



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition (FSN)

CASH FOR WORK IN IRAQ

FAO's Cash for Work (CFW) initiatives provide income support to poor, vulnerable households through short-term, intensive and unskilled labour to build or rehabilitate community productive assets. In doing so, CFW addresses people's basic needs, prevents negative coping strategies and stimulates local economies through the direct injection of cash.

BACKGROUND

Years of conflict in Iraq have created a protracted and complex humanitarian crisis which has eroded livelihoods, massively displaced local populations and increased the vulnerability to food insecurity for the majority of Iraqis across the country. With 2 million people in need of food security assistance and 3.35 million returnees, it is crucial to provide income opportunities to families in rural areas affected by conflict and where competition for employment is high, jobs are scarce and people are struggling to survive.

Crop production in Salah Al Din and most parts of Kirkuk governorates is heavily dependent on irrigation systems. In many areas retaken from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), infrastructure such as water supplies for agricultural production and domestic use has been damaged or destroyed as a result of military operations. This has disrupted agricultural production and forced families to engage in negative coping mechanisms, such as reducing the number of meals per day.

COUNTRY

📍 Iraq



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Participants in FAO's cash for work project clean the main irrigation canal in the area.
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ACTION

Funded by the Belgian Government, FAO launched in 2016 a CFW programme to rehabilitate land and agricultural infrastructure for 12 000 conflict-affected people in 30 villages in Kirkuk, Anbar, Salah Al Din and Ninewa governorates. In addition to benefit local farmers by enabling them to restart or expand farming activities with rehabilitated infrastructure, the project provided agricultural livelihood opportunities for displaced people returning home, improving their income and employment opportunities.

Furthermore, the work not only allowed farming activities to get back underway, which is the foundation for the country's recovery, but the introduction of cash flows revitalized local markets whilst the involvement of local communities ensured the sustainability of the results.



A participant in FAO's cash for work project cleans the main irrigation canal in the area.
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RESULTS

27 KM of the  irrigation canal rehabilitated in three target locations

660 people  provided with temporary employment opportunities in agriculture

9.6 KM of  water drainage canals from agriculture fields and land cleaned and improved

660 poor  households received cash to purchase food, cover medical care and repair their houses

5.5 KM of Farm-  to-Market-Paths/Roads rehabilitated through maintenance work

2 040  individuals were directly benefited by the project

100% of exit surveyees reported that they make use of any water and/or agriculture infrastructure or productive communal asset rehabilitated through the project. 

BENEFICIARIES

- > 660 beneficiaries employed (146 women and 514 men)
- > 660 poor households
- > 2 040 individuals

PARTNERS

- > Ministry of Agriculture
- > Community-based organizations

“It is our collective responsibility to collaborate with FAO to rehabilitate canals in our area. Eventually, this work will benefit the farmers in Saqlawiyah.”

- Shaikh Abdallah, a tribal leader in Saqlayiah village.