

Strategic Plan
Dorcas
Iraq

Climate-smart communities **2026-2030**

Strategic Plan **Dorcas** *Iraq*

Climate-smart communities **2026-2030**

Publishing information

Dorcas Iraq Strategic Plan
Published November 2025

Editorial staff: Sargon Oraha,
Heleen Berends, Dave Thomas
(thegoldenthread.nl)

Design: Paper & Pages
(paperandpages.nl)

Photographs: Dorcas

*The boundaries used on maps do
not imply official endorsement or
acceptance by Dorcas.*

Dorcas Iraq
Mamstreet 59
Botan Residential Area
Dohuk, KR-I, Iraq
Telephone: +964 750 031 5150
E-mail: office@iraq.dorcas.org
Website: dorcas.org/iraq

in [linkedin.com/company/dorcas-iraq](https://www.linkedin.com/company/dorcas-iraq)

This public version of the Dorcas Iraq
Strategic Plan 2026-2030 is a concise version
of the internal document.

Contents

From conflict to climate resilience	6
Foreword	
01 What unifies and guides us	8
Our identity and mission	
02 Iraq's complex challenges	10
Our context	
03 Growing impact and recognition	12
Our strategic ambitions and focus	
04 Three programmatic themes	16
Our approach	
05 Looking after people and the environment	20
Our organisation and culture	
06 Driving change	22
Our fundraising	



From conflict to climate resilience

Dorcas Iraq in 2030

By 2030, Dorcas Iraq will be the climate resilience centre for Dorcas in the Middle East, operating across three governorates with extensive expertise in climate adaptation programming. Through climate-smart agriculture, integrated water resource management, and community-led protection and preparedness initiatives, we will transform how communities in vulnerable situations respond to

Iraq's environmental crisis. Our hybrid approach, which partners with local organisations while maintaining direct implementation capacity, will ensure a sustainable impact. We will be recognised internationally for our contribution to climate adaptation, working alongside authorities to build resilient livelihoods, restore ecosystems and empower communities to thrive with dignity despite unprecedented environmental challenges.

Foreword

Iraq ranks among the world's most vulnerable countries to climate change. Our nation faces unprecedented water scarcity, rising temperatures and accelerating desertification. Over the past four decades, water bodies have shrunk to a quarter of their original size, while arid zones have tripled in size. These environmental challenges compound the legacy of conflict, leaving over a sixth of the population in poverty and creating profound concerns about the protection of those in vulnerable situations.

The climate crisis threatens Iraq's agricultural heartland. Droughts have left farmlands parched, forcing farmers to abandon their traditional livelihoods and driving rural communities toward cities that are already struggling with inadequate infrastructure. Competition over scarce water resources risks reigniting conflict, while unemployment pushes young people towards insecurity. For the 1.1 million internally displaced Iraqis and 180,000 refugees our country hosts, these pressures are particularly acute.

Dorcas Iraq's Strategic Plan 2026-2030 responds decisively to these interconnected challenges. We are transforming our approach to become an organisation that clearly contributes to climate resilience and adaptation. We

will introduce climate-smart agriculture techniques, pioneer water-saving innovations, and strengthen community preparedness to climate shocks. Our programmes will reach 15,000 people by 2030, combining nature-based solutions for sustainable agriculture, innovative irrigation solutions, and integrated water resource management with essential protection measures, including conflict resolution and social cohesion initiatives.

This transition aligns with Iraq's National Strategy for Protection and Improvement of the Environment, positioning Dorcas as a strategic partner in achieving the nation's commitments under the Paris Agreement. Through partnerships with local organisations and authorities across Ninewa, Duhok, Basra and other southern governorates hit by climate crisis, we will build lasting resilience while empowering communities to shape their own futures.

By 2030, Dorcas Iraq will serve as the Dorcas climate resilience centre for the Middle East, demonstrating that sustainable solutions emerge when international expertise meets local knowledge and determination.

Sargon Orah
Country Director
Dorcas Iraq



What unifies and guides us

Our identity

Dorcas is a growing, dynamic and responsive organisation. Much has changed over the years, but our calling to support, our shared values, and our inspiration from Jesus have remained constant. This strong identity defines who we are and guides how we work, shaping an organisational culture rooted in compassion, collaboration, and commitment. As we enter the new strategic period leading up to 2030, consistently living out this identity across all levels and facets of our work is essential to deepen our impact and foster coherence between our offices and shops, enabling us to work together effectively as a united movement.

Our vision

We believe that every person is equal before God and has been given unique potential by Him. Yet we live in a broken world where people suffer due to poverty, exclusion, climate change and other crises. Still, we see the extraordinary resilience of people. We envision a world in which people unlock their potential and restore their dignity so that people and communities can flourish!

Our mission

We are called to stand up for people in need. We take action in the face of poverty, exclusion and crisis. We come alongside marginalised people and communities and together create opportunities for them to flourish. This is how we follow Jesus' example.

Our values

We are determined, ...

We act with conviction and do not give up. Where there is need, we take action and get things done. We go the extra mile to make a lasting impact.

...we act together, ...

We are a movement that pursues sustainable change. We work alongside people in need and join hands with everyone who shares our mission. Only together can we make a real difference.

...out of love.

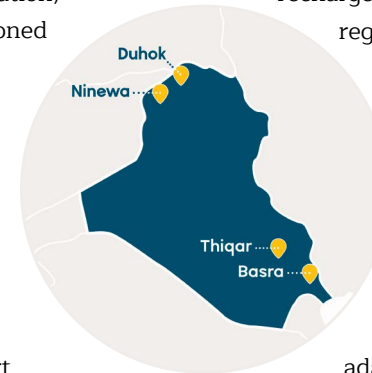
We are driven by compassion. We follow Jesus' example - out of love for our neighbour. We stand beside you - whoever you are.

Where we work

Dorcas Iraq operates across four governorates with climate resilience programming. In Ninewa and Duhok, we have established integrated programmes centred on climate resilience, sustainable water management, and environmental adaptation, and we have transitioned from humanitarian support to longer-term approaches. In Basra, we adopt a hybrid model combining direct implementation with local partnerships, piloting climate-smart

agriculture, water conservation technologies, and community disaster preparation. Expansion into Thiqr targets drought-stricken communities and degraded landscapes through regenerative farming and groundwater recharge projects. Across all

regions, we combine technical implementation with local capacity building, and we engage government officials, civil society actors, and the private sector to strengthen resilience and establish leadership in climate adaptation.



Iraq's complex challenges

Economic challenges and poverty

Iraq is an upper-middle-income country, yet over one-sixth of the population live in poverty and almost one-fifth face unemployment. Decades of conflict and instability have caused lasting damage to infrastructure, livelihoods, and agricultural land, deepening hardship across rural and conflict-affected areas.

Climate change

Iraq is particularly vulnerable to climate impacts. Higher temperatures, precipitation changes, water shortages, and desertification severely threaten biodiversity and local livelihoods. These climate pressures are also exacerbating existing water and food challenges.

Social barriers and people in vulnerable situations

About 1.1 million Iraqis remain internally displaced alongside 180,000 refugees. Livelihood losses create protection concerns: forced migration, children dropping out of school, and gender-based violence. Competition over scarce resources, particularly water, risks renewed inter- and intracommunal conflict.

Donor and funding landscape

Since the phasing out of UN clusters in late 2022, the humanitarian landscape has shifted significantly as Iraq entered a recovery phase. Humanitarian response coordination has increasingly transitioned to national and local systems. While this marks progress, the

effects of years of conflict and weak institutions still limit access to essential services and make recovery uneven across communities.

Technology

Although Iraq is rich in oil, many rural and underserved communities struggle to access energy. Solar energy can fill this gap and power water extraction, irrigation, and household needs for low-income farmers. However, adoption is uneven and hindered by regulatory resistance. Efforts to overcome these challenges will accelerate progress towards climate-smart agriculture and sustainable food systems.

Water scarcity and resource management

Iraq is among the world's most water-scarce countries. Overextraction and inefficient water use have led to a dramatic decline in groundwater levels, and a corresponding decrease in river discharge. By 2060, half the population will lack sufficient water.

Agricultural sector decline

Previously a food-producing country covering its population's needs, Iraq's small-scale farmers now struggle with water-dependent agriculture. Droughts cause reduced or failed crop yields, increased rural unemployment, and forced migration. This strains city infrastructure and services and threatens national food security.

03 | Our strategic ambitions and focus

Growing impact and recognition

Strategic ambition

Dorcas Iraq's strategic ambitions centre on growth, quality, and position. We will **grow** our programming reach and funding base, enhance the **quality** of our work through strengthened capacity

and impact measurement, and **position** ourselves as a recognised climate resilience leader in Iraq and across the Middle East.



Grow

We will **triple the number of communities we positively impact** and tackle the vulnerabilities they face. Our portfolio is expected to double in size by 2030 and will **diversify from one to three funding sources**. We will expand our geographical presence from two to three governorates, and adopt a hybrid implementation approach that combines direct delivery with local partnerships. **Staff capacity will increase substantially**, and efficient office operations will be maintained to support scaled climate resilience programming.

Quality

We will comply with Dorcas and external quality standards. We will realise this through independent external audits, advanced financial control and donor compliance, stronger and multi-year integrated programme design, and comprehensive impact measurement. By 2030, we will complete a full impact study, which will demonstrate lessons learned and **provide evidence of transformational change and comprehensive impact measurement**.

Position

We will develop and implement a **clear communication and positioning strategy** that positions Dorcas Iraq as a knowledgeable, reliable, and **innovative partner in climate adaptation programming**. By 2030, we aim to significantly increase brand recognition among donors, authorities and partners, establishing ourselves as a well-known and recognised national leader that supports Iraqi communities and policies in the area of climate change.

Strategic focus

1

Evidence and impact to have a compelling, evidence-based story

We will gain a better understanding of our impact by continuing to develop evidence-based programmes and building strong track records. We will enhance MEAL capacity through standardised data collection tools and staff training by 2026. By 2028, we will have incorporated real-time monitoring systems and completed midterm impact assessments. Finally, by 2030, we will deliver a comprehensive impact study that establishes lessons learned and shares stories of change from our climate resilience programming.

2

Expertise and innovation to be relevant and strongly present

We will improve programme quality and impact by investing in developing specialised technical expertise across programmatic themes. Dorcas Iraq will centre its programmes around climate

Dorcas Iraq can only achieve these ambitions if it excels in five interlinked key areas that form our strategic focus.

crisis response and be well-known nationally for effective contributions to climate adaptation. By 2030, we will serve as the climate centre for Dorcas in the Middle East, with expertise in climate-smart agriculture, water management, and protection programming.

3

Fund diversification to increase our donor base

Impact stories and evidence-based track records will make us more attractive to funding agencies. Iraq will secure three new donors by 2030. Our total income will double, with 80 per cent coming from external funding. We will develop expertise in institutional fundraising and proposal writing to access sufficient opportunities, while also exploring alternative financing models such as public-private partnerships and blended financing.

4

Positioning to be well-known and attractive to supporters and networks

We will strengthen our partnerships and diversify our funding by positioning Dorcas Iraq as a leading partner in humanitarian and development cooperation. By 2026, we will implement a communication and positioning strategy. In 2028, we will have sufficient capacity to position ourselves effectively. Finally, by 2030, we will achieve a 35 per cent increase in brand recognition amongst donors, authorities, and key networks.

5

Local power to increase local capacity

We will invest in training and mentorship to build local capacity in quality management, financial control, programmatic design, and communications. By 2026, most staff will be trained on Dorcas standards and donor compliance. By 2030, we will achieve full compliance with Dorcas Quality Standards, with Iraq recognised as a localisation model linking community-led initiatives to global solutions and climate adaptation efforts.



04 | Our approach

Three programmatic themes

How we do things

As a faith-based organisation, Dorcas Iraq follows eight principles that enable us to help people and communities flourish:

- We focus on people who are most **marginalised** and believe in their potential.
- We facilitate the **flourishing and well-being** of individuals and communities.
- We implement community-based and **locally led** projects.
- We cooperate with local **community-based** organisations and strengthen their capacities.
- We realise sustained change through **long-term** commitments.
- We connect people and organisations around shared values for **partnerships** with impact.
- We seek to be **impartial** in who we hire, support, or partner with.
- We uphold a high level of **integrity** in all aspects of our work.

These principles guide all our programmes. Dorcas Iraq will focus on three key programmatic themes as we work toward 2030.

Our three themes

Dorcas Iraq will apply three programmatic themes to sharpen expertise, strengthen our track record, and define clear organisational positioning. By 2030, we aim to harmonise and standardise these programmes through a lens of inclusion and vulnerability, with community-based programming as our core approach.



Livelihoods and
Food Security



Climate
Adaptation



Water





Livelihoods and Food Security

We support people in finding sustainable livelihoods, increasing resilience and contributing to community well-being, with particular attention to food security.

Gule, a 38-year-old mother of six who returned home after displacement, revived her livelihood through the Dorcas Home Gardening Project. With seeds, tools, and training, she turned her barren land into a productive garden. Her family now enjoys greater food security, lower expenses, and restored stability and hope.



Water

We provide communities with access to clean water and promote its sustainable use so everyone can flourish as environmental conditions change.

Our WASH project in Sinjar improves access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Rehabilitation of boreholes and water networks encourages IDP returns. The intervention strengthens community health, stability and resilience.



Climate Adaptation

We enable farmers and citizens to adapt, protect themselves, build resilience and flourish in the face of climate change impacts.

After eight years of displacement, Shihab returned to his drought-affected land in Ware Khider. Dorcas Iraq gave him technical training and 50 Waterboxx devices to revitalise his orchard. Young trees now thrive with a minimum of water, and so Shihab's family can face the future with hope.



05 | Our organisation and culture



Looking after people and the environment

Our people

By 2030, Dorcas Iraq will build strong staff capacity and leadership to deliver high-quality programmes with reduced reliance on international office support. Project staff numbers will

grow substantially, while office support will be managed efficiently to ensure operational strength. We will invest in advanced training, mentorships, exchange programmes and technical support with other Dorcas offices until

we have developed sufficient capacity at our office. Staff development will focus on quality management, financial control, programme design and external communications. This investment will strengthen managerial leadership and ensure that our people are well-equipped to drive sustainable country operations.

Our capacity

Dorcas Iraq will strengthen capacity across four critical areas to become increasingly independent, self-sustaining and autonomous. Quality management will focus on achieving independent compliance with Dorcas standards and external audits.

Financial control and budgeting will develop advanced skills in donor compliance, cost recovery and forecasting, enabling the office to manage growing portfolios independently. Our programmatic design capacity will be strengthened through enhanced thematic proposal writing and multi-year programme design expertise, supporting diversification of funding from one to three donors.

We will use our positioning and communication capabilities to engage strategically with donors, media, and authorities at both national and international levels. By 2028, the country office will have sufficient capacity to position Dorcas Iraq effectively without international office support.

Our environment

Environmental sustainability is a key part of everything Dorcas Iraq does. Our programmes directly address Iraq's climate crisis through climate resilience programming that promotes the responsible use of natural resources. We will introduce climate-smart agriculture techniques, including drought- and heat-resistant crop varieties, soil management practices, and renewable energy sources for agricultural activities.

Afforestation activities will utilise the Groasis Waterboxx technique, which dramatically reduces water use for tree growth while increasing survival rates. We will implement integrated water resource management approaches, including nature-based solutions like reforestation and watershed protection. Water-saving techniques will be promoted at the household, school, and community levels through increased awareness.

Our programmes will focus on ecosystem restoration, reducing water loss, increasing water efficiency and promoting organic and climate-smart agriculture. These interventions align with Iraq's National Strategy for Protection and Improvement of the Environment, contributing to the country's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 15 per cent by 2030.



Driving change

Dorcas Iraq will systematically double its income by 2030, with 80 per cent derived from external funding sources. This growth strategy centres on fund diversification, expanding from a single donor base to three distinct funding sources by the end of the strategic period. This diversification reduces dependency on any single funding stream while building financial sustainability. Our cost centre contribution from the international office will drop to less than 10 per cent, covering only expenses that cannot be charged to projects, reflecting our transition towards self-sufficiency.

Our desired income growth critically depends upon our ability to develop expertise in institutional fundraising and proposal writing. We will strengthen our capacity to position ourselves effectively with funding agencies, using impact stories and evidence-based track records to demonstrate value.

Partnerships are fundamental to both income generation and

programme impact. We will adopt a hybrid implementation approach, combining direct delivery with partnerships with local organisations. This strategy will enable geographical expansion, particularly into southern Iraq, where we will work solely through local partnerships. These collaborative relationships will enhance our reach, credibility, and contextual understanding while demonstrating commitment to localisation principles that increasingly influence donor priorities.

We will strengthen our positioning with authorities and funding bodies by building strong partnerships with local non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations. By 2030, these sustainable partnerships will enable us to operate across three governorates with work fully aligned to local contexts and requirements. This will make us an attractive partner for donors seeking locally embedded, impactful programming.

We take action in the face of poverty,
exclusion and crises. We come alongside
marginalised people and communities and
jointly create opportunities for them to flourish.
This is how we follow Jesus' example.