

Enabling Social Innovation in Iraq



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Country Snapshot

Social innovation: "the processes and outcomes of developing novel approaches to address societal challenges facing people and planet." ¹

This snapshot represents a descriptive, non-exhaustive overview of key highlights from Iraq's social innovation ecosystem.

Direct focus on social innovation Connected but indirect focus on social innovation No focus on social innovation

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK



Official Definition of Social Innovation

The Republic of Iraq is taking confident steps toward institutionalizing social innovation, as the government steadily works to integrate this concept within the "Social and Human Development" pillars of its national strategies ^{1 3}. Furthermore, the Ministry of Planning is currently adopting an "Innovation in Social Welfare" approach to enhance the efficiency of public service delivery and effectively meet the needs of its citizens ³.



Government Body for Social Innovation

Rather than a single dedicated department, responsibility for social innovation is distributed across the **Ministry of Planning**, which oversees the **Social Fund for Development (2018)**, and the **Ministry of Youth and Sports**, which anchors new community innovation hubs ^{2 3}.



Government Strategy for Social Innovation

The **National Development Plan 2024–2028** marks significant progress by embedding social innovation themes into its "Social Protection" and "Economic Diversification" chapters ⁴.



Policies, Laws & Regulations

- **NGO Law No. 12 (2010)**: Continues to be a key enabler by regulating civil society organizations that lead community innovation ⁶
- **Social Security Law No. 18 (2023)**: This landmark law supports social innovation by expanding coverage to private-sector workers, encouraging more citizens to join social enterprises ⁷.
- **Investment Law No. 13 (2006)**: While focused on business, recent amendments are being leveraged to promote private-sector participation in social development projects ⁴.



Official Statistics

Official data collection is steadily expanding through the **Central Statistical Organization (CSO)**, which tracks poverty and social protection metrics that inform social innovation priorities ³.

Government Programs



The **Souq Al-Shoyukh Community and Climate Hub (2025)** serves as Iraq's first government-integrated innovation center, focusing on local climate and social challenges ². Additionally, the **Social Fund for Development** supports decentralized community projects across multiple governorates ³.

ECOSYSTEM

Stakeholders



The ecosystem is maturing through the involvement of non-governmental actors like the **Bahr Al-Uloom Foundation**, which provides intellectual support for social hubs ². Multilateral partners, including the **UNDP** and **World Food Programme (2026–2029 Strategic Plan)**, act as primary catalysts for scaling social innovation models ⁸.

Support Initiatives



Non-financial support is increasingly available through university-linked incubators and donor-led training programs that focus on "activist entrepreneurship" and community resilience ⁹.

Collaboration



Public-private partnerships are evolving, such as the collaborative efforts between the Ministry of Youth and international agencies to pilot "Deep Demonstrations" for social change ².

FINANCE

Financing Schemes



Funding for social innovation is progressively shifting from humanitarian aid to structured development finance, with the ILO targeting €100 million in SME lending by 2031 ¹⁰.

- **Inclusivity:** Financing is becoming more inclusive, with approximately 17% of recent SME project funding specifically earmarked for women-led social initiatives ¹⁰.

SOCIETY

Public Awareness of & Research



Public discourse is gradually embracing "entrepreneurship" as a tool for social good, supported by emerging academic research in journals such as the **International Journal of Innovation Science** ¹¹.

Education & Entrepreneurship



- **Graduates:** Iraq produces roughly 250,000 graduates annually, with a growing emphasis on aligning skills with modern innovation needs ¹².
- **Innovation Capacity:** While Iraq was omitted from the 2025 Global Innovation Index due to data gaps, the country is making steady progress in rebuilding its research infrastructure ¹³.

Social & Environmental Consciousness



Solidarity



Political participation

-.-%



population

Volunteering

Community solidarity is a cultural hallmark, with Iraq maintaining strong levels of informal helping behaviors as noted in global giving trends ¹⁴

172nd

180 countries



Sustainability

(Score: 30.3), driving a new wave of social innovations focused on climate adaptation ¹⁵

Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2024

