



The lives of children in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq have improved, but challenges remain, new survey reveals

ERBIL, 17 December 2018 – The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) has made considerable progress in improving access to basic drinking water and sanitation facilities, but more needs to be done to improve access to education and ending all forms of violence against children, according to a new survey on children’s wellbeing in Iraq.

While almost all children in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (96%) are attending primary school, only 67% of children are attending lower secondary education, with an even lower completion rate for children from poorer backgrounds across the country (37%).

“Economic hardship, insufficient schools in rural areas and lack of transportation are just some of the factors that are keeping children from disadvantaged backgrounds from receiving an education that can transform their lives and that of their communities,” said Peter Hawkins, UNICEF Representative in Iraq.

“Without urgent and sustained investment in education, children from the most vulnerable backgrounds will be left behind and this will have a negative impact not only on their families, but society and the prosperity of the region,” he warned.

“Despite economic challenges of the last couple of years, the data highlights the progress made by the Kurdistan Regional Government in improving access to basic services, including health services and access to safe drinking water,” said Dr. Ali Sindi, Minister of planning.

“This survey will further assist the government and its partners to identify and prioritize areas where additional investments are needed,” he added.

To protect the rights of all children, UNICEF calls on the Kurdistan Regional Government to invest in services that directly benefit those children affected by conflict and poverty, and to work towards putting an end to all forms of violence against children.

Note for Editors:

- The KRI has made notable progress providing primary health care, including maintaining high-levels of assisted births and reducing the number of new-borns who die in the first month of life from 32 to 17 per 1000 live birth.
- Access to water and sanitation is universal (98%). However, challenges remain in ensuring all families have access to safe drinking water on premise and free from harmful bacteria.
- The MICS data was collected in 2018. Field workers from the Governments of Iraq and the Kurdistan Region surveyed 20,520 households across the country. MICS data is a benchmark for reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and national development goals.

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