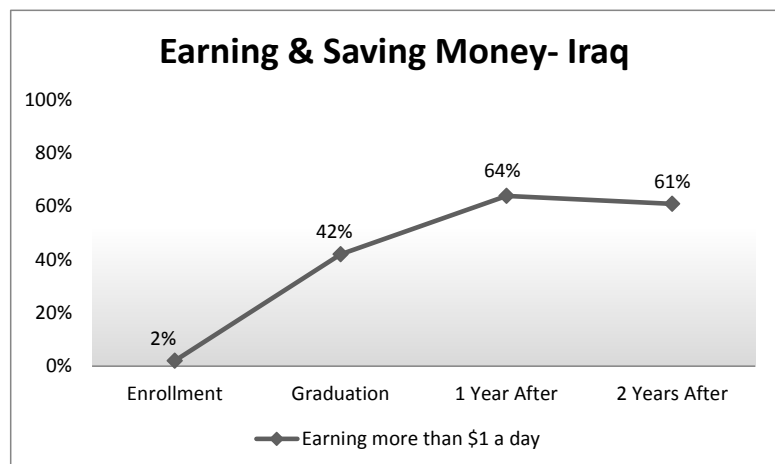
OUR PROGRAM IS FOCUSED ON HELPING WOMEN ACHIEVE THE FOLLOWING FOUR KEY OUTCOMES:

1 WOMEN EARN AND SAVE MONEY

When women earn an income, they reinvest a much higher portion in their families and communities, compared to men.

In Iraq, women demonstrate the ability to increase their daily income even two years after graduating from our program, earning an average of \$2.88 per day two years after graduation, compared to \$0.52 at enrollment.

(See footnote 1)

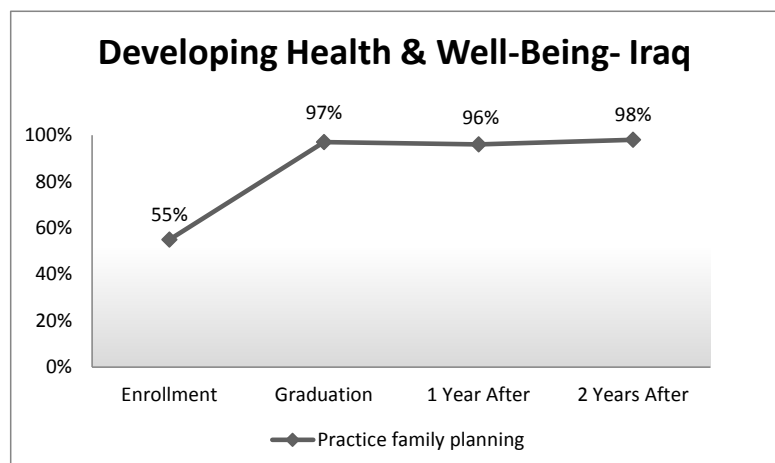


2 WOMEN DEVELOP HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Access to affordable and accessible healthcare – as well as training in disease prevention – significantly reduces preventable deaths.

Women continue to apply improved knowledge about how to protect their health and well-being after graduating from our program. 55 percent of women report practicing family planning at enrollment, compared to 98 percent two years after graduation.

(See footnote 1)

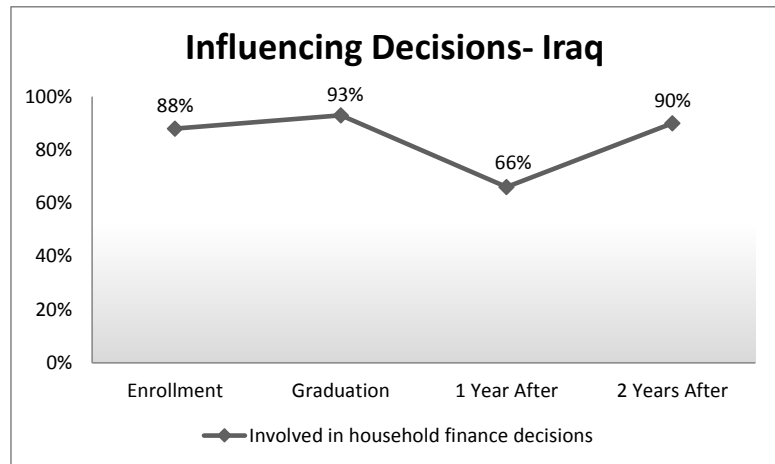


3 WOMEN INFLUENCE DECISIONS IN THE HOME AND COMMUNITY

Studies show that women exercise greater decision-making power within their families when they are educated, earn a stable income, and have access to resources such as land and credit.

Women become increasingly involved in making the decisions that affect their lives. 88 percent of women reported being involved in household financial decisions at enrollment, compared to 93 percent at graduation.

(See footnote 1)

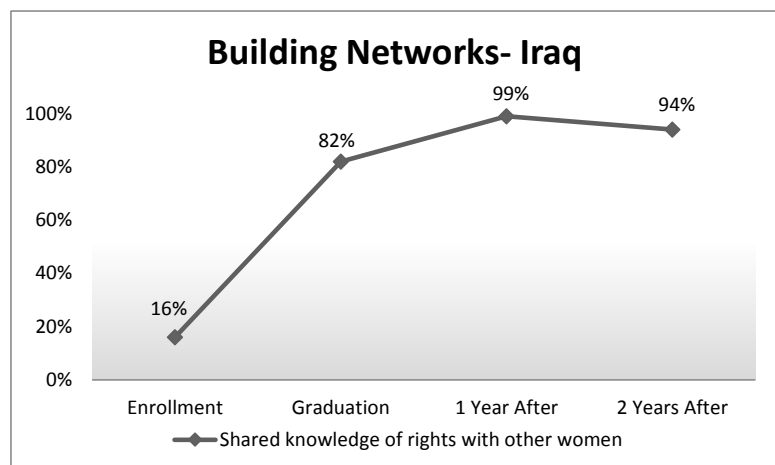


4 WOMEN CREATE AND CONNECT TO NETWORKS FOR SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY

As program participants, women learn the importance of working together. By working in groups, they also benefit from a support system and social networks.

Women share what they learn about their rights with other women in their communities. Almost all women reported educating another woman on her rights two years after graduation, compared to 16 percent at enrollment. Educating a woman yields dividends not only for herself, but for others in her community.

(See footnote 1)



FACTS ABOUT WOMEN IN IRAQ

The UN's Gender Inequality Index ranks Iraq as 120 out of 208 countries, with 55.7 percent of national achievement lost as a result of gender inequality.²

51 percent of Iraqi women believe that a husband beating his wife is a justifiable action.³

Iraq's maternal mortality rate is 67 female deaths per 100,000 live births.⁴

Only 53 percent of women who are married or in a union between the ages of 15 and 49 use some form of contraception.⁵

The average Iraqi woman will give birth 4.1 times in her life.⁶

Only 15 percent of women over the age of 15 participate in the labor force.⁷

In 2013, only 25 percent of parliamentary seats were held by women.⁸

LEARN MORE

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FOOTNOTES

¹ Data represents women who graduated from our program in Iraq between 2010 and 2011.

² "Table 4: 2012 Gender Inequality Index." United Nations Development Programme. Accessed 6 June 2014. <https://data.undp.org/dataset/Table-4-Gender-Inequality-Index/pq34-nwq7>.

³ "The State of the World's Children 2014." United Nations Children's Fund. Accessed 4 June 2014. http://www.unicef.org/sowc2014/numbers/documents/english/SOWC2014_In%20Numbers_28%20Jan.pdf.

⁴ "Maternal Mortality Ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)." The World Bank. Accessed 4 June 2014. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.STA.MMRT>.

⁵ "Contraceptive Prevalence (percent of women aged 15-49)." The World Bank. Accessed 4 June 2014.

⁶ "Fertility Rate, Total (births per woman)." The World Bank. Accessed 4 June 2014.

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.CONU.ZS>.

⁷ "Labor Force Participation Rate, Female (percent of female population ages 15+) (Modeled ILO estimate)." The World Bank. Accessed 4 June 2014.

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN>.

⁸ "Proportion of Seats Held by Women in National Parliaments (percent)." The World Bank. Accessed 4 June 2014. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS>.

⁸ "Proportion of Seats Held by Women in National Parliaments (percent)." The World Bank. Accessed 4 June 2014.

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS>