

**Iraqi Civil Society Empowerment Project  
Citizen Participation and Local Governance Grant Fund**

The Citizen Participation and Local Governance grant fund is a component of the project “*Iraqi Civil Society Empowerment*” funded by the European Union, the Government of Finland and other donors through the UNDG-Iraq Trust Fund (ITF) and implemented by UNOPS.

**Rationale**

1. The Iraqi Civil Society Empowerment Project was launched to increase the participation of citizens, in particular youth and women, in the management of local public affairs. This will be achieved by reinforcing the role of civil society to lead concrete participatory initiatives that will improve the accountability and responsibility of local governments toward their citizens.
2. Through the provision of funds to selected NGOs in these governorates, it is expected that: (i) citizen participation in local governance processes will be enhanced; (ii) it will result in a positive impact on social assistance delivery and local economic development.

**Selection Process**

3. A Request for Proposals (RfP) was launched in December 2009. It was advertised electronically to the NGOs based in Basrah, Missan, Thiqr and Muthana governorates, using several channels: (i) UNOPS distribution list, (ii) NCCI (NGO Coordination Committee in Iraq), (iii) UNOPS Website; (iiii) Other UN agencies. Interested NGOs had one month to prepare and send in their technical proposal as well as all the detailed information on their structure, past experience and references of donor organizations that had supported them previously. A budget not exceeding 50,000 USD per grant and allocating a maximum of one grant per community for each governorate was requested in the RfP.
4. A total of 11 proposals were subsequently received and reviewed by an evaluation panel of UNOPS staff.
5. Out of the eleven applying NGOs, five were considered for granting. The remaining six NGOs did not comply with the criteria requested in the TOR and hence failed to provide details in order to be considered for the next steps.
6. The quality of the proposals was low in general and most of the NGOs did not follow the project proposal preparation guidelines and templates attached to the RfP. Therefore, UNOPS team worked together with the applying NGOs to support them in completing the project proposals, defining the intervention strategy and making sure they were complying with the ToR requirements.
7. After the initial evaluation of the proposals and discussion with the NGOs, the committee decided to select five NGOs instead of four as initially planned to give them the opportunity to complement the interventions and have a greater impact. Two NGOs in Basra and one in each of the governorates of Muthana, Thiqr and Missan were selected.

**Implementation process**

8. The implementation period of the projects will range from 4 to 6 months, starting from April 2010 until September 2010.
9. In general the selected projects proposed the following activities: trainings, campaigns, and workshops, production of posters and booklets, and radio programs.

**Technical assistance to implementing partners**

UNOPS selected the service provider for the technical support to citizen participation grant fund. The service provider was Canadian Leaders in International Consulting Inc (CLIC). An RFQ was issued and number of applications were received among whom CLIC. A contract was signed in late April with CLIC and training was planned to take place in Basra, but due to difficult logistic arrangements, the training was shifted to Erbil instead. The training took place between 23-28 of June and it was attended by 10 NGO members and 9 local authorities.

### **Monitoring modalities**

10. The NGO projects are monitored through the following mechanisms:

- UNOPS staff in Amman closely liaising with all partners, supervising and cross-checking activity reporting and monitoring as well as developments in the field.
- UNOPS staff located in Basra through regular visits to the offices of NGO partners and activity implementation sites in Missan, ThiQar and Muthana governorates.
- Media monitoring through screening internet about activities in addition to media coverage forwarded to UNOPS by the NGOs.

## **Annex 1**

### **List of Projects funded through Citizen Participation and Local Governance Grant Fund**

1. **National Association for Blind Care in Iraq** implements a project in the governorate of **Basra**. Through its partnership with the Czech NGO People in Need (PIN), it will implement a civic education campaign in the governorate to introduce citizens to the basic rules and institutional features of democratic political systems and to provide them with knowledge about democratic rights and practices. The project will work cooperatively with the groups of youth and adults to identify a public policy problem in their community. A minimum of 4 action groups will be formed. Each group will identify and select a pressing issue that needs to be addressed in their community. In a series of meetings, the groups will then research the problem, evaluate alternative solutions, develop their own solution in the form of a public policy, and create a political action plan to enlist local authorities to adopt their proposed policy. Subsequently, participants will present their project before a panel of civic-minded community members and local officials. The proposed activity will help 200 individuals foster their knowledge and understanding of how to formulate, monitor and influence public policy while strengthening their support for democratic values and principles, tolerance, and feelings of political efficacy. In addition to the activities targeting citizen integration, the project will also issue a Pocket Citizen Guide, through working in partnership with three local CSOs. 2500 copies of the information booklet 'Pocket Citizen Guide' will be distributed to the targeted communities, which will help CSOs start a conversation about what it means to be a citizen in Iraq today.

#### **Achievements to date of the National Association for Blind Care in Iraq:-**

The NGO has held three meetings that brought together local citizens and local authorities to discuss the issues they considered to be the most pressing. The first issue to be addressed was the issue of harmful flying insects (mosquitoes) in the area of Shat Al-Arab and was attended by 54 people, 50 males and 4 females. The meeting was held on June 10, 2010, and the NGO reported that the indirect beneficiaries of this event numbered up to 1,000. The second meeting was held on June 24 when the

participants discussed the lack of recreational green space for families in the area of Al Dayer. The NGO reported that the number of attendees was 45. The NGO also reported that local authorities have allocated a piece of land in Basra of ٢٢,٨٤١ square meters. The third meeting was held on July 10, 2010 in Hartha and it was aimed at elevating the administrative performance of the area. The NGO reported that 8 staff from local authorities, representing various sectors including the Provincial Council, Municipal Councils, the Prime Minister's Office, which has a committee working on the reconstruction of Basra, and other local offices such as Population and Sewage of Hartha.

In order to make the discussion richer and more concrete for the three meetings mentioned above, the NGO (before each meeting) distributed a questionnaire with multiple and specific questions about each issue and directed the feedback to the local authorities in order to help find solutions for each issue.

Finally, the NGO is preparing to publish a booklet under this grant discussing the active role of citizens in local governance and how it will positively impact on all aspects of life in Basra.

**2. Bustan Association for Children's Education, Media & Culture** implements a project in Basra city centre, Al Jazeera, Abi Khasib and Khor Al-Zober districts. This project focuses on youth because young people are a major force in the world of social, economic and political developments. In addition to the youth, other community members and stakeholders from Basra will participate including school teachers, community/religious leaders, statisticians, CSOs, media outlets, etc. This project will increase the skills and knowledge of 1,600 youth, aged 17 and 18 years, in civic participation and civil rights from 9 preparatory schools in Basra (6 inside Basra and 3 from its rural areas). The trained youth will be involved in the production of 1 radio programme on participation in decision making, planning and maintaining dialogue between government and citizens' civil rights. The produced radio programme will be disseminated through 2 radio channels in Basrah targeting listeners in the governorate. Conducting 2 art exhibitions in the schools on citizen rights, including minorities/vulnerable groups' rights and responsibilities, the best artworks of the 2 art exhibitions will be compiled to create a leaflet on citizen participations. A total of 2,500 copies will be printed to be disseminated to the people of Basrah in different places: schools, Hussainyats (mosques), shops and supermarkets, public places, etc. 1 opinion poll will be conducted on citizens' freedom of information, including freedom of budget information, community needs versus government responses, and citizens' access to goods and services. The results of the public poll will be analyzed and the findings will be shared with 50 community leaders/public leaders/stakeholders/local authority officials/media outlets in 1 public event and the best themes selected during the 2 competitions will be introduced in the form of essays and messages that will be disseminated through 1 newspaper and 1 mobile company (in the form of SMS) to the public. The lessons learned and the experience gained during the project will be shared with 50 representatives of 20 NGOs/CSOs in Basrah.

#### **Achievements of Bustan Association for Children's Education, Media and Culture:-**

Following the formation of the team in April, the NGO started to prepare curriculums on civil rights and the sound engagement of citizens in local governance. The NGO selected 9 schools and explained the curriculums to the trainers in these schools so that the trainers will pass the knowledge to 1,500 students in these schools.

In May, the NGO selected two schools and trained some of its students on how to participate in planning and decision making by maintaining an open channel of communication between the local authorities and the local citizens. These students began to write short stories in the form of a radio drama in order to be performed and aired later. These activities were held in the form of a competition between students to select the best short story, the best photo for the leaflet, the best article and best short letter.

In June, the best drama was selected and it has been finalized in a form to be sent to UNOPS for final approval. A leaflet has been developed as well about civil and minorities rights using some of the paintings of

students. This will also be sent to UNOPS for approval. Furthermore, the NGO reported that they distributed questionnaires about citizen participation and demanding citizens' rights and benefits. The reports from this questionnaire will be sent to UNOPS. The best short letter about the right of citizens to have a decent life has been selected and the best article on the right of citizens to access information has been also selected.

**3. Sons of Displaced People** implement a project in Maysan, Ali Al Sharqi and Kumeat areas; the project aims at holding 20 seminars between the jobless of both genders to include (i) owners of small businesses (ii) farmers (iii) notables from religious and tribal backgrounds on one side and representatives from the local government from the other. The purpose of these seminars is to bring viewpoints together to reach common ground on the means to solve economic problems, while taking into consideration the financial allocation of the governorate. The participants of these seminars will be as follows: (i) the chairperson, who is responsible for chairing the sessions as planned, allocating time for all of the lecturers and the participants and making sure that all adhere to modern dialogue. (ii) A total of 16 representatives divided into two groups: the first group will be for 12 participants from the group of unemployed from both genders, and another group of 4 representatives from the local government. The discussion between the two groups will be held in a way that the first group will prepare a list of challenges that unemployed people face and the second group, which includes representatives from the government, will formulate solutions for these challenges (iii) Approximately 75-100 people will be invited to represent the different backgrounds of the local community and 80 % of invitations will be sent to marginalized groups, further taking into consideration the participation of women in these seminars. The project will mainly concentrate on the process of building the awareness among 2,000 people of the democratic approach that targets the integration into local governance activities.

Achievements of Sons of Displaced People:-

After the preparatory phase, the NGO started the implementation of the dialogue seminars in the selected areas. 9 seminars out of 20 were conducted by the end of June 2010. All of these sessions were held in traditional agrarian societies that suffer from poverty and deprivation. The NGO reported that during the 9 seminars, 20 local council members participated. During each of these sessions, the issues discussed varied between unemployment, pavement of roads, lack of schools, lack of prenatal care, emancipation of women, stagnant water, and the hanging bridge problem)

The NGO reported that one of the facilitators of these meetings is working for Relief International for Legal Services and this helped many families to raise their problems and issues, making full use of his attendance.

For each of these meetings, a committee was assigned in order to follow up with local councils on the recommendations issued from each meeting.

**4. Rafidain Feministic Organization**, the project will be implemented in Al **Muthana** governorate, in Samawa, , Rumaitha, Khidr, Warka'a, Majid, Hilal, Najmi, and Seaweer areas. The project of the Rafidain Organization aims to increase citizen participation in local governance through the education of local government and citizens on the importance of participation to build a democratic system. This will be implemented by targeting 150 members of the provincial council and members of municipal councils and about 1,600 citizens, including 1,000 women. The project's planned activities are: 10 workshops targeting the members of the provincial council and municipal councils, 25 workshops involving civic education to citizens in different areas of the province (it will focus on women and youth in those areas), 10 direct meetings between citizens and representatives of government departments in the province, establishing joint committees of citizens and government employees to follow the activities of government departments.

Achievements of Rafidain Organization:-

Following the preparation phase and hiring of staff, the NGO started with designing and printing posters, brochures and training materials after having them cleared by UNOPS. The NGO started the implementation of activities as per their proposal and started with workshops in Darraji, Seawer and Hilal. During these workshops, the NGO also implemented many of the awareness sessions as per the proposal. The total number of workshops and awareness sessions reported by Bustan NGO as per their midterm report was 8 workshops

and 23 awareness sessions in 10 different areas. In their midterm report, the NGO reported that there is a general tendency by citizens to obtain information about how accountable the local government is. Citizens want to know about the mechanisms of local governance. They also said that many members of municipal council showed their willingness to engage citizens in governance through direct meetings and seminars. The NGO highlighted the difficulty of women's participation in local governance, especially in rural areas where tribal law is dominant.

The NGO reported that the actual number of beneficiaries achieved during the reporting period was 1,154 (546 females and 608 males) and the number of members of municipal councils who attended was 121. Regarding publications, 1000 posters and 1000 brochures were printed. Of these, 500 brochures and 250 posters were distributed during the reporting period.

**5. Resurrecting Iraq People Centre** the project will meet the needs of people to raise their awareness and education on the importance of citizen participation in local governance and democratic values in **ThiQar** governorate, in Nassirriyah, Shatra, Suq AshyooHQ, Refai and Chibaish districts. The project will be providing 50 dialogue sessions, including the planning and implementation of a civic education campaign on citizen participation and democratic values. The sessions will explain citizen participation in local governance processes, principles and the importance of citizen participation and will regularly coordinate with other NGOs in other provinces to share experiences and advocacy ideas. The 50 sessions will be divided as: 30 sessions in Nassirriyah district including: Fahdelia, Islah, Bateha, Sayd Dahkeel and Sedanawiya districts; 6 sessions in Al-Shatrah district including: Gharraf, Dawaia, and Badaa districts; 6 sessions in Suq Ash-Shuyukh district including: Tar, Akeka and Karmat Bani Saeed districts; 4 sessions in Refay district including: Naser, Fajer, Qalaat Sukaer areas and 4 sessions in Chibaysh district including: Fuhud, and Hamar. A total number of 2,500 copies of training material will be prepared during the project and will be distributed during these sessions. Each participant will receive the training material about citizen participation in local governance processes, principles and the importance of citizen participation to assist with raising the participants' awareness about the process, principles and roles of citizens in local governance. Media and journalists will be invited to cover the activities. There will be coordination of activities as well as exchanges of experiences with other organizations working on the same projects in the campaign which might require support from UNOPS as well. Also, there will be cooperation with civil society leaders and local government in the province of ThiQar.

#### Achievement of Resurrecting Iraqi People.

The NGO started by preparing for the 50 sessions they proposed to implement throughout starting the recruitment process and starting the communication channels with the local government in ThiQar, including discussions between community leaders and local authorities. Out of the 50 sessions proposed by the NGO, the NGO implemented 23 sessions, which were aimed at empowering citizens and improving their capacity to understand the importance of citizen participation and democratic values. The attendees of these sessions are people from the general community (literate and illiterate) and all of the sessions were held in Nassiriya, the city center of ThiQar. The NGO reported that it printed 2,500 booklets and distributed 683 of them. The NGO reported that members of provincial councils attended the sessions and that there were productive discussions between the people and the local government members. The number of direct beneficiaries, as reported by the NGO, was 809.