



FINAL REPORT

Summary

Participating UN Organization:

UNHCR

Cluster:

F – Refugees, IDPs and Durable Solutions

Project No. and Project Title:

F8-03
Return and Reintegration of IDPs and Iraqi
Refugees in Northern Iraq

Project Location/Region/Province:

Governorates of Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and
Dahuk, Kurdistan Region, Iraq

Reporting Period:

01 April 2005 to 31 December 2006

Report no:

5

Counterpart organizations / implementing partners:

Counterparts:

Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM)
Kurdistan Regional Government

Implementing partners:

Shelter for Life (SFL)
International Relief and Development (IRD)

Project cost:

UNDG ITF: US\$ 2,962,000

Other: US\$ 1,520,000

Total: US\$ 4,482,000

Abbreviations and acronyms:

BoQ – Bill of quantities
CBO – Community-based Organization
CD T – Community Development Team
CRRPD – Commission for Resolution of Real
Property Disputes
Govt – Government
IDPs – Internally displaced persons
IPCC – Iraqi Property Claims Commission
IRD – International Relief and Development
KRG – Kurdistan Regional Government

Project Duration:

1 April 2005 to 31 December 2006

LAIC – Legal Aid and Information Centre
MOHAC – Ministry of Humanitarian Aid and Cooperation
OCUNA – Office of the Coordinator to the United Nations Affairs
SFL – Shelter for Life
UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

I. Purpose

Main objectives, outcomes and outputs expected as per approved Project/Programme/project document:

The key immediate objectives of the programme/project are:

1. To address community-based needs of the returning populations and receiving communities;
2. To enable access of the returning populations to adequate, low-cost shelters with a self-help approach;
3. To create opportunities for resumption of a safe and sustainable livelihood among the returnee populations;
4. To address the essential needs of the Turkish and Syrian refugee communities whereby facilitate their integration in the host society.

The expected outcomes of the programme project are:

Cluster Planned Outcome (4): Improved access to basic infrastructure and services at the local level.

- Basic services are available to all families who return to their home villages through the support of water, road, electricity and school projects, thus ensuring permanent settlement for both the returning and host communities;
- Assisted IDPs/returnees and their host communities have increased awareness of health, hygiene and environmental issues, and assume greater role for their day-to-day lives and increased responsibility for the environment;
- Children at the targeted schools know how to safely cross roads and avoid traffic danger;
- UNHCR warehouses in the North are maintained and operated with adequate quantities of non-food items available in stock for responding to the needs of vulnerable refugees, returnees and IDPs as well as any emergency needs.

Cluster Planned Outcome (2): Improved availability of adequate housing for returnees, IDPs and refugees.

- 233 IDP/returnee families who are living in dilapidated houses, under tent or crammed into a small number of rooms without ventilation, washing and bathing facilities, are provided with self-built starter shelters (55m² of floor space) in a permanent location. The beneficiaries will

own the new houses and will move in right upon completion;

Cluster Planned Outcome (1): Enhanced self-reliance through creation of sustainable employment opportunities and social protection for IDPs, returnees, refugees and their host communities.

- A sustainable income for 290 IDP/returning families through provision of livelihood grants (for sheep, cows, tools, materials and skills training), skills training and small loans;

Cluster Planned Outcome (10): Capacitated local and central institutions protecting and assisting refugees, IDPs, returnees and stateless persons.

- Government and the relevant institutions dealing with land and property claims are better equipped to anticipate and respond to land and property justice issues;

Cluster Planned Outcome (12): Enhanced respect for human rights through tailored protection tools.

- Returnees, IDPs and refugees receive protection and legal counselling and support from independent Legal Aid and Information Centres (LAICs) established in the three Northern Governorates;
- Returnee communities are regularly visited by monitoring teams and their legal, protection and material needs are assessed, analyzed and reported to UNHCR;
- 500 returnees from Iran safely arrive in their home towns and villages or places of choice, with the vulnerable persons among them assisted with a special package;
- Based on the findings of an intentions and needs assessment survey in Dahuk, UNHCR will be in a better position to develop durable solutions for Turkish and Syrian Kurd refugees in that Governorate;
- Over 5,000 Turkish and Syrian Kurd refugees and asylum seekers in Dahuk Governorate have access to safe, clean water, medical assistance and subsidized food and kerosene ration.

The expected outputs of the programme/project against the set objectives are:

1.1 Reintegration of the returnee families facilitated through implementation of community-based projects aimed at resuming access of the receiving communities and returnees to basic services.

2.1 Shelter materials, small cash amounts and technical support provided to the returnee families to enable them to build their own houses.

3.1 Legal, social and economic support provided to the returnee communities through the establishment of independent Legal Aid and Information Centers (LAICs) and making available small-scale livestock/ poultry rearing, gardening activities and access to vocational skills training and small loan schemes.

4.1 Basic care and maintenance, including medical assistance, provided to five Turkish and Syrian refugee settlements in Dahuk Governorate.

Reference to how the program/project relates to the UN Assistance Strategy for Iraq and how it aims to support the Millennium Development Goals and Iraq national development goals)

The Programme/Project contributes to the UN Assistance Strategy for Iraq in the following way:

Objective: The project aims to promote and facilitate socio-economic reintegration of returning IDPs and Iraqi refugees and to support community rehabilitation efforts and conditions for sustainable development in the targeted areas of return and settlement. The second phase of the project (implemented in 2006) also addresses some of the essential needs of the Turkish and Syrian Kurd refugees in Dahuk Governorate.

The project falls into the scope of the prime objective of the United Nations Cluster F on Refugees, IDPs and Durable Solutions which is “... to ensure that the Iraqi authorities apply international protection principles and standards to uprooted populations, including IDPs, stateless persons and returnees, and assist to achieve a sustainable return, relocation and reintegration process that prevents and reduces tensions, as well as to assist refugees in Iraq to realize a durable solution¹”.

The Programme contributes to the following UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG):

Through comprehensive support to reintegration of IDPs and returnees and care and maintenance assistance to non-Iraqi refugees, the project contributes to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, specifically to the following goals: Goal 1, ‘Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger’; Goal 2, ‘Achieve universal primary education’; and Goal 7, ‘Ensure environmental sustainability’.

The Programme contributes to the following Iraq National Development Goals:

The project objective is in line with and supports the Social Advancement Programmes of the Iraqi National Development Strategy (2005-2007).

Main international and national implementing partners involved their specific roles and responsibilities in project implementation and their interaction with the agency:

The project was implemented by two credible international NGOs: Shelter for Life (SFL) and International Relief and Development (IRD).

SFL was responsible for the initial needs assessment, identification of permanent locations for constructing houses with legal land allocation, identification of beneficiaries, hiring of local contractors, procurement of the necessary supplies, materials and equipment, technical expertise, monitoring and quality control of the works performed, regular reporting to UNHCR and evaluation.

IRD was responsible for organizing the safe transportation of returnees from border to their final

¹ UN Cluster F on Refugees, IDPs and Durable Solutions and the UN Country Team, *Strategic Plan on Assistance and Durable Solutions for IDPs in Iraq*, October 2005.

destinations, identification of and provision of assistance to vulnerable returnees and refugees, management of UNHCR warehouses, establishment and management of Legal Aid and Information Centres, returnee monitoring, production of Governorate Returnee Area Assessment Reports, capacity building of the KRG institutions dealing with land and property issues. In discharging these responsibilities, IRD provided technical expertise, carried out regular monitoring and quality control of the works performed, and reported to UNHCR regularly. IRD sub-contracted and intensively trained three local NGOs to man and administer the LAICs in the three northern governorates. These are: Public Aid Organization (PAO) in Erbil, Civilization Development Organization (CDO) in Sulaymaniyah and Harikar in Dahuk. Although considerably capacitated, the three NGOs will have to continue to work under IRD supervision in 2007 to acquire sufficient skills and know-how in this particular field.

SFL and IRD worked in close consultation and coordination with UNHCR and KRG authorities and, where necessary, the Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM), from the commencement to the end of the project. Frequent consultative meetings, telephone conversations and intensive emailing between UNHCR and the implementing partners, at field and Amman level, facilitated information sharing and problem solving. Also during the July Mid-Year Review and the October Participatory Planning Meeting that took place in Erbil and Amman, respectively, UNHCR and its partners thoroughly examined the progress of activities, prioritized the objectives and activities, revised the budgets as appropriate, reviewed the lessons learned and agreed upon next steps. Both partners also tried to involve the beneficiary communities in the development and implementation of activities. In the selection of beneficiaries, they observed the UNHCR's vulnerability criteria and effected all the procurements in accordance with the standard rules and procedures of UNHCR (e.g. transparent competitive bidding).

II. Resources

Total approved budget and summary of resources available to the program/project from the UNDG Iraq Trust Fund and non-Trust Fund resources where applicable:

Funds:

The total funds provided by UNDG Iraq Trust Fund for this project was: US\$ 2,962,000

Amount committed, disbursed and expended as at 31 January 2006: US\$ 990,000

Amount committed, disbursed and expended as at 31 January 2007: US\$ 2,962,000

Amount still available to project as at 31 March 2007: Nil

Other funds: Estimated at US\$ 1,520,000

94.6% (US\$ 2.8 million) of ITF funds was used for the implementation of activities (Programme Costs), of which 88.3% was spent under 'Contracts', 8.79% under 'Personnel', 0.90% under 'Travel' and 2% under 'Security'. Of the total contribution, 5.4% was spent on 'Indirect Support Costs'.

UNHCR and the Kurdistan Regional Government contributed cash and in-kind inputs to the project. In 2005, UNHCR contributed a considerable amount of construction materials for the construction of 182 houses, school and other communal infrastructural facilities. The agency had procured these materials internationally from the funds provided by Oil for Food programme and stocked them in a warehouse facility in Erbil. The latter warehouse, managed by UNDP under a separate agreement (Exchange of Letters) with UNHCR, was funded through UNHCR's other sources of funding. Moreover, UNHCR used non-ITF sources of funding for security, communication, office equipment, and other administrative costs in 2005 and the first half of 2006. Nor any staff salary and travel costs were charged against ITF funds in 2005.

The Governorate of Erbil donated 52 parcels of land 200m² to 51 returnee families from Iran and a

further one family from Sardaw Collective who was too poor to be able to purchase land within Soran District. The KRG also provided \$346,710 at a rate of \$1,905 per family to enable each house to have a caste concrete roof.

The Governor of Erbil granted the request of a drilling rig when it was clear funds were not sufficient within the budget lines to complete the Sardaw and Khishkal Water Projects. The teams worked quickly and efficiently to drill, with skilled engineering and geological staff visiting from Erbil to assess needs and help implement the project as required.

Human Resources:

The Dolermari Committee, Mayor and Municipal Leader of Mazneh, Mayor of Dahuk and the IDP and Refugee Office of Dahuk helped cross reference, check and sort out problems of land, beneficiaries and numerous other issues throughout the project period. Without their support, the project would have been impossible to implement.

IRD (International Relief and Development) supported SFL with technical legal input over the creation of an acceptable land certificate for non TAPO registered rural areas.

UNHCR Amman, Erbil and Dahuk supported the project implementation and changes required to achieve objectives as realities and problems unfolded. In 2006, the ITF funds covered part of the salary and travel costs of the following staff:

Senior Programme Officer, Reporting Officer and one national Programme Assistant in Amman; Programme Officer, one national Programme Assistant and one national Protection Assistant in Erbil; one national Field Assistant and one Senior Programme Clerk in Dahuk. The fraction of salaries varied according to the estimated staff time devoted to the activities under the project.

Project and Budget Revisions:

In 2005, due to the major reduction in the number of villages from 22 to 6, with subsequent changes in the Community Service Projects, some revisions to the project were required without affecting the main objectives and number of beneficiaries. Similarly in 2006, a revision and prioritization of activities in the sub-agreement with IRD was deemed necessary due to the lack of organized returnee convoys from Iran. The sub-agreement with SFL also went through a revision in 2006 because of a change in the location of the housing project in Dahuk. Noting that the returnees and host communities had access to water in the new locations (Bawan and Barash villages), the funds were diverted from two planned water schemes to health and education activities after a needs assessment exercise. All these changes remained in line with the initial objectives and targeted beneficiaries with only some modifications in the related outputs and activities.

III. Results

An assessment of the extent to which the program/project component / program /project is progressing in relation to the outcomes and the outputs expected (and identified in section I)

Summary of Achievements:

The starting date of the 2005 project was 1st April 2005, which meant a delay in recruiting of staff and tendering procedures, hence some explanation of why SFL was unable to complete some of the construction projects before the cold and wet period of December 2005. However, by the end of the liquidation period of the project - 31 March 2006 – all planned activities had been completed and the major objectives achieved. By April 2007 all the 182 families had moved to their new homes in ten locations in six villages in Erbil, and the communal facilities (primary school, six water projects, several kilometres access roads, electrical power supply) had been constructed and handed over to the local authorities and communities. The Community Service and Income Generation Projects were mostly implemented in the 2007 with significant achievements gained in building health, hygiene and environmental awareness, creation of community-based organizations (CBOs), provision of livelihood and other income-generating support and establishment of a revolving loan system in each community. Throughout the project period SFL was able to initiate local responsibility and involvement in the project objectives and activities. The Govt of Kurdistan financially supported the projects, donated land to the landless, poor families and provided heavy machinery and technical staff for the construction of roads.

In February 2006, before the new reintegration project started, there were 29 people living in plastic tents in Bawan. In Barash almost the entire 316 people were living in substandard housing: houses without windows, roofs or doors. Now they have a place that they can make their home in. Through the construction of their own homes, the people of Bawan and Barash have invested in their future, achieving ownership, a state of being in control of their future.

It was clear that families were borrowing sometimes large sums of money to expand their houses beyond the 55m² starter shelters. The average amount borrowed was \$2,000 with a few reaching as high as \$5,000 and the lowest being \$100. Although debt was created at the cost of this project, most families seemed certain they would be able to repay within two years. The evaluation carried out in January to February 2006 showed that the overall impact of the project would enable higher incomes and longer term stability than had been possible for the beneficiary families. Families had discussed debt repayment schedules with the Community Development teams and the continued support of the same beneficiaries through a Community Development Project with UNHCR in 2006 (funded through ITF), included an intensive Income Generation section that enabled families to plan methods to recover their debts.

By the end of 2006, the activities funded through ITF made a significant change in the lives of 290 returnee families and over 880 families of the host communities in Erbil and Dahuk Governorates.

In 2006, Protection activities were implemented through the establishment of three independent Legal Aid and Information Centres (LAICs), each in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Dahuk, and regular monitoring and surveying of the returnee households and affected areas. The production of Area Analytical Reports and Governorate Returnee Assessment Reports created a wealth of information on the situation of return areas and the returnees' protection concerns and material needs, which enabled UNHCR and its partners to advocate on behalf of those communities and try, in the best of their ability and within the limits imposed by security, funding and other constraints, to address their needs.

From April to December 2006 basic care and maintenance activities were regularly carried out in the refugee settlements in Dahuk Governorate. These enabled over 5,000 residents of these settlements to have access to clean water and medical assistance, household and hygienic items as well as health,

hygiene and HIV awareness.

Activities and % completion in relation to planned outputs and beneficiaries

1.1 Reintegration of returnees through implementation of community based projects

- a. Construction of 1,850 meters of interior roads in Jundian 3 and 3,350 meters of interior roads in Sardaw 1, 2 & 3, Mazneh and Khishkal. These activities were 100% completed and benefited 404 families (approx. 2,800 persons).
- b. Installation of power supply grids and connection to 105 houses (approx 700 persons) in Sheroqia and Khishkal villages. 100% completed.
- c. Construction of a new water system in Khishkal village and connections to existing systems for families in and around Soran and Mazneh were 100% completed and thus gave access to clean, running water to 277 families (approx. 1,800 persons).
- d. Construction of a six-room primary school in Khishkal village. Authorities provided school furniture and staff. 100% completed
- e. Health and Hygiene Awareness Education was conducted for 350 beneficiaries in 12 locations in 8 villages in Erbil and Dahuk Governorates. The awareness campaign also included community discussions on responsibilities for the local environment (rubbish collection, disposal, tree planting etc).
- f. Eight CBOs were established with fair representation of women in 8 communities: Bani Bapishtiyani, Jundian 3, Jundian New, Kishkal, Mazneh, Sardaw, Barash and Bawan. CBOs were trained in the characteristics of a good CBO. CBOs undertook several activities for the benefit of their communities through community mobilization (e.g. installation of electricity with the assistance of the government; distribution of rubbish bins to 736 families in six communities, cleaning of the fields through voluntary work). 100% implemented
- g. School furniture and glass for widows were provided to 36 schools in rural areas in Erbil and Dahuk.
- h. Operation and maintenance of UNHCR warehouses in Erbil and Dahuk where non-food relief items are stockpiled for distribution to needy returnees and any emergency response. 100% implemented

2.1 Shelter materials, small cash amounts and technical support provided to the returnee families to enable them to build their own houses

- a. Resolution of land ownership issues for all the beneficiaries of the project. 100%
- b. Construction of 182 self built shelters in 10 locations in 6 villages in Erbil Governorate. 100% completed
- c. Construction of 51 self built shelters in 2 villages in Dahuk Governorate. 100% completed
- d. Relocation of 233 families in 8 villages, with land ownership legally certified. 100% completed

3.1 Legal, social and economic support provided to the returnee communities

- a. Conducting of 12 sewing training courses for 111 women in 5 villages and distribution of livelihood/cash grants (goats, poultry, etc.) to 241 beneficiaries in 8 villages.
- b. Establishment of 15 'silfah' groups (a traditional revolving fund scheme) of 6-8 members each in

six communities.

c. Establishment and running of three independent Legal Aid and Information Centres (LAICs) in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Dahuk Governorates (3NGs). 100% implemented

d. Monitoring, collection, analysis and delivery of precise and accurate information on the situation of the returnee and IDP communities scattered all over Northern Iraq, their needs and protection concerns.

e. Production of three Governorate Assessment Reports each for Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Dahuk.

f. Monitoring and analysis of property, land and housing rights, in particular land tenure and legal issues relating to fixed property, including support to the Commission for Resolution of Real Property Disputes (CRRPD) offices in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah.

4.1 Assistance to Turkish and Syrian Kurd Refugees in Dahuk

a. Subsidizing 50% of public food rations and distribution of kerosene to over 5,000 Turkish and Syrian refugee and asylum seeking families in five settlements

b. Maintenance of water pump generators in five refugee settlements

c. Provision of direct medical assistance and medical referrals by mobile medical units (MMUs)

d. Distribution of sanitary napkins to refugee and host community women

e. Health and HIV awareness campaign

f. Needs assessment and intentions survey

Main activities undertaken and achievements:

Construction of houses and communal facilities

- Final location of projects and list of beneficiaries were selected and agreed upon with KRG authorities and beneficiaries after nearly two months intensive meetings/discussions.
- Local contractors for various activities were hired through competitive bidding.
- Site preparations, excavations, procurement of supplies and construction materials and construction works were monitored and necessary adjustments were effected. In 2005 most of construction materials were provided by UNHCR while in 2006 the partner purchased all the material from the local market.
- Construction materials as per agreed quantities were delivered to each project site for both individual houses and communal facilities.
- Legal land ownership documents have been provided.
- 233 houses were constructed by returnee refugees and IDPs in 12 locations in 8 villages in Erbil and Dahuk Governorates.
- Electricity supply and basic services were made available to the houses.
- Beneficiaries benefited from technical support and regular visits by the project supervisor.
- 233 families moved to their houses, possessing legal ownership documents.
- Total of 5.2 km of interior roads were graded and surfaced and handed over to the authorities and communities in four villages in New Jundian, Sardaw, Mazneh and Kishkal villages.
- Two power supply grids were installed and connected to 105 houses in two villages.
- Construction of new water systems in Khishkal and Sardaw villages and connection to 277 houses.
- Construction of a six-room primary school in Khishkal village. Desks, chairs, whiteboards and textbooks were supplied to school. The school was handed over to the local Department of Education. 94 children gained access to a proper school with standard classroom space and sanitary facilities.
- After a needs assessment and agreement with the local education authorities, school furniture and glass for widows were procured and delivered to 36 schools in rural areas in Erbil and Dahuk.

Community Development Activities

- Health staff of DoH were employed and trained to conduct Health, Hygiene and Environmental Awareness Education for the rural communities.
- 350 beneficiaries in 12 locations in 8 villages in Erbil and Dahuk Governorates attended classes.
- Discussions were held with the communities to familiarize them with the concept and advantages of community participation, CBO and characteristics of a good CBO.
- Women were specifically targeted and encouraged to participate in discussions and CBO formation.
- Eight CBOs were established with fair representation of women in 8 rural communities. CBO members received training and capacity building.
- The CBOs mobilized their communities and carried out number of initiatives. Families planted trees contributed by SFL, distributed garbage bins and carried out voluntary rubbish collection and road repair activities.
- Waste management training was conducted for 9 municipalities.

- 223 households received a 6-month supply of sanitary towels.

Income-generation Activities

- Skilled labour hired from amongst the returnee families and wages paid.
- Livelihood grants and materials were procured in the local market and distributed to families.
- 111 women successfully completed a sewing course in Soran
- Six community groups are currently benefiting from sustainable revolving loan schemes.
- Salary increase of 241 families to an average of over \$200/month has been achieved.

Protection and Capacity Building Activities: LAICs, Returnee and IDP Monitoring, Property Law Issues

- Three credible local NGOs were identified and after an intensive training were supported to establish three Legal Aid and Information Centres, one in each Northern Governorate.
- 2,372 legal aid cases were handled and 1,990 people of concern assisted.
- Information leaflets were produced in Badinani, Sorani, Arabic and English and distributed.
- Established links with LAs to publicise new independent LAICs
- 2 additional field teams per governorate were established in September in order to monitor returnees and new IDPs and were trained in the proper use of the UNHCR Returnee Monitoring Framework
- Routine field visits were conducted by monitoring teams and the following UNHCR monitoring assessments were completed and analysed:
 - Household – 1974
 - Group – 88
 - Village – 64
- Reports were produced on living conditions, needs, protection issues & access to basic services in return areas. The IRD monitoring team reports, summarizing the data on 14 locations: Dahuk city, Kuri Gavana, Daratoo, Grey Gerwry, Muqable Ex-military, Harir, Hussainiyah, Malaparwan, Sarsink, Teldef, Misirke, Balqus, Balqus camp and Zakho, were grouped into 7 report groups and submitted to UNCHR in December.
- Draft Governorate Assessment reports for Erbil and Dahuk were sent to UNHCR and the Sulaymaniyah report was submitted and translated into Kurdish.
- 12 monitoring assistants were recruited and trained to conduct IFA (Internal Flight Alternatives) questionnaires (285 completed) and IDP Rapid Needs Assessments
- 996 randomly selected new IDP families were surveyed and reports on these sent to UNHCR.
- Two workshops were held: In Erbil (for communication between LAICs and discussion on property cases); and in Amman, Jordan (for discussions on property rights in Iraq)
- IRD personnel attended UNHCR's legal coordination meeting in Kuwait where they received LAIC database training and established contacts within the Kuwaiti Bar Council and with Kuwaiti advocates for women's rights.
- An IRD representative and LAIC lawyers attended a four day UNHCR training workshop in Kuwait, covering Humanitarian Law and other various topics.
- Research was conducted on Iraqi property law, although new legislation rendered information in the findings document redundant (update could not be completed).
- A general assessment of the current property rights claims process in Northern Iraq was conducted and meetings with the CRRPD were held to develop coordination between its branches, its head office and the local authorities. Joint workshops were also held for this purpose as well as training sessions for CRRPD branch personnel.
- The IRD Legal Services Manager made multiple visits to the three LAICs and coordinated with NGOs in the Kurdistan region.

- Preparations were made to receive and transport 500 returnee refugees to their final destinations in the KRG. However no organized returnee convoys were dispatched from Iran during the year.
- The relocation of Haji Omeran Reception Centre was coordinated (as requested by LA) and the handover of 2 others to LA was planned.
- Two warehouses in Erbil were efficiently managed and non-food relief items were released in time for distribution to vulnerable refugees and as an emergency response to the needs of the new IDPs in the 3NGs and Kirkuk. Also furniture and office equipment were issued to UNHCR partners.

Assistance to Turkish and Syrian Refugees and Asylum Seekers

- 61,300 litres of kerosene was distributed to 834 refugee families in May and 125,800 litres to 1,016 refugee families and 39 IDP families in December.
- 8,736 sanitary towels were distributed to 2,184 refugee and host community females.
- 50% of public food rations for over 5,000 refugees was subsidized.
- Regular delivery of potable water to settlements was ensured.
- KRG consent to supply Kerosene at a reduced rate was attained.
- Data was collected and processed in order to update refugee figures and the KRG list of families receiving rations.
- Rental payments were made from April onwards for a warehouse in Dahuk.
- 353 beneficiaries attended 18 HIV awareness sessions.
- Regular access to healthcare professionals through mobile medical teams (MMUs) was ensured.
- A needs assessment and intentions survey was conducted among refugees. Two female surveyors interviewed 187 refugee families, approximately 18.3% of the population.

Implementation constraints, lessons learned from addressing these and knowledge gained from assessments, evaluations and studies that have taken place during the reporting period:

Constraints faced in construction and community development activities

- The primary problem occupying the first two months of project implementation in 2005 and 2006 was the identification of locations to which the beneficiaries really wished to return. With support from the local authorities, Dolermari Committee and Community Committees the sites were eventually identified for each family to relocate though the overall plan was reduced from 22 to 6 villages in Soran, Erbil Governorate in 2005, and the two villages selected in Dahuk in 2006 had to be changed to two new locations.
- Three families had to be removed from the list of beneficiaries in 2005 when it was discovered that they had received Govt support for shelters in the previous year. This was only possible through cross checking and referencing with the Dolermari Committee, KRG's HCR in Soran and the Mayor and Municipality leaders in Mazneh.
- Resolving land issues were paramount to the initiation of the project. The support of IRD in drawing up a 'local' non TAPO certificate that would provide some legal protection for families in Mergasur was essential. Whilst the intervention of the Governor and Mayor of Soran to provide the 35 families in New Jundian with land enabled the returnees from Iran and very poorest families with a permanent solution to their housing needs. However, the provision of land in New

Jundian took much longer than was anticipated and delayed completion rates considerably.

- The Government agreed to support the families with funds and materials purchased by SFL for cement caste roofs. The time between the agreement for support and the arrival of the money was six months. This put huge financial pressure on SFL, on the contractor supplying materials and resulted in serious construction delays.
- The increase in house sizes undertaken by the families ultimately led to debts and lack of timely completion. However, as the families are expected to live in these houses for the rest of their lives, this flexibility on design and therefore lack of completion can be seen as a right the families have chosen to exercise. The long term effects of changing the design, and the high level of supervision from SFL engineers ultimately ensured that the houses are of the highest, most durable quality.
- Water projects in 2005 were very late in being implemented due to a host of problems, most notably being the change in location of Khishkal village and the lack of water in the original drilling site. Fortunately, due to the support from the Governor of Erbil, high drilling costs for the 2 new wells were born by the Kurdish Govt . Hence, although the projects were late in completion with rain delays etc, they are expected to support a larger number of families than originally planned with a high pressure and quality, clean water.
- The windows provided by UNHCR were not those originally specified in the BoQ. Hence SFL had to employ a welder using existing budget lines to weld two windows into one. This took a considerable amount of time and co-ordination, but families did eventually gain the correct windows.
- Some materials provided by a contractor were below standard and had to be rejected. SFL independently took materials to Erbil for laboratory checking. The contractor paid the laboratory costs and SFL the transport of staff and items. The contractor was always supportive when poor quality materials were identified, but considerable time was lost when replacements were required.
- Certain unplanned community projects were identified only as the project was implemented. The construction of retaining walls, pipe culverts and more roads than had originally been identified (access to Khishkal borehole and Sardaw cement water tank) could not be avoided but were not planned within the original budget. UNHCR admitted a late change within budget lines.
- The omnipotent weather proved the final impediment to timely finalisation of the project. Despite all attempts to plan projects within the required time, delays were inevitable. The delights of the Kurdish mountains, rain and snow in November and December finally ensured that the last two weeks of work could not be completed until spring.
- The full time occupation of families with construction and the debts incurred to build larger houses meant that the Income Generation Objective could not be wisely undertaken in 2005. Hence, a new project with increased Community Development Activities was planned for and implemented in 2006. The activity enabled not only income generation and skills training to take place, but much wider CBO development and a whole range of community initiatives that improved living standards and sustainability of the community.
- SFL had originally planned to communicate with field staff through the UN VHF radio system, running from a repeater on Korek Mountain. This was not possible, despite months of negotiations and correspondence, as the UN changed their radio frequencies and could not produce the required forms for SFL to re-programme their radios. Hence, staff had to use the local mobile system, causing an increase in the communications budget line and an over dependence on the mobile system, which is known to fail during periods of insecurity.

Constraints faced in Protection related activities

- No organized returnee convoys by UNHCR Iran for IRD to receive in Iraq. Some convoys were initiated but later cancelled.
- Erbil and Dahuk KDP administered authorities refused to provide IRD with vital information for

the completion of Governorate Assessment Reports. Under the unification authorization to access this information was granted in September and the drafts were completed in December.

- Repeated unsuccessful attempts by IRD and UNHCR failed to gain approval from the CRRPD HQ to work with northern branches. This constrained our efforts and all discussions with the branches remained informal as they were unable to cooperate with us fully without HQ approval.
- The LAs only provided a one month share supply of kerosene for Turkish and Syrian refugees.
- Mandatory budget cuts of 28% Most cuts were absorbed by savings from facilitated returns, however, we were unable to support some new positions or extend the contract of the Property Law and Capacity Building Specialist.

Overall Project Impact:

SFL conducted an evaluation of the 2005 reintegration project during January-February 2006. Below are the interesting findings and conclusions of that evaluation:

Financial Impacts:

Part of the flexibility afforded by this project was the opportunity of families to add to or change the design of the shelter in close co-operation with the engineers to ensure quality standards were maintained. The largest house was a surprising 180m², the smallest was the standard UNHCR/ SFL layout at 55m², but the average was 103m². Most families (142 or 78%) expressed the need for a larger house based on the size of their own family, which averaged 6 in number, often more. The remaining 40 families said they expanded the size with available materials from their old houses, and could afford to purchase some materials to make it more personal (often meaning fashionable with columns and a traditional stair and access to the roof). However, in order to achieve these expansions money had to be borrowed (Table 1 Amount of Money Spent on House Design Changes).

Table 1 - Amount of Money Spent on House Design Changes

Amount of Additional Money Spent US \$	Actual Numbers	% of Total Houses
100	8	4
200 – 800	16	9
1,000	28	15
1,100 – 1,500	30	16
1,600 – 2,000	35	19
2,300 – 3,000	29	16
3,500	13	7
4,000	17	9
4,500 – 5,000	6	3
Numerical Average:	US\$ 2,037	

The average amount of money spent on changes in the design was US\$2,037 with the highest amount being \$5,000 and the lowest only \$100. 54% of the families said they had borrowed money from relatives, and 46% said they had borrowed from friends with the average expecting to repay all debts within 2 years. However, in reality, despite 83.5% saying they expected to be able to repay these debts through daily labouring, this will only be possible if the current economic improvements in Kurdistan continue. Eight widows said they had received ‘gifts’ and would not be repaying the money, whilst 22 or 12% had no plan or any idea how they would repay. The SFL Community Development team will be targeting these families specifically in 2006.

The average amount of money families felt they needed to be able to live on and pay back their debts per month was \$200 per month. 56% said they hoped to achieve this through daily labouring, 26% said through future SFL Income Generation projects and 18% through some form of Govt employment (often short term guard work).

The average number of hired labourers per house was 4 being used primarily for walls and foundations (60% of families hired extra labourers with their own money for this work). Each labourer on average was paid \$12 per day, which is high for an unskilled or semi-skilled labourer, but reflects the high demand in the area during the peak construction period.

When asked why the houses had not been finished during the 9 month period, 98 families (54%) answered that they did not have sufficient funds to complete the work yet, whilst 7 widows stated that labourers were in scarce supply and could not be found to undertake the work. This is not unusual during the winter period, when certain activities like gypsum plastering cannot be undertaken due to the damp.

Social Impacts:

When asked what major advantages the new houses provided, the answers were rather simple and probably do not reflect the true complexity of real ownership that is difficult to articulate, especially in a rapid interview situation. However, the fact that 47% indicated that a cleaner house was a huge advantage reflects partially the poor condition of the shelters in Sardaw Collective, which were small, cramped and often in very bad repair. The fact that 15% stated the new houses were more comfortable reflects their sense of ownership and personal input being given the chance to modify the design to their own needs.

Table 2 - Advantages of New Homes

Advantage	Number	Percentage
Cleaner	85	47
Larger	40	22
Warmer	30	16
More Comfortable	27	15

The beneficiaries of this project knew that one of the objectives was to enable them to gain a more secure financial future through potential income generation projects. When asked what their expectations of the future were and how they could improve their lives economically, 29% stated that they would like to learn a new skill, 24% said they would like to start a business and 47% said they like to keep animals. These possibilities will be investigated in 2006, as the Income Generation portion of the project develops.

Skills learned during the construction phase were less than had been hoped, mainly due to the time pressure and lack of skilled labourers who were working fast and therefore limited in who and how much they could train. However, some families did benefit considerably. 42 families or 23% stated they gained some skill that would enable them to improve their economic status in the future. Types of skills learned were:

- Plastering - 8 men
- Wall construction - 21 men
- Gypsum plastering - 9 men
- Electrical installation - 4 men

Note, women were generally not permitted to learn one of these skills, which are still traditionally held by men. However, many women did contribute to the labour, assisting their husbands and carrying out the less physical jobs of painting, cleaning of cement and general finishing.

Interestingly, 43% of the beneficiaries said they had land for their children, and 57% did not, reflecting those families who are located near to their traditional village (mainly families in Khishkal) and those who have relocated from more distant villages who no longer have ties with their former tribal groupings. This change in social structure and the subsequent lack of traditional support is normal of families in urban areas. However, in these village situations, lack of clan and family support means that community relationships will take on more importance and hence must be truly representational and non political or tribal.

All 182 families said that the project had greatly benefited their lives. However, when asked about the community assets they had gained in the project the answers varied considerably.

Table 3 - Beneficiary Expectations of Service Projects

Service Asset	Community Maintain.	% Community Maintain.	Govt Maintain.	% Govt Maintain.
Water System	115	63	67	37
Road Maintenance	102	56	80	44

From the table above it can be seen that just over half of the beneficiaries believed they will have to take responsibility for their community assets. Given the realities of the Govt in Kurdistan at the moment, this idea should be encouraged. Past experience has indicated that govt maintenance is often politically based and not predictable. Hence, the community may have a system for collection of money to maintain a service, which will be over-ridden once by the Govt but cannot be guaranteed for second or third time repairs. These issues will be discussed with the CBOs and Govt officials to ensure that long term maintenance is possible.

The entire Soran area is due to receive improved electrical supplies when the large dam at Berkhma comes on line in the next 5-10 years. Until then the 52 families in Khishkal expect to be dependent on the UNHCR/ SFL installed generator, with occasional supplies from the National Grid when it works. All other families have other systems, mainly dependent on their own individual or shared generators or on intermittent National Grid supplies where they are connected.

Expectations of the CBOs:

Some of the major project impacts concerned the social structures within the communities. When asked how the communities would solve their problems once SFL had left, 29% said through the traditional Dolermari Committee and 71% said through the newly elected CBOs. This figure changed slightly when the question was re-asked to include specific neighbour problems. In which case 21% stated that the CBO would help solve the problem, 60% said the Dolermari Committee and 19% said the local Mukhtar. This difference reflects the work needed to be undertaken in 2006 to ensure the CBO's with female representation gain full operational capacity and that old traditional politics are limited from the process. The intervention of the Dolermari Committee has been essential in resolving land issues, but it is unfortunately heavily male in character and politically affiliated.

When asked if the role of women had changed over the last year 66% said yes, due to their inclusion in the CBO and community discussions. 79% emphasised that this was right and correct, and the role

of women needed to be increased.

Specifically on the CBO, 96% of the families stated that it should be developed to solve community problems, and present them to the Govt when appropriate. 92% of the beneficiaries stated that they thought the CBO would continue after SFL left the area, with 95% stating that it is essential that the CBO works closely with the Mukhtar's, Dolermari Committee and Govt structures.

Future Community Projects:

Families were asked which issues they considered to be important within their communities and still needed further work. Table 4 illustrates the projects the families emphasised.

Table 4 - Issues Identified by the Communities for Further Support:

Issue	No Responses	% of Responses
Rubbish Collection	54	30
Animal Husbandry	32	18
Skills Training	15	8.2
Tree Planting	81	45
Health and Hygiene	182	100

The table above is probably skewed positively to reflect the issues SFL has brought to the communities' attention in 2005. Hence, Health and Hygiene appears very favourably, whilst skills training is seen to be of little significance. The real dilemma of any Community project is identifying what the community perceives as a need, and what the community worker prioritises, coming with different experiences and visions of sustainability. Certainly, the 82% of families who stated that they believed the community was responsible for their own future and that training and change was essential for their own sustainability reflects a huge difference in attitude from 2004 where prior to SFL's intervention the Govt had been held responsible for everything.

Many activities need to continue if the objectives of the original project proposal are to be achieved. The greatest challenge is most notably in attitude and responsibility, which is addressed in the 2006 Soran Community Development Project submitted to UNHCR. Much has been achieved, especially in the creation of new villages, which have largely been achieved through the efforts and hard work of the families themselves. Building on this success will help ensure that long term viable communities exist beyond the lifetime of SFL and UNHCR's intervention.

Key partnerships and inter-agency collaboration, impact on results:

Like other UNHCR partners SFL and IRD participated in the Coordination and Strategic Planning meetings that UNHCR organized in Amman in September and October 2005 and also attended the Erbil Mid-Year Review and the Amman Participatory Planning Meeting that took place in July and October 2006, respectively. The Mid-Year Review resulted in a revision and prioritization of activities in light of the changing situation (e.g. lack of returnee convoys from Iran, new waves of internal displacement in Iraq) and budgetary constraints. During the implementation phase co-ordination meetings were held in Erbil and Dahuk with the participation of the relevant authorities on a regular monthly basis. In addition, frequent ad hoc meetings between UNHCR Erbil/Amman and the two partners took place as required.

Throughout the design and implementation process each partner held frequent ad hoc and coordination meetings with various departments of KRG, in particular MoHAC (prior to its dismantling), Office of the Coordinator to the UN Affairs (OCUNA), Mayor's Office, Governor's Office in each of the 3NGs, Water and Rural Rehabilitation Department of Dahuk, Directorate of Health, Directorate of Education, Commission for Resolution of Real Property Disputes (CRRPD) offices in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah. The authorities were generally cooperative and made (or promised to make) significant contributions to the projects. They made financial and in-kind contributions to the reintegration projects and helped with provision of information to UNHCR partners, resolving of land issues, identification of beneficiaries and the like.

In 2005, UNOPS and UNHCR signed an Exchange of Letter for cooperation. One component of this agreement was management and maintenance of 2,700 construction kits that UNHCR had procured externally from the Oil for Food funds. UNOPS delivered the required construction materials to various implementing partners of UNHCR upon request of partners and UNHCR's authorization. This collaboration was extended into 2006 until all construction materials had been distributed to Iraqi returnees and vulnerable IDPs.

For the implementation of tree planting and other environmental issues, SFL held meetings with FAO team in Erbil and received valuable advice and recommendations from them.

With a wide range of expertise in land and property rights subjects in Northern Iraq, IRD is providing information and counselling to other UNHCR partners in the region, more specifically it has been assisting SFL with various complex issues the latter was facing during identification of beneficiaries and negotiations with the authorities on issuance of land ownership certificates.

UNHCR medical assistance project to the refugees in Dahuk was implemented in close collaboration of the Dahuk Directorate of Health (DoH). With a nominal incentive scheme for the DoH medical staff, two medical mobile teams (MMUs) were organized which visited each refugee settlement twice a week. This proved to be a high impact successful partnership at very low cost.

In various UNHCR-NGO Coordination meetings held in Erbil during the year, NGOs were encouraged to work more closely together to mutually benefit from each other's resources and expertise. In particular the following areas were identified: Gender equality and related issues; education in health, hygiene and environmental sanitation and protection; and revolving fund and micro-credit schemes.

Highlights of achievements against the project planned results for cross cutting issues:

• **Security**

Throughout the implementation period no security incidents or threats hampered the ongoing activities. Although UNHCR's implementing partners followed their own internal security regulations, UNHCR circulated to them security advisory notes and briefings as required. Budget lines were included in the contracts for partners to implement their security measures (e.g. hiring of 24-hour guards for their office premises, procurement of communication means). Moreover, UNHCR provided the partners with radio-communications means and 4x4 vehicles at request. In June 2006 UNHCR deployed permanently an international staff to Erbil and established an office within the UN New Compound. In 2006, the UN DSS gradually applied more flexibility to the movement of UN staff in the North. This allowed UNHCR national and international staff to conduct more frequent visits to project sites for monitoring and evaluation as well as needs assessment. Also UNHCR could field several missions from Amman to Erbil. Notwithstanding this positive development, each mission and movement out of the UN Compound remained subject to laborious and time consuming security clearance procedures, always with a great likelihood that the mission could be aborted as a consequence of last minute changes due to overriding priorities and hence unavailability of military security escort.

• **Gender Issues**

Though the project takes into consideration the needs of all women, men, boys and girls of concern, special attention is accorded to women and girls in displacement through specific protection measures for their physical safety and actively supporting their involvement in all stages of the process. To the extent possible the LAIC teams consist of male and female lawyers so as to enable and encourage women to approach the LAICs. All staff of the LAICs have been trained on gender issues which includes how to address such issues on how to deal with cases of sexual and gender based violence, trafficking and early marriage. The LAICs' mobile teams disseminate information to female IDPs and collect information on their needs and concerns. Women with particular social protection problems are prioritized for court representation by LAIC lawyers at no charges.

The returnee monitoring teams focus on collecting information on the situation and needs of female returnees. These information are reflected in the Governorate Assessment Reports enabling potential women returnees and IDPs to make an informed decision about returning to Iraq or their places of origin. UNHCR's 2007 projects were partly based on the observations of the monitoring teams and address especially the needs of women and children.

Community Development Teams (CDTs) made particular effort to engage women in the community based organizations they created, in various gatherings and meetings held to discuss project related matters, and in educational classes. Female heads of household received special support for building their homes. The six CBOs established in rural communities in Erbil have a fair representation of women though the 50% objective has not been achieved. Nevertheless, women members of these CBOs are actively involved in the discussions and decision making processes. The SFL evaluation showed that a significant percentage of women confirmed a change in the role behaviour of women in their community.

In 2007, UNHCR will put further accent on gender issues by introducing the concept of AGDM (Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming) into its programming exercises, a concept which has been built on effective participatory assessment and planning.

- **Human Rights**

The project concept is rights-based and addresses the needs of the most vulnerable people. Special attention is given to the realization of property rights. Legal Aid and Information Centres focus on ensuring that persons whose human rights have been violated will receive adequate legal assistance, counselling and guidance in how to solve their problems and/or seek remedy in court. In 2006, staff of the LAICs received special training in international human rights and on how to address violations of human rights.

Monitoring exercises, intentions surveys and needs assessments are focusing on the situation of returnees, IDPs and refugees with regards to the realization of their human rights. Questionnaires are designed around basic human rights principles.

- **Employment Creation/Economic Self-Reliance**

Some phases of the project have generated short term job opportunities, especially construction activities. Skilled labour is hired and the beneficiaries themselves under guidance work on the houses. Skills learned during the construction phase were less than had been hoped mainly due to the time pressure. However, according to the SFL evaluation, 42 families or 23% stated they gained some skills that would enable them to improve their economic status in the future. (Pls see above under 'Constraints, challenges and lessons learned').

The establishment of revolving loan funds in six communities was a major achievement in enhancing the beneficiaries' self-reliance opportunities. Unfortunately it is not yet known what percentage of the loan takers used the fund for starting a business or improving their existing business. The provision of livelihood grants and skills training was intended to help the beneficiaries become economically self-reliant. The impact of these activities will only be known through an evaluation in 2007. It is clear, however, that the project has helped the beneficiaries to develop and strengthen their livelihood and reduce vulnerability and prolonged reliance on humanitarian assistance.

Specifically the three Legal Aid and Information Centres are designed to carrying on as independent structures to serve people of concern beyond the duration of this project. They will be guided and trained in how to secure their own funding and become part of an independent Iraqi civil society.

- **Health and Environmental Issues**

The 2005 and 2006 ITF-funded projects have had great achievements in promoting the beneficiary communities' awareness of health, hygiene and environmental issues. This was achieved through education, training and practical work with communities, such as distribution of garbage bins to over 730 families, garbage collection and disposal, voluntary cleaning of fields, sapling planting and creation of green spaces.

An impact assessment of Health and Hygiene Education sessions showed that by the second session of the course the women were very aware of the issues being discussed. How this has impacted on behaviour change remains to be seen. Another assessment of toilet use and quality conducted in December 2005 of 74 households show that 84% opted to build the toilet outside of

their shelter mainly because of its smell. The use of a water siphon to flush toilets is still rare in rural Kurdistan and even when it does exist, inexperienced people do not automatically flush. Hence, smells persist and outdoor latrines are preferred.

The Dohuk MMU project was another strong health component of the 2006 project. Although not yet statistically verified, the local DoH staff report that it has had a significant impact on the level of awareness and health status of refugees, especially of women and children who traditionally have less access to health facilities.

The construction, extension and rehabilitation of water systems in returnee villages in Erbil and the regular maintenance of water supply in refugee settlements in Dahuk have ensured the regular access to a sustainable safe water for over 14,000 persons. It goes without saying that much work still needs to be done in this area.