

United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust Fund

Project #:C9-25

Date and Quarter Updated: October - December, 4th Quarter 2010

Participating UN Organisation: UNOPS	Sector: Governance
Government of Iraq – Responsible Line Ministry:	Ministry of State for Civil Society Affairs

Title	Iraqi Civil Society Empowerment Project				
Geographic Location	National coverage, with specific activities targeting priority areas to be selected when the process of granting NGOs is initiated.				
Project Cost	4,255,193				
Duration	24 months				
Approval Date (SC)	4 Dec 2008	Starting Date	9 Dec 2008	Completion Date	9 Dec 2010 extended to 31 Dec 2011
Project Description	<p>This project builds on UNOPS experience in supporting Iraq’s citizens with the assistance of Iraqi civil society over the past 4 years, be it through capacity-building, grant funding or technical assistance. ICSEP defines <i>empowerment</i> as a process where the Iraqi people, in this instance via civil society, gain greater independence through capacity-building. This project will enable civil society to develop into a stronger and more reliable partner for government and donors in order to better inform, monitor and support processes of democratization, stabilization, development and relief to the benefit of all Iraq’s people. The Project comprises 4 stand-alone modules: 1. Capacity-Building, Awareness-Raising and Networking; 2. Emergency Response and Preparedness; 3. Citizen Participation in Local Governance; & 4. Community-based Peace-building. Special attention will be paid to gender and youth-sensitive programming. ICSEP adopts a two-pronged implementation strategy with certain outcomes pursued nationally while others follow area-based models. ICSEP rests on strong partnerships with our Iraqi partners - governmental (Min. of Civil Society, NAO, NCCMD) & NGOs.</p>				

Development Goal and Immediate Objectives

The project contributes to the following development goals in the relevant development strategies for Iraq:

Iraqi National Development Strategy (NDS): 7.5.3. (*Emergency Coordination, Preparedness and Response*); 9.1.1. (*National Dialogue and Reconciliation*); 9.4.1 (*‘Engaging with Civil Society’*)

International Compact with Iraq (ICI): Section 3.1.1. (*National Dialogue and Reconciliation*), 3.3.1. (*Establish a comprehensive human rights regime country wide*) and Section 4.2.1 (*‘Engaging with the Civil Society’*)

Sector Team Outcome(s) for the Governance Sector:

Outcome 2: *Strengthening national dialogue and civil society for governance and reconciliation.*

Outcome 3: *Strengthened regulatory framework, institutions and processes of national and local governance.*

Project objectives:

1. To establish a liberal legal and administrative framework for Iraqi NGOs, respected both by the authorities and the NGO community itself.
2. To increase organizational capacity for advocacy of the Iraqi civil society.
3. To improve access of Iraqi citizens to relief assistance following increased role of NGO community in conducting emergency response.
4. To strengthen citizen participation in local governance processes, facilitated by civil society, which impacts positively on local economic development and social assistance delivery.
5. To spearhead collaborative initiatives to counter conflict trends through civil society with the ultimate aim of protecting human rights and achieving community development.

Outputs, Key activities and Procurement

Outputs	1.1: Intn’l standards mainstreamed in draft laws and regulations governing NGO sector 1.2. Increased capacity of NGO Assistance Office to register NGOs timely and provide information support. 1.3: Higher awareness across civil society, government and public on rights & duties of NGOs. 2.1 Increased Iraqi capacity to provide CB support to civil society organizations in core organizational functions and Human Rights Civic Education. 2.2: Civic Education campaign on Human Rights conducted by empowered NGO network. 3.1: NGO Emergency Preparedness and Response Network (EPRN) established nationwide 3.2: Enhanced coordination of local humanitarian NGOs with humanitarian community (GoI, UN, Int.
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	<p>NGOs)</p> <p>3.3: Increased under-standing of humanitarian ethics and advocacy role among NGO community.</p> <p>4.1. Increased capacities for evaluating local governance and producing recommendations to improve citizen participation.</p> <p>4.2: Civic Education campaign on citizen participation in local governance conducted by empowered NGO network.</p> <p>4.3: Citizen participation initiatives increase democratic local governance through close collaboration between NGOs and local authorities.</p> <p>4.4: Stronger policy debate for enhancing civil society and citizen participation in local governance.</p> <p>5.1: A cadre of peace-building resource persons able to initiate change in the larger relational patterns within their communities, is set-up in select locations.</p> <p>5.2: Civic Education campaign on community based peace-building and its contribution to national dialogue and reconciliation process conducted by empowered NGO network in Baghdad.</p> <p>5.3: Tension levels amongst the general Iraqi public decreased by peace-building initiatives run by CSOs and community leaders in select areas.</p> <p>5.4: Formerly divided communities are able to plan their future together.</p> <p>5.5: Stronger policy debate on integrated community-based peace-building.</p>
Activities	<p>1.1.1 Provide TA to GoI and KRG Institutions on NGO legislations</p> <p>1.2.1. NAO staff capacity needs assessment</p> <p>1.2.2. Capacity-building of NAO staff</p> <p>1.2.3. IMS support to NAO NGO Database</p> <p>1.3.1 Training program for government officials on civil society / law</p> <p>1.3.2 Educating NGOs on NGO Law</p> <p>2.1.1. Capacity building of Civil Society Service Center in Sulaymaniyah</p> <p>2.2.1. Support to capacity building of civil society network (HR) by CSSC</p> <p>2.2.2. Network plan and carry out Civic Education Campaign</p> <p>3.1.1. Create and Support EPRN network operations and expansion</p> <p>3.2.1. Set up communication protocols inside EPRN and with 3rd parties.</p> <p>3.2.2. Fast track data collection and early warning by EPRN nodes and compilation of all governorate databases into national DB.</p> <p>3.3.1. Produce media materials raising awareness of CSOs on humanitarian principles and advocacy.</p> <p>3.3.2. Hold governorate-level awareness raising events.</p> <p>4.1.1. Adapt & fine-tune local governance assessment (LGA) methodology.</p> <p>4.1.2. Carry out local governance assessments in 2 locations</p> <p>4.2.1. Capacity building of Civil Society Service Center in Basrah</p> <p>4.2.2. Support to capacity building of civil society network (citizens participation) by CSSC</p> <p>4.2.3. Network plans and implements Civic Education Campaigns in Citizen Participation</p> <p>4.3.1. Implement citizen participation initiatives in 2 target areas</p> <p>4.3.2. Evaluate impact of initiatives (including baseline) via academic / research centers.</p> <p>4.4.1. Organize Roundtable to debate project outputs and propose policies to increase nation-wide citizen participation.</p> <p>5.1.1. Carry out conflict assessments in 2 select areas Baghdad, Mosul)</p> <p>5.1.2. ToT on Peacebuilding and Awareness-raising for community stakeholders in alternative conflict / dispute resolution mechanisms</p> <p>5.2.1. Capacity building of Civil Society Service Center in Baghdad</p> <p>5.2.2. Support to capacity building of civil society network (peacebuilding) by CSSC</p> <p>5.2.3. Network plans and implements Civic Education Campaigns on Pecebuilding</p> <p>5.3.1. Peacebuilding projects implemented by local CSOs through grant funding</p> <p>5.3.2. Evaluate impact of initiatives.</p> <p>5.4.1. Organize community planning exercises after peace-building projects.</p> <p>5.4.2. Secure support of local authorities and civil society for funding of community plans through regular budget.</p> <p>5.5.1. Organize Roundtable to debate project outputs and propose policies to increase community-based peace-building networks and initiatives, with involvement from GoI and civil society at large.</p>
Procurement	<p>In the reporting period major procurement items included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Request for proposal launched – Provision of a Grant Administrator for Peace-building Civic Education Campaign .

Funds Committed	\$ 2,849,380	% of approved	67%
Funds Disbursed	\$ 2,356,795	% of approved	55%
Forecast final date	31 st December 2011	Delay (months)	12

Direct Beneficiaries	Number of Beneficiaries	% of planned (current status)
Men		
Women		
Children		
IDPs		
Others	(At the end of the project it is expected that app. 1,300 NGOs and app. 600 GoI officials will have benefited)	
Indirect beneficiaries		
Employment generation (men/women)		

In general the project is to benefit the Iraqi public on a number of levels. The project is to provide certain short-term benefits through its direct activities in addition to long-term benefits obtained through adoption of the NGO law, improved capacity of civil society, and enhanced cooperation with the central, regional and local authorities of Iraq in order to improve the situation of the Iraqi people throughout the country.

Quantitative achievements against objectives and results		% of planned
1. To establish a liberal legal and administrative framework for Iraqi NGOs, respected both by the authorities and the NGO community itself.	1. Assistance was provided in the Kurdistan Region in the process of developing a new regional NGO law: The three-day study visit to Lebanon and a law drafting workshop on the Kurdistan Region NGO law was organised from 3rd to 5th November (24 participants) The visit provided an opportunity for a smaller group of MPs and representatives of committees in charge of drafting the law from the Kurdistan Parliament to learn from the Lebanese experience and develop the wording of the draft text. The visit was also attended by representatives of the Kurdish Regional Government, the Presidency Council and NGOs based in the Kurdistan Region. 2. NCCMD completed the capacity building project of the staff of the NGOs Directorate.	65
2. To increase organizational capacity for advocacy of the Iraqi civil society.	During this quarter, the partner NGO is in the final phase of the civic education campaign implementation. 10 NGOs implemented grants in 8 provinces during October and 13 NGOs started to implement their activities during December in the remaining 10 provinces. The LAONF network web portal was updated.	85
3. To improve access of Iraqi citizens to relief assistance following increased role of NGO community in conducting emergency response.	The six NGOs that were implementing the Disaster Risk Reduction coordination grant fund completed the implementation of their activities by the end of December. Four of them provided final reports.	85
4. To strengthen citizen participation in local governance processes, facilitated by civil society, which impacts positively on local economic development and social assistance delivery.	1. First module: Local Governance Assessment in Said Sadiq/Sharoozor in Sulaymania and in Hilla City center in Babyl: - Assessment reports for the two locations were finalized; - The assessment reports were printed and disseminated among the local stakeholders (authorities, civil society, academia, local leaders, media, private sector); - Local conferences presenting reports in the two locations were organised (29 th of November in Said Sadiq and 6 th of December in Al Hilla) and reports were presented to the local stakeholders and approved (each conference gathered app. 150 participants).	80

	<p>Backstopping has been provided during the period of reports drafting and preparation of the conferences.</p> <p>2. Second module: Citizens Participation Grant fund: The five NGOs that were implementing the grant fund completed the implementation of their activities by the end of December and started to prepare and submit the final reports.</p>	
5. To spearhead collaborative initiatives to counter conflict trends through civil society with the ultimate aim of protecting human rights and achieving community development.	<p>The implementing NGO in early December completed the implementation of activities from two out of the three objectives. The following activities were completed: i) Organized the planning exercises in both targeted areas and conducted lobbying sessions with stakeholders to secure support. ii) Monitored the small peace-building grant applicants on the preparation of their proposals. iii) Conducted the evaluation of impact of the project initiatives in two parts. In addition, the five NGOs selected to implement small peace-building grants completed their activities and the impact was assessed by the external evaluator.</p>	70

Qualitative achievements against objectives and results

Objective 1: As a result of the Lebanon study visit, the Kurdistan Region draft NGO law was further refined. It will serve in further proceedings at the Kurdistan Parliament. Exposure of the participants representing the Kurdistan Parliament, the Presidency of the Kurdistan Region, the Kurdistan Regional Government and NGOs to the Lebanese experience and good practices of cooperation between authorities and civil society has had very positive impact on the process of law drafting and ensuring that it is aligned with international best practices. .

Objective 2: The implementation of the civic education campaign went smoothly, however, the monitoring and reporting presented some difficulties which were tackled on time. After the first phase, an internal lessons learned session was held and adjustments took place to improve the strategy and procedures during the second phase. The first phase was implemented by 10 NGOs in 8 provinces during October. For the second phase, 13 NGOs started to implement activities in December in the remaining 10 provinces. In addition, the ToR for the evaluation company was revised and the web designer completed and updated the web portal with material in three languages. (<http://www.laonf.net/>).

Objective 3: The second phase of the component was completed by the end of December. The six selected NGOs successfully achieved the expected results in the targeted governorates despite some small delays in the implementation. The intervention produced a large mobilization and sensitization of people and local authorities and some governorates have been active in following up activities and including DRR initiatives into their agendas, such is the case in Ninewa and Diyala. During the next quarter, the third phase of the component will be implemented with the organization of a lessons learned workshop with the participating NGOs, Governorate Emergency Cell (GEC), local authorities and relevant stakeholders to identify the common findings and the way forward after the project is completed.

Objective 4: Local Governance Assessment: The LGA conferences marked nine month long process of conducting Local Governance Assessments in these two locations. The field assessment work and reports drafting were done entirely by local Assessment Teams composed of representatives of academia, local authorities, civil society and private sector with support of Advisory Committees bringing together representatives of both district and governorate authorities. The LGA included a process of participatory methodology drafting, awareness on LGA, trainings for Assessment Team members, field work and the phase of reports preparation. The reports present detailed findings of the Assessment and draw recommendations for enhancing the level of representativeness of the local governance. The recommendations range from providing capacity building to local authorities and members of communities, creating a data base of official documents that would be accessible to the citizens, ensuring that members of local administrations are free from political affiliations, increased participation of media in creating a democratic society, strengthening communication mechanisms between authorities and society, fighting corruption, as well as changes in legislation. The LGA process allowed to strengthen relations between various groups within the communities and in particular between authorities and civil society. The recommendations and their implementation will serve to further enhance this cooperation around common goals. UNOPS will use part of the recommendations for designing grant projects which will target some of the problems identified during the course of the LGAs. The reports, after their translation is finalized, will be available in Arabic, Kurdish (for the Sulaymaniya districts) and in English on the internet.

Citizens' participation grant fund: After surpassing some delays in the implementation of the grants and once the mid-term reports were cleared and second instalments disbursed, the activities implemented by the five partner NGOs were successfully completed. The selected NGOs started the preparation of the final reports and UNOPS has continued back-stopping them. The impact so far has been assessed as positive and during the next quarter one wrap-up activity will be organized in coordination with local authorities and a larger group of NGOs.

Objective 5: Most of the activities planned in the first modules related to capacity building and conflict assessment in the targeted locations were completed, having an important impact in the communities targeted. Confidence and trust were built which facilitated the successful implementation of the small PB grants by the other five NGOs. PRA reports were prepared and an impact assessment evaluation conducted by an external monitor.

Due to delays in the implementation of the last module, it was decided that the civic education campaign activities and web-portal development will not be implemented by this implementing NGO, and hence a call for proposals was launched to identify another grant administrator.

Main implementation constraints & challenges (2-3 sentences)

- The Iraqi registration process for local and international NGOs remains a major constraint for the selection of suitable and qualified NGOs for implementation of the grant funds.
- Low quality of project proposals and an inability of applicant NGOs to understand requirements (ToR) of request for proposals resulted in the need to work closely with selected NGOs to finalize the project proposals. This had negative implications in terms of slowing down the implementation pace of the project.
- Given restrictions imposed by security concerns, ensuring proper monitoring of grants is a challenge. However, great efforts are made to weigh up for the limited access to Iraq and to follow up that all activities are properly monitored by UNOPS staff as well as external monitoring companies that are hired..
- Uncertain political developments (general elections, forming of a new government) negatively affect the process of support to implementation of the NGO law.