



PROVISION FOR POST-PROJECT EVALUATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS
DEMOCRACY FUND
Contract NO.PD:C0110/10

EVALUATION REPORT



UDF-IRQ-08-242 ±Preparing Iraqi women as leaders, advocates, participants in
the political process (Iraq)

Date: 24 June 2013

Acknowledgements

The evaluators would like to thank all those who made themselves available for interview, and who responded to requests for e-mailed input and/or telephone discussions.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluators. They do not represent those of UNDEF nor of any of the institutions referred to in the report.

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I. Executive Summary

i. Project Data

From 1 November 2009 to 30 October 2011,¹ the Iraq Civic Action Network (ICAN) implemented the project: *Preparing Iraqi women as leaders, advocates, participants in the political field*. The project received USD150,000 in support from UNDEF (including USD15,000 held for final evaluation), all of which was expended.

The long-term objective of the project was: “to prepare Iraqi women for full and equal participation in the democratic process”. This was to be done: “by equipping them with knowledge of their rights and by providing a practical set of skills to empower them to implement this knowledge in the political arena”.

The project targeted as intermediaries in this endeavour non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are members of the ICAN network. Project components included Training of Trainers (ToT) for NGO participants; internships for 14 young women who were placed with the NGOs; knowledge-sharing workshops and civic forums organized by the trainees to reach out to a wider public, including decision makers and media; and the reinvigoration of a National Committee for the Political Participation of Iraqi Women. These actions were supported by the issue of regular newsletters (in part written by the participants), website development and brochures.

ii. Evaluation questions

Evaluation questions relating to relevance focused on the design of the project (in particular how the separate components complemented each other) and how the participants were selected (to see whether the project was appropriately targeted). A number of interviewees also noted that the project was timely, since it allowed for women to consider participating in elections scheduled for early 2013.

The evaluators asked about the involvement of men in the project, given that interviewees consistently identified men as obstacles to women’s participation. While men were invited to participate in the knowledge-sharing workshops and civic forums, they were not given the opportunity to be trained and were not considered for internships.

The training component of the project was well received and seen as highly relevant by the participants. The internships were less successful, with some interns explaining that they would have preferred to be placed with political offices rather than NGOs. Some of the interns, conversely, were employed and promoted by the NGOs accepting them, and several remained engaged within their communities.

The National Committee was established and members were enthusiastic and active, both during the project and since it ended. Materials produced were not entirely successful: the training materials were of high quality and the trainees continue to use them; the website was seen as under-developed; and the newsletter/newspaper was poorly targeted so that some readers welcomed it while others questioned its usefulness.

In exploring the project’s effectiveness , it was noted that the project achieved all its objectives and targets. The project was designed for a 12-month duration but a contract of 24 months was issued in accordance with UNDEF standard practice. ICAN consequently ran

¹ The project duration is given inconsistently in documentation. Despite the start and end dates given, the project was described as taking 12 months, and the budget was calculated accordingly. This is further explained in the text.

the project over 12 months but did not report until 24 months had passed. In hindsight, the project might have been spread over more than 12 months to allow closer follow-up of the trainees and interns.

Both trainers and trainees considered that the training, although it was very good, would have benefited from some practical application through visits to political offices or placements with relevant political players. In 12 months there would not have been time for this, however using the 24 months allowed might have allowed it.

In relation to efficiency, the evaluators note that the budget was acquitted appropriately. The activities were well planned and the few minor delays as a result of security considerations did not interrupt plans unduly. Many of the interviewees noted that the project needs to be followed up, in particular through advanced training and practical application.

Unusually, the evaluators were able to conclude that there had been significant impact at a number of levels: importantly, the project resulted directly in a large number of participants (ICAN estimates 50%) deciding to stand for election at provincial and occasionally federal level. The impact on individuals was also clearly demonstrated.

Apart from the women who decided to stand for office, there were examples of women who started their own NGOs, got jobs in political offices, organized campaigns for women's rights and delivered training to others. The impact on NGO partners was marked but may be short-term as a result of staff turnover.

Questions relating to sustainability focused on examples of how the project had become embedded in the daily actions of participants, either through continuing membership of the National Committee or through other actions relating directly to the training. The training materials have a continuing "a

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a p 4 3 (p r o i) 5 r i . t e r y b e - 4 (e n) 4 () - 6 9 p r b e d a h a i l i - - 4 (g N) 5 () - 6 9 p r o j (e c) 2 3 (t) - 3 () 6 f o r e o (t) 3 4 (

The internships

I. Introduction and development context

i. The project and evaluation objectives

From 1 November 2009 to 30 October 2011,² the Iraq Civic Action Network (ICAN) implemented the project: *Preparing Iraqi women as leaders, advocates, participants in the political field* with activities in a number of governorates across Iraq. The project received USD150,000 in support from UNDEF (including USD15,000 held for final evaluation), all of which was expended.

The long-term objective of the project, as stated in the Project Document, was: “to prepare Iraqi women

Following a national referendum in 2005, Iraq approved a new constitution and elected a 275-member Council of Representatives. Cabinet ministers were approved in May 2006 and in January 2009 elections were held for provincial councils. National legislative elections were held in 2010, which resulted in an expanded Council of Representatives of 325. The *Failed States Index* ranked Iraq as the world's seventh most politically unstable country in 2010; by 2012 it had improved only slightly to ninth position.³

Political tensions marked the early years of the Council, in particular between Sunnis and the Shiite-dominated government. In January 2012, Vice-President Tariq Al-Hashimi was forced to flee in the face of accusations that he had commanded sectarian death squads. Protests marked the end of 2012 as Sunni citizens took to the streets, claiming to be marginalized by the Shia government. Tension continues, also, with Turkey as a result of historical repression of Iraqi Kurds, who established their own autonomous region in the early nineties.

Both literacy levels and school participation are highly gendered, with a literacy rate of over-15 year-olds of 86% for men and 70.6% for women. While boys/men remain in education for an average 11 years, girls/women complete only eight years schooling on average.

Iraqi citizens are eligible to vote at the age of 18 and suffrage is universal. Implementation of the constitution and relatively gender-sensitive laws, however, is undermined by official recognition of Sharia law alongside common law. This, and entrenched social attitudes towards women, mean that the protections included in the law often do not extend to women in practice. While women have the right to vote and to participate in political processes, for example, and despite a 25% quota for women in the Iraqi parliament, women are under-represented at all levels of government and discouraged from participation by violence and repressive family and community traditions.⁴

Women continue, also, to be disproportionately affected by the aftermath of conflict, with large numbers of war widows. Ironically, TBT1 0 0 1ict, Tm[()484.03(, Tm[(24(i)5(s)-25((be)178(con)14(f)-

II. Project strategy

i. Project approach and strategy

The project had three short-term objectives to advance the long-term objective:

To create a cadre of women leaders with strong skills in advocacy, coalition building and networking, and organizational management;

To strengthen women-led NGOs by increasing coordination and cooperation among them, including by establishing a committee to empower women's political participation; and

To increase acceptance of women's political participation and women's rights among key strTf1 y[oldersT EMC /P 4MCID 2/Lan1ck

"The main obstacles to women participating

The evaluators asked to what extent gender considerations were integrated into the training. One trainer confirmed that the needs assessment conducted by ICAN included input from both women and men and that the preparatory research for the training took gender issues into account, especially in relation to the cultural/institutional environment. He mentioned in particular that the training dealt with the belief that “culture prohibits gender responsiveness”.

Internships

The project included the placement of 14 young women as interns in partner NGOs. In fact, in most cases this seems rather to have been a case of funding probationary positions for women already working with the NGOs. One intern, for example, was already working as a volunteer with one of the NGOs and, as a result of the internship and training, took up the position of programme officer there. She now holds the same position in another NGO. Another intern who had been working as a data collection officer moved to become a branch manager and advocacy trainer. A number of respondents reported similar moves from volunteer work to staff positions following the internship/training. Some changed areas of specialisation: two interns had been working with IDPs and moved into women’s issues; one had been a primary school teacher and joined another ICAN member NGO as a senior programme manager.

The interns were chosen in a closed but competitive selection process in which ICAN called for nominations from partner NGOs and then selected the successful candidates based on a number of criteria including their educational achievements, ability to volunteer, mobility within the region and interest in political affairs. ICAN attempted to reflect geographical distribution in the selection. Here again, the project essentially worked to increase the capacity of the NGOs themselves – again relevant but not specified in the Project Document. The internships were an important component of the project because they seem to have had significant impact (see below) on both the individual women and the overall aims of the project.

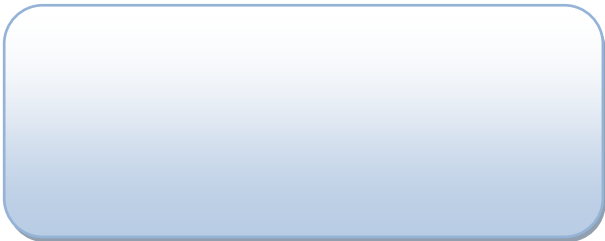
Publications and website

As outputs from the project, ICAN made the training materials available to participants, some of whom have since used them for training others.

ICAN also produced 13 issues of its newsletter *Women in the new Iraq*, 2,000 copies of which were distributed to various organizations, through forums and conferences, to interested members of the public and to decision makers, as well as through partner NGOs. A number of the interns said that they had written articles for the newsletter.

ICAN also used some funds for its website, designed as an on-line forum for the participants and as a repository for the materials produced. A number of

Training session in Basra



Internships

Female candidates were sought through a competitive process for placement as interns with partner NGOs for four months. They subsequently participated in the training and other project events.

14 young women completed internships with partner NGOs.

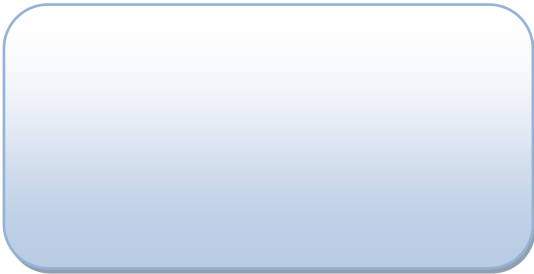
Some of the interns seem to have been more active than others. One trainer noted that the interns did not participate as actively in the training as he thought they should. Some of the interns, on the other hand, seem to have taken on very active roles as trainers after the ToT and some have become activists for women's rights. One intern, a lawyer, was appreciative of the fact that ICAN took the effort to provide legal publications and tailor her internship to her specialism, but said that in hindsight she would have preferred an internship in a political office rather than in an NGO.

Less than half the interns were taken on by the NGOs after their internships and in general these women were already volunteers or staff in the organizations and moved into more permanent or higher-

"I receive [the newspaper]. I find it is good but it deals with studies, assessments, investigations and surveys more than talking about the Iraqi context."

"It deals with studies...I do not like this type of newspaper."

"I find it useful with independent points of view. Most of its subjects are studies and surveys and for this reason Most of the NGOs and government get benefit from it."



ANNEXES

Annex 1: Evaluation questions

General evaluation question categories

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub -questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and	

Annex 2: Documents reviewed

Background documents

CIA World Factbook – Iraq, 16 April 2013. www.cia.gov/library

Failed States Index 2012. www.foreignpolicy.com/failed_states_index_2012

Annex 3: People Interviewed

Name	Organization
Waii Hamzai	ICAN Board member; Project Coordinator
Meeting with trainers	
Ahmad Jasam	Trainer
Ali Hussain	Trainer
Meeting with interns	

Annex 4: Acronyms

DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EQ	Evaluation Questions
ICAN	Iraq Civic Action Network
IRD	International Relief and Development Inc.
NGO	Non-governmental organization
UN	United Nations
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UNWOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USD	United States dollar