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Legislative Strengthening Program (LSP)

## OUTLINE OF TRAINING SEQUENCE FOR COR REPORTERS

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# Legislative Strengthening Program (LSP)

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USAID/Iraq SO10: Capacity of National Government Institutions Improved

## OUTLINE OF TRAINING SEQUENCE FOR COR REPORTERS

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### **Outline of training sequence for COR reporters**

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## Outline of training sequence for COR reporters

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USAID's Legislative Strengthening Program in Iraq has prepared this basic journalism training curriculum intended for journalists and media staff in the Council of Representatives (COR). This effort is in direct response to LSP's Objective 5: Strengthened COR Outreach, specifically its Task 5.3.b. of its *Year Two Annual Work Plan*. The outline describes a possible sequence of workshops aimed at improving the skills of journalists who cover the COR. It combines topical study with practical work to carry out international standards of journalism in preparing reports on issues of importance to parliament.

### *Format*

The curriculum would offer a number of separate workshops, related to topics of COR standing committees (see list below) as described in Chapter 13 of the COR Rules of Procedure:

- Complaints (would be good to start with this one as a source of anecdotes and story ideas for citizen-driven reports on the other topics)
- Parliamentary structure and mechanics (should be among the first offered)
- Domestic security
- Defense
- Foreign affairs
- Legal (rule of law, including courts)
- Oil and Gas
- Corruption
- Finance (how to read and report on the budget)
- Economic development
- Education
- Health
- Environment
- Labor
- Regional and Governorate structure
- Human rights
- Culture and Anthropology
- Media (rights and law)
- Religious affairs
- Refugees, immigrants and IDPs
- Agriculture and water
- Government services (electricity, sewage, roads)
- Aviation
- Political prisoners
- Youth issues
- Women's issues
- Family and childhood
- Civil Society
- Tribal relations
- DeBa'athification

The training activities will focus on the basic skills of journalism: reporting, interviewing, story development, etc. The same skills will be targeted in each workshop, but by presenting them in the context of current issues before committees, the workshops will be more practical.

### *Staffing*

A part-time local co-trainer (or co-trainers) will work with an expatriate co-trainer on designing and sequencing the workshops. The expatriate trainer would work in-country initially, then remotely to design materials and plan other elements. Over the series of workshops, the local co-trainer(s) would gradually work more and more independently in preparing and conducting the workshops. LSP will

maintain contact with the Media Directorate and the new association of parliamentary journalists. LSP's Communications & Outreach Specialist will oversee the process. The qualifications for a local co-trainer will be:

- experience as a journalist
- demonstrated skills to international standards in reporting or editing
- experience as a trainer or participation in training-of-trainers courses

### *Participants*

To establish this training as a privileged learning opportunity, and to set a serious professional tone, the participants should actively seek to participate. They would be required to sign up well in advance, fill out an application form, sign a statement of understanding about the expectations for the course, submit a sample of their work, and choose the topics they prefer. To further obtain buy-in from the participants' media outlets, the application may include a space for signature/stamp indicating permission from their editors. A committee comprised of members from the Media Directorate, journalism association, and LSP will select and assign participants. A minimum of five participants, and an average of ten, will be selected.

### *Schedule and Structure*

A typical workshop will last between 60 and 90 minutes per day for five days and be offered in the COR. The final product of each participant would be a story within the relevant topic which meets international standards. Participants could produce a news report or feature, including profile, documentary, explanatory, investigative, etc.

Participants of each workshop would be required to:

- Pre-workshop: Read the materials provided well in advance, which may include articles in the topic area from relevant media; background and briefing papers, training materials on fundamentals such as interviewing, research, writing to international standards, and other essential skills; and a recommended bibliography.
- Day One: Generate and refine a report idea based on the interests of your audience; develop a list of potential sources.
- Day Two and Three: Develop questions and conduct interviews. Optional group interviews could be held outside of workshop time, arranged by the trainer with an outside professional or expert, an MP on that committee, and a mid-level source at the relevant ministry.
- Day Four: Outline the report. Obtain any needed background or follow-up responses.
- Day Five: Write/produce the report.

Each day would also include peer review and critique.

### *Certificates*

Participants would receive a certificate upon completion of their reports. It would be expected that the reports would then be published in the participants' outlet of employment as a first option. If the employer declines to publish it, the participant may sell the story freelance. After local publication, the report could be published on a web site, maintained either by LSP staff or the co-trainer.

### *Recommended Additional Training*

In conjunction with the above training, an interviewing practicum should be conducted. This should commence after the new parliament is seated. The format would involve the following sequence:

- one-on-one interview between a journalist and a COR official, recorded on video, with a trainer observing
- journalist and COR official complete self-critique form
- trainer meets separately with journalist and COR official to provide feedback
- video used in future trainings.