

# I. Research methodology

The research is based on the principles of participation, inclusiveness and gender sensitivity. The research adopted a mixed methods approach, including the collection and consolidation of qualitative and resulting quantitative data. While the qualitative approach investigated the perceptions and experiences of the interviewees, the quantitative approach focused on the numerical data derived from the rankings. All the findings from the desk review and from individual and group discussions were triangulated for consistency and validity.

## *Tools*

The information was collected through the following five tools.

### **1. Desk review**

Secondary resources were reviewed, including project documents, studies and background material on relevant research done in other parts of the world.

### **2. Individual interviews**

The project addresses two categories of elected women: female members of parliament (MPs) elected in 2018, and current provincial council (PC) members. The current parliament offers an interesting profile: out of 84 women MPs elected in 2018, 60 are new to parliamentary life, and 19 won seats outside the quota system. One woman, Majda Temimi, who headed the Sa'iroon list in Baghdad and gained the highest number of votes in the province, was interviewed as a case study.

Based on the desk review, research tools were developed to interview the MPs and council members to understand the challenges they faced in their candidacy, how they overcame them, and what actions were still needed to

promote women's participation in elected public life and enhance women's political participation.

A total of 32 one-on-one interviews were conducted. All interviews were semi-structured and participatory in nature, meaning the researcher used guiding open-ended questions that were based on the findings of the desk review (annex I).

### **3. Individual interviews with women parliamentarians**

Nine women MPs were interviewed to understand the challenges they faced in their candidacy, how they overcame them, and the support needed to promote women's participation and representation in public life.

Interviews were conducted with some of the women MPs who won seats outside the quota, to understand the strategies and tools that helped them win and the mechanisms that can be applied to address challenges.

### **4. Interviews with women PC members**

Interviews were conducted with 23 PC members. They were asked to identify common challenges hindering the electability of women in their own right, rather than to fulfil women's quota seats. They also discussed the challenges faced in their previous candidacy, new constraints they may face in the next elections in 2020, and the type of skills-strengthening, knowledge and support they required to meet those challenges.

### **5. Focus group discussions in the selected provinces**

To obtain a counterpoint perspective to supplement and round-off the research conducted with women in parliament and PCs, five focus group discussions were held in five

governorates and attended by 84 persons. The objective was to understand public perceptions of women candidates and attitudes towards women in elected office, and what citizens looked for in a credible woman candidate. The focus groups brought together local civil society organizations, community leaders, women's groups, media groups, religious leaders and activists.

## 6. Case studies

Two case-based studies were conducted with two women parliamentarians who won outside the quota system. The objective was to provide insight on what worked, and to illustrate the mechanism and strategies applied. The two cases, one from Baghdad and one from Nenawa, were asked to describe their own experience throughout the phases of the political campaign (annex II).

## 7. Data analysis

Data from all sources, including desk review, focus group discussions and interviews, were analysed as follows:

- a. The triangulation of data emerging from these divergent sources was used to ensure validity and reliability of the findings. Triangulating information was used to identify similarities and/or discrepancies in data obtained in different ways and from different stakeholders;
- b. Interviews and focus group discussions were constructed in a participatory analytical mode, in which interviewees were guided to assess themselves or the situation and illustrate the problem faced or mechanism applied;
- c. Focus groups discussions were used to identify on a macro level the context of the candidates and illustrate broader findings, while individual interviews were used on a

meso level to describe personal experience. Case studies were used to illustrate the micro level and were purely individual, describing personal experiences;

- d. A ranking analytical and participatory tool was used during the individual interviews with the groups of parliamentarians and PC members. During the interview, the challenges identified in the prepared research framework were presented to the interviewee, who was invited to rank each challenge individually according to the degree of the problem they faced, with justifications for that rank. Another ranking tool was used to rank the still-unmet needs to qualify for election and enhance candidate's proficiency for political participation.

## 8. Sample and sampling design

The total sample in this study includes 116 respondents who were selected intentionally to cover all the desired groups, using a maximum variation sample. From the total stakeholders consulted, the sample included 80 females and 36 males (tables 1-4). To ensure broad coverage, the criteria for sample selection included diversity in terms of stakeholder groups, and MPs and PC members, with and without the quota. The focus group participants were selected to vary in sex, age and occupation. As noted earlier, geographic and socio-cultural diversity were also built into the project through the selection of governorates.

## 9. Research team

The team was composed of 10 female and male researchers from four local non-governmental organizations in four selected governorates, Basra, Nenawa, Najaf and Salaheddin, in addition to the research team of the Iraq Foundation in Baghdad. Following two days of training in Erbil, they carried out the research in their designated locations and sent their output to the Iraq Foundation.

## 10. Limitations

Methodological limitations were encountered and reported by researchers in most governorates, primarily owing to the difficult circumstances in Iraq and the intensity of protests, as described below:

- a. The difficulty of communicating with women MPs and PC members in the country's current situation. In Najaf, for example, the unrest increased tensions between PC members and demonstrators;
- b. In Basra, the deteriorating security situation and the threat to provincial council members led to difficulty in participation, and non-response to communications on interview coordination;
- c. Parliamentary sessions were held continuously due to the current situation and the need for MPs to attend the sessions in Baghdad hindered their presence in the provinces;
- d. The recent dissolution of PCs made communication with the PC members difficult, as many were traveling outside Iraq;
- e. Female MPs and PC members were fearful of appearing in public, so as to avoid any security threats against them;
- f. In Basra specifically, most interviews were conducted over the phone and were often not continued because of fears, busy schedules, or the desire to retreat from political participation.

**Table 1.** Sample size and classifications

Classification	Baghdad	Nenawa	Basra	Najaf	Salaheddin	Sex		Total
						M	F	
Individual	11	6	3	6	6	0	32	32
Focus group	9	18	21	15	21	36	48	84
Total	20	24	24	21	25	36	80	116

**Table 2.** Interviewees according to governorates

Governorate	Parliamentarian	Provincial	Total
Baghdad	4	7	11
Basra	0	3	3
Nenawa	2	4	6
Najaf	3	3	6
Salaheddin	0	6	6
Total	9	23	32

Researchers used all means to circumvent these limitations. Nevertheless, some respondents remained inaccessible and had to be replaced or cancelled. These limitations lowered the number of interviewees that were initially planned, and

in some cases interviews were conducted over the phone or the interviewees were asked to write their own answers, thus lowering the chances of personal participatory interaction and direct communication to clarify responses.

**Table 3.** Parliamentarian interviewees with political affiliations

Governorate	Parliamentarian	Total
Baghdad	Majda El Tamimi Independent (Sadrist Current – Free Bloc –Sa’iroon)	55,251 votes, no quota
	Alia El Amara Independent	
	Hanan Hanoun Independent (Al Hikma Movement)	Previous Candidate
	Amera El Baldawy El Fath Coalition	Previous Candidate
Nenawa	Mahasen Hamdoun Independent (Coalition of Iraqi Forces Bloc)	
	Lilyal Mohamed Ali Al-Fatah Alliance/Badr Organization	2,674 votes, no quota
	Intisar Ali El Jubouri Iraqi Forces Alliance Bloc	President of Nenawa Spring Organization for Woman and Girl
Najaf	Sohad Darwisch Iraqi Communist Party/Sai’roon Bloc	Previous candidate
	Sanaa El Mousawi Coalition of El Fath/Badr Organization	
	Zubayda El Baghdady Al-Jaafari List in 2014 State of Law List in 2018	Previous candidate

**Table 4.** PC members with political affiliations

Governorate	Provincial Council Members	Total
Baghdad	Iman El Barzanjy Independent	
	Jasouma Rahim El Azirgawy Al Sadr Movement	Former employee at the Ministry of Education
	Naheda El Tamimi State of Law Bloc	Civil society: Subel El Najaa
	Nawal El Arajy Independent within the State of Law Bloc	
	Hoda El Aboudy Member of the political Bureau in the National Wisdom Movement	Activist and social researcher
Nenawa	Assin Khalil Independent	
	Khaleda El Memary Independent, Sanad Bloc	Quota
	Kolestan Hassan Kurdistan National Party	No quota
	Fahima Kaso Kurdistan National Party	Quota
Najaf	Sanaa El Aly Awafaa to Najaf	Candidate for PC
	Zeinab El Aly	PC, Member of Mother and Child Committee
	Najlaa Bahr El Iraqia	Candidate for PC
	Anwar El Agoudy El Nahj El Watany Bloc	Former El Fadila Party
Basra	Somaya El Halfy Iraqi National Coalition	Former El Badr Association
	Najla El Tamimi Independent	Former El Hikma Movement and El Mowaten Bloc
	Sadeya El Obaidy National Intimaa Bloc	Former Arab Jamaheer Bloc
Salaheddin	Amna Ahmed El Gamaheer El Arabia Bloc	
	Souad Youssef Independent	
	Ashwak Hassan El Gamaheer El Arabia Bloc	President and founder of El Benaaf for Human Rights
	Sahar El Naimy El Gamaheer El Arabia Bloc	Two sessions PC, President of the Iraqi Women's Branch/World Women's Union Member of the Arab Federation of Voluntary Action

**Table 5.** Profile of interviewees in the focus group discussions

Governorate	Profile	Male	Female	Total
Baghdad	Women non-governmental organizations, activists, the media, academics, human rights organizations	2	7	9
Nenawa	Nenawa local government representatives, MPs, PC members, academics, university professors specializing in political science, the media, civil society organizations	8	10	18
Salaheddin	Educators, civil society leaders, community leaders (men and women) from non-governmental organizations, the media, academics	12	9	21
Basra	Civil society organizations, the Office of Human Rights in Basra, a Christian minority cleric and a student of the Basra Police Command represented by the Director of Community Police, the media, former PC members, activist, the youth parliament and judicial assistants	8	13	21
Najaf	Women candidates group, a media group, a human rights group	6	9	15
Total		36	48	84