



BAGHDAD WOMEN ASSOCIATION

STRATEGY

2025 - 2028

Historical Background of the Organization

Baghdad Women Association is an Iraqi national non-governmental organization led by women. It was founded in June 2004 and operates in four provinces across Iraq and the Kurdistan Region. The association is one of the leading organizations in the field of women's rights, striving to reduce violence against women and girls by providing all necessary support services for survivors and advocating for the implementation of appropriate governmental laws and policies. Additionally, the association works to enhance women's political participation by developing leadership skills, knowledge, and capacity building. Baghdad Women Association continues to achieve its goals by promoting women's rights and strengthening their role in society. The association is officially registered in Iraq with the NGO Directorate of the General Secretariat for the Council of Ministers under the number (1017090) and in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq with the Directorate of Civil Society Organizations under the number (I-2705).

Vision

BWA's vision is to combat all forms of violence against women and girls, while ensuring their legal protection, equality, respect and all human rights.

Mission

To limit and mitigate violence against women and girls by providing all required services for women survivors of violence; by calling to implement the appropriate laws, policies, and government programmes to support women, while aiming to increase the political involvement of women through the development of leadership skills through knowledge, growth, and capacity building.

Core Values

1. Empowerment:

We believe in empowering women and girls to reclaim control over their lives, destinies, and bodies. Through our programs and services, we strive to provide the necessary tools, resources, and support systems that enable survivors of justice imbalances between sexes-based violence to rebuild and thrive. Empowerment is not only our goal but our unwavering commitment.

2. Equality:

Equality is the cornerstone of our vision. BWA stands firm in its dedication to achieving justice between sexes in all aspects of life. We advocate for the implementation of laws, policies, and government programs that eradicate discrimination, fostering a society where women and girls have the same rights, opportunities, and privileges as their counterparts.

3. Respect:

Respect is the bedrock of our interactions, both within our organization and in our engagement with the community. We treat every individual with dignity, recognizing the inherent worth and unique experiences of each person. By fostering an environment of mutual respect, we aim to create a society where the rights and contributions of women are valued and upheld.

4. Human Rights:

BWA is committed to upholding and protecting the human rights of women and girls. We advocate for legal protection and work tirelessly to ensure that all individuals, regardless of sex, have the right to live free from violence and discrimination. Our commitment to human rights extends to every aspect of our work, promoting a just and equitable society.

5. Integrity:

Integrity is non-negotiable in our pursuit of justice. BWA operates with transparency, honesty, and accountability in all our endeavors. We believe in the importance of maintaining the highest ethical standards to build trust with our beneficiaries, partners, and the wider community. Our actions align with our words, reflecting our dedication to creating lasting, positive change.

6. Inclusivity:

BWA embraces diversity and strives to create an inclusive environment that values and respects the unique contributions of every individual. We recognize the intersectionality of issues related to justice imbalances between sexes-based violence and work to address the diverse needs of women and girls, considering factors such as ethnicity, socio-economic background, and cultural differences.

General Context Analysis

Iraq faces multiple challenges that directly impact the lives of women and girls, necessitating strategic interventions to promote their rights, protect them from violence, enhance their economic and social roles, and ensure their participation in leadership and decision-making processes. These challenges stem from political, economic, social, and cultural factors, requiring integrated responses to achieve sustainable development. Women and girls in Iraq experience high rates of violence, which have been exacerbated by armed conflicts, political instability, and a weak legal framework for their protection. Various forms of violence pose a serious threat to personal and social security, including domestic and community-based violence, early and forced marriages driven by economic and social pressures, as well as the increasing challenges of digital violence and online blackmail due to the widespread use of technology and social media. Additionally, women from minority groups face targeted violence due to their religious or ethnic identities, leading to additional suffering such as forced displacement, restricted access to education and employment, and severe psychological challenges caused by violence, abduction, and unsafe living conditions in

displacement camps. Legal barriers, such as the lack of official registration for their children, further complicate their future rights and opportunities.

Additionally, women face increasing negative impacts due to climate change and environmental crises. In Iraq, women are among the most vulnerable groups to the consequences of climate change, such as drought, desertification, and environmental degradation, which affect their livelihoods and exacerbate their economic and social struggles. During environmental crises, women's responsibilities often increase due to their roles in agriculture, livestock herding, and water collection, placing an additional burden on them in already deteriorating conditions. Moreover, the rise in environmental crises has led to an increase in the number of displaced women and girls, exposing them to greater risks of violence, forced displacement, and limited access to essential services.

Furthermore, women's rights defenders and feminist organizations face threats and backlash from groups opposing gender equality, attempting to obstruct their progress, limit their participation in public life, and restrict their opportunities to drive change and promote gender equality. Despite international commitments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and UN Security Council Resolution 1325, implementation remains challenging due to the absence of effective legislation, weak institutional response, and the influence of societal customs and traditions. A key challenge is the delay in passing the Domestic Violence Law, which faces opposition from social and political groups that perceive it as a threat to family values, thereby hindering comprehensive legal protection for survivors of violence. Additionally, proposed amendments to the Personal Status Law affecting women's rights in (marriage, divorce, and child custody) remain highly controversial, as some groups seek to weaken existing legal protections for women.

Women also face significant challenges that hinder their participation in the labor market and their economic empowerment. Among the most prominent challenges are the high unemployment rates among women compared to men, limited access to financial resources and funding to support entrepreneurship, and discrimination in the workplace regarding wages, promotions, and job stability. Additionally, the lack of adequate and effective social protection policies, especially for women in cases of motherhood or informal work, exacerbates these challenges. These issues are further intensified by the negative impacts of economic crises, such as inflation, reduced job opportunities, and limited funding for organizations working in the field of women's rights, which increases the vulnerability of women and exacerbates their economic and social hardships. Based on this, the response requires the enhancement of economic and social policies that create a supportive environment for empowering women and girls, promote their access to sustainable economic opportunities, and ensure they receive the necessary social protection.

Despite a relative improvement in women's participation in some areas, challenges remain, such as the weak political representation of women in decision-making positions, the lack of political will to enhance women's participation in leadership roles, and societal constraints that hinder the acceptance of women as leaders in political,

economic, and social spheres. Achieving change in this area requires the development and implementation of legislation that supports women's empowerment and strengthens partnerships with government entities and civil society to support women in leadership roles and ensure a safe environment for their effective participation in decision-making processes.

The general context analysis in Iraq reveals that women and girls still face significant challenges preventing the achievement of justice and equality. Despite international and national commitments, there remains a gap in the actual implementation of these commitments. This underscores the importance of developing integrated strategies that address the deep-rooted causes of these problems and provide sustainable solutions. Baghdad Women Association will continue its efforts to ensure the protection of women and girls, enhance their economic and social independence, and ensure their fair representation in decision-making positions, in line with the strategic goals for the period (2025-2028).

Main Objectives

Objective 1: Reducing Violence Against Women and Girls

1. Promoting Human Rights and Protecting Women and Girls Exposed to Violence, Baghdad Women Association aims to enhance human rights, particularly the rights of women and girls, as an integral part of human rights. Through its work over the years, the association has contributed to reinforcing the principles upheld by international agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and Security Council Resolution 1325, as well as the national plans adopted by Iraq to provide protection for women and enhance their role in the peacebuilding process.

Building on these commitments, the association offers services aimed at raising public awareness on women's and girls' issues, educating women about their legal rights and how to defend them, and facilitating access to justice by providing free legal consultations and court representation, especially for survivors of violence. The association also provides psychological support to women, helping them cope with the psychological and social effects of violence, thereby enhancing their ability to live in a safe environment.

2. Breaking the Cycle of Violence and Enhancing Social Stability

Through its programs, Baghdad Women Association aims to change societal attitudes toward violence by promoting community dialogue across different groups. The association works to strengthen collaboration with relevant government institutions to improve their response to cases of violence and enhance their role in maintaining social stability.

3. Advocating for the Strengthening of Legislation, Laws, and Policy Improvements Based on a Human Rights Approach to Protect Women and Girls

We aim to enhance the national response to issues concerning women and girls by improving national legislation and policies and building the capacity of relevant institutions. This includes collaborating with civil society actors and decision-makers to amend discriminatory laws and policies that hinder the achievement of justice and equality for women and girls and expanding advocacy campaigns to improve implementation mechanisms.

Additionally, we work to ensure that national plans align with international standards, such as the National Human Rights Plan and the National Strategy for Iraqi Women, in accordance with international conventions like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which is consistent with the principles outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These principles emphasize the rights of women and girls and their protection from violence and discrimination.

Objective 2: Enhancing the Social and Economic Status of Women and Girls

1. Economic Growth and Empowerment

Economic empowerment of women is a fundamental pillar for enhancing their independence and ensuring their active participation in development. This objective is grounded in international resolutions that emphasize the role of women in the economy, including the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), which stressed the removal of barriers hindering women's access to economic resources and the promotion of their participation in economic decision-making. Additionally, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 highlight the importance of providing equal opportunities for women in the labor market, creating a supportive environment for women's entrepreneurship, ensuring wage equality, and protecting women from economic violence through Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Furthermore, UN Security Council Resolution 2242 (2015) supports the integration of women into economic systems as a critical element in achieving security and stability. Based on this, and in line with our commitment to economically empowering women and girls and enhancing their role in sustainable development, Baghdad Women Association aims, over the next four years, to implement programs and initiatives that contribute to women's economic independence. These initiatives will include supporting entrepreneurship, providing training in professional and technical skills, and enabling women to access financial resources. The association will also place special emphasis on empowering women in the private sector, supporting them in developing small and medium-sized enterprises, with a focus on marginalized groups, to ensure the achievement of economic independence and enhance the role of women in sustainable development.

2. Enhancing Policies Supporting Economic and Social Protection for Women

Supportive policies for the economic and social protection of women are essential in achieving justice and equality. Women face numerous challenges that hinder their access to economic opportunities and benefit from social protection systems, which calls for the adoption of more inclusive and equitable policies that ensure a safe and

stable work environment. In this strategic goal, Baghdad Women Association draws upon several international objectives and resolutions, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, particularly Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities). These goals emphasize the importance of providing effective social protection systems for women, enhancing their access to equal economic opportunities, and ensuring they are not subjected to discrimination in the workplace.

Based on this, over the next four years (2025-2028), Baghdad Women Association will work to enhance policies that protect women economically and socially by supporting legal reforms and participating in the development of national strategies that enhance women's opportunities in the labor market, create a supportive environment for entrepreneurship, ensure wage equality, and protect against economic violence and discrimination in the workplace.

The association will also seek to strengthen partnerships with government institutions, civil society organizations, and the private sector to ensure the implementation of more inclusive policies that support women's independence and enhance their role in sustainable development. Additionally, Baghdad Women Association will continue to support cash-for-protection mechanisms by providing direct financial support to the most vulnerable women through projects that align with economic empowerment goals, helping them meet their basic needs while ensuring protection from economic and social crises. The association will aim to implement programs that enhance the effectiveness of this mechanism, enabling women to improve their living conditions, develop their professional skills, and become more capable of achieving economic independence.

3. Raising Economic and Social Awareness for Women and Girls

Economic and social awareness is the cornerstone of achieving women and girls' independence and enhancing their active participation in society. Women face numerous challenges that hinder their access to information about their economic and social rights, limiting their ability to make sustainable economic and entrepreneurial decisions and ensuring they receive the necessary social protection. Therefore, over the next four years (2025-2028), Baghdad Women Association will implement awareness campaigns targeting women and girls to educate them about their economic and social rights and equip them with the skills necessary to manage their financial resources efficiently. The association will also organize workshops and training programs on financial planning, economic independence, and social empowerment, with a focus on the most vulnerable groups to ensure that information reaches all women and girls. This will empower them to make decisions that enhance their economic and social stability.

Additionally, the association will work on integrating the concept of economic support activities into awareness programs to ensure that women understand how to benefit from this support and transform it into long-term economic opportunities. Beneficiaries will be guided on how to manage cash assistance effectively and invest in the development of small projects, which will contribute to enhancing their financial stability and reducing their reliance on short-term assistance.

Objective 3: Enhancing Women's Participation in Leadership and Decision-Making**1. Supporting the Development of Legislation to Enhance Women's Participation in Leadership and Decision-Making**

Baghdad Women Association aims to support national legislation and policies to ensure a legislative environment that enhances the role of women in leadership positions and political decision-making. This includes collaborating and coordinating with national committees concerned with women's issues within ministries and governmental institutions, offering recommendations and proposals that contribute to amending laws that hinder women's access to senior positions, and advocating policymakers to ensure the implementation of legislation that promotes equal opportunities. The association will work to align national laws and regulations with Iraq's international commitments, ensuring active representation of women in the decision-making process.

2. Supporting the Sustainable Participation of Women in Leadership and Political Position

The association works to support women in reaching leadership positions and actively participating in them through specialized programs in leadership and political engagement. The presence of women in decision-making roles contributes to adopting more inclusive policies that ensure justice and effectively respond to the needs of all women, regardless of age, race, religion, or disability. This includes considering the inclusion of women from minorities, displaced women, returnees, and women in rural areas, ensuring that their voices are heard and represented in leadership roles. In this context, the association continues to implement national action plans for United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in coordination with governmental institutions, civil society organizations, and stakeholders. It also works to highlight the challenges women face in the political process and advocates for policies that ensure women's representation in decision-making positions. This is done by adopting a human rights-based approach and strengthening sustainable development plans, ensuring that the rights and needs of women are prioritized and addressed in the political sphere.

3. Enhancing the Role of Women in Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion

We seek to enhance the role of women in peacebuilding through collaboration with government institutions and national committees, such as the National Higher Committee for Combating Violent Extremism, the National Committee for Resolution 1325, and other relevant committees. This is done through initiatives, training workshops, and awareness campaigns aimed at raising awareness about the importance of women's roles in peace processes. The association also provides consultations and supports the development of national policies that promote women's representation in post-conflict peace negotiations. Additionally, the association focuses on working with the community and stakeholders to strengthen social cohesion in conflict-affected areas and facilitates strategic partnerships with

relevant parties to achieve sustainable peace and social justice for women in conflict-affected societies.

Objective 4: Enriching and Sustaining Knowledge

1. Enhancing Access to Knowledge

Baghdad Women Association seeks to provide digital knowledge platforms for women and girls to enable them to access diverse knowledge resources. The association will continue to hold specialized workshops and training courses in areas aligned with the association's vision and mission, such as human rights issues, women's leadership, life skills, mental health, legal awareness, and other important topics. These activities aim to expand women's horizons, empower them to access information, gain knowledge and experience, and build the necessary capacities to create and ensure a sustainable future.

2. Expanding and Developing Research Tools and Promoting Cultural and Knowledge Awareness

Over the years, Baghdad Women Association has worked to enhance the role of women in various fields by implementing research projects aimed at addressing women's issues comprehensively. The association has focused on developing policy papers and research related to women's rights in various social, political, and economic sectors. The association has also given special attention to the needs of women in facing new challenges, such as climate change and its impact on society, with a focus on empowering women in this important area.

As part of these efforts, the association has been an active partner with international and local organizations, helping to adopt international concepts and standards related to women's rights and sustainable development. The association continues to expand its role as a key driver of cultural and knowledge awareness among different community groups, with a focus on integrating the environment into its future. Baghdad Women Association is working to integrate environmental sustainability into its programs by adopting eco-friendly practices in its affiliated centers.

3. Cooperation with Educational and Research Institutions

Baghdad Women Association works on building strategic partnerships with various educational and research institutions and enhancing cooperation with universities and research centers to develop research and studies related to women's rights and equality. Through these partnerships, the association aims to exchange knowledge and experiences with academic institutions, international organizations, and local civil society organizations, with the goal of developing curricula and educational programs that focus on women's and girls' issues.

The association also seeks to collaborate with specialized research institutions such as the Women's Studies Center, strategic studies centers, and other related centers,

with the aim of disseminating specialized research and networking with relevant entities such as government institutions, international organizations, and local civil society organizations. This collaboration helps the association expand its influence and increase awareness of issues related to women's rights and equality in society.

Objective 5: Governance and Expanding Sustainability

1. Diversifying Sources of Income and Grants

The association intensifies its efforts to explore new funding opportunities aligned with the needs of women and girls by submitting integrated project proposals targeting the most marginalized groups. The association also works on strengthening its partnerships with previous donor organizations and new donors by building long-term relationships with international institutions and expanding partnerships with other civil society organizations. In addition, the association seeks to enhance collaboration with the private sector through corporate social responsibility programs, where companies can support some of the association's activities related to women's empowerment and community services. Furthermore, the association is working on developing public support mechanisms such as online donation campaigns, which can provide an additional source of sustainability for some activities.

2. Increasing Relationships

Expanding networks and building strategic alliances are essential elements for the sustainability of the association and enhancing its impact. In this context, Baghdad Women Association works on strengthening its relationships by activating communication channels and providing periodic reports that reflect the impact of its projects. The association continues to actively participate in local and international conferences and forums to benefit from exchanging experiences and learning about best practices in the fields of women's empowerment and sustainable development. In addition, the association focuses on building alliances with governmental bodies, international organizations, local civil society organizations, and local and regional networks to enhance cooperation and implement joint projects that meet community needs. Furthermore, the association strengthens its collaboration with media institutions, recognizing their pivotal role in enhancing the association's reach to the public through media campaigns on traditional and digital platforms to showcase success stories and raise awareness about its activities, thus contributing to building trust, transparency, and increasing community support.

3. Establishing Sustainability Policies

Achieving institutional sustainability requires clear and effective policies that include good governance and transparent management of resources. Therefore, Baghdad Women Association is working on developing financial and administrative policies to ensure the optimal use of human and financial resources, with a commitment to providing transparent financial reports to donors and partners. Furthermore, the

association places special emphasis on developing the capacities of its team, providing ongoing training for staff and volunteers, ensuring the sustainability of knowledge and expertise within the association, and enhancing its ability to implement projects with a lasting impact.

Conclusion:

Baghdad Women Association continues its efforts to achieve its goals through its strategy for the period 2025-2028, focusing on enhancing women's participation in the political process and empowering them socially and economically. It also strives to combat violence and discrimination in all its forms, while working to promote social cohesion for all, regardless of social, economic, political, religious, or ethnic differences.

In order to ensure the inclusivity of the strategy and its relevance to the needs and challenges faced by women and girls, this plan was developed in consultation with the members of the Board of Directors of Baghdad Women Association. The participation of the Board reflects the association's commitment to involving all relevant stakeholders in the development of plans and strategies aimed at improving the situation of women and girls. Through collaboration with concerned entities such as government institutions, international and local organizations, and stakeholders, the association is committed to providing the necessary services to women and girls, achieving social justice, and actively contributing to building a sustainable society.