

Photo: Huda Ali



CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION & CLIMATE JUSTICE IN IRAQ ●

CARE International in Iraq resumed its activities in 2014, focusing then on humanitarian response efforts and providing development assistance to vulnerable populations across multiple Governorates in Iraq—including Dohuk, Ninewa, Salah Al-Din, Al-Anbar, and Diyala. With the end of the humanitarian cluster system announced by the UN in 2022, the country is now transitioning towards development initiatives. As part of this transition, CARE International in Iraq is expanding its activities into the southern regions of Dhi Qar

and Basra, while continuing to maintain operations in the northern areas. This shift signifies a strategic expansion of our programming to address broader development needs in the country, aligning with our commitment to supporting communities across Iraq. Registered with both, the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Iraqi Federal Government, CARE operates currently with a main office in Erbil, and secondary offices in both Duhok and Baghdad.

OVERVIEW OF CARE INTERNATIONAL IN IRAQ KEY STRATEGIC INITIATIVES 2022-2027

CARE International in Iraq strategically focuses on addressing the immediate needs of vulnerable populations. This involves a range of interventions spanning humanitarian action, economic justice, climate resilience, inclusive decision-making, rights to water and health, data-driven impact assessments, strategic partnerships and investment in its staff. Each initiative integrates climate considerations to ensure a comprehensive approach and sustainable development.

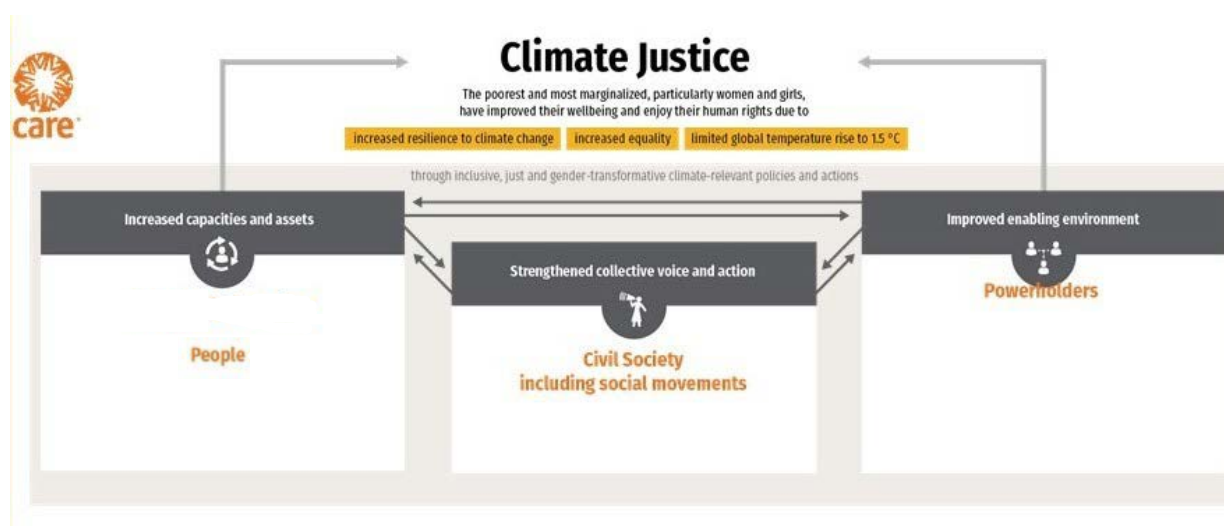
CARE International in Iraq focuses on:

- Strategic Initiative 1: Humanitarian Action
- Strategic Initiative 2: Economic Justice and Climate Resilience
- Strategic Initiative 3: Climate-Inclusive Voice, Leadership, Participation & Decision-Making
- Strategic Initiative 3: Women and Youth Voice, Leadership, Participation & Decision-Making
- Strategic Initiative 4: Right to Water and Right to Health
- Strategic Initiative 5: Data, Evidence and Impact
- Strategic Initiative 6: Partnerships
- Strategic Initiative 7: People

CARE CLIMATE JUSTICE STRATEGY 2030

The CARE Climate Justice Strategy 2030 underscores the critical impact of the climate crisis on the world's most vulnerable. **CARE's overarching objective is to enhance the resilience and adaptive capacities of 25 million poor and marginalized individuals by 2030, with a particular focus on women and girls.** By aligning its global climate justice goals with the specific challenges faced by vulnerable communities in Iraq, CARE aims to contribute significantly to the resilience and well-being of those most affected by the climate crisis, embodying a commitment to equitable and sustainable development. CARE's approach to climate justice in its 2030 Strategy revolves around three interrelated pathways of change:

1. **Increased Capacities and Assets for All People:** CARE strives to support the adaptive capacities and assets of individuals, encompassing the marginalized communities in Iraq. This involves targeted interventions aimed at enhancing resilience to the impacts of climate change.
2. **Improved Enabling Environment through Policies and Actions:** CARE advocates for a more conducive environment by influencing policies and actions undertaken by powerholders in both the Global North and the Global South. This approach is essential in mitigating the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable populations.



3. **Strengthened Collective Voice and Action of Civil Society, including Social Movements:** CARE emphasizes the vital role of civil society, including social movements, in effecting change. In Iraq, this involves fostering collaboration and collective action to amplify the voices of marginalized communities, ensuring that their experiences and needs are considered in climate-related decision-making processes

CLIMATE CHANGE IN IRAQ

The UN identified Iraq as the world's 5th most vulnerable country to global warming. This is positioning the country on the frontline of an escalating climate crisis. The nation's geography exposes it to a range of environmental hazards, all of which are further exacerbated by the impacts of climate change: **Rising temperatures, insufficient rainfall, drought, water shortage and the prevalence of dust storms and floods are becoming more frequent in the country.**

The consequences of climate change disproportionately impact the most vulnerable communities, with **94% of displaced populations in the southern governorates attributing their displacement to water shortages.** The degradation of southern Iraq's marshes stands as an example of biodiversity loss and large-scale displacement triggered by the climate crisis. These environmental concerns intertwine with Iraq's deep social divides and inequalities, creating a risk for a systemic crisis. The country finds itself among the most vulnerable to climate change shocks, facing both, physical impacts such as temperature rise, water scarcity, and extreme events, as well as financial risks, linked to its reliance on oil revenues.

The water shortages Iraq is facing is driven by low rainfall rates, rising temperatures, mismanagement, population growth and increasing urbanization. Climate change exacerbates these challenges, particularly through the rise of drought conditions, leading especially in the south of the country to an overall decline in water availability. Risks such as saltwater intrusion into groundwater and desertification

downstream of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers further stress Iraq's water resources. **The nation's agriculture, the second-largest economic sector after oil, faces a significant decline due to climate change-induced droughts and water shortages. This results in substantial crop production losses, with rain-fed agriculture-dependent farmers experiencing the most pronounced impacts.**

Rising temperatures and heat stress cause significant health risks in Iraq. Additionally, frequent and intense floods impact the health of vulnerable communities directly. Furthermore, global warming causes indirectly food insecurity and heightened vulnerability to disease outbreaks in Iraq.

Addressing Iraq's climate crisis requires therefore a holistic approach that not only acknowledges the immediate environmental challenges in country but also considers the far-reaching social, economic, and health implications for the Iraqi people.

Climate Change and Internally Displaced Populations in Iraq

In 2024, CARE Iraq published a study analyzing the linkages between Climate Change and internal displacement in Iraq. The study highlights how changing climate patterns, such as rising temperatures and water scarcity, directly influence migration. Findings from interviews with 1,024 Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in Sumel District indicate **a significant consideration of climate factors in their decisions regarding return to their Areas of Origin.** Many IDPs cite weather conditions and environmental degradation as deterrents to returning home.

The study emphasizes the urgent need for integrated strategies that address the intersecting challenges of climate change and displacement. By recognizing these complexities, we can better support affected communities and promote resilience in the face of climate change.



Nursery of the College of Agriculture in Duhok
(Photo: Sihem Attalah/2024)

CARE CLIMATE JUSTICE IN IRAQ

Generation Green – Empowering Youths for Climate Change Mitigation Actions

- Budget: 293,000 EUR
- Donor: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Luxembourg
- Timeline: January 2024 – December 2026

The project aims at enhancing climate resilience, promoting climate-smart agricultural practices and contributing to climate change mitigation efforts. The distribution of small grants and training support enables villages to construct rain-fed dams using innovative techniques, thereby enhancing climate resilience, particularly in areas lacking rivers for dam functionality.

As part of the initiative, a youth group is established in collaboration with Dohuk's Agricultural and Environmental Department colleges. Skilled trainers educate participants on eco-friendly, climate-smart farming techniques and enhancing nursery skills. The group's core focus lies in advocating for

climate action, renewables and innovative agriculture.

The project also wants to raise public awareness about innovative agriculture, climate action, and early warning systems within the Iraqi society. CARE is therefore targeting 25,000 individuals through schools, universities, government channels and social media. Additionally, youth groups are empowered with essential climate training.

Building Community Resilience Through Environmental Innovations and Climate Smart Practices in Basra

- Budget: 50,000 EUR
- Donor: CARE International
- Timeline: February 2024 – July 2024

Reduced agricultural productivity due to climate change is a pressing concern for farmers in Basra, Iraq. This project addresses this issue by working with 100 farming households in two climate vulnerable communities who will be identified after an area assessment in coordination with local government and stakeholders. The project aims to enhance the



Water conservation awareness raising in Eminke village, Duhok Governorate (Photo: Huda Ali/2023)

understanding of climate change and its mitigation measures, to provide access to essential farm inputs to boost agricultural productivity and to promote community resilience-building.

Basra faces significant challenges, including water scarcity, desertification, and soil salinization, which have resulted in declining agricultural land and livelihoods. The project, implemented by CARE Germany and Tearfund UK, targets women, youth and vulnerable community groups. It aims to build the resilience of these vulnerable farming households through climate-smart and water-efficient practices.

Emergency Water Supply for Vulnerable Communities in Dohuk District

- Budget: 350,000 EUR
- Donor: PROLOK
- Timeline: August 2023 – April 2024

CARE rehabilitated water sources in Eminke village through the construction of boreholes. CARE also contributed to bolstering the capabilities of the Department of Water (DOW) in Dohuk. This was achieved through capacity-building initiatives aimed at safeguarding water sources from contamination and hazards. The program involved Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) training to DOW personnel, equipping them with safety protocols and tools for water stations. The project launched a campaign to conserve water, aiming to increase awareness about responsible water usage in response to scarcity. The campaign advocated for the government’s adoption of sustainable practices, such as the reuse of grey water for livestock and agriculture after initial treatment. By encouraging these eco-friendly approaches, the initiative sought to contribute to both, immediate relief and long-term resilience in the face of water scarcity.



Healthcare workers in Baadre sub-district, Duhok Governorate (Photo: CARE Iraq/2022)

MotherCare: Protecting Maternal Health in Iraq and Promoting Informed Adaptation to Climate Change

- Budget: 630,000 EUR
- Donor: ADH
- Timeline : June 2024 – August 2025

CARE is addressing the specific vulnerabilities faced by women during elevated temperatures. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, this project adopts a health-focused approach, prioritizing the delivery of essential healthcare,

support and community resilience-building. The project is focusing on Ninewa and Basra and aims at addressing the intersection of maternal health and climate change. Through specifically targeting healthcare practitioners, it wants to strengthen healthcare and resilience. Pregnant women and young mothers affected by extreme heat temperatures are the primary focus of the project, while families and community members also benefit from heightened awareness of climate-related health hazards.

She Leads in Food Security (SLiFS)

- Budget: 760,000 EUR (GIZ) and 100,000 EUR (ADH)
- Donor: GIZ and ADH
- Timeline: November 2022 – December 2023

This collaborative project, a partnership between CARE Iraq and The Lotus Flower, addresses food security and livelihood initiatives in Dohuk Governorate, targeting IDPs, refugees, host communities and returnees in Sinjar District. With dual objectives, the project aims to raise awareness among vulnerable populations about food waste and engage them in agricultural activities to enhance food security and create income opportunities. Simultaneously, in Sinjar, where 80% rely on agriculture, CARE facilitates farmer association training, workshops on climate-smart technologies and supports small-holder female farmers with livelihood activation grants for sustainable food security.

As an integral component of the same project, households in Essyan Camp are actively participating in a biodegradable waste collection and processing system. This initiative, building up on the GIZ project 'Ecobot system', converts organic waste into compost within 24 hours, alleviating the strain on Dohuk landfills and reducing methane emissions. CARE's comprehensive efforts include waste collection in the camp, training on waste segregation for 800 households and the distribution of suitable garbage cans.



Training on smart agriculture practices in Essyan camp greenhouses, Sinjar District, Ninawa Governorate (Photo: Huda Ali/2023)

For more information contact:

- Sihem Attalah, CARE Iraq | attalah@care.de
- Thuy-Binh Nguyen, CARE Climate Justice Center | nguyen@carefrance.org
- To get to know CARE Climate Justice Center, visit [CARE Climate Change](#).