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Support for Fair, Safe and Professional Media Election Coverage: Election Reporting Guide and Advocacy Campaigns

Report written by

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1. Introduction

The arrangements for developing and implementing projects in Iraq inevitably have taken place under extraordinary conditions. Since the attack on the UN in Baghdad in June 2003 and the withdrawal of UN personnel, limitations have been placed upon local working which pose a particular challenge for the UN. Controversies over the Oil for Food Programme have also engendered suspicion inside Iraq and have placed a high requirement on the UN to ensure transparency and tight financial controls.

UNESCO devised a project designed to support the ability of journalists to cover the elections independently, objectively and safely. The broad concept was to produce an election guide for journalists and undertake targeted advocacy, which would strengthen the independence of the media.

The specific objectives of the project were:

- To promote transparency and accountability through advocacy campaigns to encourage full and fair and efficient access to information to and by Iraqi journalists covering the elections;
- To raise awareness among civil society and officials on issues relating to elections, such as safety and democratic principles;
- To enhance professional election reporting through skills training (and safety awareness training) and the production and dissemination of an election guide for Iraq.

In order to achieve these objectives, three major areas of activity were developed as follows:

Activity one. Awareness raising campaigns

- A media and public awareness campaign to be backed by direct lobbying & advocacy initiatives. The aim was to encourage participants in the election to make a full disclosure of information and activities. This was to include practical support programmes for Iraqi civil society and officials to help them develop their own strategies to work with the media.
- A media and public awareness campaign on the safety of journalists and their right to work without threat.
- Seminars to raise the level of debate and dialogue on the media's role and rights during elections and to promote access to public information.

Activity two. Election guide for journalists-

- Publication of an election guide booklet for journalists to include guidelines on principles of professional reporting during elections, journalists' rights, election processes, contacts, reference materials, background documentation and safety information.
- Regular updating of guide to booklet distributed through web and partners during programme events.
- Online archive of election resource material and information.
- Translation of all content into relevant Iraqi languages, with selected translation into English.



Activity three. Election reporting/safety training

Three training seminars to develop the capacity of Iraqi civil society and media to enhance the safety of journalists and media workers.

UNESCO and the UN

1. The project was implemented by the UNESCO office for Iraq, based in Amman assisted by staff from the Division for Freedom of Expression, Democracy and Peace (Communication and Information sector) and the Social and Human Sciences Sector based in Paris.
2. New arrangements have had to be put in place to co-ordinate the UN's work in Iraq from its temporary base in Amman. Under the overall auspices of the United Nations Mission to Iraq, UNAMI, agencies are co-operating through policy "clusters" to try and ensure better co-operation across the different working areas. The clusters address 1. Education and Culture; 2. Health; 3. Water and Sanitation; 4. Infrastructure and Housing; 5. Agriculture, Water Resources and Environment; 6. Food Security; 7. Mine Action; 8. Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees; 9. Governance and Civil Society; 10. Poverty Reduction and Human Development, and finally 11. UN Electoral Assistance. Each cluster scrutinises bids that go to the United Nations Development Group Trust Fund for Iraq (UNDG Trust fund), which acts as the main multilateral disburser of funds.
3. Cluster Nine covers governance and civil society, and one of the clusters through which UNESCO works¹. Cluster Nine has a broad range of objectives, from supporting civil society in Iraq, strengthen government ministries, mainstreaming gender equality, supporting the emergence of a free media, promoting a culture of human rights, and addressing issues as diverse as child protection and drugs policy. Partner agencies are UNDP, UNIFEM, OHCHR, UNICEF, UNEP, UN-HABITAT, ILO, UNESCO, UNAMI and UNODC.
4. However, with the advent of the first elections in January 2005, this project was submitted to Cluster Eleven which deals with Electoral Support to be fast tracked. The main objectives of Cluster Eleven are to establish the electoral commission and plan and prepare for of the elections. In turn this involved training Iraqis to become skilled electoral staff and co-ordinating international assistance. Partner agencies in Cluster Eleven are UNDP, UNAMI, UNOPS, UNESCO, IOM, UNCHR, UNIFEM, with the cluster headed overall by United Nations Electoral Assistance Division (EAD). Given the priority accorded to the elections in Iraq, Cluster Eleven had access to considerable sums from the UN Trust Fund for Iraq.

Analysis of Contract phase.

5. A number of difficulties were posed by the way the project was established. The initial focus for Cluster Eleven was on direct support to the elections. However, late in 2004 they suggested that they would consider funding projects that were seen to indirectly support the

¹ UNESCO also has projects that address Education and Water issues

elections, such as media work. The project was then pulled out of a wider programme of assistance foreseen for submission to Cluster Nine and consequently fast tracked through Cluster Eleven (given the imminence of the elections).

6. As a result of this process, and despite the fact that the project had been developed by UNESCO staff for some time, final approval was only given on December 22nd. Given that most northern countries, where the international NGOs are based, have extensive public holidays at this time and that the elections were scheduled for the end of January 2005, this inevitably placed a severe constraint upon implementation. This was further complicated by the fact that Eid fell early in January 2005.
7. A further problem lay in the contractual relationships within UNESCO itself. In order to achieve the required outputs in the time available, a number of NGOs were contracted to carry out the work. These were ARTICLE 19, IMPACS, INSI and Index on Censorship that was supposed to co-ordinate the main bulk of activities (and which sub-contracted the Reuters Foundation to carry out training).
8. Contracts in UNESCO are subject to close scrutiny. The various types of contracts are ruled by specific legal frameworks depending on the amount and type of contract in question, each contract being processed in order to ensure transparency in issuing contracts.
9. Due to the timing of the project and the UNESCO administrative procedures, the NGOs began work on the basis of a verbal understanding prior to contract being finalized.
10. As activities one and two amounted to a contract of a total of US\$165,000, the contract for INDEX had to be broken down into two separate contracts in order to ensure immediate implementation. The total amount of the two contracts being above US\$ 100,000 meant that the second draft contract was submitted for further internal scrutiny, before it could be finalized with INDEX.
11. While this flexibility was helpful and demonstrated a high level of trust between partners, it is not ideal for transparency and accountability and should be avoided in future. It is important that contractual arrangements are resolved as soon as possible, perhaps in the form of provisional contracts subject to final approval once the funding has been secured.

12. A third challenge that affects any project is the difficulty of identifying and working with effective partners remotely in a country cut off from the norms of democracy and human rights for so long. Inevitably a situation such as Iraq, where civil society was not permitted to exist, where any independent voice was silenced and where stable political institutions have never existed, is particularly challenging. UNESCO is an inter-governmental organization (and UN Specialized Agency) that has to work with Member States. Its strength is that it can bring them together with civil society and independent voices – and it is this combination that is particularly powerful. But severe time constraints and the lack of developed partnerships in country meant that this project focused exclusively on journalists rather than including public officials as envisaged in the original objectives. I suspect this also reflected the history of Index on Censorship who have worked with journalists rather than the government in Iraq.
13. This is understandable in the circumstances, given that elections were under way and the interim government could not be certain how long it would remain in power. Nevertheless the need to provide capacity, awareness and training for public officials is very urgent and should form a strong component of the next round of UNESCO work in Iraq.

Evaluation of contract phase:

14. In general the inter agency co-operation seems to work reasonably well, although it does require a considerable amount of day to day discussion. However, the structures through which the clusters operate are not clear – different staff give different interpretations of the system. At its best, the personal relationships formed enable agencies that have previously been purely competitive to find ways of working together. However the cluster system places high priority upon staff being based in Amman so they can constantly pursue ideas and proposals – and report back where necessary - through the local system.
15. It maybe that the lack of a dedicated staff person in Amman meant that regular reporting to Cluster 11 did not take place. UNESCO thus only reported in-line with formal reporting mechanisms and did not participate in daily exchanges with Cluster 11. (There is a national CI staff member in Amman, but there are no international staff members from the sectors for Social and Human Sciences or Communication and Information. Staff in the Iraq Office are all dedicated...) Certainly the request for an extension of time to the end of April came as a surprise to some members of Cluster 11. Future project work on a significant scale will have to rectify this by ensuring that UNESCO have a dedicated project manager in the Amman office (either on secondment as currently envisaged or by utilising locally based staff) who can systematise UNESCO's approach and relationships with other agencies. Where responsibility is shared between staff (and contacting agencies or consultants) it will also be necessary to establish clear timelines and responsibilities for reporting back to the cluster and the trust fund.

Analysis of Implementation phase

16. The project was divided into three major groups of activities for implementation purposes. Index on Censorship had the overall responsibility as managing partners for developing the election guide and advocacy work, the International News Safety Institute INSI carried out the safety training and IMPACS provided material in Arabic. Implementing partners with Index were ARTICLE 19 and IMPACS, while INSI collaborated with the Institute of War and Peace Reporting (IWPR). Index also subcontracted the Reuters Foundation to carry out the training element of the proposal. Aside from the delays caused by the size of the contract, the Index contract manager suggested he may need to go to Iraq to implement aspects of the project. To facilitate this UNESCO created an activity contract rather than a fee contract (as directly engaged UNESCO would have needed special permission to visit Iraq). This caused further delays and has potential implications for the ownership of any product, which I mention below.
17. The delays in securing agreed contracts meant that in some cases work had to start before contracts were agreed. While this proved satisfactory for those aspects of the project that were clearly delineated – such as the production of election guidelines by ARTICLE 19, it was less satisfactory for the management of the project as a whole. It also meant that it was not possible to secure agreement in advance to an implementation programme. It proved difficult to establish and sustain an agreed timetable and timeline, and project management responsibilities occasionally broke down. In turn the Reuters Foundation were involved in their own project working with UNDP, to establish a news agency in Iraq as well as being subcontracted to Index. I have seen a UNDP report claiming that the UNESCO funded training organised by Index was a UNDP funded event organised by Reuters, which gives me cause for concern about how the event was being promoted to the two agencies. This maybe an issue that the internal auditors wish to clarify with their opposite number at UNDP.

Activity One – awareness raising campaign

18. The original concept was to organise a media and public awareness campaign about the importance of independent media and the role they can play in covering elections. The aim was to encourage participants in the election to be as open as possible about their policies and programmes and it was envisaged that there would be practical support programmes for Iraqi civil society and officials to help them develop their own strategies to work with the media. Specifically it was envisaged that there would be “an ‘awareness programme’ of seminars and advocacy support in association with civil society groups that will encourage all agencies and active participants in the election process to ensure transparency through the fullest possible disclosure of information in the most efficient and fairest manner; and encourage all agencies and active participants in the election process to ensure the safety of journalists covering the campaigns”.

Results achieved

19. Time constraints and the overall security problems prevented this activity from happening in the time available. To develop effective advocacy in country, in the security and general restrictions of the pre election environment (when little public campaigning of any kind took place) would have been impossible and it was unrealistic to set this goal. The parties themselves restricted their campaigning because of the overall security climate.
20. However, the production and distribution of the election guidelines and the IMPACS safety manual will provide the basis for greater media awareness of the issue of journalist safety. Through this enhanced media awareness there is likely to be some indirect impact upon public officials and the general public. The real benefits of this project will be felt over time with the continuing distribution of materials.
21. One positive development was the creation of a UNESCO web-site carrying useful information – such as election guidelines and briefing notes for the media in Arabic. UNESCO also ensured that some of the Article 19 briefing notes as well as the guidelines were translated and placed on the net before the elections. These will form a valuable future resource. This web-site is being further developed and has been used to launch an Arabic language version of the UNESCO web-site, which is a very significant output from and contribution by the project.
22. Further progress was made with a World Press Freedom Day seminar held in Baghdad on 3rd May 2005, despite considerable security complications. Among the participants were members of the Iraqi Journalists Union, the Iraqi National Communication and Media Commission (NCOM), women's rights activist, civil society groups and journalists. Over forty people attended. The main focus was on the need for legal reform that guarantees freedom of expression, improving professionalism and the need for high safety awareness. Recommendations included the need to strengthen relations with the Arab and international organisations, providing training opportunities and pursuing legal reform. The seminar marked a significant stage in developing the domestic debate inside Iraq and winning recognition of the role UNESCO can play in the future.

Recommendations and future possibilities

23. Developing local contacts, capacity and expertise will be an important task for the next phase of UNESCO work in Iraq although success will depend on the nature of the partnerships that can be developed in the current climate. Now that the guide has been produced it will be important to ensure that it is widely distributed and used.
24. Any future activities should involve prioritising developing local partnerships on the ground. As the project was taken out of another programme it was always envisaged that the activities were

undertaken with a view to continuing and building up them in future projects in Iraq. I think it likely that the real benefit of the project in terms of advocacy and awareness raising will be felt over the next year or so. What has happened so far can be regarded as a useful foundation for the future. But this does emphasise the importance of developing further activities.

25. Cluster Eleven managers have indicated that they may request an application from UNESCO to train the public information officers of the electoral commission prior to the referendum later this year. The training would consist of an element of basic professional training (i.e. what is the role of a public information official, how do you write a press release, how to maintain an accurate press database etc.) alongside an introduction to the principles of freedom of expression and transparency in government. In terms of substance, account would also have to be taken of the rapidly changing media environment of Iraq. For example during the last elections 2,000 journalists were accredited just from the Baghdad area alone. No press officer can reasonably cope with demands for interviews from over a thousand journalists so some prioritisation will have to be put in place that is non discriminatory and transparent.
26. This will be an opportunity to develop contacts with public officials and ensure that the principles of respect for an independent media are respected in the new Iraq. I would suggest that this project possibility is pursued actively.

Activity Two

27. This activity envisaged the publication of an election guide booklet for journalists to include guidelines on principles of professional reporting during elections, journalists' rights, election processes, contacts, reference materials, background documentation and safety information.

Results achieved

28. This activity was contracted to by Index on Censorship with the support of ARTICLE 19, the Reuters Foundation and INSI. The aim was to produce a publication covering the following areas:
 - Guidelines to legal standards on election reporting
 - Training materials based upon the above (sub contracted to Reuters)
 - A guide to the current situation in Iraq (produced by Index itself)
 - Safety training materials (produced by INSI)
 - A diary of useful contacts, dates etc.
29. The sections have been included in a filofax style binder, to try and create an attractive product, and to allow easy updating in the future. This is an imaginative approach that should be commended as it will allow UNESCO to develop the product in the future and ensure it has an extended shelf life. It is available in Arabic, English and Kurdish..
30. Given the late agreement to release of funds, and the problems in agreeing contracts through the UNESCO process a schedule for

completion of this work was agreed on January 5th, setting out a completion date for the end of March. Index identified three key milestones – the production and delivery of the material in English by January 25, the translation of this into Arabic and Kurdish by the end of February with a training seminar scheduled for Amman in early March.

31. This timetable recognised that it was not practical to produce material in time for the January elections, but given the programme of elections provisionally scheduled for 2005, it was felt – correctly in my view – that this material would still be very useful. The seminar would both introduce the training material and test its effectiveness.
32. The content provided by ARTICLE 19 appeared in a timely and professional manner. Their input involved two sets of material: a revised and adapted set of the specific election guidelines found in the 1994 ARTICLE 19 publication, *Guidelines For Election Broadcasting In Transitional Democracies* and a set of 19 Briefing Notes on different issues relating to free media and elections. The Reuters training material concentrated on journalistic techniques. Index produced the history and INSI a section on safety. This phase appeared to produce few problems.
33. Production was evidently more difficult. Index argued that there is no standard agreed form of Kurdish (no officially agreed dialect in the absence of a state to authorise one) and it took some time to identify an acceptable idiom for the material. I checked this in Amman with other agencies and none of them reported this problem – which may mean it would have been better to produce the material locally, through UNESCO's Amman office. Consequently (and relying upon freelance translators) the material in Kurdish and Arabic only arrived on February 5th. There were a number of other questions about printing and the use of the UNESCO logo (possibly arising from Index's difficulty in understanding the sensitive nature of UNESCO involvement in Iraq), all of which caused further delays. Nevertheless the guide has been produced and an initial 750 copies were printed in time for the workshops in March and distributed, mostly through Iraqi media outlets. A further 2,500 copies are being printed in May, in Beirut, and will be distributed subsequently. These will also contain a 2006 diary to give the product additional currency..
34. However the use of an activity contract places a question mark over whether the final product belongs to UNESCO or to Index. I don't anticipate this being a problem but in future it is probably useful for UNESCO to retain the ownership of any products produced with its money (this can be covered in the memorandum or contract) as well as insisting on final editorial control.
35. Between the 6th and 10th March three workshops and a seminar were held in Amman as part of this project. Two workshops were aimed at journalists and one at senior editors – the first event of its kind to draw senior editors in. The workshops for journalists covered a range of election reporting topics, from the role of media in elections to

principles of democracy and freedom of expression. Alongside these broad topics professional training was offered including exercises to strengthen reporting skills. The workshop for editors focused on the formation of an independent media association, developing new forms of co-operation (to share news for example) and the recruitment of journalists. The seminar was held on 8th March and brought together the journalists and editors, along with journalists from Egypt and Jordan. The seminar was an opportunity for participants to reflect on a broad range of issues, from the role of the media in the constitutional process, to the need for an Iraqi press association, to a range of professional development issues.

36. A total of 57 journalists and editors attended these events out of the 80 who were invited. Of these ten were women although more would have attended had the event been held in Iraq itself. (Previous events held by Index and Reuters in Iraq had a majority of women participants. Despite the security problems and attendant difficulties of travelling attendance was good. It was notable that so many senior editors came to the event – their feedback was positive which is encouraging given Iraqi criticism of much of the training offered in Amman. The senior editors said they had found a space of common interest and co-operation that had not existed before. Although the seminar in Amman was organised by Index, using Reuter's trainers, the UNESCO Iraq Office assisted with transport and other logistics. This proved problematic. Index staff did not have someone running the logistical side of the conference throughout with the result that questions were directed to the UNESCO Iraq Office that were best answered by the organisers. The Index contract managed left part way through the event and the Reuters trainers did not feel responsible for the overall event. Participants' names and travel schedules were agreed at the last minute which caused further problems.
37. The senior editors were placed in a smart hotel as an incentive for them to travel, and more junior reporters who were placed somewhere cheaper. Whatever the perceived advantages of this arrangement it further complicated logistics. This situation was compounded by a lack of organisational control exercised by Index – perhaps not appreciating the extra effort involved in such a situation, and compounded by the fact that Index only ever had one member of staff working on the project part time. Despite the logistical problems the feedback that was recorded was generally positive.
38. Detailed feedback sheets for the events were not kept, which hinders the ability to assess the quality of the training in retrospect. The outline feedback sheets were positive – all the attendees appreciated the training and expressed the desire for more in the future. The trainers themselves from Reuters felt the training had gone very well compared to other training exercises they had been involved in Iraq. They felt there was a high level of commitment from the participants and that the senior editors found a space of common interest and co-operation which bodes well for the future.

39. In future I would recommend that feedback sheets are kept for each session however as it will make detailed feedback easier to collect and allow more targeted planning of future events. It is also likely that more women would have been able to attend had the training been organised inside Iraq. The travel and associated costs meant that the training inevitably had to be compressed into a short period of time but the only solution to this problem is to find venues in Iraq for training when security permits. It may also be useful for the UNESCO office to keep a record of those attending training seminars, both to develop long term links in the country and to avoid the danger of encouraging the same people to attend training events.

Recommendations + future possibilities

40. One obvious lesson to learn for the future is that there needs to be a clearly understood division of labour between the various partners (perhaps through a memorandum of understanding) and a clear line of control and responsibility being exercised by the principal contractor (
41. I would suggest that there is a clear memorandum of understanding, or tender specification that sets out the responsibilities of then main contractor and any sub contractors, and which contains significant milestones that UNESCO staff (and an external evaluator) can monitor. It is also important that contractors understand their responsibilities for the logistical arrangements of any project. This may mean careful scrutiny of any future tenders to ensure that those bidding for contracts have the necessary capacity to carry them out.
42. Alternatively, UNESCO could in principle, and where possible, avoid making contracts that include sub-contractors, but would contract all agencies itself. In this way those who are eligible will have a contract directly with UNESCO, which would place management with UNESCO itself. Of course contracts will be for smaller amounts of money and be of varying type which will increase the management workload for UNESCO but it would UNESCO much greater control over the whole process. This will however require an appropriate level of staffing to implement. It is also important that UNESCO clarify ownership of the guide, so that they are able to update it and continue to utilise it in future project work. I would also recommend monitoring the distribution of the guide so that UNESCO can check the degree to which it is available to the emerging Iraqi media community.
43. Having developed what is considered to be a useful product and having made a number of useful contacts, UNESCO now has the ability to build on this in developing future project work in Iraq. It was been suggested to me that it would be important to undertake a mapping exercise of the media scene in Iraq, one that could be regularly updated. It is a fast moving picture but one that needs to be understood better if projects are to develop properly. Such mapping should also include relevant polling data if available to ascertain what

media the Iraqi people actually watch and read (bearing in mind the regulator's belief that TV is the most accessible medium in Iraq ahead of both radio and newspapers). It may be possible to include this as an element of the main proposal currently being fast tracked.

44. Surveying the growth and extent of the Iraqi newspaper industry will present a particular challenge. Although newspaper penetration in Iraq is comparatively small (some observers claim only around 15% of the Iraqi population have access to a newspaper), newspapers have an important role in creating pluralism in the country. It may be that much more attention needs to be paid to developing management and business skills in the Iraqi newspaper industry alongside an assessment of its sustainability.

Activity Three

45. The third activity was three training seminars that were meant to develop the capacity of Iraqi civil society and media to enhance the safety of journalists and media workers.

Results achieved

46. The training for journalist focused on safety and was conducted by INSI. In recognition of the varying degrees and types of security threat in different parts of Iraq, the original intention was to organise three seminars in Basra, Baghdad and Sulimaniya each for 25 journalists. Timing again proved to be one of the biggest problems. With just ten days notice to organise the training INSI had to improvise and decided to organise one event in Sulimaniya that would involve journalists from Baghdad and the north. The combination of timing and overall security meant that INSI did not feel able to use their international trainers and so had to use local trainers obtained through IWPR who work in Iraq, but with whom they had no experience and therefore no guarantee of quality control. The training involved a complex set of arrangements between Amman and Paris (for UNESCO), London and Sulimaniya (where INSI used the IWPR training facilities) and the Brussels HQ of INSI.
47. Due to security issues – and consequently transport difficulties in Iraq the training event scheduled for Baghdad could not be held and people were asked to travel from Baghdad to the training in Sulimaniya. Only eleven journalists travelled from Baghdad rather than the twenty five originally envisaged (INSI recognised that had training been in Baghdad, many more would have come). Twenty five attended from the north. The difficulties of travelling to and from Baghdad meant that the seminar had to be compressed into somewhat less than two days.

48. While trainees expressed appreciation of the content of the training they expressed a growing resentment at international staff being unwilling to work in the country and people like themselves having to travel around at cost to their own time, expense and professional obligations in order to attend training activities. Other feedback was that course was too short (although it was designed to be intense as longer training would cost more and take them out of work for too long).
49. Attempts we made to organize a second event in Basra in April to pick up more trainees, however the security situation did not allow for the trainers to go to Basra. Indeed it was not even possible to organize the training elsewhere, as the participants foreseen could not leave Basra for the same reason.

Recommendations + future possibilities

50. The shortness of the time available and the practical constraints upon INSI meant that this project inevitably had to be reshaped to reflect realities on the ground. The response to the training was generally positive although much material had to be compressed into a short period of time. Allowing for the limited numbers of journalists who are able to travel from Baghdad, this activity was on target and INSI demonstrated a high level of professionalism and responsibility.
51. Unless security improves the only long term practical solution is for INSI to train Iraqi trainers who can work in Iraq – this is INSI's plan long term but not till next year. The "training of trainers" approach does however have the advantage of building capacity, if it can be guaranteed that trainers will have scope to operate in the longer term. Iraqi based training can then take place on an evening or day release basis that could be more spread out over time. If UNESCO wish to support future safety training it will have to think carefully about how to organise this – it should be possible, with sufficient notice to organise activities in Basra and Arbil and possibly even Baghdad, subject to the changing security situation in Iraq .

5. General Recommendations

A. Contract agreement stage

52. Clearly more realistic timetables need to be established to implement projects. My specific recommendations are:
 - a. Future UNESCO proposals to the Trust fund should allow sufficient time to carry out specified projects. UNESCO should break down large scale programmes into a series of manageable projects, delineating the overall UNESCO role from that of implementing partners. Assuming the media and human rights project is fast tracked this an urgent task.
 - b. However we have to recognise the nature of decision making through arrangements such as those for the Trust Fund which are inevitably uncertain. I would recommend that once a project has the approval of

the relevant cluster (Cluster Nine in this case) and is therefore ready to be presented to the Trust Fund, that expressions of interest are invited from a wide range of NGOs. Each should be requested to submit an expression of interest in the project with a short note setting out their capacity in the field, the resources they could make available, with CVs of the staff likely to be involved. UNESCO can then create an approved list of contractors that comply with the UN standards on transparency and accountability. Once approval is given it will then comparatively quick to agree on an implementation plan with the selected partners. Alternatively organisations could be requested to tender for projects subject to final approval being given for funding – as UNESCO will not enter into a contractual liability until any contracts are signed.

- c. 4. UNESCO has discretion to issue contracts of up to \$100,000 without clearance. Given that there is a substantive audit process in place I would also suggest that UNESCO consider raising this level to \$250,000 to allow the local office greater responsiveness to the rapidly changing environment in Iraq.
- d. 3. Final agreement to project implementation should be recorded either through a tender that specifies both what is expected of the implementing NGO or organisation and what is provided by the relevant UNESCO staff or through a memorandum of understanding that covers the same ground.
- e. 4. Finally it has emphasised to me that it is important to maintain regular reporting on progress with any projects to the cluster system (or any replacement should that take place). This will require a staff member with responsibility for the project to be located in Amman or some equivalent arrangement. Regular reporting to the Cluster and to the Trust Fund is vital in retaining confidence.

B. Project implementation

- 53. It is vital that future projects are implemented with the necessary political sensitivity and professionalism that the situation in Iraq demands. Considerable disquiet has been expressed – both in the course of this evaluation and in other contacts I have had with Iraqis – at the current approach to training being practised by the international community. Too many courses are held in Amman or elsewhere outside the country, with too little consistency and quality control, bringing trainees who are not selected necessarily for their position or ability and who are not followed up on subsequently. The aim of all training should be to increase the capacity of Iraqi society to meet the extraordinary challenges of creating a new democracy that respects human rights in Iraq.

My specific recommendations are:

- a. While the current constraints exist the best approach is to focus on the training of trainers for all activities, with training provided where possible in the country. The UN is considering opening offices in Basra and Arbil now that the security situation there has improved which indicates that training (or other activities) may well be able to be

located there. In the case of a training of trainers programme I would suggest that a long term contract is taken out with trainers, with payments to be made at set intervals and these payments are only made once training activities in Iraq are completed. The alternative would be to reach agreement with Ministries in Iraq to train designated staff members who will act as internal trainers as part of a longer term agreement with UNESCO.

- b. In addition I would recommend that each international implementer be asked to identify and work with an Iraqi partner or partners for the duration of the project.
- c. It is important that implementing organisations understand their logistical and organisational responsibilities and do not expect the local UNESCO office in Amman to pick up tasks not in their brief. I would suggest that following agreement of a contract that a memorandum of understanding is drafted by UNESCO that makes clear the relationship between the lead implementing organisations and UNESCO itself. This should a requirement that the lead implementing organisation present UNESCO with a timeline once contracts are agreed, identifying key milestones when reports will be made. This information should be shared with the independent evaluator who will also monitor progress and report to UNESCO any concerns about implementation.
- d. Given the problems of production and distribution of the election material I would also recommend that an agreed system of translation and publication be agreed with all partners in the early stages of the project. I would also suggest that the production of material may be best handled from Amman, and that if agreed, this be reflected in nay contracts awarded.

6. General Conclusions

54. Overall I think UNESCO can be reasonably satisfied with the implementation of the project given the constraints under which it developed although there are a number of important lessons to be learned. Other agencies and cluster members were pleased with what was achieved and there was particular praise for the UNESCO staff who worked on the project – specifically Christiana, Annali and Tamara who have won the respect of their UN colleagues for the work they have done and the leadership they demonstrated. I'm convinced it is down to their work that the project was able to achieve what it did.
55. The principle constraints were external to UNESCO – partly determined by the UN's relationship to Iraq and partly by shortage of time. There is a concrete product that should be useful through to the end of the year and probably beyond. There some structural issues for UNESCO to consider however –
 - Its project management arrangement in Amman/Iraq and systemising its reporting
 - The relationship between Paris and Amman and the contractual delays caused by this

- How to structure and tender for larger projects and ensure the correct division of labour between UNESCO and implementing partners.

56. Finally I would like to thank all of those who gave generously of their time, particularly Christina Dahlman, Annali Kristiansen and all the staff in the UNESCO office in Amman who were so helpful on my trip.

Appendix One

Those interviewed

Sara De Jong	INSI
Rohan Jayasekera	Index on Censorship
Agnes Callamard	ARTICLE 19
Christina Dahlman	UNESCO
Annali Kristiansen	UNESCO
Tamara Qaraien	UNESCO
Salah Khaled	UNESCO
Wolfgang Reuthers	UNESCO
Hakam Shahwan	UN Electoral Assistance for Iraq
Heidi Modro	UN Electoral Assistance for Iraq
Annie Demirjian	UNDP
Belen Alvaro	UNDP
Tony Rowlands	UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office