

United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust Fund
Project #:C9-25
Date and Quarter Updated: April – June, 2nd Quarter 2011

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				
Geo. 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	36 months				
Approval Date	04.12.2008	Starting Date	9.12.2008	Completion Date	09.12.2010 extended to 31.12.2011
Project Description	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.				

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	<p>1.1: Intn'l standards mainstreamed in draft laws and regulations governing NGO sector</p> <p>1.2: Increased capacity of NGO Assistance Office to register NGOs timely and provide information support.</p> <p>1.3: Higher awareness across civil society, government and public on rights & duties of NGOs.</p> <p>2.1 Increased Iraqi capacity to provide CB support to civil society organizations in core organizational functions and Human Rights Civic Education.</p> <p>2.2: Civic Education campaign on Human Rights conducted by empowered NGO network.</p> <p>3.1: NGO Emergency Preparedness and Response Network (EPRN) established nationwide</p> <p>3.2: Enhanced coordination of local humanitarian NGOs with humanitarian community (GoI, UN, Int. 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</p>
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	<p>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 (major items)	<p>In the reporting period major procurement items included:</p> <p>1. Request for proposal launched – Provision of Grant Administrators to implement activities that will answer to the short-term recommendations specified in the Local Governance Assessment reports.</p>

Funds Committed	\$ 2,834,323	% of approved	66%
Funds Disbursed	\$ 2,630,624	% of approved	62%
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.	<p>1. Kurdistan Region in Iraq – NGO law. A new NGO law for the Kurdistan Region was passed by the Kurdistan Parliament in April and entered into force in May. UNOPS has provided substantive support during the process of developing the law. The new law offers an enabling framework for development of civil society, one of the best in the Middle East region. UNOPS was requested by the KRG and the Kurdistan Parliament to support implementation of the law and is currently waiting for the Kurdistan Region counterparts to take internal decisions on the directions of the implementation process.</p> <p>2. A training on registration of NGOs was organized, jointly with ICNL, in Erbil from 13 to 18th of May 2011. The training was attended by 35 participants including the State Minister of Civil Society Affairs, Members of the CoR, management and staff of the NGOs Directorate, NGOs and guests from the KRG. The training focused on discussing ways of cooperation between public authorities and civil society, as well as the NGO law itself and prepared trainers representing the NGOs Directorate and NGOs who will jointly organize cascade trainings on NGO registration. The trainees were provided with training handbooks which will be utilized during follow up trainings to be organised in all Iraqi governorates. The last day of the training was dedicated to a participatory discussion on challenges faced by the NGOs directorate in fulfilling its mandate of registering NGOs. Intensive follow up communication has been maintained with the NGOs Directorate and CoMSec in order to ensure that the new registration forms prepared by ICNL are approved (precondition for the cascade trainings to be implemented).</p>	70
2. To increase organizational capacity for advocacy of the Iraqi civil society.	<p>The goals of Al Mesalla's project were: 1) provide capacity-building services for Iraqi CSOs; 2) strengthen one local Iraqi NGO's internal network by providing comprehensive capacity building assistance; and 3) help 30 NGOs implement a nation-wide civic education campaign on human rights, standards, and norms.</p> <p>Al Mesalla assisted Iraqi Laonf Group by helping the board receive training on strategic planning, writing fundraising proposals, and campaign management. Additionally, Al Mesalla contracted a new website manager to analyze the existing website and coordinate with the Laonf board to develop the website. Twenty-eight NGOs' representatives participated in an assembly meeting in Erbil and received four days of training on campaign management and capacity building on the following issues: finance, human resources, planning, fundraising, and rule of law.</p>	100%
3. To improve access of Iraqi citizens to relief assistance following increased role of NGO community in conducting emergency response.	All the planned activities under this objective have been delivered and reported on in previous quarters.	100%
4. To strengthen citizen participation in	1. First module Local Governance Assessment	80%

<p>local governance processes, facilitated by civil society, which impacts positively on local economic development and social assistance delivery.</p>	<p>in Said Sadiq/Sharoozor in Sulaymania and in Hilla City center in Babil:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Final LGA reports translation and editing have been finalized; 1. - Three follow up projects to be implemented by local NGOs have been launched. Project activities will last for a six months period in Hilla and Shahrazour, while for four months in SaidSadiq. The NGOs' projects will focus on implementing some of the recommendations made for the short term in the assessments. This includes: 1) Communication mechanisms between local authorities and communities in place 2. Information on community and local government coordination widely shared through local media and the provision of monthly updates using different media outlets. 3. Citizen's and local authorities increase their knowledge on citizen participation and democratic values through organization of training sessions for selected participants on civil society, democratic practices, human rights and community-driven development 4. A public service intervention addressed through identification of the intervention by the community committee followed by implementation of the selected public service project. 5. Conduct assessment which will measure the impact of the overall LGA initiative. <p>- 11 persons, members of LGA teams and representatives of local authorities from the three locations participated in a conference on "Decentralization, Local Governance and Service Delivery: Sharing Experience and Sustaining Progress in Urban Iraq" organized by UN-HABITAT in May in Amman. The findings of the LGA processes were presented and discussed.</p> <p>2. Second module Citizens Participation Grant fund: All the grant projects were reported on and closed. Preparations for a Basrah based lessons learned workshop have been underway.</p>	
<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>	<p>All the grant projects implemented in 2010 have been financially closed. A project implemented by NCCI was launched. The Civic Education campaign is on community-based peace building and contributes to the national dialogue and reconciliation process. The project has strengthened the policy debate on integrated community-based peacebuilding. The NGO Network is now organized and operating. NGOs are sending their proposals for the activities that will be implemented in the programme. Implementation will start in mid-July. Activities will target 2,000 Iraqis. Three regional meetings were held and the web portal is under construction.</p>	<p>70</p>

Qualitative achievements against objectives and results	
<p><u>Objective 1:</u> Law no. 1 of 2011 on <i>Non-Governmental Organizations in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq</i> was passed and entered into force. The new legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Substantially improves and simplifies the process of registering an NGO. <input type="checkbox"/> Creates the conditions for NGO financial sustainability. <input type="checkbox"/> Removes all restrictions on the associational rights of foreign residents in Kurdistan. <input type="checkbox"/> Explicitly recognises several key rights for NGOs, including the rights to monitor government institutions, "access information," form unregistered networks, and open branches abroad. <p>NGO law awaness: The strategy of carrying out activities on awareness of registration of NGOs in Iraq was agreed between the main stakeholders: NGOs Directorate, Council of Representatives, State Ministry of Civil Society Affairs, representatives of NGOs, ICNL and UNOPS. Trainers and most of the needed mateials were prepared.</p> <p><u>Objective 2:</u> The implementation of the Human Rights grant was successfully completed including the accomplishment of the civic education campaign through 23 NGOs Iraq wide and all activities previously reported on. The impact evaluation report was submitted to UNOPS together with the final narrative and financial reports including all supporting documentation.</p>	

- Total of direct beneficiaries is 2070 and 30,000 indirect.
- The campaign went through 3 phases. The first was to empower the staff of Al Messalla. The second phase included selecting a local network, which was Iraqi Laonf Group, to be a target beneficiary. The third phase included 22 member NGOs from the selected local network implementing a national campaign against gender based discrimination in the education sector. UPP monitored the activities in phase 1 and 2 and provided the required technical assistance and consultancy for the activities implemented by Al Mesalla.
- Women participation was 50% during the training of Al Mesalla staff in Erbil and 50% during the study tour in Amman.
- The participation of women was 28% during the training of the selected local Network Laonf Group. The percentage was lower than envisioned as the selection was based on nominations from the NGOs.
- Women were 44% of the direct beneficiaries of the implemented civic campaign.
- Al Amal association has been contracted as an external evaluator.
- Al Amal visited 4 NGOs in 4 Iraqi provinces and issued a need assessment report.
- 28 participants from 18 Iraqi provinces attended the training on Campaign management during May 16th- 20th.

The website of Laonf Group works properly after finalising the new improvements. Materials are updated in three languages Arabic, Kurdish and English.

Al Mesalla's qualitative achievements include significant female participation and educating NGOs' representatives on finance, human resources, planning, fundraising, and rule of law. Moreover, by assisting Laonf, they have increased the capacities of a local NGO, allowing it to effectively assist its community.

Objective 4:

1. First module Local Governance Assessment in Said Sadiq/Sharoozor in Sulaymaniah and in Hilla City center in Babil: The LGA reports were edited and translated. The reports will be posted on internet in July.

The most relevant and common short term recommendations were included in an RfP that was launched to identify NGOs which will be responsible for implementing activities in the targeted locations. Due to the lack of NGO applications in Sulaymaniah, another RfP was launched to target Said Sadiq and Sharoozor while the evaluation of applicants for Hilla was almost finished by the end of the reporting period. Three local NGOs were granted to implement projects in their areas. Project activities will last for six months and must be completed by 30 September 2011.

The qualitative achievements of the LGA grants were: 1) meeting with local members in each community and asking them how involved they are in local governance. This aspect of the report displays how the community feels about their role in local governance. 2) Creating recommendations based on the data gathered by the community. The recommendations were created by the LGA teams and specifically aim to address the problems that these communities face and use problem solving methods derived from within each community.

The project originally planned to organise, following completion of the LGAs, a roundtable meeting on decentralization in Iraq. However since work on decentralization in Iraq is carried out by UN-HABITAT, ESCWA and UNDP, it was decided instead to contribute to the event organized by UN-HABITAT in May in Amman, an International Conference on 'Decentralization, Local Governance and Service Delivery: Sharing Experience and Sustaining Progress in Urban Iraq. Through ensuring coordination and interaction with other UN agencies and Iraqi actors in this field, overall impact is increased. It has also ensured better exposure of project results and local partners to other agencies involved in work or decentralization in Iraq. Leaders of both local governance assessment teams delivered presentations during the conference. All the participants engaged actively in the discussions. In addition, hard copies of both LGA reports in Arabic, English and Kurdish were disseminated among participants. The team leader from Sulaymaniyah was later invited and participated in a National Conference on Decentralization and Local Governance organized by UNDP and ESCWA in Erbil in June.

2. Second module Citizens Participation Grant fund:

The UNOPS team has revised, approved and closed all the five NGO grants. Preparations for a lessons learned workshop which will take place in Basrah at the end of July have started. A company providing facilitators for the event has been selected. Iraqi visa arrangements are underway.

Objective 5:

The possible qualitative achievements from the NCCI project on the NGO Network include NGOs in Iraq utilizing this network, allowing them to discover other local NGOs and larger international organizations. Moreover, donors can use this network to look for possible partner organizations when they implement projects in Iraq.

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.
- Delays on the side of the NGOs Directorate regarding approval of the new registration form caused delays in the implementation of the NGO registration and NGO law awareness activities.
- 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. External monitoring companies are also hired along with UNOPS monitoring staff.
- Uncertain political developments (formation of the new government) negatively affect the process of support to implementation of the NGO law.