Gender-Sensitive Resilience Capacity Index
Iraq Report, May 2020

Thanks to the support of the European Union (EU), and the Government of Japan and other donors, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) implemented the 'Strengthening the Resilience of Syrian Women and Girls and Host Communities in Iraq, Jordan and Turkey' programme. Building on the programme implementation experience, UN Women set up a no-cost collaboration with FAO to conceptualise a gender-sensitive resilience index based on FAO's Resilience Measurement Analysis (RIMA) Model (FAO, 2016)[1]. The analysis builds upon data collected through the Madad programme monitoring and sought to provide evidence around key resilience issues, including (1) if resilience is the same for all women (host communities, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs)), (2) whether the programme produced the desired impact, (3) the extent to which the programme benefited women who received services, and (4) an examination of the results produced by the different types of livelihood interventions. The in-depth analysis generated under this programme with FAO will allow UN Women to better design programmes, ensuring that they are mainly based on needs and vulnerabilities of the population of concern.

What is Gender-Sensitive RIMA?

The Gender-Sensitive RIMA is a quantitative approach to measuring resilience of women based on FAO's RIMA econometrics. Through a constructed index, it allows stakeholders to better understand how women deal or cope with shocks and stressors. The Gender Sensitive RIMA is based on statistical modelling tools that ensure the causal relationship between resilience and its critical determinants, depending on the context.

The Gender-Sensitive RIMA is constructed using a multidimensional approach, It is aggregated using four critical pillars: women's access to basic services, adaptive capacity, access to assets and social safety nets. The weighting of each of the pillars is response-dependent (in other words, it depends on how important women consider these determinants to be). In addition, each of the pillars is a composite index on its own and was developed based on a set of direct and proxy indicators. Each composite index contributes to an aggregate resilience capacity index (RCI) and is identified by a value. An increase in the RCI value over time implies improved resilience. Since the calculation of the RCI is based on the pillars and the weightings allocated to each of the pillars, the RCI's structure and results will, be dynamic in nature.

How is Gender-Sensitive RIMA measured?

Changes in beneficiaries' resilience, measured through the RCI, is generated through repeated surveys with the same group at different points in time. UN Women's regional Madad programme planned to measure changes in the short and long term. Three surveys were developed; one baseline survey at the start of the programme, and two lighter surveys with

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[1] FAO developed RIMA in 2008 and continued technically improve it based on its implementation in 10 countries. http://www.fao.org/resilience/background/tools/rima/en/

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one carried out 3-6 months after the start and another taking place 6-9 months after the beginning of the programme.

To date, UN Women in Iraq conducted a total of 892 baseline, 797 midline and 323 endline surveys with programme beneficiaries. The results obtained reflect changes for those who have participated in all three interviews. These beneficiaries mostly participated in the livelihood component of the programme.

Gender-Sensitive Resilience Pillars

The conceptual framework for measuring the gender-sensitive RCI is built on the strategic approach adopted by FAO, which addresses the underlying causes that contribute to vulnerability, and seeks to understand and address long-term trends that affect people's exposure to risks and increase/decrease capacity to absorb or resist shocks. The core resilience components, namely pillars, are:

- Access to Basic Services (ABS)
- Assets
- Social Safety Nets
- Adaptive Capacity

Access to Basic Services gives a measure of access to critical services, such as education, employment, health services, political participation and decision-making as well as documentation (relevant to refugees and IDPs).

Assets are considered one of the most direct measures of standard of living. Income generation refers to earning from productive assets and activities as well as allowing women to obtain goods and services. It is also a determining factor for dealing with shocks and stressors. The ability of women to generate income will enable them to become more independentAlso the ability of women to spend on non-essential goods or to sell productive assets can be considered a proxy for wealth.

In terms of social safety nets, access to transfers in many contexts make up a large part of poor households' annual income, and remittances generate additional income for individuals and households. Similarly, sharing of resources with neighbours/groups can be a proxy indicator of social cohesion and support networks that enable community-based social safety net measures to be put in place.

Adaptive capacity mainly considers the ability of women to adapt to changes in their environments. This pillar is primarily determined by complex inter-relationships and gendered dynamics related to decision making and the ability to influence decision making. There are other factors such as demographic structures affecting adaptive capacities such as the dependency ratio (e.g. how many adults are in a given household, the individual that is the household head, etc) and the level of education of individuals within the household.

The structure of the RCI at the baseline:

The resilience measurement conceptual framework has to capture all possible effects on well-being in the face of shocks. For this to occur, it is crucial to understand the weight of each pillar to the RCI.

The weighting of each pillars is response-dependent (in other words, it depends on how important women consider these determinants to be). When analysing the RCI structure, it was noted that the RCI differs between three different groups, namely refugees, IDPs and host communities (as the table below highlights). This essentially signifies that resilience and the approach to strengthen resilience has a different meaning in each of the groups.
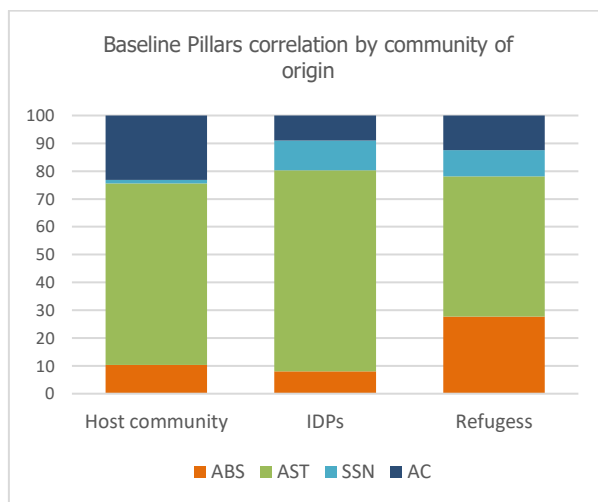
It was noted above that the asset pillar has the strongest correlation with RCI among the three groups. The assets component is determined by variables related to employment status and the ability of women to generate income and spend on non-essential good/services as well as ownership of assets (including productive assets).

Therefore, the critical drivers of resilience capacity in Iraq for women is primarily determined by employment, followed by their ability to generate income. Although the remaining resilience components carry relatively less weights when compared with assets component, they remain essential determinants of women's resilience.

Reported Challenges to Access Basic Services			
	Host community	IDPs	Refugees
Education	49.74%	44.44%	45.45%
Employment	64.10%	69.44%	62.73%
Health Services	60.51%	40.74%	36.36%
Politics and decision-making	21.03%	6.48%	26.36%
Public services	52.31%	35.19%	50.00%

Access to employment opportunities is the main challenge reported by all groups. The second challenge reported is different for each group. For host communities, it is access to health care

services. For IDPs, the second challenge is access to education and for refugees, it is access to public services[2].

Summary of findings:

Demographic profile of programme beneficiaries:

A byproduct of the surveys was the demographic profile of programme beneficiaries. The surveys enabled UN Women to generate a multidimensional view of the socioeconomic and cultural status of reached beneficiaries.

Data collected through the baseline survey revealed that the large majority (74%) of the programme beneficiaries were Iraqis (69.1% of which were IDPs displaced for over 12 months) and the rest were Syrians (26%). With an average reported age of 41 years and household size of 6 members, 80% of surveyed women have on average 4 children, and nearly 48% are heading the households (18% of refugees, 71% of IDPs and 59% of host communities). At least one-third of women are either divorced, separated or widowed.

Resilience Profile of programme beneficiaries

The RCI differences among the programme beneficiaries were noted and were all statistically significant. Refugee women were the least resilient and IDP women the most resilient.
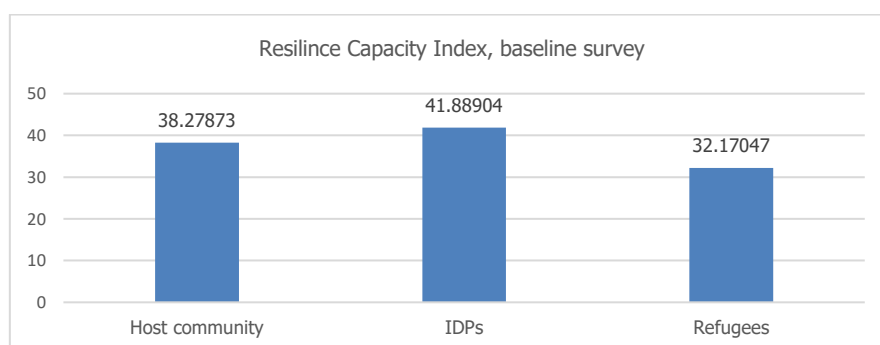

At the baseline, the least resilient age group was found to be between 30 and 49 years old, followed by the age group between 18 and 30 years old, and the age group between 50 and 59 years old respectively. Syrian refugees were found to be least resilient across the three age groups.
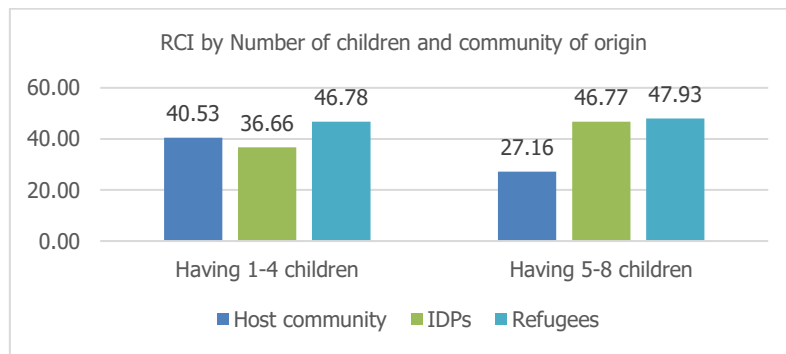
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[2] Public services include public transportation, electricity, health care, education, environmental protection, social services, telecommunications, waste management and water supply networks.

RCI, by age and community of origin
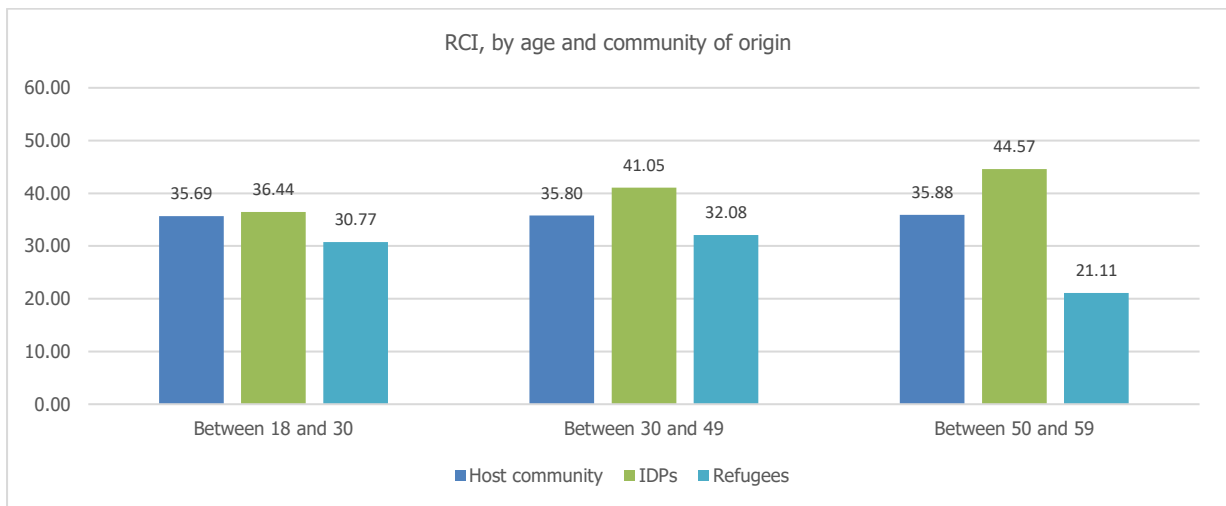
When comparing RCI with the marital status, the overall analysis indicate that the least resilient women are the single Syrian women followed by divorced women for all groups. Data showed that among the married group of women, refugees were the least resilient. While among the widowed and divorced women, those from the host community were the least resilient.

RCI by Marital Status and community of origin
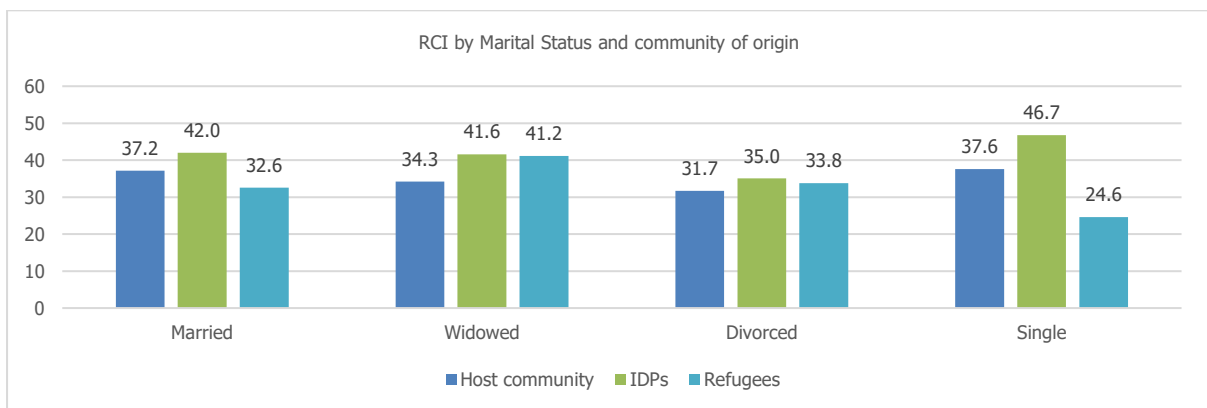
The RCI analysis indicated a weaker RCI for women with children as opposed to women without children. For host community women, having more than 5 children reduced their resilience by at least 33%. As for results for the IDPs and refugees, the number of children did not have a major impact on their RCI.

RCI by Number of children and community of origin

Having 1-4 children: Host community 40.53, IDPs 36.66, Refugees 46.78
Having 5-8 children: Host community 27.16, IDPs 46.77, Refugees 47.93

Livelihood Coping Strategies- Baseline Survey

Livelihood-based coping strategies[3] are longer term household measures deployed to cope with a lack of food, or money to buy food. These strategies are categorised according to severity. There are three categories: stress, crisis and emergency. The deployment of these strategies indicates people's ability to deal with shocks. Stress coping strategies reflect a reduced ability to deal with future shocks and include spending savings, buying food on credit,etc. Crisis coping strategies reduce future productivity and includes selling productive assets and being unable to attend to health needs. Emergency strategies are more difficult to reverse and are more dramatic in nature. They include sending household members to engage in illegal, exploitative or degrading jobs, removing children from school and sending them to work,etc.

Data analysis suggests the deployment of livelihood-based coping strategies by all groups at the baseline. All groups showed similar results with stress type livelihood strategies being deployed more frequently, followed by crisis coping strategies and emergency coping strategies respectively. Syrian refugees were deploying stress coping strategies at the baseline while beneficiaries from the host communities were deploying more crisis and emergency coping strategies than IDPs and refugees.


Deployment of livelihood based coping strategies by community of origin

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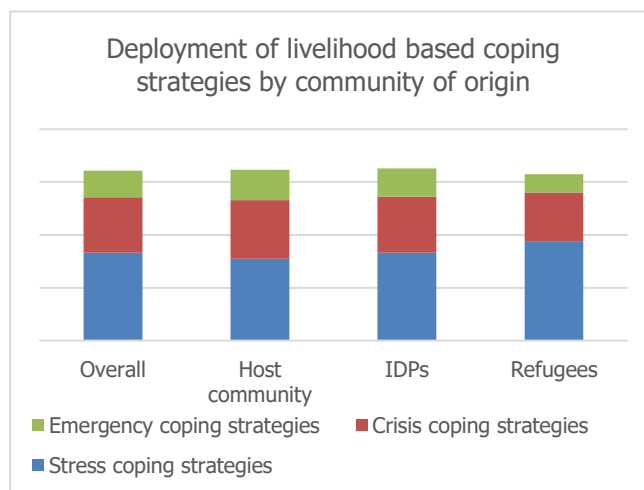
[3] https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/manual_guide_proced/wfp271449.pdf

The analysis results indicated an increase in resilience over time. The highest increase in the short-run (3-6 months following the receipt of the service) has been noted for Syrian refugees (+26.9 points increase). In the longer-term (6-9 months following the receipt of the service), the most significant increase was noted for host community women (+39.6 points increase). IDPs showed 5 times increase in their resilience from short term to long term.

Progress in RCI at baseline, midline, endline by community of origin
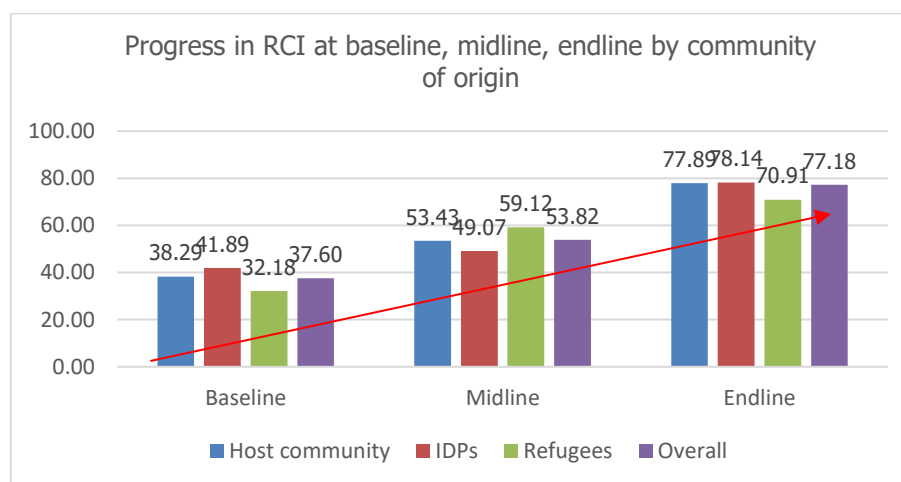
When the RCI results were disaggregated by marital status, it was found that the programme had the greatest impact on single women in the short term (this could be because they form most of the beneficiaries who received temporary cash for work (CFW) opportunities). In the longer term, the programme had the greatest impact on divorced women (most of them have been mainly the recipients of job placement).

RCI at baseline, midline and endline by marital status
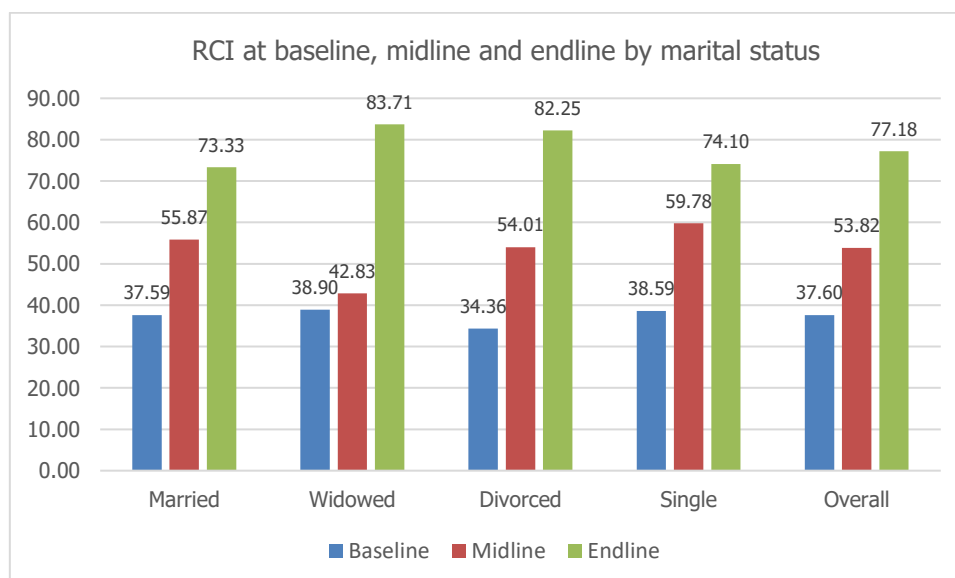
The age group that benefited most in the short term were those women aged between 18 and 29 years old although there were no significant differences noted in the remaining other age

groups. As for the longer term, the 3 age groups, namely those between 30 and 39 years old, (40 and 49 years old, and the 50 and above years old, had similar result with those aged between 30 and 39 years old scoring the highest improvement. Women aged between 18 and 29 years old scored the lowest when compared to other groups (this also can signify that the duration of the temporary CFW opportunities did not allow women to maintain the resilience improvement in the longer term).
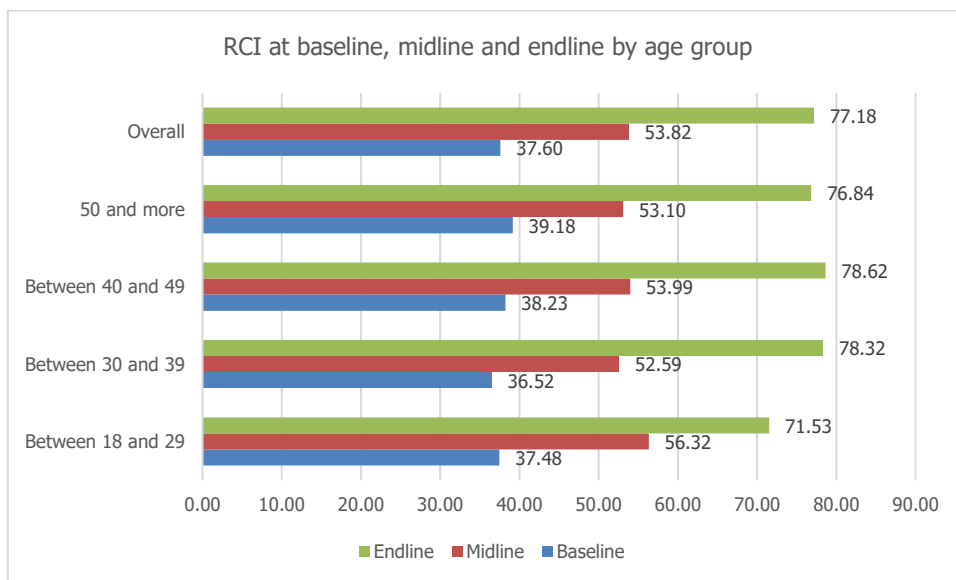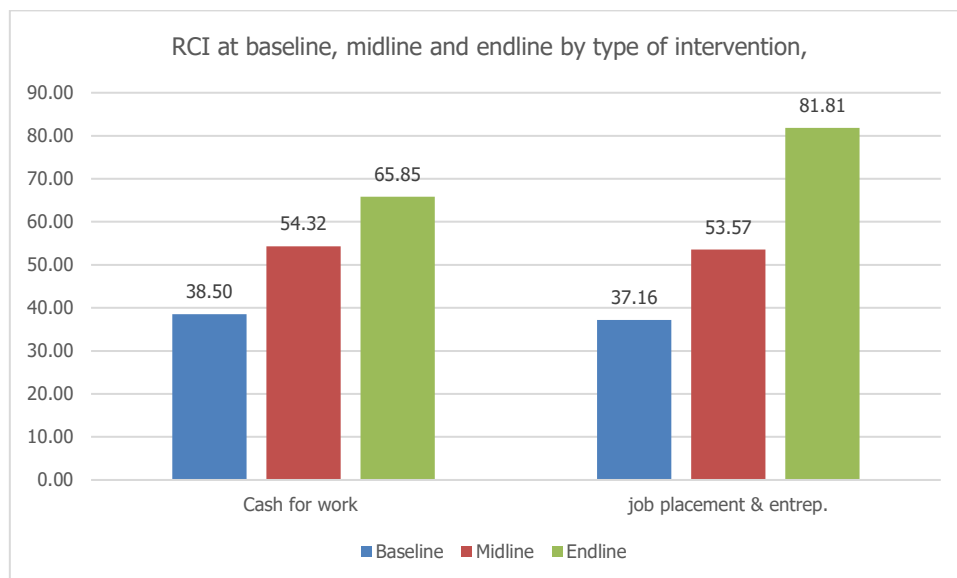

In the short term, women without children showed a 1.5 times higher improvement in resilience than women with children. In the longer term, women with children showed a higher improvement in resilience than those without chidren. When the results for women who have children were compared with the number of children, it was clearly noted that women with a larger number of children did not attain improved resilience results in the short run. As for the long term, women who had 1 to 6 children produced same results (the value of the resilience index at the endline was the same for all women who had 6 or less children but a decrease in resilience was noted for women that reported having more than 6 children).
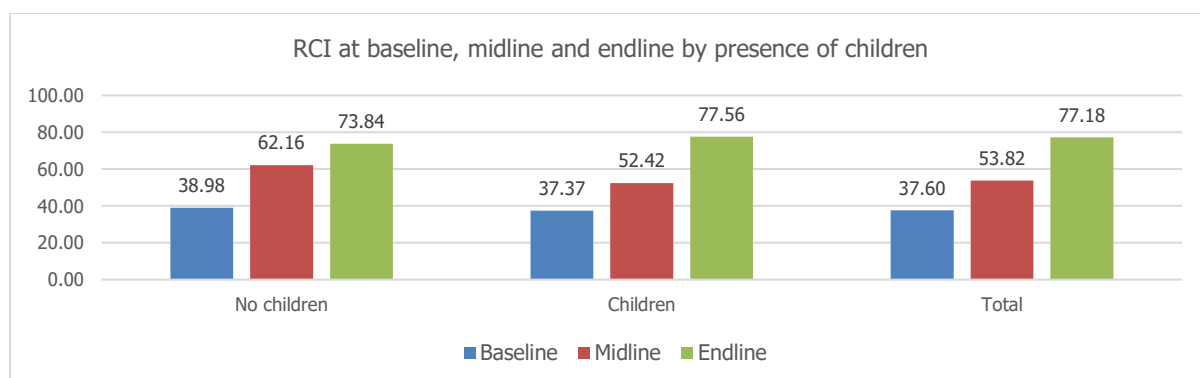
When RCI results were compared with the type of assistance received (temporary CFW opportunities versus longer-term job placement and entrepreneurship support), it was noted

that in the short-term similar results were noted. Yet in the long term, job placement and entrepreneurship support showcased better results.

RCI at baseline, midline and endline by type of intervention,

Chart showing RCI values for two intervention types with Baseline, Midline, and Endline:

Intervention	Baseline	Midline	Endline
Cash for work	38.50	54.32	65.85
job placement & entrep.	37.16	53.57	81.81

Recommendations:

1) **Assets pillar is a key determinant identified by women to strengthen resilience**: Of the four pillars, the key driver of the RCI for women in Iraq is primarily determined by employment and their ability to generate income.

2) **The need for tailored assistance to address the unique needs of beneficiaries**: The programme produced an increase in resilience for all programme beneficiaries. However this increase varied from one group to the other, and the variations were noted against the following indicators; community of origin, age groups, marital status, number of children and types of assistance obtained (short term versus longer term). In order to produce results that meet the needs across all groups, assistance must be tied and tailored to the needs and vulnerabilities of the different groups.

3) **Different interventions produced different improvements in resilience**: Temporary CFW assistance has produced positive results in the short term only. If the results were to be sustained, investments in longer term (eg. job placement or grants) assistance need to be considered.