

United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust Fund
Project #:C9-25
Date and Quarter Updated: October - December, 4th 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 31.08.2012
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	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.
----------------	--

	<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 understanding 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 nationwide 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"> 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.

Funds Committed	\$ 3,707,428	% of approved	87%
Funds Disbursed	\$ 3,448,569	% of approved	81%
Forecast final date	31 st August 2012	Delay (months)	Budget revision/time extension request was approved in October 2011.

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.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Three training sessions on NGO law awareness were conducted: 20-24 November, 26-30 November, and 8-12 December. Participants included 8 individuals from the Iraqi judiciary, 19 from the police, 3 from the GoI, 2 from the CoR, 12 from various local authorities and 21 individuals representing NGOs. A press release about this series of events is attached to this report. 2. An institutional assessment of the NGOs Directorate is underway. Clic Consultants has been contracted to carry out the assessment. Field work began in November 2011 when a representative from Clic made a field visit to the NGOs Directorate in Baghdad and met with the Director and his deputies. The consultant also met with the head of the Civil Society Committee of the Council of Representatives and other members of the parliamentary committee. The consultant, in cooperation with NCCI, is currently distributing a questionnaire to NGOs to receive their views about the work of the NGOs Directorate. During this mission the consultant also visited 	85

	<p>Erbil in the Kurdistan Region, where UNOPS is helping to set up the new NGOs Department for the region. More details are provided in the qualitative description of this activity (#5).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. A small grant fund has been created for six of the NGOs that participated in the May 2011 registration training in Erbil. These NGOs, in cooperation with the NGOs Directorate, will conduct 22 workshops in 18 Governorates (two in Baghdad). The workshops will focus mainly on the process of registration with the NGOs Directorate. Three of these are funded by UNOPS, and the other three are funded by ICNL. The grant fund is active and NGOs are due to report by the end of January 2012. More details are provided in the qualitative description of this activity (#1). 4. The NGOs Directorate has approved new registration forms for NGOs after months of consultations. Five forms are now available on the NGOs Directorate website. 5. A study visit to Lebanon is planned for mid February for representatives from the CoR, the GoI and various NGOs. The visit will include meetings with Lebanese counterparts, experience sharing sessions and a three day training of trainers for the participants. The participants will then be requested to carry out seminars in the CoR and at the GoI offices on NGO law no. 12 as well as overall relations between public authorities and civil society. 6. A memorandum of understanding and cooperation has been signed between the KRG NGOs Department and ICNL/UNOPS. Its purpose is to facilitate the process of implementation of the NGO law no. 1. 	
<p>2. To increase organizational capacity for advocacy of the Iraqi civil society.</p>	<p>All the planned activities under this objective have been delivered and reported on in previous quarters.</p>	<p>100%</p>
<p>3. To improve access of Iraqi citizens to relief assistance following increased role of NGO community in conducting emergency response.</p>	<p>All the planned activities under this objective have been delivered and reported on in previous quarters.</p>	<p>100%</p>
<p>4. To strengthen citizen participation in local governance processes, facilitated by civil society, which impacts positively on local economic development and social assistance delivery.</p>	<p>The three NGOs from the districts of Sayed Saddiq and Shahrazour in Sulaymaniyah as well as from Hilla in Babil contracted under this grant fund, carried out projects in their respective areas and submitted impact assessment reports. This grant fund contributed to the overall cooperation between the three stakeholders NGOs, citizens and local authorities and provided an opportunity to reinforce this partnership while improving services for the local communities.</p>	<p>100%</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>The Civic Education campaign, implemented by NCCI, is mostly complete. NCCI partnered with 19 NGOs to form an NGO Network to carry out the campaign throughout Iraq. The campaign itself, which is now finished, focused on community-based peace building and human rights protection and contributed to the national dialogue and reconciliation process.</p> <p>Most of the activities in this category have been completed in the reporting period and the project achieved most of the objectives of spreading the principles of peace, coexistence and benevolence among stakeholders. The only remaining activity is the final conference to debate the project output and propose policies to increase community-based peace building networks and initiatives, with involvement from the Government of Iraq and civil society at large. The final conference is planned to take place in January 2012.</p>	<p>95</p>
---	--	-----------

Qualitative achievements against objectives and results

Objective 1:

- 1- In a joint project, UNOPS and ICNL contracted three NGOs each to reach out to unregistered NGOs in Iraq. The six NGOs were selected with an even geographical distribution so that each NGO covers three governorates. They will conduct trainings and spread knowledge among unregistered NGOs in order to help them get registration certificates as quickly as possible. NGOs cannot work in Iraq without registration certificates, so it is important to raise awareness and remove any obstacles to registration. The three NGOs contracted by UNOPS are expected to finish their work by end of January 2012.
- 2- Under the same objective, UNOPS and ICNL organized three trainings for trainers on NGO Law Awareness in Erbil between November and December 2011. The first training targeted local authorities and NGOs. The second targeted police and NGOs, and the third one targeted justice system & police and NGOs. The NGOs that participated in these trainings will submit proposals for funding from UNOPS and ICNL to share what they learned during these sessions with NGOs, local authorities, police and justice entities in their respective governorates. These trainings will target all NGOs throughout Iraq (including the Kurdistan Region) for awareness about NGO Law No. 12 and building partnerships between civil society and public authorities on the local and federal levels. It is expected that around 18 small grants will be co-administered with ICNL. When the NGOs deliver these trainings jointly with local authorities, police and representatives of the justice system, it should reinforce this partnership and help each partner understand their responsibilities towards each other.
- 3- A study visit to Lebanon is planned for mid February for representatives from the CoR, the GoI and various NGOs. It is expected that this study visit will build on the impact of the previous study visits in 2009 and 2010. The stakeholders will be exposed to other countries' experiences of partnership within civil society and specifically Lebanon which has similar political, social and socio-geographical circumstances to Iraq. Three days of study visits in addition to another three days of analytical studying and self evaluation will guarantee an opportunity for the stakeholders to better serve their communities and carry out their duties.
- 4- After several months of consultations, the NGOs Directorate approved new registration forms for NGOs. Five forms are now available on the NGOs Directorate website. The forms were designed by ICNL in cooperation with UNOPS and they have played a vital role in streamlining and facilitating the process of registration for NGOs who are having major problems due to the difficulty of acquiring legal status as registered NGOs.
- 5- A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the KRG NGOs Department and ICNL/UNOPS. This MoU will serve as a legal basis for cooperation between the three parties for the

purpose of strengthening the capabilities of the Department. According to the agreement, ICNL and UNOPS: 1) have contracted Clic Consultants to assess and support the Department, 2) will create online registration forms to support NGO registration in the Kurdistan Region, and 3) will assist the Department in establishing fair and efficient funding mechanisms for NGOs development in the Region. On the national level, UNOPS and ICNL are working on a similar MoU with the Federal NGOs Directorate in Baghdad, and an institutional assessment of the Directorate by Clic Consultants is already in progress.

Objective 4:

1. First module - LGA

The projects of the NGOs working under the LGA grant fund focused on implementing the following activities:

- 1) Establishing communication mechanisms between local authorities and communities in each area,
- 2) Widely sharing information on community and local government coordination through local media and the provision of monthly updates using different media outlets,
- 3) Training sessions on civil society, democratic practices, human rights and community-driven development for selected participants, with the goal of increasing knowledge of citizen participation and democratic values,
- 4) Public service interventions following the identification of potential projects by local community committees,
- 5) An impact assessment which will measure the impact of the overall LGA initiative.

Within the framework of project activities, community committees were established with participation of teachers, school principals, workers, engineers and other citizens. The local authorities continued to meet with these community committees regularly twice a month to offer the chance for them to express their problems and needs. This also contributes to strengthening the relationship between citizens and local authorities. The local authorities were obliged to put in more effort to find solutions to some of the needs, for example in the targeted areas in Hilla, the Local Authority committee was able to solve some problems related to sewage, roads, electrical generator and cleaning campaigns.

After establishing complaint/suggestion boxes in different places where citizens can raise their issues and problems, the follow-up committees extended their efforts to address some of the needs which were raised. Press releases and monthly reports were published in the newspapers and on the local TV channels to increase impact and awareness. This also reflects a transformation of relations between citizens and local authorities.

Furthermore, to promote effectiveness of this type of projects, the NGOs carried out public service interventions in their communities which aimed to serve the public; for example, in Sayed Sadiq in Sulaymaniyah, the NGO rehabilitated a primary school with financial contributions from the local authority as well. This reflects cooperation between Local Authorities and Citizens. In each case, the local authorities contributed labour hours and construction materials.

Lastly, an assessment to the impact of the project is currently underway to measure the impact of the project.

Objective 5:

The activities under this objective implemented by NCCI aim to promote peaceful coexistence by way of utilising references to Iraqi history. Iraq is well known as an ancient civilization but this concept has been used to prove to the stakeholders and the beneficiaries that such a civilization would not have been achieved without peaceful coexistence and benevolence. The campaign succeeded in promoting principles of peaceful coexistence among the citizens through workshops, trainings, conflict management sessions, marches and tours all over Iraq. It is noteworthy that most of these activities were hosted by tribal sheikhs, religious men and grassroots organizations that were willing to be part of the campaign.

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 in approval of the new registration forms by the NGOs Directorate 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 (ToRs) 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 make 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.