



Context

Unemployment continues to be a serious issue for Iraqis, especially for young women, as only 10% of women aged 15-29 are in formal employment. Traditional socio-cultural factors and limited infrastructure impede girls' and women's participation in education and vocational training opportunities. As a consequence of their lack of education and employment, Iraqi women are socially and economically excluded from household decision-making and community and political participation. To address these constraints, Iraqi women need access to quality professional skills training, including in non-traditional occupations such as business and technical professions.

Strategy

UNIDO and Scania, a leading Swedish manufacturer of heavy trucks, buses and engines, have been strategic partners since 2011. Together with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Education First (EF) and the Kurdistan Regional Government Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), the partners established the Swedish Academy for Training, which was officially opened in April 2012. Located in Erbil, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the Academy aims to help unemployed Iraqis under the age of 30 to develop relevant skills and to find professional employment. With a 30% target for female participation, the Academy will offer courses in computer literacy and English language, and young women are actively encouraged to participate in technical and managerial training, so that they are well prepared for opportunities in the workplace.

Results

- Thirty-eight per cent of those participating in computer training and English-language classes are women
- Several women have participated in technical training courses to date
- The academy is used by local Scania staff who are taking advantage of workshops and training to improve their prospects within the Scania network, and one recent

workshop provided women with the opportunity to gain training they would not have been able to access elsewhere

- Graduates receive help in finding jobs and internships within Scania and local companies
- Local value chains and economic development in general in the region have improved
- Traditional and discriminatory attitudes and beliefs about women's capabilities are being challenged, leading to a longer-term socio-cultural transformation

Impact/Outlook

Promoting women's involvement in education and employment opportunities plays a vital role in Iraq's post-crisis rehabilitation and future economic growth and social development. To address the socio-cultural and family-based obstacles to women's full participation in technical courses and internships at the training academy, UNIDO is working with UN Women, Sida and local non-government organizations, such as the Women's Business Association, to develop inclusion strategies. By providing Iraqi women with training and work opportunities in non-traditional domains, the UNIDO-Scania programme will help to socially and economically empower women, and thus positively contribute to the rebuilding of the country.

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At a glance:

Goal: Establish a training academy in operations and industrial maintenance in Erbil, Northern Iraq

MDG: 1. Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger
3. Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Thematic areas:

Poverty Reduction through Productive Activities

Donor: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)

Partners: Scania, Education First (EF); the Kurdistan Regional Government Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA-KRG)

Budget: USD 5,630,000

Status: Ongoing

Duration: 2011 – 2015