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Legislative Strengthening Program

## CASE STUDY

### FELLOWSHIP AND APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

March 2011

Contract No. 263-I-03-06-00015-00 (REDI Task Order No. 3)

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# Legislative Strengthening Program

Contract No: 263-I-03-06-00015-00

REDI Task Order No. 3

USAID/Iraq SO10: Capacity of National Government Institutions Improved

Program Area: Good Governance

Program Element: GJD 2.1- Legislative Function and Process

## CASE STUDY FELLOWSHIP AND APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

March 2011

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## **CASE STUDY**

### **Fellowship and Apprenticeship Programs**

#### **Introduction**

The Legislative Strengthening Program (LSP), funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by AECOM, is promoting a new era of political stability in Iraq. LSP provides a range of support to strengthen Iraq's parliament, the Council of Representatives (COR). LSP is guiding the COR along a more sustainable democratic path, promoting greater transparency and accountability.

#### **Fellowship Program**

COR committees identified a lack of research support as a major obstacle to effectively completing their work. Many committees lacked resources to perform academic and strategic research to support and implement their ideas and projects. Designed specifically to address this issue, LSP's Fellowship Program makes academicians and subject experts available to the COR to conduct research in areas requested by committees.

The LSP Fellowship program allows the COR to benefit from access to the knowledge of various professors and other professionals who are experts on a variety of policy issues, legislation and subject matter. Fellows respond to the requirements of the COR by conducting analytical and strategic research, and providing objective solutions. Fellows are recruited to conduct project specific research within a set time frame. Research topics may include such subjects as the economy, energy, elections, corruption, fiscal policy, transportation, education, human rights and health care.

The Fellowship Program did not require formal approval from the COR for implementation, and as such commenced without delay in 2008.

Although the delay in the formation of the new parliament in 2010 represented a challenge to many LSP activities, the Fellowship Program continued without interruption during this period, due largely to the relationships LSP forged with COR committees. LSP met with COR committee advisors to discuss the priority of committee concerns and collect information on research topics of interest. LSP then conducted a series of interviews to select qualified professors as fellows based on the research topics identified by the committees.

Implementation continued smoothly in part because, as professors in local universities, the fellows often collaborated with the parliament and their presence in the COR was frequent before the LSP Fellowship program began. In addition, as the fellows are politically neutral, their research and final products reflected a balanced approach that was welcomed by MPs and COR staff.

The first group of fellows was engaged on individual limited term contracts and the fellows delivered completed research papers to the Members' Affairs Parliamentary Development

Committee (MAPDC) on topics that included: rules of procedure, Political Parties Law, the election system in Iraq, and budgets and allocations. Research papers were also completed for the Education Committee and the Complaints Committee. The Chair of the MAPDC submitted a letter of appreciation to LSP for managing such an effective program.

Following the success of the first group of fellows, LSP recruited a second group of five fellows in February of 2010. LSP organized meetings with the newly recruited fellows and COR Committee Advisors to solicit new ideas and discuss research priorities. LSP also conducted regular meetings with the fellows to evaluate and provide guidance on their research products. In cooperation with the fellows, LSP developed templates, and created quality control standards for research products.

As a result of the work of the second group of fellows, eleven research papers were submitted to the Economic Committee, Investment & Reconstruction Committee, Youth & Sports Committee, Regions & Governorates Committee, and the MAPDC. Topics included: the Social Safety Law, unemployment and terrorism, the impact of direct foreign investment in Iraq's economic development; trespassing on state property, the water supply problem in Iraq, open legislative processes, freedom of assembly and peaceful demonstrations; housing projects; the High Commission of Human Rights; and the preparation of draft laws.

LSP received a letter of appreciation from the Chair of the Regions & Governorates Committee for the research paper "The Water Supply Problem in Iraq". The Chairman noted that the paper covered international treaties on water issues, explained in full Iraq's water problems, and recommended practical solutions. LSP also conducted a successful fellows' Speakers Forum on legislative drafting. Two fellows presented the subject matter to, respectively, the Committees Advisors and the parliamentary staff.

The LSP Fellowship Program continues to be a successful, effective activity which is highly valued by COR committee and parliamentary staff. With the parliament now into its second five year term following the elections in 2010, further topics for research will be identified in cooperation with the COR. It is anticipated in 2011 that there will be a transition in the management of the program with responsibility for the Fellowship Program being gradually transferred to the ICPD.

### **Apprenticeship Program**

On November 1, 2009, three Legislative Strengthening Program (LSP)-funded apprentices commenced work with the Council of Representatives (COR) Media Directorate, under the direct supervision of Media Directorate Chief of TV Production, Mustafa Moneer Kamal.

The apprentice program had two objectives: to provide direct assistance to the COR Media Directorate in its communications and outreach activities so that it could better communicate COR activities to Iraqi citizens; and, to provide professional experience to young Iraqis who are just entering the workplace.

Zaid Nassir Hassan was hired as Film Director; Mithaq Hikmat Adil was hired as Voiceover Talent; and, Ghaith Talal Abdul Hameed was hired as Film Presenter. The three apprentices had initial six month contracts, running from November 1, 2009 through April 30, 2010. Upon the completion of this period, and following praise by the Media Directorate for the initiative, the contracts were extended for an additional six months, beginning on May 1, 2010 and concluding on October 31, 2010. The monthly salaries for the apprentices were \$800 per month for Mr. Hassan, and \$550 per month for Mr. Talal and Mr. Hameed. The entire program financial investment was \$22,800.

During this one year period, the apprentices were engaged in a number of projects on behalf of the Media Directorate. The first and highest profile of these was the production of informational films for the COR. Television segments entitled "Public Letter" and a short film entitled "A Day in the Life of a Member of Parliament" were both created and produced with the direct assistance of the three apprentices. According to Mustafa Moneer Kamal, these "were a valuable and prosperous experiment by which the Media Directorate transferred a real and factual picture of the COR's work to Iraqi citizens." The latter project, "A Day in the Life of a Member of Parliament" will also be included in the LSP Member Parliamentary Professional Development Program (MPPD) being presented to all members of the COR in 2011.

In total, the apprentices produced 26 television segments, a short documentary film and an ad break for the Media Directorate.

Production of television segments and films concluded as the country awaited the formation of the government. During this delay, the apprentices were not able to continue filming, but instead assisted the Media Directorate with important archiving of materials.

The program culminated in one of the apprentices being hired as a direct employee of the COR Media Directorate. Zaid Nassir Hassan is now a producer with the Media Directorate Television Production Department.

The Media Directorate's Director General, Muhamad Abubakr, has expressed his appreciation for this project, and enthusiastically noted the added value the apprentices brought to the directorate and the COR. The Director General has requested additional funding so the apprentices can return now that the COR is in active session, and produce more informational films about the parliament's activities.

That the Media Directorate has expressed its ongoing appreciation for the program, that the work product developed is held in high esteem and that one of the apprentices was eventually hired as an employee of the COR reflects the success of this program.