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# USAID/IRAQ GENDER ASSESSMENT

## Final Report

May 2010

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# USAID/IRAQ GENDER ASSESSMENT



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# ACRONYMS

ADS	Automated Directives System
ARDI	Agriculture Reconstruction and Development in Iraq
BSA	Board of Supreme Audit
CAII	Creative Associates International, Inc.
CAP	Community Action Program
CEDAW	United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CGA	Country Gender Assessment
COI	Commission on Public Integrity
COR	Council of Representatives
COSIT	Central Organization for Statistics and Information Technology
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DG	Democracy & Governance
DOD	Department of Defense
ECWR	Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights
EGAT/WID	Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade/Women in Development
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGC	Female Genital Cutting
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
G8	Group of Eight
GIS	Geographic Information System
GoI	Government of Iraq
HEAD	Higher Education and Development
HPV	Human Papillomavirus
HR	Human Resources
ICDT	International Centre for Democratic Transition
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ID	Iraqi Dinar
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFHS	Iraq Family Health Survey
IG	Inspector General
IHEC	Independent High Electoral Commission
IRC	International Rescue Committee
ITC	Information and Communication Technology
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
LGP III	Local Governance Program
LSP	Legislative Strengthening Program
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MENA	Middle East and North Africa region
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoDM	Ministry of Displaced and Migrants
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoHER	Ministry of Higher Education and Research
MoHR	Ministry of Human Rights

MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoLSA	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
MoMPW	Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works
MoO	Ministry of Oil
MoPDC	Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation
MoP-KRG	Ministry of Planning of the Kurdistan Regional Government
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NACS	Iraq National Anti-Corruption Strategy
NCD	National Capacity Development
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NDP	National Development Plan
NES	National Education Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PAPID	Participatory Assessment and Project Idea Development
PERFORM	Performance Evaluation and Reporting for Results Management
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PPA	Provincial Powers Act
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RFP	Request for Proposals
RISE	Revitalization of Iraqi Schools and Stabilization of Education
SEAGA	Socio-economic and Gender Analysis
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SMoWA	State Ministry of Women's Affairs
SMS	Short Message Service
SOW	Scope of Work
SSN	Social Safety Net
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
TOT	Training of Trainers
TPP	The Protection Project
TWG	Transition Working Group/Council of Ministers Secretariat
UN	United Nations
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
UNCAC	United Nations Convention against Corruption
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USF-I	United States Forces-Iraq
USG	United States Government
WEO	Women's Empowerment Organization
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

# GLOSSARY OF GENDER TERMS<sup>1</sup>

**Gender** refers to the socially constructed economic, social, political and cultural roles and responsibilities, attributes and opportunities assigned to females and males in a given society. Gender differs from sex in that sex refers to biological characteristics of males and females. Gender relations and gender inequality vary among cultures and change over time.

**Gender Analysis** is a set of research methodologies that identify and interpret the consequences of gender differences and gender relations for achieving development objectives, as well as the implications of development interventions for changing relations of power between women and men.

**Gender Assessments** involve carrying out a gender analysis of an organization's programs and of its ability to monitor and respond to gender issues throughout the program cycle.

**Gender Equality** refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality is a U.S. Government-endorsed goal of development and development cooperation efforts.

**Gender Equity** refers to fairness in the distribution of resources, benefits and opportunities between men and women. Fairness is determined according to cultural norms, values and what is deemed just in different societies. Such perceptions and definitions of fairness are based on locally-specific definitions, vary between and within countries and may be disadvantageous to women and girls.

**Gender Integration** involves identifying and then addressing gender differences and inequalities during program and project design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation to ensure women and men participate and benefit equally from development. Since the roles and relations of power between men and women affect how an activity is carried out, attending to these issues throughout the project cycle is essential.

**Gender Mainstreaming** involves making women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that inequality between women and men is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is gender equality.

**Gender Sensitivity** is the ability to recognize gender issues and especially the ability to recognize women's different perceptions and interests arising from their different social positions and gender roles.

**Gender Awareness** is the ability to identify problems arising from gender inequality and discrimination, even if these are not very evident on the surface or are "hidden" (i.e., not part of the general or commonly accepted explanation of what and where the problem lies).

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<sup>1</sup> These definitions are derived from USAID Women in Development's *Key Terms in Gender Analysis*: [http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/cross-cutting\\_programs/wid/gender/gender\\_analysis\\_terms.html](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/gender/gender_analysis_terms.html) and *Gender Terminology* ([http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PNADL089.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADL089.pdf)).

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

USAID/Iraq is committed to the development of a “sovereign, stable and self-reliant Iraq.” As the Mission develops its 2010-2012 country strategy, it will find that the state of gender relations in Iraq is central to its success. Around the world, gender inequality has been found to hamper reconstruction and development efforts, while the promotion of gender equality has been shown to promote sustainable development, greater national security and peace. In a place like Iraq where security is often linked to gender roles, where women’s legal, social and political rights are contentious and where the equal participation of women and men in economic development is hampered by corruption and a gendered division of labor, the positive returns that can flow from women’s and girls’ equal participation in national development are too significant to be ignored.

## Key Gender Issues in Iraq

Significant gender disparities are present in Iraq’s economy, education and health sectors. While improvements in security have resulted in increased employment for women, the female labor force participation rate continues to be one of the lowest in the region. Similarly, adult literacy rates are particularly low for women and the dropout rate for both boys and girls is high and increasing. Job segregation is prevalent and women’s entrance into male-dominated professions, including business and political leadership, is forbidden in certain communities. Women’s access to justice and legal protection is also limited. Many women are unaware of their legal rights and are bound by cultural requirements to seek mediation through family and other traditional methods rather than through the (often gender blind) courts. Sexual and gender-based violence is a growing threat for women and girls and honor killings, rape, kidnapping and domestic violence are on the rise. More than half of Iraq’s human capital is undervalued and underutilized and this gender gap has serious implications for the emergence of a viable and sustainable economy and for progress towards a secure and lasting democracy.

## A Strategy for Gender Integration in USAID/Iraq Programs

Iraq’s gender gap is simultaneously a challenge and an opportunity for the USAID Mission as it develops a new strategy for the coming years. What approach should the mission engage to promote equitable *and* effective development in Iraq? This report includes a set of gender integration recommendations for USAID/Iraq. The recommendations are the result of an assessment of gender integration conducted between March and April 2010, which examined USAID/Iraq’s country strategy and existing programs. The Gender Assessment Team recommends a four-part strategy for effective gender integration. This strategy will assist the Iraq Mission in addressing the key gender issues identified in the assessment and link gender-focused assistance approaches to the realization of the strategic objectives for Iraq. The four-part strategy calls on USAID/Iraq to:

- Enhance accountability by requiring consistent compliance with gender integration policies in the Automated Directive System (ADS) and other Mission gender policies and directives;

- Increase Mission technical capacity in gender planning and gender analysis and select implementing partners with strong gender track records and expertise;
- Commission sector-specific gender research and analysis and integrate findings in development of new programs; and
- Expand partnerships with US Government (USG), Government of Iraq (GoI), civil society and international development agencies committed to the promotion of women's rights and gender equality.

### **Consistent Accountability**

While USAID/Iraq has a solid gender policy framework on which to rely for the promotion of gender integration in programs, compliance with the Agency's ADS gender requirements is inconsistent. The ADS calls for integration of gender throughout the entire cycle of the assistance process- from strategy development and requests for proposals to program implementation and monitoring and evaluation. Too often these requirements are given cursory attention with a couple sentences or a boilerplate "gender paragraph" in requests for proposals/applications (RFP/As), contracts and cooperative agreements, or the inclusion of the number of women trained in quarterly reports. Serious attention by Mission and implementing partner staff to the impact of gender relations on program effectiveness and the impact of assistance interventions on gender relations is missing, though required and important for success.

One policy document that may help link the larger Agency directives with the Mission's work on the ground in Iraq is the *Mission Order for Gender Integration*, of which a draft has been developed. This order should be reviewed, approved and used as a mechanism to ensure compliance. Mission staff and implementing partners alike should be evaluated on their compliance with the gender integration requirements. Another important entry point for compliance can be found at the contracting stage. The inclusion of gender integration requirements in implementing partner contracts and cooperative agreements, which are legally binding documents, can also increase compliance with the ADS gender requirements. The full set of recommendations for the realization of consistent accountability can be found in the section on the USAID/Iraq Country Strategy and in Appendix A.1, which outlines recommendations for the development of a Mission Gender Action Plan.

### **Technical Capacity**

Strong technical capacity in gender integration is an important prerequisite for equitable and effective programs. USAID/Iraq should invest in the development of staff capacity in gender analysis and gender planning and should also invest in the recruitment of an Iraqi gender specialist. Research interns can also provide support for the Program Office and technical offices as they assess past performance and develop new programs and intervention strategies. The Mission Gender Officer is a key position and also the lead technical staff for gender issues, so keeping that post filled by a program staff member with appropriate gender expertise should be a Mission priority. Similarly, the selection of implementing partners with a strong track record of gender programming in their sectors of expertise and/or with gender specialists on their teams should be among the selection criteria. Requiring implementing partners to develop a gender policy is an important step in ensuring their technical capacity in gender. A sample gender policy and gender engagement plan for an implementing partner is included in Appendix A.4. Additional recommendations for technical capacity can be found in sections on democratic

governance and national capacity strengthening and in the sections on economic growth, integrated agriculture development, education and health.

### **Gender Research and Analysis**

There is a need for more research and analysis of gender relations in Iraq and in particular the impact of gender relations on economic growth, private sector development, health, education and access to justice. USAID/Iraq should support the collection of gender statistics and gender disaggregated data at both the national government level and at the implementing partner level. Most of the disaggregated data the Gender Assessment team was able to collect from implementing partners were assembled specifically for the gender assessment and there was little indication that this data is regularly included in reports, used for program learning or used in the development of mid-term program adjustments. Additional research and sector-specific gender analysis can help produce the appropriate gender indicators for inclusion in performance management plans and to provide evidence of program effectiveness. Topics for research and areas where gender disaggregated data can be most helpful are discussed in the sections on democratic governance and national capacity strengthening and in the sections on economic growth, integrated agriculture development, education and health.

### **Partnerships**

Sometimes agencies think that they must go it alone in the development and promotion of a gender integration initiative, but that is not the case. In Iraq there are many agencies, organizations and other stakeholders committed to the promotion of gender equality and working on their own gender mainstreaming initiatives. Building partnerships with these entities can strengthen USAID/Iraq's gender integration initiative. Partnerships are a good source of technical information and contacts and provide a more comprehensive picture of the landscape of gender issues, best practices and promising approaches. The Iraq Mission should take advantage of the expertise of the following partners: USAID's Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade/Women in Development Office (EGAT/WID), the UNAMI Gender Task Force, the Gender Focal Points in various Iraq Government Ministries and the US Embassy Women's Issues Working Group. The Appendix includes lists of Gol and civil society contacts and research institutions that the Iraq Mission can connect with for expert knowledge on gender issues in Iraq.

### **Conclusion**

Integrating gender in the work of the Iraq Mission is more than a theoretical exercise; it is an operational exercise involving very targeted and specific actions aimed at producing institutional results. Gender integration is more than simply "checking-the-box;" it is an institution-wide process that helps organizations to focus their interventions strategically. As the Gol moves forward in the process of political consolidation after the March elections, most Iraqis are waiting patiently for signs that the country will continue on a path of stability and growth. If the gender gap in Iraq widens, the challenge for stability and growth will also expand. On the other hand, if those leading development efforts promote interventions that reduce the gender gap, stability and growth are more likely to follow.

# INTRODUCTION

## WHY GENDER MATTERS: GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

Gender is inextricably linked to development. Socially assigned roles, responsibilities and relationships among women and men affect are affected by international development assistance with resulting consequences for program effectiveness. Because women around the world tend to be on the disadvantaged side of the gender equation, most of the international initiatives designed to promote gender equality have focused on women and girls. After decades of work, the good news is there is a growing body of evidence that investing in women and girls provides solid returns for international development. Integrating gender in development programs and including gender equality as a priority program goal promotes economic growth, sustainable development, security and peace. Living conditions change for the better when women and girls benefit as equally as men and boys from reconstruction and development efforts.

World Bank research supports this conclusion. In *Engendering Development: Through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources, and Voice*, a Policy Research Report by the World Bank, the Bank concludes that ignoring gender disparities reduces the ability of a country to grow and develop. The report examines the conceptual and empirical links between gender, public policy, and development outcomes. The resulting evidence shows that societies that treat women and men differently tend to experience less rapid economic growth and poverty reduction than societies that treat men and women more equally. The report proposes a three part strategy to promote gender equality and gain the resulting benefits for sustainable growth, effective governance and poverty reduction. The strategy includes:

- Institutional reforms that promote equal rights for women and men;
- Policies for sustained economic development; and
- Active measures to redress persistent gender disparities.

In its 2006 *State of the World's Children Report*, UNICEF highlighted the critical link between gender equality and development. The report finds that gender equality is "pivotal to human progress" because it produces a "double dividend." This double dividend not only benefits women and children, it is also vital to the health and development of families, communities and countries. The UNICEF report found that children are more likely to receive proper nourishment, education and health care services when mothers have an equal voice in basic family decisions. The report projected that if men and women had an equal voice in decision-making, the incidence of underweight children from birth to age three in South Asia would drop by up to 13 percent, resulting in 13.4 million fewer undernourished children. The report also found that an increasing number of women in developing countries are entering the workforce, but lower wages for women are hampering their ability to provide sufficient healthcare, nutrition and education for their children.

The report concluded that increasing gender equality would improve maternal health, help reduce poverty and hunger, help ensure universal education, and help curb HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. The following promising approaches for the promotion of gender equality were identified:

- Investing in girls' education;

- Improving property law and inheritance rights to ensure equal rights for women;
- Establishing quotas to ensure women are involved in politics; and
- Engaging men and boys on the benefits of equality.

A recent report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) also concludes that sustainable development can only be achieved through investments in women and girls. The OECD report, *Gender and Sustainable Development: Maximizing the Economic, Social and Environmental Role of Women* (2008) highlights why development assistance providers must recognize the role gender plays in development effectiveness and the important contributions women make to national development. The underutilization and undervaluing of half of the world's human capital reduces the potential contributions women can make to economic advances, social progress and environmental protection. The report notes that greater inclusion of women could increase economic growth, reduce poverty, enhance societal well-being, and help ensure sustainable development in all countries. In particular, studies find that if better use were made of the world's female human capital the following benefits would accrue:

- Economic growth would increase in all countries;
- The number of people living in poverty would decline in all countries;
- Fertility rates would rise in OECD countries and decline in non-OECD countries;
- Business performance and innovation would be enhanced;
- The cost-effectiveness of health care and social programs would be raised;
- Government policies would better respond to the needs of all citizens; and
- Environmental damage from unsustainable activities would decrease.

The OECD also concludes that closing the gender gap requires the following enlightened government policies which take gender dimensions into account:

- Family-friendly policies to increase the labor force participation of women;
- Development assistance policies which promote the economic role of women;
- Upgrading the status of and wages for traditional areas of women's work;
- Incentives for women to enter science and technology careers;
- Increased access to finance and support services for women entrepreneurs;
- Gender-specific approaches in healthcare planning and treatment;
- Better integration of women migrants in labor markets and society;
- Setting targets and goals for women managers and parliamentarians; and
- Giving greater weight to female perspectives in environmental policies.

In a 2009 special issue of the New York Times Magazine, Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn (authors of *Half the Sky*) present another reason for integrating gender in reconstruction and development. Greater female involvement in society and the economy

undermines extremism and terrorism. Research has shown that male domination of society is a risk factor for internal conflict and violence and it is argued that the reason Muslim countries have been disproportionately afflicted by terrorism is not Islamic teachings but rather the low levels of female education and participation in the labor force. It is little wonder then that Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, in celebration of International Women's Day in 2009, asserted that, "Supporting women is a high-yield investment, resulting in stronger economies, more vibrant civil societies, healthier communities, and greater peace and stability."

## **PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT**

The USAID/Iraq Gender Assessment was commissioned to identify key gender issues and gender constraints in Iraq as part of the process of a review of USAID/IRAQ programs and strategy. The Gender Assessment will inform the development of USAID/Iraq's new strategic plan for Fiscal Years 2010-2012. Specifically, the assessment is intended to facilitate the statement of appropriate gender equality goals for the Mission, provide guidance for the new strategy, make recommendations on how USAID/Iraq can achieve greater gender integration in its programs, and identify additional topics for further gender analysis.

## **ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

The Gender Assessment was designed to meet the following objectives:

1. To identify the gender landscape in Iraq.
2. To assess USAID/Iraq's gender integration efforts.
3. To provide recommendations for USAID/Iraq 2010-2012 Strategic Plan and Gender Action Plan.

In order to meet those objectives, the following sources of data and information were utilized:

- Pertinent literature and documents on gender issues in Iraq including USAID reports, Gol documents, international donor documents, NGO documents, academic research, etc.
- National data and statistics including the recent household survey, the Iraq Family Health Survey Report and Iraq's Central Organization for Statistics and Information Technology (COSIT) data.
- Focus group discussions with rural and urban civil society representatives.
- Interviews with Mission staff, technical teams, implementing partners and select civil society representatives.

Gender analysis tools (see Appendix B.3) were used to:

- Reveal information as to why a situation has developed the way it has and help the team to uncover assumptions about issues such as the distribution of resources and the impact of culture and traditions.
- Assist in the detection of the direct or indirect benefits of a development initiative on women and men.

- Indicate some appropriate entry points for measures that promote equality within a particular context.
- Assist in determining how a particular development initiative may transform or maintain the existing gender division of labor, tasks, responsibilities and opportunities.
- Suggest strategies for gender integration and gender sensitive indicators can be developed to address the disparities and to promote equality.

### **Document Review**

A desk review of pertinent documents and literature was an initial and important part of the Iraq Gender Assessment. This included a review of policy and planning documents, background information available on gender issues in Iraq and other in-country data, and gender assessment reports and action plans from other partners and donors. The Mission's Concept Paper, draft Strategic Plan, technical analyses of current projects, studies and assessments conducted by donors, NGOs, national governments, regional organizations, and the academic community were reviewed using a common gender analysis framework consolidated in a Desk Review Checklist (See Appendix B.3).

### **Meetings and Interviews**

Meetings and interviews with US government agency representatives working on the ground were used to gather information on gender relations in Iraq and the impact those relations have on reconstruction and development efforts. This feedback was incorporated into the USAID/Iraq Gender Assessment report and is expected to inform the development of the Mission's strategic plan. Interviews were used to gather information on (a) the part that opinions, beliefs, and attitudes about men's and women's roles in Iraqi society play in the success or setback of reconstruction and development programs; (b) opportunities and constraints in achieving gender equality in Iraq through reconstruction and development programs; (c) culturally appropriate program approaches and strategies in the promotion of future democratic governance, economic development and peace and security programs; and (d) unaddressed gender issues and areas requiring more analysis, research and/or international development assistance.

### **Focus Group Discussions**

Focus group discussions with Iraqi stakeholders are an important part of the Iraq Gender Assessment. The focus groups are a way to reach representatives of the ultimate target groups of USAID/Iraq programs and to gain their feedback on the impact of USAID/Iraq-funded projects on reconstruction and development efforts in Iraq. Specifically, the focus group discussions:

- Gathered opinions, beliefs, and attitudes about the gender dimensions of reconstruction and development in Iraq;
- Solicited information on the opportunities and constraints in achieving gender equality in USAID/Iraq programs;
- Identified culturally appropriate program approaches and strategies in the promotion of future democratic governance, economic development and peace and security programs; and

- Identified unaddressed gender issues and areas requiring more analysis, research and international development assistance.

### **Data Analysis Approach**

A gender analysis of the data and information listed above was applied to reveal the connections between gender relations and reconstruction and development efforts in Iraq. The team analyzed the data and information to determine the extent to which USAID/Iraq programs are in alignment with the gender requirements of the ADS in the design, implementation and evaluation of projects and to ascertain where possible the degree of gender equality in project outcomes. Various gender analysis tools included in the Appendix were employed in the assessment including:

- A checklist for document review;
- A project checklist;
- Focus group discussion questions; and
- Gender mainstreaming guidelines.

# GENDER AND SECURITY

## Background

Insecurity remains a long-standing and daily hazard for most Iraqis. From Saddam Hussein's regime, to the Iran-Iraq war, to international sanctions, to the US invasion, to the recent spread of sectarian conflict, Iraq's continuing violence and insecurity has a significant impact on the pattern of gender relations across the country. Even in locations in Iraq where there is less sectarian violence—as in the north in Kurdistan— theft, extortion, kidnappings and random violence are pervasive. While Iraqi women, men, boys and girls all suffer from the relative lack of security in the public and private spheres, the level and type of insecurity they experience differs and carries with it significant implications for human rights, democratic governance and sustainable economic development.

The security situation for women in Iraq changes with the associated fluctuations in the general level of violence. According to the *United Nations Consolidated Appeal: Iraq and the Region*, "Women in particular are less safe now than at any other time during the conflict or in the years before," (Oxfam, 2009, 3). *Stronger Women, Stronger Nations: 2008 Iraq Report*, a study of 1,513 women across Iraq, revealed that 71.2 percent did not feel protected by American or British soldiers and 67.9 percent said that their ability to walk down the street as they please has gotten worse since 2003 (Women for Women International, 2008, 7). Iraqi women who participated in the survey also stated that violence against women was on the rise and cited less respect for women's rights than before (*Ibid.*, 1), the tendency to consider women as possessions (*Ibid.*, 2) and the worsening economy as reasons for the increase (*Ibid.*, 3). Women's mobility and their corresponding ability to participate in society are also affected by the high level of insecurity— 86 percent of the women surveyed said that they are not able to walk down the street as they please, 68 percent said they are not able to drive a car and 48.8 percent said they are not able to work outside the home (*Ibid.*, 17).

## Gender Role Swap

The media has reported on what some are calling the "gender role swap" that has materialized in Iraq as a result of the high level of security threats (IRIN, 2007). Because some men, particularly former regime and military officials, are under increased risks for political murder when they go outside their homes, women have begun to take on many traditionally male family responsibilities. A researcher on family and children's affairs at the University of Baghdad was quoted in the news report concluding that, "If the security situation continues to deteriorate we will see women working as taxi or truck drivers; more of them will work in shops or as technicians and mechanics." (*Ibid.*) The news agency reports that more and more, women are accompanying their sons and daughters to school and universities and they are seeking work to earn an income to provide for their families. Women, rather than their husbands or brothers, are going to the morgue to claim bodies of loved ones and are attending funerals without their male family members. Some Shia men are avoiding travel through Sunni-dominated areas to avoid kidnapping, torture and/or murder; while others are leaving the country, keeping a low profile at home or are in prison. Those who don't survive make up 91 percent of the violence-related deaths in Iraq. (*Ibid.*)

## **Violence against Women**

In *Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa*, Freedom House highlights the growing levels of violence against women in Iraq including honor killings, rapes and abductions. These threats, the report notes, force some Iraqi “women to stay home and has negatively affected their opportunities for employment and education.” In 2008 there was a 70 percent increase in honor killings in Basra and only five convictions (Kelly and Breslin, 2010, 7). A 2009 United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) report highlighted growing levels of domestic violence including honor killings and burning of women (*Human Rights Report*, UNAMI, 2009). Honor killings are often overlooked by officials and the community and viewed as “tribal issues” or “private matters.” In Kurdistan, cases of death by immolation increased fourfold from 36 in 2005 to 133 in 2006 (Kelly and Breslin, 2010, 23). It is often difficult to determine whether these deaths are suicides or murders. Those that are suicides are often committed at the urging of family members. In 2009, a total of 163 women were killed as a result of domestic violence in Kurdistan, a rate that has held steady in recent years. A recent study of female genital cutting<sup>2</sup> by a German NGO based in KRG found the overall rate in Kurdistan to be 72.2 percent. The rate in Sulaymaniyah was found to be 77.9 percent, while in Garman and New Kirkuk it was 81.2 percent and in Erbil 63 percent.

Interviews with government officials, civil society members and other stakeholders revealed that Iraqi women continue to be harassed or attacked by insurgents, militias, and Iraqi security forces for not wearing *hijab* (head covering) or otherwise failing to observe the perpetrators’ interpretation of proper Muslim women’s dress. Some women who drive or are found walking or talking with unrelated males have also been victimized. Iraqi police forces have been indifferent and sometimes hostile to victims and have received no training on how to properly address these crimes. Female members of the security forces also find themselves subject to sexual harassment from their colleagues and Iraqi women have become suicide bombers at an increasing rate. Some are seeking revenge for a slain loved one or escape from poverty and abuse, while others are abducted by insurgents, raped, and then forced to become suicide bombers to save their honor. Between 2003 and mid-2008, 43 women carried out suicide bombings in Iraq, including 20 in the first half of 2008 (Kelly and Breslin, 2010, 15).

## **Trafficking in Persons**

The 2009 US State Department *Trafficking in Persons Report* identifies Iraq as both a source and destination country for the trafficking of men, women, and children who are trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation and involuntary servitude. Women and girls, some as young as eleven years old, are trafficked within Iraq and abroad to Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Iran, and Yemen, and are met with a life of forced prostitution and sexual exploitation within households in these countries. Some victims are sexually exploited in Iraq before being sold to traffickers who take them abroad. In some cases, women are lured into sexual exploitation through false promises of work. The more prevalent means of becoming a victim is through sale or forced marriage. Family members have trafficked girls and women to escape desperate economic circumstances, to pay debts, or resolve disputes between families. Some women and girls are trafficked within Iraq for the purpose of sexual exploitation through the traditional institution of *muta’a* (temporary marriage). Under this arrangement, the family receives a dowry from the husband and the marriage is terminated after a specified period.

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<sup>2</sup> The term “female genital cutting” (FGC) is used for the purposes of this report, although the term “female genital mutilation” (FGM) is widely used and recognized throughout Iraq at this time.

When trafficked by persons other than family members, women face a high risk of honor killing if their families learn that they have been raped or forced into prostitution. Iraqi boys, mostly from poor families of Turkmen and Kurdish origin, are trafficked within Iraq for the purpose of forced labor, such as street begging and sexual exploitation. Iraqi men and boys who migrate abroad for economic reasons may become victims of trafficking. Women from Ethiopia, Indonesia, Nepal, and the Philippines are trafficked into Kurdistan for involuntary domestic servitude after being promised different jobs. Iraq is classified as a Tier II country by the American government, meaning that the Iraqi government does not fully comply with the US trafficking standards but is making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance (*Trafficking in Persons Report, 2009*).

### **Promising Approaches**

Interventions aimed at addressing gender and security issues in Iraq will require efforts on multiple levels, through various sectors and the input and insights of Iraqis. Global best practice programming for combating gender-based violence focus on the “Three Ps”: prevention, protection and prosecution. Prevention efforts put a spotlight on violence and aims to reduce prevalence and demand. Protection efforts are designed to proactively identify victims of violence and provide shelter and temporary care. Prosecution efforts prohibit all forms of violence, prescribe penalties that are sufficiently stringent to deter the crime and vigorously punish offenders convicted of gender and security crimes.

One promising approach encountered by the Gender Assessment Team involved training programs and partnerships with local religious leaders and the promotion of anti-violence during weekly Friday speeches at mosques. Since religion is as strong a leverage as tradition and culture, partnerships with religious leaders of high standing in the Iraqi community can help to counter the culture and cycle of violence in the community and promote respect, tolerance and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.

Another promising approach is the recruitment and training of female police officers to increase protection efforts and provide the kind of sensitivity necessary to encourage more women who experience violence to come forward and seek justice. In Diyala, the “Daughters of Iraq” are women who supplement the security forces at both government buildings and check points. This program chiefly gives women who have lost family to violence the chance to make a living and keep people safe. These female security forces were trained along with female soldiers on proper searching techniques and where to find contraband or where SBIEDs (suicide bomb improvised explosive devices) may be hidden and they received additional training before the March 2010 elections. In 2007, the Sisters of Fallujah was started in Al-Anbar Governorate to work with Iraqi security forces and U.S. Marines (Muehe, 2010).

Civil society members working on these issues have called for a national strategy to address gender-based security issues and the growing level of violence against women and other sexual and gender-based acts of violence. Collaborative action in support of the implementation of a national program to address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), programming could include:

- Drafting, implementation of and socialization on a “law against domestic violence;”
- Strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and Ministry of Human Rights and other national institutions, such as the national police force and the judiciary, to respond to SGBV;

- Building, strengthening and expanding a functional network of services for survivors of SGBV (emergency medical assistance, shelter, trauma counseling, legal and other services) through technical support and funding to local NGOs;
- Implementation of various strategies to prevent SGBV, including a ‘controlling violent behavior program’ for violators and outreach and communications strategies in addition to coordination of national events and campaigns; and
- Collecting data and information and conducting extensive training on the prevention of SGBV and gender equity awareness to build the capacity of local NGOs, civil society and uniformed forces.

In many parts of the world violence prevention programs are developed at various levels to support and complement work done at other levels and in other sectors including policy and legal responses, program responses and advocacy and community mobilization responses. Some examples of the typical program interventions in these three areas are:

- Policy and legal responses;
- National family and domestic or sexual violence legislation;
- Capacity building for government ministries and local government;
- Regional and international conventions;
- Judicial reform and access to justice initiatives;
- Program responses;
- Healthcare services;
- Domestic violence shelters and trafficking centers;
- Counseling, victim assistance services and support group programs;
- Men’s behavior change programs;
- Faith-based programs and services;
- Legal rights and legal aid programs;
- Training for protection and security service providers;
- Curriculum development for university health, justice and legal programs;
- Advocacy and community mobilization responses;
- Public and community awareness and education programs;
- Media, information and awareness campaigns;
- Community networks and intervention programs; and
- International conferences and conventions.

## Areas for Future Research

Even as the security situation in Iraq improves, insecurity continues to be a primary impediment to stability, growth and development. In addition, the security landscape affects and is affected by gender relations. More research and analysis on the interconnection of security and gender is needed to better understand where the leverage points are for improved development outcomes. Additional analysis on the following issues can help USAID and its implementing partners develop creative interventions in partnership with Iraqis to reduce the cycle of violence and promote greater security for all Iraqis. Additional research should:

- Collect more information on the differing impact of insecurity on male and female mobility;
- Assess how gender violence is connected with political violence;
- Investigate ways to ensure survivors' safety, rights and confidentiality;
- Review and test strategies to support multi-sectoral interventions for enhanced effectiveness and to encourage coordination and partnership at all levels;
- Collect best practices for the inclusion of equitable development and human rights perspectives in fragile state strategies;
- Identify ways to integrate gender indicators in the monitoring and evaluation of security assessments; and
- Explore culturally appropriate approaches for working with men, especially youth, and communities at large, to change attitudes and behaviors.

## Gender, Risk and Security

Gender-specific risks are present in Iraq and will tend to fall into four main categories:

- 1) Risks in general, shared by the local population and aid workers alike;
- 2) Risks that are specific to working for USAID or its implementing partners;
- 3) Risks that are specific to a program; and
- 4) Risks that are the result of individual behavior.

(SMI, 2009, 6)

Programs that target women and girls, particularly those that focus on sensitive gender-related topics such as SGBV, family planning, HIV/AIDS and STI prevention and care, may carry risks in highly conservative and traditional areas of Iraq. USAID and its implementing partners should undertake risk assessments and develop risk management plans on a project-by-project basis to anticipate any potential issues and/or security threats that could arise.

Gender should also be integrated into Mission and implementing partner security plans. Resources to guide this process are available, including the *SMI Professional Development Brief 2: Gender and Aid Agency Security Management* (July 2009). This publication notes that while security policies and procedures are “generally perceived to be “gender neutral... gender is one of a number of contextual factors to be taken into consideration in developing security plans and procedures” (SMI, 2009, 4).

Key recommendations for aid agencies to manage gender-related security risks are:

- Mainstreaming gender into security management;
- Making staff aware of the wide range of ways in which gender is relevant;
- Instituting context-specific assessments of gender-specific risks;
- Integrating gender-specific risks into the security assessments that are conducted in emergency contexts; and
- Involving gender experts in a reciprocal process.

*(Ibid., 3)*

# INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO GENDER ISSUES IN IRAQ

## GOVERNMENT OF IRAQ GENDER STRATEGY

### **Institutional, Legal and Judicial Frameworks**

In 1986, Iraq acceded to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), but with reservations exempting it from modifying or abolishing existing laws and penal codes that discriminate against women. The Iraqi penal code still heavily punishes women for crimes of honor and permits men to physically abuse their female family members. Article 18 of the Iraq Constitution provides a relatively progressive citizenship law, but there are restrictions on conferral of citizenship from mother to child that do not apply to children of Iraqi fathers (Ahmed, 2010). National laws and the Constitution provide protections for citizens regardless of gender and many articles of the 2005 Constitution clearly state broad protections of civil and political rights, and economic, social and cultural liberties. However, weak, contradictory and unenforced laws jeopardize these rights and freedoms. Many women express concern that the Personal Status Law of 1959, which is regarded as one of the most progressive in the region, might be abolished or superseded by less equitable legislation.

Since the establishment of the Human Rights Office of UNAMI in 2004, OHCHR, the UNAMI Human Rights Office and partner UN agencies have worked together to assist the Iraqi authorities to address human rights issues and build the capacity of Iraqi civil society to support reconstruction and development. These efforts have included training courses for the staff of Iraq's Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR), Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the Ministry of Defense (MoD) on human rights standards and international humanitarian law, seminars on the protection of human rights within the framework of Iraq's counter-terrorism measures, workshops and training courses on detention standards and human rights monitoring, and assisting with the establishment of a Center for Missing and Disappeared Persons and a national Center for the Rehabilitation of the Victims of Torture (UN/OHCHR website 2010).

UNAMI and OHCHR have also assisted the Gol in establishing a High Commission of Human Rights and provided support for Iraqi government and civil society participation in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process of the Human Rights Council. Iraq's most recent UPR was undertaken in February 2010, during which the Gol noted its efforts on a number of issues pertaining to women's and human rights, including a push to abolish article 128 of the Penal Code, which allows for "mitigating factors" to decrease punishment for "honor crimes" (UN Human Rights Council, 2010, 8).

### **National Development Goals**

Iraq's *National Development Strategy (2007-2010)* outlines the Government of Iraq's plan for achieving its vision to "Transform Iraq into a peaceful, unified federal democracy and a prosperous, market oriented regional economic powerhouse that is fully integrated into the global economy" (Gol, 2007, i). The strategy includes gender-specific goals and targets in a number of areas, which highlights the importance of gender equality to the realization of

sustainable development in Iraq. With regard to overall human development, the strategy calls for “a comprehensive approach to address complex social problems to pave the way for stability and security. Priority areas in this regard include combating all of the following: poverty, food insecurity, unemployment particularly among youth and women, weak female participation in politics and decision making, school abandonment, a lack of vocational opportunities, lack of basic services and the growing number of vulnerable groups including internally displaced people, orphans and the disabled” (*Ibid.*, 60).

Additional gender-specific goals and policies (by sector) include:

- Democratic Governance and Rule of Law:
  - Increasing representation of women and minorities in both the legislative and executive branches (*Ibid.*, vii).
  - Prisons will have sufficient and separate facilities for women and juveniles and those in pre-trial detention, and these will be in line with international standards (*Ibid.*, 99).
- Economic Growth:
  - Encouraging the establishment of technical resource networks for women entrepreneurs (*Ibid.*, 53).
  - Expand micro-finance programs for income generating activities (*Ibid.*, 63).
  - Increase labor force participation for women to 35 percent (*Ibid.*, 64).
- Health:
  - Promoting the role of women within the public health system at all levels (*Ibid.*, 80).
- IDPs, Refugees and Returnees:
  - Equal access to employment opportunities and job retention for all vulnerable men and women, taking into account that displacement implies dislocation from employment, with longer-term consequences for downstream pension and social security access (*Ibid.*, 69).

### **State Ministry of Women’s Affairs**

The State Ministry of Women's Affairs (SMoWA) was established in 2003 as a state ministry, which means that it is not a full ministry with an independent budget but instead currently serves solely in an advisory capacity. Because the Ministry is underfunded, it has not been able to implement programs with broad national reach. Civil society groups have called for the government to elevate the SMoWA to a full ministry with a clear mandate and adequate budget. Some would like to see SMoWA in a monitoring role where it would review other state entities and vet proposed laws and constitutional amendments for possible violations of women's rights. Others see the ministry as an implementer of government sponsored programs for women.

The SMoWA has developed its own strategy for promoting Iraqi women's effective participation in the country's reconstruction. The strategy identifies six sectors where women can contribute to the country's growth and development: the education, healthcare, social services, legislative, economic and media sectors. The SMoWA strategy also identifies critical areas for interventions in each sector and proposes particular initiatives for women's advancement in each sector. For example, in the education sector, illiteracy is highlighted as a critical issue for women and girls. Strategies proposed to address this issue include using unemployed college and institute graduates to lead literacy training; strengthening the capacity of education professionals; developing strategies to keep girls in school and reduce the dropout rate, including computer and English language courses at rural primary schools; and providing proper training for unemployed girls to increase their employability.

In the health sector, the SMOWA has identified breast cancer as a major health issue for Iraqi women. The Ministry secured funding from the Prime Minister to implement an awareness-raising campaign that included brochures, television spots, and educational courses for medical personnel. The SMOWA would like to expand this campaign nationwide, undertake a neighborhood family doctor initiative and support the issuance of government-sponsored healthcare cards for women and orphans who can't afford health care as ways to address the problem of breast cancer. In the social services sector, the SMOWA identified two domestic issues related to marriage and violence against women as critical areas requiring attention. The two marriage issues identified are unregistered marriages and divorce. The Ministry strategy includes the development of an awareness campaign on the disadvantages of unregistered marriages and a campaign to encourage reconciliation for seemingly irreconcilable differences between marital partners. The Ministry also identified the importance of additional research and documentation on violence against women, and the funding and establishment of more domestic violence centers to provide services for victims, including programs for the reintegration of survivors into society.

The SMOWA strategy identifies women's lack of knowledge of their legal rights as a critical issue and proposes the following approaches to reverse this situation:

- A national campaign of legal literacy targeting Iraqi women and focusing on both national and international statutes;
- The modification of Iraqi laws that are inequitable for women;
- Initiating a process aimed at removing Iraq's reservations to certain sections of the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); and
- The development and passage of a social security law to address social security issues for Iraqi families, particularly women and children.

In the economic sector, the Ministry identifies the integration of women into the Iraqi economy as an important area for focus and intervention. In particular the Ministry strategy calls for greater participation of women in economic growth initiatives including women's inclusion and investment in government projects, qualifying Iraqi women as project owners, increasing the provision of loans to female entrepreneurs, compensation for female victims of anti-terrorist operations, and the provision of unused government buildings for women's training programs. The Ministry's plan concludes with a media strategy aimed at promoting women's roles in the media and the media's coverage of women's contributions to society. The strategy also calls for the development and publication of a quarterly magazine that highlights the latest women's news and provides space for articles and research on contemporary Iraqi women's issues and contributions to national development.

### **National Gender Infrastructure**

The State Ministry of Women's Affairs' work is also supported by a larger gender infrastructure comprised of gender focal points and gender or women's committees in each of the government ministries. Ministry gender/women's committees meet monthly and the SMOWA holds quarterly meetings with the gender focal points to discuss issues and develop strategies for women's advancement and gender equality in the work of the other ministries.

## GENDER AND THE USAID/IRAQ COUNTRY STRATEGY

While work has begun on developing a new USAID/Iraq 2010-2012 country strategy, it has not been completed as of the writing of this report. The Mission began with the development of the 2010-2012 *Strategic Direction Discussion Paper*, which is focused on supporting the realization of a “sovereign, stable and self-reliant Iraq” (USAID/Iraq, 2009). The Discussion Paper includes three objectives: (1) Iraq’s development of just, representative and accountable governance; (2) Iraq’s integration into the global economy; and (3) Iraq’s contribution to regional peace and security. To achieve these three objectives, USAID/Iraq outlines a set of interventions targeting government entities at the national and provincial levels. The focus is on strengthening the competence of government entities -including in the health, education and legal sectors- through technical assistance in the form of staff training, expert advisory services for government agencies for policy, legal and regulatory reform and the creation of an enabling environment for private sector growth. The Discussion Paper mentions gender issues only briefly, referring to the challenge “unfavorable gender issues” place on the provision of adequate education in Iraq. The paper also notes the growing size of the youth population in Iraq (40% are under 15 years of age) and its connection to a cycle of high fertility, rising illiteracy and poverty for girls. Specific interventions to address these gender issues are not identified in the strategy.

The 2010-2012 Strategic Direction Discussion Paper is designed to build on the strategic objectives outlined in the 2006-2008 Transition Strategy Plan, including security, economic and political tracks. The security track focused on the stabilization of strategic cities and specifically targeted unemployed and disengaged young men for inclusion in employment initiatives. This track also identified the importance of encouraging collective citizen and government decision-making to address gender-based disparities. The economic track, though inclusive of a microfinance component, fails to highlight gender issues or opportunities even though microfinance is often used as a strategy for the promotion of women’s empowerment and gender equality. In a similar fashion the political track, which focuses on building national capacity, fails to mention gender issues or strategies for increasing the role of women in formal decision-making structures or the role capacity strengthening initiatives can play in the promotion of gender balance in national leadership. While the transition strategy included references to cross-cutting and converging themes, gender was not included among them.

Iraq is a unique and difficult context and the reality of working on the ground poses a number of constraints that impede the Mission’s general effectiveness and its ability to integrate gender in its work. These constraints include insecurity, corruption, cultural traditions and arrested economic growth. In interviews with Mission and implementing partner staff, insecurity was consistently identified as a leading factor hindering program effectiveness. The mobility of Mission and implementing partner staff is restricted for their protection, reducing their ability to experience the on-the-ground realities of Iraq. Security understandably remains top priority, but it consistently diverts attention and resources that could be used to explore and address other important development considerations like gender. While the security situation has improved in Iraq, the trajectory is unclear. It may continue to improve; it may deteriorate or remain stagnant. At the same time, gender and cultural roles have become increasingly politicized and both women and men face differing security threats because of their gender (see earlier section on Gender and Security). In some cases these potential threats constrain the participation and inclusion of certain sectors of Iraqi society in assistance programs.

Collusion, corruption and nepotism pose major challenges for development and for gender integration. Iraqis experience corruption in every aspect of life from employment to purchases and services. Corruption places women and other vulnerable groups like internally displaced persons (IDPs) at a disadvantage. It siphons off much needed resources and instills a cycle of

inefficiency and ineffectiveness in both the public and private sectors. Culture, tradition and their role in political extremism also inhibit the Mission's ability to fully integrate gender into its programs. Some gender-based traditional and cultural roles and norms segregate and restrict the life options of women and men in Iraq, hampering their ability to achieve their full potential and to contribute to the country's growth and development. High unemployment, limited private sector investment and poor diversification of the country's economy also reduce women and men's ability to equally participate in the economy.

### **Recommendations for Gender Integration in the Iraq Country Strategy**

As USAID/Iraq moves forward with development of its strategic directions for 2010-2012 and as it seeks to integrate gender into the final strategic plan, the Mission should strive for balance in its assistance strategy and program approach in order to promote equal participation and benefit for women and men in Iraq. This means balancing its focus on institutional capacity strengthening with initiatives that also build individual capacity and targeting both government and civil society actors. The country strategy should also consider a balance of both sector-focused and crosscutting, integrated initiatives, particularly as the Mission expands its assistance in the education and health sectors. Interventions in these two areas tend to be more effective when they are combined with legal rights and/or employment programs targeting women and youth.

A review of the Performance Management Plans (PMPs) for Mission programs reveals that the Mission's monitoring and evaluation focus is weighted heavily on output measurement processes and less so on feedback processes and results. Programs are strong in counting the number of participants, particularly for trainings and other capacity strengthening initiatives, and some disaggregate data by gender. Yet programs are unable to connect training outputs to the broader goals of the programs and are unable to track or attribute the impact of interventions on desired outcomes. The level of equity in program participation is a process indicator that measures the quality of program implementation, but it is not an indicator of program results (which requires its own set of gender indicators). Finally, the country strategy should also include input from a range of stakeholders to balance the inputs from Mission staff and experts. In particular, representatives from socially excluded groups, including women's associations, should help inform the goals and objectives of a strategy that is intended to improve their lives.

Additional recommendations for integrating gender in the USAID/Iraq country strategy are as follows:

- Fully incorporate gender objectives in requests for proposals/applications (RFP/RFAs) and ensuing contracts, cooperative agreements, project plans, performance management plans, project reporting and assessments;
- Include gender analysis in feasibility studies;
- Develop gender targets for program outreach and impact;
- Develop gender-specific indicators and collect and analyze sex-disaggregated data to monitor performance and to inform new project design;
- Include pre- and post-capacity and participation measures to enhance assessments and evaluations of capacity strengthening programs; and
- Integrate relevant gender issues and approaches like gender budgeting in the provision of technical assistance and advisory services.

There are several key forthcoming opportunities for the Mission to come into alignment with agency directives for gender integration and to promote more effective development results. These opportunities include:

- **Mission Order:** The Mission has developed a draft order on gender integration and analysis. This order reiterates the requirements outlined in the gender ADS and outlines processes and responsibilities for compliance. The order should be reviewed, updated if necessary, approved and implemented.
- **Mission Strategic Plan:** The Mission has a Strategic Direction Discussion Paper for 2010-2012. When a final strategy is completed, the Mission should review and, as appropriate, incorporate recommendations in this assessment report for improved gender integration.
- **Mission Gender Action Plan:** The Mission plans to develop a Gender Action Plan. It should review and, as appropriate, incorporate the recommendations for the plan included in this report. The Mission leadership may also wish to conduct a Gender Audit as part of the development of its Gender Action Plan.
- **Forthcoming RFPs, Contracts, PMPs, Assessments and Evaluations:** USAID/Iraq can exploit these upcoming opportunities to require, monitor and evaluate gender integration in future programs.

There are a number of sources that USAID/Iraq can turn to for technical assistance, support and collaboration on its gender initiative. These include:

- The Mission Gender Mainstreaming Officer;
- EGAT/WID Office in Washington, DC;
- UNAMI Gender Task Force;
- USAID/Iraq Gender Assessment;
- International Experts and Regional Gender Consultants;
- Government of Iraq Ministry Gender Focal Points; and
- The US Embassy Women's Issues Working Group.

# GENDER, DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND NATIONAL CAPACITY STRENGTHENING IN IRAQ

## Background and Context

Iraq is improving its governance infrastructure and its national capacity but many challenges remain for establishing democracy and rule of law in Iraq and creating equality for women and men. Of particular importance is ensuring a peaceful transition of power following Iraq's recent parliamentary elections. As Iraq's Minister of Finance Bayan Jabr noted in November 2009, "a profound instability was created by the prolonged governance gap when a prime minister was not named until April 2006," five months after Iraq's first free parliamentary election in December 2005. He stressed that for stability it is "essential to prevent the recurrence of such a gap after the March 2010 elections" (Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, January 2010). However, there is presently no sitting Prime Minister since the election on March 7<sup>th</sup>.

Strong voter turnouts in the March elections illustrate that Iraqis believe they have a stake in a democratic Iraq and are constructively engaged in the political process. Since 2003, however, women's rights and women's roles in the rebuilding process have consistently taken a backseat to broader security and political concerns. The focus of the Iraqi government remains on security and political issues, while social and economic development, service provision and infrastructure lag behind. This choice has serious implications, particularly for women, in a country that has undergone significant socio-economic and demographic changes since 2003. According to a 2009 Oxfam survey, 35.5 percent of female respondents were acting as head of household and nearly 25 percent of female respondents had not been married, indicating the heavy toll the conflict has taken on the population of men of marrying age (Oxfam, 2009, 3). It is estimated there are upwards of 750,000 widows in Iraq, 76 percent of whom report that they do not receive a pension from the government (*Ibid.*, 4). Safety and security continued to be the number one concern for 60 percent of women; 55 percent have been a victim of violence since 2003; 22 percent of women have been victims of domestic violence; more than 30 percent have family members who died violently, and 33 percent have received no humanitarian assistance since 2003. Women face daily hardships and live without basic services and very often in precarious and dangerous situations without protections, legally or otherwise (*Ibid.*, 2-3).

Governance and laws impact all aspects and sectors of life; therefore structural causes of gender inequality must be addressed in programs on legal reform, access to justice and national capacity building. Repeatedly, focus groups and interviews revealed Iraqis' belief that politics is the driving force that controls and supersedes everything in Iraq. Membership in a political party influences opportunities in all areas of life, from getting a job to accessing healthcare. Corruption, collusion and nepotism appear to be woven through all government interactions and public trust is waning. Interviews and focus groups conducted across Iraq during this assessment revealed low levels of confidence in government officials and institutions at the

national, provincial, municipal and community levels on the part of both women and men. According to Transparency International, Iraq was the fourth most corrupt country in the world in 2009—a very slight improvement over its spot at number three in 2006, 2007 and 2008 (Transparency International, 2009). Corruption is prevalent in the Gol, but there is now oversight provided by the Board of Supreme Audit and the Council of Representatives and two U.S.-established anticorruption agencies—the Commission on Integrity (COI) and the ministerial Inspectors General, although they are viewed as inadequate in their functioning capacity. A number of Iraqi women from both business and government reported that bribes and payoffs are required when dealing with the government in any way. Payoffs are demanded for business licenses and bribes are required for tendering a bid for a government project, although there is no guarantee of winning projects even if bribes are paid. Collusion and nepotism often prevent women from progressing in the private and public sectors, because they are excluded from male dominated networks.

Many focus group participants pointed out the need for government to promote public awareness about gender equality as a means of improving women's and girls' roles and status in Iraqi society. Participants identified the critical role government can play in ensuring equal protection under the law for both women and men and improving and equalizing protection and enforcement mechanisms. The Gol has begun integrating democratic principles as a priority for national, provincial, and local levels of government to accomplish the goal of improving the lives of Iraqis throughout the country. Some of Iraq's leaders have expressed support for democratic ideals but have struggled as they face inter-regional and ideological differences and extremely conservative religious parties as Iraq develops a new political identity emerging from conflict. Ongoing insecurity has hampered much the achievement of stated goals such as strengthening basic services and rebuilding the economy.

Interviewees felt that the Gol has not promoted or fostered initiatives promoting women's participation at the national or local levels, nor have women been encouraged to take a role in community participation and municipal strengthening. Women who were interviewed confirmed a need for programs, workshops and symposia to develop their leadership capacities and strengthen their organizational and institutional capacity. Certain groups of women report that a revitalized level of activism is emerging at the community level and a new restlessness is encouraging some women to move away from traditionally subordinate roles. A few reasons noted for this were economic concerns, including the high cost of living, and the rising number of widows.

## **Electoral Systems**

The recent parliamentary elections demonstrated that efforts to build norms, practices, mechanisms and institutions that can foster active citizenship and stronger democratic accountability are possible. "In the wake of this election, there is a path to a stable government, chosen by the people," said Leslie Campbell, Senior Associate and Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa for NDI, in a recent article for Foreign Policy Magazine (Campbell 2010, 2). The Chief of Party for the USAID project providing assistance to the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) characterized the most recent elections as "credible and legitimate."

According to IHEC estimates, voter participation exceeded expectations, as approximately 62 percent of the 19 million eligible voters in Iraq cast their votes. Reports say that more women voted than expected. According to IFES, voting patterns of Iraqi women often vary according to educational levels; social, tribal and sectarian pressures; and influence from male family members. Although some problems were acknowledged, the consensus of participants communicated confidence that the will of the Iraqi people was validly expressed in the balloting.

This includes the IHEC, the UN, independent election monitors and the results of public opinion polls. It is believed that there were no systemic shortcomings or fraud, according to IHEC. International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), which implements the USAID IHEC project, worked closely with the Gol providing technical advice to IHEC, as well as political party training and voter education. Along with others, the United States Forces in Iraq (USF-I) advised, trained and assisted Iraqi security forces in coordination with IHEC to provide assistance in addressing the potential violence expected during the elections. IHEC reported that more than 2,000 of the more than 6,000 total candidates were women, a significant increase compared with the 2005 elections (Ahmed, 2010).

Provisions within the 2005 Iraq constitution call for a parliament with a membership that includes at least 25 percent women, to provide advances for women who were previously excluded from the political process and representation. According to Article 49, “The elections law shall aim to achieve a percentage of representation for women of not less than one-quarter of the members of the Council of Representatives.” The constitution of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRG) states “women will comprise 30 percent of all members of the Kurdistan Parliament of Iraq (KPI).” Similarly, special provisions were recently created for minority parties, now adding eight seats in the new parliament designated for minority candidates.

The U.S. Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and Regional Reconstruction Teams (RRTs) have been working to empower local governments to govern more effectively and instituted efforts to promote citizenship participation, particularly with women and other disadvantaged groups during the election, helping to cultivate a path toward democracy and human rights. However, staff of an RRT visited during the course of this assessment cited a lack of clarity as to USAID gender integration requirements and the implications for their activities.

### **Access to Justice and Rule of Law**

Access to justice is provided by competent, independent, and ethical adjudicators, attorneys or representatives and judicial officers who are of sufficient number, have adequate resources, and reflect the makeup of the communities they serve. In Iraq, the institutional, legal and judicial frameworks are considered dysfunctional on the national, provincial and local levels, and there is limited access to justice, particularly for women, girls, the poor and vulnerable. This, coupled with weak rule of law institutions, a lack of independence of both the judiciary and government institutions, a high level of corruption, and unpunished human rights violations, has resulted in poor overall governance. Presently, the national and local judicial selection processes throughout Iraq are described as corrupt and male-dominated. The court faces impediments due to meager budgets and legislation that is weak and vague. Judges and court staff often have not had adequate professional training, are unqualified and lack the caliber of skills needed to make fair and impartial decisions. Women are vastly underrepresented at all levels of the courts and the judicial branch has not shown a commitment to address gender considerations.

Significant problems permeate the operation of justice systems, implementation of laws, and access to justice generally, which disproportionately affects women, and even more so in rural and conflict areas where they are most vulnerable and subjected to violations of rights without redress. These infringements include sexual and gender based violence, female genital cutting (FGC), honor crimes and honor killing. In many regions tribal and customary law is also followed, which tends to be extremely disadvantageous to women. Honor killings are common throughout the entire country, FGC is practiced overwhelmingly in certain regions, and overall access to legal services and the judicial system is weak. The lack of infrastructure and difficulty in both access and awareness further hampers the formal system’s administration of justice for

women. A lack of institutions and nominal capacity of legal and judicial actors abounds and often makes it difficult for women to access legal services.

The Personal Status Code of 1959 brought rights to women and certain regulations have also brought equity for women. Basma al-Khateeb of the Iraqi Women's Network in a recent interview said, "It was vital for Iraqi legislators of both genders to defend the Iraqi Law of Personal Status, which protects women and families, and limits the influence of religious courts" (Evans, 2010). The 2005 Constitution, finalized in 2005, provides a number of positive provisions for women and women's rights, and statutory laws also hold certain protections for women. As Dr. Azizah Y. al-Hibri, President and Founder of Karama: Muslim Women Lawyers for Human Rights has stated, Islam does not require choice between Muslim women's human rights and their faith ([www.karama.org](http://www.karama.org)). In reality, the Iraqi legal framework is dismal with respect to gender equity. On paper, legal provisions call for gender equality and protection of vulnerable groups, but in practice, limited political will exists for the legal system to protect human rights, women's rights and civil rights. Iraq has ratified international treaties such as CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women), recognizing and protecting equal rights and guarding against discrimination, but again, standards are not consistently followed or enforced.

A working definition of the Rule of Law is generally based on four universal principles:

- The government and its officials and agents are accountable under the law.
- The laws are clear, publicized, stable and fair, and protect fundamental rights, including the security of persons and property.
- The process by which the laws are enacted, administered and enforced is accessible, fair and efficient.
- Access to justice is provided by competent, independent, and ethical adjudicators, attorneys or representatives and judicial officers who are of sufficient number, have adequate resources, and reflect the makeup of the communities they serve.

(World Justice Institute, 2010)

Since the 1920s, women in Iraq have participated in the judicial system as lawyers, legal advisers, criminal investigators, prosecutors, social workers, clerks and forensic lab assistants, but their participation and opportunities are limited in comparison to their male peers. In 2010, 57 female judges received training on women's rights (Ahmed, 2010); however, women judges have limited roles and few opportunities to gain judicial experience. They are excluded from the personal status courts and criminal courts and are found only in the juvenile courts and the civil courts of first instance, which often have limited powers. Female lawyers typically handle personal status cases involving divorce, marriage and inheritance, although some handle business contracts and criminal cases. In 1959, the first female judge, Zakkiya Haqqi, was appointed and she is now a Member of Parliament. In 1976, the Judicial Training Institute in Baghdad started admitting women and at that time they were appointed as judges and prosecutors. Women were banned from the Judicial Institute from 1984 until 2003, when the Iraqi Higher Judicial Council began appointing former graduates of the Judicial Training Institute to the bench. Women have not been barred from being lawyers, prosecutors and clerks in the courts. In 2006, four of 79 judicial appointees were women and by late 2006, 13 of the 738 judges outside Kurdistan were female. Kurdistan has three female judges who all serve in the juvenile courts (Ahmed, 2010).

Currently there are no women among the country's eighteen governors. The electoral laws governing provincial elections have included provisions to encourage female representation in provincial councils, but in practice has no legal or constitutional requirement. As a

consequence, results vary from place to place, often falling below 25 percent. Three of 36 posts in the cabinet are held by women: Environment, Housing and Construction, and Human Rights, and two women head ministries of state: Women's Affairs and Tourism and Antiquities (*Ibid.*).

### **Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)**

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are now defined as, “an Iraqi who has been forcefully displaced from his permanent place of residence to another place within Iraq after April 9, 2003, for any reason,” according to the amendments to the election law made in December 2009. Rule of law needs to be strengthened in order to deal adequately with IDPs, particularly on issues of land rights, inheritance and documentation. Laws and mechanisms for enforcement must be in place to address these issues. Programs are presently being developed and funded by international donors and USAID could coordinate with these programs and ensure that female IDPs are included in all assistance provided.

### **Promising Approaches**

#### ***Mobile Legal Clinics***

Dissemination of information about legal rights for women is recommended for improving women's status in the country. The average citizen is not clear as to which laws are in effect and which laws remain in draft form. This is also true for many parliamentarians, representatives from the Council of Ministers (COM) and civil society leaders' active in the areas of human rights. One method of educating the public is to create mobile legal clinics staffed with lawyers and paralegals that travel throughout the country to provide legal information and expertise at the community level. A similar approach was employed by the Sri Lankan Ministry of Constitutional Affairs and National Integration in partnership with UNDP following in the 2005 tsunami to provide free legal advice and assistance to survivors (UNDP 2005). Because women are often unable to travel for economic, security and cultural reasons, reaching out to women “where they are” through civil society groups working on grassroots mobilization has been recommended as a strategy repeatedly by focus group participants and interviewees. In addition to mobile legal clinics, additional channels for public outreach and awareness-raising should be explored, including places of business, hair salons, maternal and child health centers, and mosques.

#### ***Programs and Networking Platforms and Technology for Outreach and Participation***

Information and communication technology (ICT) is a fast-growing tool for development in transitioning countries. Cell phones communication, in particular, text messaging [or Short Messaging System (SMS)], is quick, relatively inexpensive and offers huge potential for development efforts. USAID has recognized and highlighted the use of SMS technology as a grassroots tool for outreach and communications for increasing political participation and advocacy. SMS can be a tool for finding jobs, helping widows and others access assistance and aid and can be used to disseminate information.

“NGOmobile” uses SMS technology for community mobilization and the NGO Digital Development's “Count to 5! Campaign” in Azerbaijan used text messaging to help grassroots and politically excluded people understand their human and legal rights. The campaign also sought to engage them further in the political process by reaching out to vulnerable and

disadvantageous classes of society, especially women, to encourage political participation and build awareness of entitlement benefits. Blogging and social networking technology are great tools in the good governance, access to justice and national capacity building areas and can be used to reach out to women, men and youth in locations not normally accessed. This enables the communication of democratic principles and information to be distributed cheaply and widely to a vast number of people at one time. Using newer technologies to build the capacity of grassroots civil society organizations accelerates the process to more quickly raise the caliber of the work of NGOs and civil society organizations and build their capacity to initiate, administer and sustain their own programs and solutions for priority issues.

### ***Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights (ECWR): HarassMap-Reporting & Mapping Sexual Harassment on the Streets via SMS***

One project that serves as a model for adaptation is the USAID 'Development 2.0' Finalist "HarassMap-Reporting & Mapping Sexual Harassment on the Streets via SMS" from the Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights (ECWR). A system was implemented for reporting sexual harassment incidents through SMS messaging, serving as a tool giving women a way to report sexual harassment anonymously immediately from their mobile phone. By mapping these reports online, the system acts as an advocacy, prevention, and response tool, highlighting the pervasiveness of the problem.

### ***International Centre for Democratic Transition (ICDT): "Increasing Lebanese Women's Participation in Public Life"***

Opportunities for scaling up programs include expanding USAID's network of partners, especially those from and experienced with newly developing democracies. One example of this type of organization is the International Centre for Democratic Transition (ICDT), based in Budapest, which facilitates the process of democratic transition by using the knowledge pool of transitional experiences and sharing experiences and best practices. They typically convene the most important local stakeholders to play key roles in the transition process, provide an adaptable toolkit and appropriate models for the creation and consolidation of democratic institutions, and mediate between cultures and regions by generating dialogue.

A recent relevant ICDT program was the "Increasing Lebanese Women's Participation in Public Life" project, which strengthened the public participation and social rights of women in Lebanon by sharing some of the experiences accumulated in central and southeast Europe in the field of advancing women's rights. The center provided adaptable tools, techniques and best practices to a group of twenty-five female politicians, lawyers, journalists and NGO activists from different regions and religious communities to improve their skills for leadership, negotiation, coalition building, campaign planning and execution, lobbying and presenting their cause to the media. The groups ensuing efforts impacted more than 200 people as direct beneficiaries of this effort, in addition to many more indirect beneficiaries, attracted national and local media attention and generated extensive interest in promoting women's participation in public life and protecting the rights of disadvantaged groups. It also gave impetus for the formation of a new NGO and national network on women's participation in the public sphere (ICDT 2010).

### ***Civil Society 2.0***

Secretary Clinton's initiative Civil Society 2.0 has allocated \$5 million in grant funds for pilot programs in the Middle East and North Africa to bolster new media and networking capabilities of civil society organizations and promote online learning in the region, in order for "grassroots organizations around the world [to] use digital technology to tell their stories, build their memberships and support bases, and connect to their community of peers around the world."

Civil Society 2.0 is deploying a team of experienced technologists to work with civil society organizations around the globe to provide training and support to build their digital capacity. The trainings will include information on building websites, blogging, launching a text messaging campaign, leveraging social networks for a cause.

## **USAID/IRAQ DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND NATIONAL CAPACITY STRENGTHENING PROGRAMS**

### **Program Summary**

USAID's policy and reform agenda has focused on developing effective national institutions, supporting national capacity and providing Gol officials with global best practices in governance. Working side-by-side to support government officials in developing new policies and laws, USAID programs demonstrate to all Iraqis they have a stake in a democratic Iraq and encourage them to engage in a constructive political process and contribute to the building of effective national institutions. USAID has helped the Gol improve its operations in core public administration functions, human resources, information technology, resource management, and has pursued targeted policy reform through training, on-site experience, expanded support for budgetary and financial issues, budget development, revenue collections, capital expenditure forecasting, and management. Sustainability, responsiveness, transparency, and coordination between public and private organizations are emphasized as key strategies for building a stable and prosperous Iraq.

USAID/Iraq's *Transition Strategy Plan (2006-2008)* calls for building the advocacy skills of members of civil society and specifically includes women's advocacy groups to effectively represent the needs of certain segments of the population and serve as watchdogs to combat government corruption. It also states the need to address gender-based disparities and the importance of collective citizen and government decision-making in enhancing community welfare, resolving conflicts, and making the Gol more accountable and transparent.

In interviews, civil society groups and NGO leaders reported little interaction with USAID and were not aware of USAID's existing efforts on gender. Those that were aware of programs could not mention or describe specific programs targeting women or gender. More was known about other international donor and UN gender programs. Some who were familiar with current USAID programs expressed the belief that the same organizations and trainees were repeatedly targeted and that there was a lack of outreach to new participants or trainees.

### **USAID Priorities in Democratic Governance**

Building the capacity of the national, local, and provincial governments is of the highest priority for USAID and the Gol. USAID programs facilitate democratic transformation and strengthen governance in Iraq. At the community level, USAID works with local groups to assist them in prioritizing their needs and implementing their own solutions. At the provincial level, USAID helps to build the capacity of provincial and local authorities to provide essential services, plan development strategies and projects, and work together to govern effectively. At the national level, USAID works with key ministries and administrative offices to bolster the professional aptitude of mid- and senior-level civil servants. Anti-corruption measures are incorporated in program components at both the ministerial and local levels, and in coordination with UNAMI, USAID has supported Iraqi electoral activities by helping to strengthen Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission.

## **USAID Efforts on Peace and Security and Stabilizing Vulnerable Communities**

Law reform and access to justice programs will continue to provide trust in the government, due process for all citizens and a more stable society. Building on past USAID efforts with community groups, local government officials, central ministries, and provincial reconstruction teams will provide viable alternatives to lawlessness and chaos. The USAID/*Tatweer* (National Capacity Development in Public Management) program is working to build the capacity of the national, local, and provincial governments to respond to the needs of the Iraqi people. The *Tatweer* program has trained more than 30,000 women (out of nearly 90,000 total trainees) and follow-up meetings and interviews indicate these women are now applying strategic planning skills to innovative uses. It has helped the GoI make significant strides towards comprehensive civil service reform and has designed an innovative program to provide rigorous training in key public administration areas.

*Tatweer* has supported the Ministry of Human Rights in its efforts of promotion and protection of human rights as an objective of public policy. The Minister of Human Rights has articulated that this assistance has helped the Ministry to proceed in a more proficient manner, by building national institutions and a national plan. The new databases being created are automating the archival of information to preserve evidence and track important facts and data. According to Minister Wijdan Salim, the Ministry is “committed to achieving international standards of human rights by making promotion and protection of human rights an objective of public policy, developing a national action plan, and building national institutions including education in the field of human rights,” due to the capacity building assistance. Civil service reform is taking place and a draft civil service law is being finalized to develop a professional, effective, and transparent civil service system to assist the professional functionality of the GoI.

## **PROGRAM GENDER ANALYSIS**

### **Community Action Program, Phase III (CAP III)**

CAP III engages Iraqi community leaders and elected local councils in reconstructing essential infrastructure in their cities and villages and is based on the idea that local community needs are met by ensuring the active partnership of all stakeholders— citizens, local government, business and social leaders—in identifying priorities and designing interventions. It is building the capacity of local government to take on its proper governance role as the center of community needs assessment, prioritization, project design, funding and implementation. Widows and other civilian victims of war are provided assistance through the Marla Ruzicka Iraqi War Victims Fund program administered through CAP III. Communities are identified and local needs prioritized and projects addressing those needs are then developed and implemented, such as school renovations, literacy programs, neighborhood cleanups, and water and sewerage system rehabilitations.

CAP III has included women and to some extent has encouraged women to participate in community-based campaigns and activities, but much more can be done to increase the number of women participating and increase the level and status of women and girls within the CAP III program. Of the 4,000 completed CAP initiatives, 500 benefited the immediate needs of Iraqi women, and more than one third provided an indirect benefit. It is not clear that this was accomplished through the direct targeting of women or occurred randomly.

### **Local Governance Program, Phase III (LGP III)**

LGP III is designed to support implementation of Iraq's new law for governorates that are not incorporated into a region, the "Law for Governorates Not Incorporated into a Region," also known as the "Provincial Powers Act (PPA), creating a sense of community responsibility among citizens and facilitating programs encouraging community building among diverse parties and across ethnic boundaries. It defines, strengthens and facilitates local governance and fosters direct citizen engagement in effective local level participation to create conditions necessary for a democratic political framework; promotes informed involvement of local government in budget formulation and execution processes; and enhances oversight functions of local government.

Women have been impacted by LGP III, although there were no specific gender indicators or gender outputs. The integration of gender issues into processes could enhance operational effectiveness, help further establish local ownership throughout a greater portion of the population, strengthen the role of women within the communities it is operating in, and improve oversight. The integration of gender issues will face different challenges and opportunities based on the specific context in which it takes place. Analysis of relevant laws is an integral part of LGP III and gender analysis should be integrated throughout this process.

### **Elections Strengthening Program: International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) Assistance to IHEC**

USAID's Elections Strengthening Program funded IFES to provide training and technical assistance to the Independent Higher Electoral Commission (IHEC) of Iraq to build its capacity to plan and administer credible elections. Expert advice was provided on drafting laws and regulations, developing the capacity of the provincial election offices, and mentoring the national electoral commission. Election strengthening activities include advisory input on how to develop an election management system, identifying improvements to electoral processes, drafting a public outreach strategy, and developing plans for a permanent and sustainable voter registry. IFES has provided technical support for developing the legal frameworks for the 2010 elections and referenda as well as an analysis of lessons learned from the 2008-2010.

The IFES program included a strong focus on enhancing women's political participation in the 2010 elections, as well as organized get out the vote efforts targeting women and encouraging women to vote independently. USAID/Iraq should continue to provide support to IHEC and other NGOs conducting outreach to raise women's awareness of political issues, their rights and to increase their participation in electoral processes.

### **Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)**

PRTs working on decentralization and local governance provide assistance to provincial and local governments through capacity building, technical assistance, training programs and small grant programs. PRTs assist Iraqis working to revive Iraq's economic and political sectors at sub-national levels. Certain PRTs are active in recruiting women for their programs. For example, the Kirkuk PRT's seminar "Addressing Women's Social and Economic Concerns in Kirkuk" was the culmination of sixteen women's NGOs working together in a six-month capacity building program conducted jointly by the PRT and local women's NGOs. The project initiatives presented at the seminar included programs to tackle illiteracy, unemployment, and the lack of small businesses owned by women, as well as to raise awareness of women's rights, and to reduce violence against women. The current program dealing with governance in PRTs and ePRTs does not have a specific gender focus or use gender as a cross-cutting consideration

for program activities. The monitoring and evaluation plan does not include specific indicators to track gender impact, quantitative and qualitative data are not disaggregated by sex, and gender integration activities are not reported.

USAID/Iraq should direct efforts towards creating leadership among young women, educating them on opportunities as an elected official, preparing them to stand for election, and to act effectively when they take office. Workshops could include modules on: identity and leadership, discrimination and self-esteem, rights and access to justice, and prevention of violence. Additional intensive workshops could follow after.

### **Tatweer: National Capacity Development in Public Management**

*Tatweer* provides assistance, training and procurement assistance to Iraqi ministries and offices that deliver social services and advisors interact daily with their ministerial colleagues in five executive offices including: the Presidency Council, the Prime Minister's office, Deputy Prime Minister (Economic Affairs), Deputy Prime Minister (Services), and Secretariat of the Council of Ministers. *Tatweer* also works with ten key GoI ministries including the Ministries of Planning, Electricity, Oil, Agriculture, Municipalities and Public Works, Health, Water Resources, Justice, Migration and Human Rights. The primary goal of the program is to improve the delivery of core public services to the Iraqi people and through the strengthening of the GoI willingness to adopt best practices, assume responsibility for associated costs, and endorse sustainable institutional and performance-based improvement. Although there has been an effort to ensure gender balance in the training activities, the professional level of these women (junior, senior, etc.) and their capacity before and after the trainings has not been measured or evaluated.

Entry points for gender integration include requiring equal numbers of women and men for each level of training, designating the training as an avenue for career advancement particularly for women and monitoring and evaluating the outcomes. Monitoring and evaluation is necessary to ensure this objective is accomplished. Sex-disaggregated data should be collected prior to the commencement of any program. As women are most often not senior staff, equal numbers of women and men should be included in any assistance provided to strengthen the capacity of the Legislative Assembly in lawmaking, representation, and executive oversight.

### **Access to Justice Program**

The new Access to Justice Program is designed to improve vulnerable and disadvantaged populations' access to Iraq's legal system. Vulnerable and disadvantaged Iraqis are defined as women, widows, orphans, detainees and the incarcerated (including juveniles), religious and ethnic minorities, the impoverished, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees. The Iraq Access to Justice Program has three objectives:

- To improve the practical knowledge of vulnerable and disadvantaged Iraqis of their responsibilities, rights and remedies under Iraqi law.
- To increase the competence and availability of legal professionals and civil society partners to assist vulnerable and disadvantaged Iraqis.
- To improve government processes and procedures to facilitate access of vulnerable populations to government services and legal remedies.

In order to ensure that the Access to Justice Program is successful in increasing the access of women and other vulnerable populations to government and legal services, the opportunity should be seized to more fully integrate gender considerations into the program design, forthcoming contract and subsequent program workplan and PMP. This should extend to strengthening court administration and court management as well as expanding civil society

participation in justice reform. A gender-sensitive Access to Justice Program would focus on four key areas:

- The elimination of violence against women (EVAW);
- The promotion of legal services for gender-specific legal issues;
- Increasing women's knowledge of their legal rights; and,
- Women's leadership in judicial and protection services.

### **General Recommendations**

- Include stakeholders and beneficiaries, particularly women, in the conceptualization, design and planning of programs. Interviewees repeatedly cited a disconnect between the needs of trainees and the types of training being offered through USAID capacity building programs. Tailor programs to local needs and priorities.
- While both women and men are impacted negatively by corruption, research shows that corruption can affect women disproportionately (Transparency International, 2007, 3). Therefore, a focus on eradicating corruption, collusion and nepotism by USAID will complement its efforts in the area of gender integration. The political will for change needs to begin at the top and the development of this political will should be supported and promoted by USAID.
- Build capacity at the local level, both with individuals and institutions. As the GoI moves to decentralize, training and technical assistance to governorate level NGOs and local branches of national advocacy networks should include an emphasis on enabling women and their supporters to advocate for and influence policy changes at the governorate level. Currently, no DG programs focus specifically on gender and sex-disaggregated data is limited.
- In the local governance and municipal development aspects of projects, all committees, councils, and initiatives should preferably include equal numbers of men and women, as well as representatives from diverse groups within the community. Special efforts may be required to recruit women and others who traditionally have not had a role in community affairs to ensure that these targets are met. Providing support to women's organizations and networks for the local government program is an important component of this effort.

# GENDER AND THE ECONOMY IN IRAQ

## Background

The Iraqi economy, though blessed with high-value natural resources, is plagued by terrorist activity, constant insecurity and growing poverty. Unemployment is high and continues to be a significant contributor to the poverty level in Iraq. A 2009 analysis of Iraqi labor force data from 2003-2008 found that underemployment and unemployment are significant threats to Iraq's economic stability (OCHA, 2009). Patterns in the data highlight the constraints Iraq faces in promoting economic growth and the need for civil service reform and private sector development. UNAMI's Information and Analysis Unit analyzed official Iraq statistics and found the following:

- The economy is unable to provide enough work for 28 percent of the labor force.
  - Unemployment in Iraq is 18 percent and an additional 10 percent of the labor force is made up of part time workers who would like to work more hours.
  - Unemployment is concentrated and rising among younger men.
  - 28 percent of the male labor force aged 15-29 is unemployed compared to the national average of 18 percent.
  - Only 17 percent of Iraqi women participate in the labor force. Women without a university education make up the vast majority of non-participants.
- Opportunities for private sector job creation have been limited by a dominant public sector, the absence of a supportive regulatory environment, high dependence on oil revenues and security issues.
  - The number of Iraqis employed in the public sector has doubled since 2005, with the public sector currently providing 43 percent of all jobs in Iraq and almost 60 percent of all full time employment.
  - The recent sharp drop in oil prices and absence of other budget sources will make it harder for the government to continue to grow its civil service as a strategy for job creation.
  - High public sector salaries are straining the public budget, consuming more than a third of planned government expenditure in 2009. Households without a civil servant wage-earner are now more vulnerable to poverty. However, Iraq cannot afford to expand its public sector any further.
  - Without a concerted effort to boost the private sector, most of the 450,000 new entrants into Iraq's labor force in 2009 will not find secure jobs. This could challenge socio-economic recovery and stability in many of Iraq's governorates (OCHA, 2009, 1).

## **Gender and Economic Growth**

The OCHA study found gender differences in labor force participation. These differences were most significant for young males and women. Unemployment among young males aged 15-29 is 57 percent and increased steadily over the six-year period of the study while decreasing for older workers. The Iraq government's tendency to hire older workers reduces job opportunities for the 450,000 annual entrants -mostly young males- into the labor market. Almost one third (29%) of private sector employment is part-time work, mostly informal, insecure and low wage compared to public sector jobs. This growing unemployment among young Iraqi men makes them and their dependents more vulnerable to poverty and increases the political and security constraints to Iraq's economic development.

The study found the situation for female workers to be similarly grim. Only 17 percent of Iraqi women participate in the labor force and 23 percent of those are unemployed. Female labor force participation for countries bordering Iraq is, on average, double the rate of participation in Iraq. For example female labor force participation is 42 percent in Iran, 29 percent in Jordan, 52 percent in Kuwait, 40 percent in Syria and 28 percent in Turkey. Education plays a significant role in the level of women's employment in Iraq. Approximately 80 percent of university-educated women are employed while only 30 percent of working-age women with a secondary education participate in the labor force. The lowest percent of labor force participation is found among women with a primary education—approximately 10 percent of these women are employed.

A 2009 survey of 1,700 Iraqi women from diverse ethnic, religious, sectarian, geographic, economic and social backgrounds in both rural and urban areas revealed that 52 percent of the women surveyed were unemployed. Forty-two percent said they were unemployed because they had never worked before and 17 percent said they were not allowed to work. A smaller percentage, 14 percent, indicated that they could not work because they were caregivers and seven percent said that it was unsafe to work. An overwhelming majority of the women surveyed (79%) reported receiving monthly government food rations though almost half (45%) reported receiving the rations intermittently. Most of the women surveyed said that their income in 2008 was lower than 2007 (45.9%) and 2006 (44.1 %) (Iraqi Al-Amal Association, 2009, 9-10). Focus group discussions conducted by PERFORM also uncovered connections between unemployment and growing poverty. Widows and other female heads of households were consistently identified in these discussions as important targets for economic growth programs because of their heightened economic and social vulnerability.

Interviews and focus group discussions conducted by PERFORM also found that male youth and women were not well integrated into the agriculture sector. Interviewees reported that while women in rural areas of Iraq do most of the agricultural labor on family farms, they tend to have limited involvement in the commercial side of the business. As a result, women have limited control of family income and limited say in decisions related to the family business. Similarly, male youth are reportedly moving away from agriculture and are seeking employment with the government or private sector due to the low prices for local products mostly attributed to competition from cheap imports. According to interviews with private sector representatives in Erbil, in the past local factories and plants that processed agricultural products employed many women. Most of these factories have been closed due to the influx of cheap imports, such as chicken, from Brazil, and fruits and vegetables from neighboring countries such as Iran.

Two of the best indicators of economic growth and stability are job creation and labor force participation. A thriving and sustainable economy creates jobs and beckons citizens into its fold. Iraq's economic stability, like that of other economies, hinges on progress in these two areas. While there has been improvement in security in the past two years, investments and growth in

micro and small enterprises have been limited. A 2008 survey by the Sumar Institute for Research and Strategic Studies found that less than two percent of micro and small enterprise business owners and managers had borrowed money from a private or public bank or other government institution. In the more than 900 interviews held in the Marshlands, Hillah and Sulaymaniyah provinces, access to capital and finance was cited as a key issue by more than 50 percent of those interviewed in the Marshlands, roughly 30 percent in Hillah and 18 percent in Sulaymaniyah (OCHA, 2009, 7). The limited access to business capital correlates with limited small and medium business expansion and limited employment opportunities from that sector of the economy. Few businesses have invested in new staff because the economic outlook remains uncertain. This stagnation reduces employment opportunities for male youth and women and increases their vulnerability to poverty.

### **Areas for Future Focus and Research**

In order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how gender relations impact the progress of economic growth in Iraq and how, in turn, economic policies and programs are affecting gender relations, more research (including the disaggregation of provincial and national economic data) is needed. In particular, constraints and opportunities for male youth and female participation in the economy should be further investigated. Market assessments and feasibility studies should include a social and gender analysis of business opportunities and the factors affecting the ability of women and youth to access these opportunities. Culture and security issues should also be looked at closely to identify potential avenues for greater participation and benefit from private sector initiatives. Most importantly, research should focus on how to best connect investments in the development of economic infrastructure, national capacity, finance and value chain linkages to the creation of jobs and micro and small enterprises opportunities for male youth and women.

For economic stability and sustainability, the Iraq economy needs to diversify beyond the oil industry. New sectors of the economy could focus on attracting high wage labor industries/sectors to absorb the roughly half a million annual entrants into the labor market, particularly male youth. Efforts could also focus on increasing the number of rural women, including widows, female heads of household and female IDPs, engaged in viable micro-entrepreneurship. A greater focus on the development of strategies for strengthening the organizational capacity of women-owned businesses and ensuring access to capital, technology, technical assistance, and markets for these businesses are key to addressing gender issues in Iraq's economy. The creation of jobs and income for the Iraqi population is an important path to lasting stability and security in Iraq, as much as security is a prerequisite for economic stability. Economic growth in Iraq is unlikely to be sustainable without the participation of Iraqis from all walks of life, including young men, widows, female heads of household, and businesswomen.

## **USAID/IRAQ ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

### **Program Summary**

Economic growth is a priority for the Government of Iraq and is one of the three pillars of the US-Iraqi joint strategy for development. From 2003-2005 the USAID economic growth strategy for Iraq focused on relief and reconstruction. The 2006-2008 USAID *Tijara* program strategy has focused on institution strengthening in support of long term development of the private sector and the 2008-2011 strategy is designed to promote private sector growth and employment

across Iraq. The primary focus of the 2008-2011 *Tijara* program, (*Tijara* means “trade” in Arabic) is the development and expansion of micro, small and medium-size enterprises in Iraq. The \$80.8 million *Tijara* program is implemented by a consortium led by The Louise Berger Group, Inc., that includes AECOM International Development, Inc., Millennium International Consulting, LLC and Sallyport Global Services, Inc.

The *Tijara* Program has five goals around which its technical teams are organized:

- To establish, support and strengthen Small Business Development Centers and provide support, services and technical assistance to the Provincial Reconstruction Teams;
- To provide training, technical assistance and grants to international and Iraqi institutions to build a sustainable non-bank microfinance industry in Iraq;
- To develop bank lending programs for small and medium sized enterprises to encourage private sector-led economic growth and support sustainable employment opportunities for Iraqis;
- To enhance the capacity of the Government of Iraq to develop and implement trade policies in accordance with international standards and treaty obligations; and
- To provide assistance to the Government of Iraq to stand up the National Investment Commission and implement the Investment Law.

*Tijara* also includes a youth entrepreneurship grants program designed to generate employment and stabilize under-developed areas of Iraq while helping young Iraqis build a better future for themselves and their families.

## **PROGRAM GENDER ANALYSIS**

### **Program Identification and Design**

The *Tijara* program is by and large a gender blind/gender neutral program, primarily because there is little evidence that gender roles, responsibilities or capabilities were taken into account during the design of the program. Instead, the program appears to assume that women, men and youth have the same needs and interests and are similarly affected by current economic realities in Iraq. There is also no evidence that stakeholders (other than government officials) participated in the preparation of the program. Program documents and reports make no mention of gender issues or any reference to women or men in the discussion of job creation and employment objectives. The youth project is a new initiative launched in the spring of 2010. Similarly, while in practice women are a target group for select Small Business Development Centers, women are not mentioned explicitly and data on women’s participation is not included in regular reporting of program progress, results or impact.

The *Tijara* program strategy is an integrated program approach that implicitly if not explicitly references the importance of gender integration. On the supply side, *Tijara* aims to build “sustainable and efficient financial institutions” that provide “competitive, high-quality, *inclusive* and *diversified* financial products and services for micro and small scale enterprises in rural and urban areas.” While USAID leadership and the implementing partners’ primary focus is on sustainability, some civil society members express a concern that the microfinance program is less inclusive and diversified than is found elsewhere in the world. Some observers have pointed out that microfinance in Iraq follows an Iraqi model, not a global best practices model. Others argue that the global model does not fit the special context of Iraq, particularly in terms of loan

size and diversity of loan products. Hence while microfinance programs around the world are known for empowering women and providing them with needed skills and resources to earn an income and participate in the private sector, less than 20 percent of *Tijara's* microfinance clients are female. Likewise, *Tijara's* bank lending programs for small and medium sized enterprises do not explicitly identify a particular focus, targets or financial products for any identified socio-economic group, such as women, though inclusivity and diversity are stated objectives of the programs' supply-side approach.

On the demand side, *Tijara* aims to remove legal and administrative constraints micro, small and medium enterprises face in creating and expanding their businesses. While it is clear that often in Iraq women and men face different constraints and have different opportunities for entrepreneurship, the program approach is "one-size-fits-all." In a meeting with several members of an Iraqi business organization for women, PERFORM was informed that none of the members had received loans or participated in *Tijara* business training even though they have successfully won and completed construction and general services contracts with the US military in Iraq. Thus instead of graduating from set-aside to full-and-open contracts, they are in a state of limbo in search of new clients and business partnerships. In one case, a businesswoman seeking a million dollar loan for a partnership with an international firm was told that the bank did not have sufficient funds to support a project of that size.

The *Tijara* Program's technical assistance on international trade issues, including Iraq's preparation for accession to the World Trade Organization and the development of investment laws to attract foreign investors, also shows no inclusion of gender considerations in the design of the program. Yet gender issues are closely tied to trade policy and national economic growth. National and international trade and development policies have significant implications for the relative status of women and men in a host of areas including employment opportunities, wage equality, conditions and quality of employment, access to resources (land, credit, business services), job segregation, decision-making and the distribution of income inside the household. Unfortunately, none of these gender issues are identified or addressed in *Tijara's* program design documents. Program consequences for gender relations and men and women's relative status in Iraqi society remain unanticipated.

## **Program Implementation**

*Tijara* participants include both women and men, though men comprise the largest proportion. *Tijara's* 2009 Progress Report identified a set of impressive program results but included only one gender indicator. *Tijara* reported that eleven microfinance institutions had \$77 million in outstanding loans to 51,318 clients, of whom 15 percent were Iraqi women. The microfinance loans were reported to result in 62,398 new jobs, but this figure was not disaggregated by gender. *Tijara* also reported that small and medium enterprise lending units at private banks made 864 loans worth \$16,564,778. It is estimated that Iraq has over one million potential microfinance clients so the *Tijara* microfinance institutions (MFI) are serving a very small proportion (4 percent) of its potential market. This suggests that there is room for significant growth of the industry and potential for the inclusion of currently underserved groups of women, men and youth.

One identified limitation to growth of the microfinance industry has been the lack of diversity in target clients. Most microfinance clients are members of the middle class with access to the required government-salaried guarantors. This requirement may be one of the reasons for the low number of female clients. Some MFIs are beginning to explore alternative approaches, such as group lending and solidarity group methods, as well as allowing bank savings and property assets to be used as collateral, as a way to reach poor women and men who would otherwise not have access to these financial services. On the ground progress for new approaches and

financial products is slow, as most MFIs continue to build institutional capacity and consolidate growth in organizational self-sufficiency.

### **Program Monitoring & Evaluation**

While *Tijara's* Performance Management Plan (PMP) and its progress reports include little gender-disaggregated data, the project does collect some of this information. Gender-disaggregated data is included in the PMP specifically for training objectives. The PMP also replaced the intermediate result objective called "increased access to financial services" with "infrastructure for modern economy strengthened." This change reduces the implementing partner's requirement to track access issues which are not only tied to, informed by and affect gender issues, but also to provide critical information on the enabling factors for program success.

Based on data provided to PERFORM, *Tijara's* reported gender-disaggregated outputs for the period of 2008 thru April 2010 is as follows:

- 27 percent of clients trained are female, approximately 1,466 women.
- 13 percent of all microfinance loans go to women, approximately 30,316 loans.
- 16 percent of the total volume of microfinance loans goes to women, approximately \$57,634,827.
- 7 percent of the small and medium enterprise loans go to women, approximately \$1,845,670.
- 20 percent of clients receiving Small Business Development Center training were women (2,953 women).
- 17 percent of participants receiving microfinance skills training were female (141 women).
- 31 percent of bank staff trained in small and medium enterprise banking skills were female (262 women).
- 31 percent of clients trained in International Trade and Investment skills were female (108 women).
- 12,341 jobs for women have been created from microfinance loans.

*Tijara* did not have sex-disaggregated data readily available on the number of jobs created by small and medium enterprises. There also was no evidence of the collection or use of gender statistics relating to differences for women and men in access to credit, available collateral or government guarantees even though these particular factors often reduce women's ability to participate in the private sector outside of their consumer role. Similarly there is no evidence of data collection related to other socioeconomic factors that could affect differential access, participation and business viability prospects for women and men. The *Tijara* PMP states that one of three ultimate measures of program success is the increase in private sector employment. This data should be readily available and disaggregated by gender in order to track program quality and progress and to determine the extent to which inputs in support of economic growth and stability also support growing gender equality for women and men in access, participation and benefits from the Iraqi economy.

## **Recommendations for Integrating Gender in Economic Growth and Private Sector Programs**

### ***General Recommendations***

- Conduct research on the roles and responsibilities of and the challenges and opportunities for women, men, youth and socially excluded groups like widows, IDPs and minority groups, along with baseline gender disaggregated data on market access and participation, to assist with the development of more targeted program interventions.
- Require the development of a gender policy for the *Tijara* program that outlines gender goals and targets as well as program implementation strategies and reporting requirements.
- Review current literature on gender and macroeconomic policy and conduct research on the Iraqi context to help refine program strategy to promote both growth and equality.

### ***Economic Growth Recommendations***

- Expand microfinance access for women entrepreneurs including widows, Anfal survivors and internally displaced and returnee women through the development of:
  - Solidarity Group Products
  - Start-up Products
- Expand financing for women-owned small and medium size enterprises and set related targets in project PMPs.
- To increase women's participation in trainings, provide single-sex classes at Small Business Development Centers in conservative areas and maintain mixed classes in less conservative areas.
- Recruit and train more female business trainers.
- Promote Iraqi businesswomen in the media to help inspire and develop a growing cadre of new and diverse entrepreneurs.
- Promote partnerships with existing Iraqi businesswomen's associations.

### ***Private Sector Development Recommendations***

- Expand investment incentives and financing support for sectors where there is potential for growth in female and youth employment, such as manufacturing and processing, particularly in the agri-business sector.
- Support and build capacity to carry out provincial and district level market assessments that include gender-disaggregated data and that focus on equal employment potential.
- Continue to build national capacity for regulation of imports to protect the Iraqi consumer and that promotes fair competition for Iraqi-owned enterprises.
- Assess the health sector, education sector and solar energy sector for potential employment growth, including women's employment.

## **USAID/IRAQ INTEGRATED AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT (IAD) PROGRAM**

### **Program Summary**

Agriculture is the single largest source of employment (27% of the population) and second largest contributor (after the oil sector) to the overall gross domestic product in Iraq. However, the productivity of Iraqi agriculture has declined over the last several decades and the industry is not currently fulfilling its potential to contribute to economic development and food security. USAID's \$343 million *Inma* Agribusiness Program works with the Government of Iraq (GoI) to increase the competitiveness of Iraqi agriculture and agribusiness by developing linkages between farmers, agribusinesses, financial services, and domestic and international markets. Implemented by the Louis Berger Group, Inc., *Inma* was initiated in May 2007 and is scheduled to continue through May 2010, with the possibility of two option years. *Inma* works in close coordination with Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) on the following primary goals:

- Improve agricultural quality and productivity by training farmers on modern technical practices to achieve better yields for their crops and more productive livestock practices.
- Restore soil and water management systems, including helping farmers to restore poorly functioning drainage facilities and improve irrigation practices.
- Increase the competitiveness of Iraqi agribusinesses by improving food grades and standards for sanitary protocols, inspection procedures, and compliance criteria.
- Increase domestic and foreign partnerships by supporting the Iraqi private sector as it establishes needed linkages with foreign enterprises and international markets.

*Inma* also provides technical assistance to national and local government agencies to address legal, regulatory and policy issues impacting the agriculture sector.<sup>3</sup> *Inma* was preceded by the ARDI (Agriculture Reconstruction and Development in Iraq) project, which was implemented from 2003 to 2006 by Development Alternatives, Inc.

## **PROGRAM GENDER ANALYSIS**

### **Project Identification**

It is not clear from available project documents to what extent female stakeholders and beneficiaries participated, or whether gender research and disaggregated data were used, in the identification of the intervention areas of the current *Inma* project. However, the ARDI Final Report (2006) contains details of a Participatory Assessment and Project Idea Development (PAPID) process that strove to integrate female stakeholders and marginalized groups into the process:

Women played a key role in PAPID implementation and were included in all decisions reached during the exercise. The women and men who helped develop the beekeeping

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<sup>3</sup> Additional intervention in the agriculture sector occurs under the auspices of USAID's National Capacity Building Program (*Tatweer*). *Tatweer* works to enhance the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) in human resources, procurement, GIS, project management, strategic planning and budgeting at the national and provincial levels.

project also actively reached out to specifically include women heads-of-household, widows, and other disadvantaged members of the community. As a direct result of these concerns, 44% of the original 82 participants in the beekeeping project were women.

(DAI, 2006, 259)

Gender appears to be less well integrated throughout the rest of the final report, however, indicating compartmentalization (rather than integration) of gender. The only gender-disaggregated data reported in the monitoring and evaluation section refers to vaccination rates of male and female livestock (*Ibid.*, 350). Likewise, the USAID Private Sector Growth and Employment Generation Report on Potential for Food Processing in Iraq (March 2006), which was used to develop the RFP for the *Inma* project, makes no mention of women, even in its analysis of sectors in which women play an active role, such as dairy, honey and livestock.

### **Project Design**

A review of the *Inma* Statement of Work (SOW) and Annual Workplan (Revised) 2009-2010 does not reveal evidence of gender integration. The illustrative activities and outputs in the SOW do not include gender-disaggregated targets for farmer outreach and training, nor do descriptions of agricultural activities include gender-disaggregated information (e.g. representation of men and women in particular activities, such as livestock production, or number of women's agricultural associations trained). The workplan lacks gender-specific implementation plans and output and impact targets for all implementation areas; instead, targets are generic (e.g. "900 farmers or buyers trained" and "5,000 jobs created"). Interviews with *Inma* staff revealed that aquaculture is an area in which Iraqi women have a strong interest and ability to participate. *Inma's* training targets for aquaculture, however, are not gender specific. The workplan budget also fails to specify resources to be dedicated to promoting women's participation in discrete activities.

Though the *Inma* Performance Management Plan (PMP) cites assisting underserved groups (including women) as a high priority, it describes interventions meant to maintain, rather than transform, current gender-roles and gender-based hierarchies. For example, women-owned businesses that produce date and fig pastes or cut fruit and flowers are cited as "potential projects related to both the cultural realities and profitable business that may be very appropriate for women to operate" (Louis Berger Group, 2010, 2). While an understanding of prevailing social norms relating to gender roles is critical and individual programs may not choose to attempt to transform these roles, it is also important to recognize that gender roles in Iraq are currently undergoing transformation due to conflict and the opening up of Iraqi society. For instance, female heads of households who participate in the agricultural sector may be forced by necessity to take on non-traditional roles in order to support their families. Failing to understand the needs of and actively support these women may place a large and vulnerable demographic further at risk and result in missed opportunities for development.

Furthermore, there is a disconnect between the preceding statement (from the PMP introduction) and program focus sections which detail the plans for interventions in specific areas. For example, "Program Focus 2: Improve Perennial Horticulture Production and Value" addresses the date value chain and includes a single sentence addressing the aforementioned processing of date paste: "Finally, and to a lesser extent, grants for date presses to grower associations could reduce the actual wastage of dates..." (*Ibid.*, 17). There is no specific target for (or even mention of) the percentage of grantees that would be women, despite the fact that this was earlier identified as an area of potential for assisting "high priority" underserved groups like women. Finally, USAID's "Dates Value Chain Analysis and Opportunities for Iraq" (July

2008) does not contain any analysis of the roles, opportunities, incentives or needs of women involved in the date value chain.

### **Project Implementation**

The majority of *Inma* participants and beneficiaries are men and plans for increased participation of women remain unclear. Current cumulative training data from *Inma* (dated April 25, 2010) shows that of the 9,566 Iraqis trained in all value chains, 7% were women. In a document entitled “*Inma* Contribution- Women’s Economic Activities” dated December 2009, *Inma* reported completing two fish farming trainings specifically for women. It stated that although only 3.6 percent of total trainees were women, “plans are being made to carry out more training specific to women. There is also a plan to identify women’s associations to benefit from the feed voucher system.” Unfortunately, the plan articulated in the document does not go beyond stating that an unspecified number of women will be “employed” “will participate” and “will be amongst the trainees” and that “To make the above a reality, all *Inma* departments and the GFAs will work to ensure women are included as beneficiaries so that the percentage assistance to women’s economic empowerment increases.” Without clear targets and clear strategies for engaging with women, it will be difficult to increase or measure impact in this area.

### **Project Monitoring & Evaluation**

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has stated that a lack of sex-disaggregated data hinders economic development. Likewise, “Gathering statistics on how women differ from men in the nature of their agricultural work - and on other issues like their access to resources and exposure to food insecurity - is essential to improving the planning and sustainability of development policies and programmes” (FAO, 2010). Although *Inma* has gathered gender-disaggregated data for a number of its activities, a lack of gender-disaggregated baseline data and research makes much of it minimally useful. Likewise, without clear gender-specific targets and indicators, *Inma* has no ability to set goals for women’s participation or to measure its achievement against targets.

Additionally, without goals or performance indicator targets for women’s participation, USAID has limited ability to assess or hold *Inma* accountable for gender integration. The areas on which project assessments focus convey USAID’s priorities to the project implementers. The complete lack of any assessment of women’s participation or impact on women in the external mid-term assessment conducted in March 2009 sends a message to the implementer that gender integration is not a priority for USAID. Informal discussions with the team conducting an assessment of *Inma* during the writing of this report (April 2010) also revealed no specific requirement or intention to address gender in their forthcoming evaluation. USAID and its evaluators can play a key role in demonstrating USAID’s commitment to gender integration by ensuring that implementing partners are held accountable for gender integration at all levels of the project. A key step is to include gender-specific research questions in all evaluation and assessment scopes of work.

### **Recommendations for Integrating Gender in IAD programs**

- Gather baseline data and research to delineate the roles, responsibilities, opportunities and challenges faced by women and men in the agriculture sector and use it to inform the design, implementation and assessment of agricultural projects.

- Refine the existing *Inma* Gender Mainstreaming Policy to articulate clear and detailed goals, objectives, targets and impacts for women to participate in and benefit from *Inma*'s activities. Provide training to *Inma* staff on gender integration techniques. Operationalize stated policy to "involve women in all aspects of program planning and implementation (including decision making)," and ensure inclusion of female beneficiaries.
- Fully integrate gender into *Inma*'s workplan, PMP and all project reporting. Develop specific, gender-disaggregated targets for outreach and impact on both female and male beneficiaries based on research. Collect gender-disaggregated data for all activities. Employ action-learning techniques to further refine targets and indicators on a regular basis.
- Worldwide, women are typically concentrated at the bottom of global agricultural value chains, where risk is high and reward is low. *Inma*'s research on strawberry production in Iraq indicates that female workers are favored for strawberry harvesting and that women can command equal wages for their labor. *Inma*'s training program in production and harvesting techniques should be designed to promote women's participation and upward mobility within the value chain. Gendered value chain analyses are the first step toward this goal. Expand support of women and women's associations through *Inma*'s Farm Service Association projects.
- Study and replicate successful livestock transfer programs and other small-scale agriculture projects that have been proven successful for women. Explore the feasibility of this for *Inma*'s water buffalo project and for small-scale sheep farming, as recommended in the ARDI Transition Plan for Agriculture (2004).
- In a meeting with PERFORM, UN World Food Program (WFP) representatives in Erbil indicated a desire to partner with USAID/Iraq. Areas for possible collaboration include sourcing inputs from local producers if/when WFP begins producing its fortified date bars in-country, as well as reviving a livestock project that was successful several years ago.
- Women and men often have different levels and channels of access to information of all kinds, including market and other information relevant to agriculture and agribusiness. Research on how women access information will be critical to ensuring that women participate and benefit equally from *Inma*'s efforts in this area.
- Continue to adapt strategies to local realities and avoid a one-size-fits-all approach to gender integration. *Inma* has found that in some cases women and men prefer separate trainings with trainers of their own gender. Elsewhere, mixed trainings have been successful and women have responded well to male trainers (and vice versa).
- While *Inma* has made progress in increasing the number of women employed on the project, senior and leadership roles are primarily filled by men. Therefore *Inma* should develop an action plan for promoting women's professional development and upward mobility within the project itself.

# GENDER AND EDUCATION IN IRAQ

## Background

Until the early 1980's, Iraq's education system was regarded as one of the finest in the Arab World. At the same time that primary education was made free and compulsory for all Iraqis in the 1970s, private education was outlawed as the government began to consolidate its control over the education system. A compulsory illiteracy eradication program begun in 1978 more than halved the illiteracy rate to 19.9 percent by 1987 (Alwan, 2004, 25). Though near-universal primary school enrollment was achieved, rapid expansion of access eventually led to a decrease in educational quality and a subsequent increase in dropouts.

The deterioration of the education system has been attributed primarily to the diversion of public funding away from education and towards military and other political priorities, as well as the politicization of all aspects of the education system, including curriculum, teaching, staffing and admissions (*Ibid.*, 11). Spending per pupil, which in 1988/89 was approximately \$620, was estimated to have dropped to an average of just \$47 in the years 1993-2002 (UN/World Bank, 2003). Teacher salaries also dropped sharply during this period, causing many to leave the profession. Registration fees were applied and families were required to contribute funds for the purchase of supplies (Alwan, 2004, 15).

Iraq's education system has seen yet more drastic deterioration since 2003. Schools have been destroyed, damaged, looted and appropriated by militia and military. A 2004 study by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education (MoE) revealed that of the 11,000 primary schools in the country, roughly 8,000 were damaged and roughly 600 destroyed beyond repair (Dall *et al.*, 2009, 2). Iraq's teacher work force, already undermined by steadily shrinking wages, has continued to diminish as many teachers have been internally displaced, fled the country, or become victims of violence.

The combined force of the economic downturn, lack of security due to military and militia operations and general lawlessness has undermined school attendance, particularly among girl students. Other contributing factors include unsafe, unsanitary and overcrowded schools, under-qualified and undertrained teachers, outdated teaching methodologies and curricula, the cost of school transport, uniforms and supplies coupled with the opportunity cost of sending children to school, and a rise in religious and cultural conservatism that devalues girls' education. Primary school attendance is mandated by law, but enrollment rates for both boys and girls are lower at the higher educational levels. Internally displaced students can face unique challenges, for instance an inadequate number of Arabic language schools in Kurdistan, or an inability to enroll in school due to a lack of documentation (Foran, 2008, 21).

Vocational schools, literacy training and accelerated learning programs for adults or children outside the school system play an important role in filling gaps in the educational system, but many do not have access to these services. Currently, less than one percent of those over age ten attend literacy classes (COSIT/KRSO/World Bank, 2009). University education is free to qualified students, but women remain underrepresented on average. The female percentage of the student body of universities, technical institutions, and private colleges, which had declined to 33 percent in 2001-2002, has risen only as high as 41 percent in the 2006-07 academic year

(COSIT 2010). Overall enrollment has fluctuated in recent years, and a lack of security, violence and threats against academics as well as widespread corruption continue to weaken Iraq's higher education system.

Currently there is widespread recognition, in both public and private spheres, of the pivotal role of education in peace, stability and socio-economic development. In addition to its commitments under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Millennium Development Goals and the UNESCO Education for All initiative, the GoI has increased its budgetary allocation for education from 7.2 percent in 2008 to 9.9 percent in 2009 (WHO, 2010, 1). With international donor support, the GoI is in the process of developing a National Education Strategy (NES) to chart its course towards the goal of achieving universal net primary enrollment by 2015.

### **Gender Issues in Education**

Because of the differing roles, responsibilities and expectations for men, women, girls and boys, it is essential to view challenges in the educational sector through a gender lens in order to address them. However, as a 2008 UNICEF evaluation pointed out, it is equally important to acknowledge that women and girls (and men and boys) do not constitute homogenous groups. Educational access and opportunities in a diverse country like Iraq will depend as much on socio-economic status, ethnicity, culture, religion and geographic location as on gender (Foran, 2008, 4). This point was echoed by a number of Iraqi stakeholders interviewed during the course of this assessment and should be taken into account during project design and implementation.

### **Peace and Security**

One of the most common barriers to education cited by stakeholders interviewed during the course of this assessment was the lack of security. Though overall security has improved in recent years, bombings, shootings and violent crime remain widespread and many parents are afraid to send their children to school. In the 2007 COSIT/KRSO/World Bank Household Survey, 9.5 percent of respondents cited difficult and/or unsafe transportation as a reason why girls aged 6-9 are not attending school and 13.1 percent cited it as a reason for boys (aged 6-9). Security fears also restrict children's lives outside of school hours. A 2008 survey in Sadr City, Baghdad revealed severe limitations on children's ability to play and interact with other children as a result of ongoing violence and insecurity (Foran, 2008, 25). Because girls are perceived as more vulnerable than boys and because a family's honor is associated with the sexual integrity of its female members, girls often experience more isolation and restriction of movement than boys.

### **Economy**

Years of war and economic sanctions have crippled Iraq's economy to the point that most Iraqis have a lower standard of living now than they did thirty years ago (Iraq Human Development Report, 2008, 41). The increase in economic hardship has had a direct impact on school enrollment and attendance. Though education is ostensibly free, many families are unable to afford the cost of transportation, uniforms and school supplies. Often the opportunity cost of sending "employable" children to school is judged to be too great, and children (particularly boys who have greater freedom of movement outside the home) are pulled from school in order to generate household income. Of households surveyed, 14.3 percent cited "work for family" as a reason why boys aged 10-14 were not in school and 22.1 percent for boys aged 15-19 (COSIT, 2008, 240). A 2009 survey of Iraqi youth (aged 10-30 years) found that "parents' refusal" was the primary reason for not being enrolled in school, followed by the school's

distance from home (21.2%) and financial reasons (19.6%) (Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2009, 19). In other cases, older girl children must remain in the home to assist with income generating activities and/or household chores. In the case of female-headed households, the oldest girl child may be required to assume the housekeeping role previously occupied by her mother, who must seek work outside the home to support her family. This is particularly germane to the Iraq context, where the population of widows has risen as high as 740,000 by some estimates (Williams, 2009).

### **Religion and Culture**

Though religious and cultural conservatism gained traction during the later years of Saddam Hussein's regime, as he attempted to curry favor with religious factions in order to retain his grip on power, the transition to democracy has also created space for conservative and extremist leaders to exert influence over the populace. This phenomenon has had a profound effect on opportunities for women and girls, including access to education, even in urban areas that in previous eras were more progressive. A study in 2008 found that 76.2 percent of respondents said that girls in their family were not allowed to attend school (Women for Women, 2008, 24). Early marriage is one factor that can prevent girls from continuing their education beyond primary school. Though the legal age of marriage is eighteen for both women and men, young people can legally be married at fifteen with judicial permission. School-aged brides are often forced to leave school by their older husbands and their families after marriage. Traditional attitudes that emphasize the subordination of women and girls and their seclusion within the home also devalue the need to educate girls along with boys. In some cases, imams have issued *fatwas* against educating girls (NGO leader interview, Erbil, 2010). While many parents in Iraq value education for both boys and girls, interviews with stakeholders in the education sector revealed that in other cases educating girls is simply viewed as unnecessary or even "wasteful."

### **Infrastructure**

Even for those students with access to education, challenges remain. Low investment in education infrastructure combined with conflict-related damage has led to a shortage of schools, especially in rural communities. Some areas lack intermediate or secondary schools, so that children must travel long distances to the nearest school. Many families are unable to afford the cost or are unwilling to allow girls to travel unescorted. Where schools do exist, classroom space is limited, leading to overcrowding and necessitating double and even triple shifts. Thirty-five percent of schools nationwide are double shift, which typically means that boys attend in the morning and girls attend in the afternoon. Some schools operate on triple shifts (of three hours each). Many schools are convened in buildings not designed for that purpose and most lack non-classroom learning or recreational spaces such as science and computer labs, libraries, sports fields or playgrounds. Many schools lack basics such as adequate water and sanitation. A study by MoE/UNICEF (2004) found that there is an average of one toilet for every 170 students. Along with overcrowding, lack of sanitation can exacerbate the spread of disease among children. Also, a lack of private, functioning sanitary facilities has a particularly detrimental effect on girls' attendance, especially at the onset of puberty.

### **Pedagogy and Curriculum**

The quality of teaching in Iraq began to decline in the 1980's, as geo-political isolation began to constrict the inflow of new methodologies. Post-2003, many teachers have been killed and

others have fled Iraq to avoid violence, leading to a shortage of highly-skilled educators. Currently, female teachers outnumber male teachers in both primary and secondary schools. While the teaching profession has provided a critical employment opportunity for many women, the gender imbalance should not be overlooked, as a lack of male teachers can mean a lack of male role models for boys (Foran, 2008, 22).

Stakeholders interviewed during the course of this assessment described the current pedagogical approach as traditional and unappealing to students. Though attempts have been made to update curricula and textbooks, these efforts have not reached all schools. Outdated curriculum not only fails to engage and adequately educate students, it often reinforces gender stereotypes (through pictures and text) that can limit boys' and girls' conceptions of their current and future roles in society. Emphasis on rote memorization impedes the development of critical thinking skills. Likewise, international donors have spearheaded teacher training, but these are often one-off events and there is little of the necessary follow-up to ensure that teachers are able to incorporate new techniques and methodologies into their lessons on an ongoing basis (Dall *et al.*, 2009, 18)

Since 2003, many students have been displaced from their homes to other parts of Iraq (including Kurdistan) as a result of violence. Though students are legally entitled to education in their mother tongue, Arabic and minority language schools in Kurdistan are not sufficient to meet the needs of the school-aged IDP population.

### **Psycho-social Concerns**

A 2007 study by the WHO/Gol of children in Baghdad revealed that 30 percent experience psychological problems. Post-traumatic stress can have an impact on the ability of children to learn and develop socially, and on the ability of teaching and administrative personnel to function effectively. A study by the Iraq Psychologists' Association revealed that there has been an increase in domestic violence against children since 2003 and that 91 percent of children surveyed said that they face more aggression at home (Foran, 2008, 24). Children in this situation can require additional care and support, inside and outside the educational setting. Some Iraqi schools have a resident social worker, and a number of internationally funded projects that address the education sector specifically target the provision of psychosocial support (*Ibid.*, 27). Gender-sensitive design and evaluation of these efforts is critical to ensure that the needs of boys, girls, women and men are addressed equally and effectively.

### **Administrative Capacity**

Post-invasion conflict and instability has greatly damaged the government's capacity in the (already) under-resourced education sector. The infrastructure, computer systems and archives of the MoE were damaged, destroyed, and looted following the invasion and the Ministry's human resources were likewise decimated, as employees fled, were unable to leave their homes, or were expelled from their positions because of Ba'ath Party affiliation. In cooperation with the international donor community, the Gol has made some progress in rebuilding the MoE and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MoHER). Capacity remains limited, however, particularly in the area of curriculum reform (Dall *et al.*, 2009, 23), which can impact the potential for gender-sensitive curriculum to be developed. Though donors are assisting the MoE as it develops an Education Management Information System (EMIS), the ministry's current capacity to gather and analyze data in order to inform decision-making is limited. Access to and appropriate use of accurate and up-to-date gender-disaggregated data is integral to development of a gender-sensitive National Education Strategy (NES).

In addition to capacity issues, continued politicization of education has prevented Kurdish, Sunni and Shia factions within the government from reaching consensus on education issues (*Ibid.*, 27). Efforts to develop a coherent NES, underway with donor support since at least 2008, have not yet produced a strategy. Creating “equal opportunities for both genders” is a stated priority of the MoE (*Ibid.*, 14), but realization of this goal will depend on the development (and effective implementation) of a gender-sensitive NES. Unfortunately, a lack of women in leadership positions within the MoE, which restricts their participation in policy and decision-making, may reduce the Ministry’s ability to integrate gender effectively into its programs going forward. Although women fill approximately 90 percent of staff positions within the MoE, few women occupy high-level posts (including only one female Director General).

Though there is a Gender Committee within the MoE (comprised of twenty governorate representatives), it is marginalized by both the MoE and the international donor community. The committee has provided recommendations for the integration of gender into the NES, but these have not yet been approved by the Minister of Education. An interview with a member of the MoE Gender Committee revealed that, although USAID, UN agencies and the World Bank work closely with the MoE, there is no interaction with the Gender Committee. The State Ministry for Women’s Affairs (SMoWA), which is also seeking to support educational opportunities for women and girls, is not a full-fledged ministry and does not have any government funding. According to the interviewee, attempts to partner with the MoE on a literacy initiative have not been successful.

### **Promising Approaches**

Improving the Iraqi education system and addressing gender issues in education will depend on a holistic, integrative approach that simultaneously addresses health, rule of law, security, and economic development. Though the challenges facing the education sector are extensive, the level of engagement on the part of Iraqi leaders and stakeholders is a positive indicator of both a high level of awareness and a willingness on the part of key actors to tackle the challenge of improving the nation’s education system. The vast majority of those interviewed during the course of this gender assessment, including government ministers, politicians, educators, parents, and civil society leaders, echoed this conviction and cited education for girls and boys as an issue of primary importance. It was also noted that the incoming government would have an effect on the direction of the Iraqi education strategy, including progress toward gender equality.

Promising approaches can be found in Iraq’s past and in present initiatives around the country, as well as best practices from other parts of the world. Careful evaluation of current efforts should be prioritized in order to identify the strategies that are most effective in the Iraqi context and those that can then be scaled-up and replicated. Some of these approaches include:

### **Gender Budgeting**

Budgetary constraints within the MoE have implications for gender equality in education. According to an MoE official interviewed during this assessment, currently an estimated 98 percent of the education budget is used for salaries, leaving a mere 2 percent for operational costs such as school construction and maintenance, textbooks, and supplies. Funding for infrastructure development must come from donors and from provincial development budgets, which represents both a risk and an opportunity. While donors can leverage their financial contributions to ensure that appropriate mapping is done to enable new schools to be built in areas that will maximize both male and female attendance, provincially-funded efforts may be

less data-driven and more subject to patronage and political agendas. Gender budgeting initiatives for education have been implemented in a number of countries, primarily in the context of a broader effort to mainstream gender into the national budget. Evaluation of the Rwanda Gender Budgeting Initiative has revealed a number of salient best practices and lessons learned, including:

- Gender-disaggregated data is a prerequisite for effective gender budgeting;
- Involvement of the Ministry of Finance is essential;
- Gender budgeting must be institutionalized through strong vertical linkages at the policy, institution and operational levels;
- Involving civil society organizations from the beginning and building their capacity to be involved in implementation, monitoring and evaluation of gender budgeting efforts is critical.

(Diop, 2003)

### **Incentivizing Education for Girls**

The World Food Program (WFP) is currently piloting school feeding programs in Erbil and Sulaimaniya, Kurdistan, providing fortified date bars to students in areas with high levels of malnutrition. In other parts of the developing world, including Muslim countries such as Bangladesh, providing payments or food rations to families that send their children to school has been proven to increase attendance, especially among girls. Incentive programs such as these can help lower the number of children who miss school for economic reasons or poor health. Stakeholder interviews indicated that Iraqi parents would be more willing to send their daughters to school if the state provided benefits or financial incentives (Focus Groups 2010; Dall *et al.*, 2009, 26).

Incentives were used in 2009 to attract participants to a literacy program funded through the Baghdad South ePRT and implemented by a local partner organization. Though the stipends have been eliminated, the project is continuing with an eight-month literacy course for more than 3,300 rural adults in twenty-five public schools spread throughout Mahmudiyah Qada. The program uses official MoE curriculum for instruction up to the 3rd grade level. In addition to literacy, the classes cover basic math and life skills topics such as the role of women in society. Between 70 and 85 percent of the students are female. Interestingly, project implementers speculate that the low participation rates for men may be due to the elimination of the stipend. If stipends are offered directly to participants, it is important to anticipate their effect on male and female participation and take steps to ensure that the desired gender ratio is achieved.

### **Raising Awareness through Religious Leaders**

The influence of local religious leaders can be leveraged to raise awareness and seek assistance in promoting education for girls and boys, especially in more conservative communities. Incentives can be used to attract participation and gain support, particularly among religious leaders who are rarely targeted for capacity building by the local government. A women-focused NGO in Erbil provided a two-year course to 480 local imams which covered basic ITC skills (email, internet, etc.) along with information on gender issues. Follow-up indicated that participants integrated the gender-related information they had gained at the workshops into the Friday teachings at their mosques. In a similar effort, the GoI inter-ministerial Gender-based Violence Committee is working on outreach to imams on GBV so that they can share this information with their constituencies during their Friday teachings/sermons.

### **Areas for Future Focus and Research**

The preceding recommendations are derived from a review of recent reports and relevant literature, as well as from focus group research and interviews with government officials, educators, parents, NGO leaders and other stakeholders familiar with the current state of the Iraqi education sector. However, further research and evaluation, in partnership with local experts and policymakers, is necessary in order to prioritize those approaches that will have the broadest and most sustainable impact on gender equality in education.

Other areas for future research include an evaluation of the technical and vocational education systems from a gender perspective in conjunction with a market survey in order to ensure that both male and female graduates are developing marketable skills. Further study on the psychosocial wellbeing of children, particularly those affected by violence and conflict, is also needed. The Iraq Psychologists' Association conducted a useful study, but the data on children was not gender-disaggregated, making it difficult to assess the differing experiences and needs of girls and boys. Developing a safe and affordable transportation system for students, especially girls, is critical to increasing access to education. Further research is recommended to identify feasible and sustainable approaches for the Iraqi context.

## **USAID/IRAQ EDUCATION PROGRAM**

### **Program Summary**

In April 2003, USAID began its first project under the large-scale Revitalizing of Iraqi Schools and Stabilization of Education (RISE) program. RISE I was implemented by Creative Associates International, Inc. (CAII), UNICEF and UNESCO and had a final budget of approximately \$56 million. The project focused on administering final exams, paying teacher salaries and other steps necessary to ensure completion of the school year; school rehabilitation and construction; supplying textbooks, furnishings and other supplies (with UNESCO); a UNICEF-implemented accelerated learning program for children outside of the school system; training for teachers and administrators in modern pedagogy; and technical assistance and capacity building for the MoE. A key success of RISE I was ensuring academic continuity so that the school year wouldn't have to be repeated. However, ongoing conflict and a poor security environment, as well as a lack of capacity on the part of the MoE, limited the impact and scaling up of RISE I.

RISE Phase Two (Education II), a \$52 million follow-on project, also implemented by CAII, attempted to build upon the successes and lessons learned from RISE I. Partners included the US military, UNESCO, UNICEF and Microsoft. Primary goals were the creation of 84 model schools distributed across each governorate, school refurbishment, teacher training, an early-childhood educational television program with accompanying activity book, and technical support to the MoE including the development of an education management information system (EMIS). Though aspects of Education II were successful, interventions could not be scaled to the national level because of the continued lack of a strong partnership with the Ministry of Education. RISE I was implemented from April 2003 to July 2004 and Education II was implemented from July 2004 until February 2007.

USAID has also undertaken education activities in other programs, including the Higher Education and Development (HEAD) project (which supported US-Iraq university partnerships) and in its cross-sectoral community stabilization programs. USAID/Iraq's National Capacity Development Program (*Tatweer*) has also recently reinitiated its efforts to build capacity within the MoE.

## **PROGRAM GENDER ANALYSIS**

### **Program Identification and Design**

Analysis of documents related to the identification and design of USAID's education program show critical gaps in gender integration. The 2009 USAID Education Assessment cites a lack of "forethought and poor planning" for the Coalition Provisional Authority's failure to dedicate adequate funding for school security, a mistake that severely undermined school attendance, particularly for girls. It is not clear whether USAID considered the impact of insecurity on the effectiveness of its education initiatives or the impact on girls' education during the identification, design or evaluation stages of the RISE projects. Likewise, an analysis of the initial RISE RFP shows that the contractor was required to obtain baseline and ongoing gender disaggregated data relating to girls students, but not on teachers. In spite of the project's focus on extensive teacher training (with a goal to train 50 percent of teachers, administrators and school leaders), gender-inclusive approaches and gender specific targets for the implementation of this training were not included.

Project briefs describe a "consultative process" with the MoE and the Iraq education system used to develop the RISE teacher training program (USAID, 2004, 1), but it is unclear to what extent gender considerations were integrated into this process. Though a majority of female teachers were trained in the program between 2003 and February 2004, women represented

only 31 percent of master trainers trained (*Ibid.*,1). Ensuring gender equity in trainer recruitment and skills training often requires extra measures to overcome obstacles to women's participation.

RFPs and ensuing contracts set the stage for implementing partner accountability for achieving gender targets. If language around gender is vague, limited, or missing entirely, implementers will have little incentive to integrate gender into the ensuing workplans, PMPs and other project documents. For example, the RISE I contract contained only the following directive with regard to gender: "The contractor shall take the issue of ethnic balance in its program into consideration, and will concentrate on areas where girls have particularly low access to education." A more detailed explanation of gender-specific goals and objectives, including targets and suggested indicators, is recommended.

### **Program Implementation and Monitoring & Evaluation**

The ability to assess gender integration in project implementation is limited by the lack of gender-differentiated information in project documents. Although there may have been particular efforts to ensure gender integration and equal participation and outcomes for both female and male beneficiaries, it does not appear that related best practices or lessons learned were captured in a systematic way.

RISE I and II had positive impacts for female students and teachers and 55 percent of teachers given training were women, according to implementer CAII. However, a failure to thoroughly integrate gender into the identification, design and M&E processes makes it difficult to fully assess the differentiated impact on male and female beneficiaries. Though project Performance Management Plans (PMP) for the RISE projects and other education interventions mandate the collection and reporting of gender disaggregated data, the Education Sector Assessment conducted in 2009 did not specifically evaluate the projects' impact on female and male beneficiaries. If an explicit goal of the projects was to increase girls' attendance, enrollment or other indicators, no conclusions were reached as to whether the projects were successful in this endeavor. Collecting data is only the first stage of gender-intelligent M&E—both project-led and external assessments must use qualitative and quantitative data to determine whether or not the project reached its gender-specific targets. Effective M&E needs to demonstrate causality between a given intervention and an observable increase in girls' enrollment and attendance. The "Lessons Learned" section of the 2009 assessment does not include any reference to gender, which implies a lack of critical reflection on the project's impact in this area.

Though a variety of barriers to girls' education were identified by stakeholders during the course of the 2009 Education Assessment, including poverty, sexual harassment, a lack of safe and affordable transport, and mixed (co-educational) schools, the assessment makes only a single, brief recommendation with regard to girls' education: creation of a community education campaign on the importance of girls' education. This is despite the admission earlier in the report that, "Stakeholders note that if the state provided benefits and financial incentives to poor families, especially single parent households, then daughters would be more likely to go to school" (Dall *et al.*, 2009, 26). As assessment documents are commonly relied upon to inform the identification and design of follow-on projects, the lack of additional recommendations relating to girls' education is a missed opportunity to integrate gender into the development of USAID's subsequent education projects.

## Recommendations for Integrating Gender in USAID/Iraq Education Programs

Prioritize building the capacity of the MoE and the MoF to develop a gender-sensitive National Education Strategy (NES) and budget that will create equitable educational opportunities for boys, girls, women and men. Integrate gender training (including gender budgeting training) and gender participation targets into all capacity building initiatives with the MoE. Establish baseline data on the number and level in the institution of male and female employees and their individual capacity pre- and post-training.

- Fully integrate gender into the RFPs, contracts, workplans, PMPs and all project reporting of future education initiatives. Develop specific, time-bound gender-disaggregated targets for outreach to girls and women as well as boys and men. Employ action-learning techniques to further refine targets and indicators on a regular basis.
- A 2009 assessment of USAID/Iraq's education program revealed that there is little effort by the MoE to use the EMIS or other planning and management tools to make objective policy decisions (Dall *et al.*, 2009, 28). These institutional failings have implications for all students, but particularly for girls and women. As it supports the MoE in developing and using an EMIS, USAID should ensure that gender indicators and gender-disaggregated data gathering are integrated into the system and its use. Prioritize training on gender budgeting and see that accountability mechanisms are in place to ensure equitable resource allocation.
- Create and expand opportunities for women and the out-of-school population to access education. Research the feasibility of replicating or scaling-up successful efforts in this area, such as Mercy Corps' literacy and accelerated learning programs.
- Improve knowledge capture and management throughout USAID/Iraq. USAID implementing partners have developed a number of practical and innovative (albeit *ad hoc*) strategies to increase women's access to and participation in trainings. These strategies, including pre-training communication with female trainee's families and designating women-only floors in hotels, can be shared and replicated as appropriate.
- USAID should assist the MoE in developing strategies and encourage the Gol to dedicate financial resources to tackling the security and transportation barriers to school attendance for girls. Infrastructure needs, including those that particularly undermine girls' attendance such as a lack of sanitation, should also be addressed. Economic incentives should also be tested as a means of encouraging girls' attendance, particularly in rural areas, conservative areas and areas with high levels of poverty (both rural and urban).
- Whether through capacity building with the MoE or through a USAID-led project, prioritize raising awareness of gender issues and the importance of education, particularly for girls. Replicate and/or scale-up successful efforts (like those of the women-focused NGO in KRG) to leverage the influence of religious leaders and the media in this regard.
- USAID should prioritize donor coordination around education to avoid redundancy, encourage knowledge sharing and collaboration and to ensure effective interaction with the Gol and MoE while minimizing the administrative burden created by multiple and competing donor demands. USAID should seek to play an active role in the UNAMI Education Group and use this forum to develop consensus around gender integration strategies. Donor coordination is key to ensuring effective gender integration in the National Education Strategy,

- If USAID chooses to establish a curriculum reform oversight committee, as recommended by the 2009 Education Assessment, it should ensure that gender specialists are included. Emphasize curricula that develop critical thinking skills, which give girls and women the intellectual tools to analyze and challenge discriminatory practices.
- USAID should demonstrate its support for gender integration by leading outreach to and inclusion of the MoE gender focal points, gender committee and gender-based violence committee in its ongoing education initiatives.
- If USAID addresses higher education in its future projects, explore the possibility of promoting the development of gender and women's studies programs, departments and curriculum by linking Iraqi academics and universities with US and other academics and institutions.

# GENDER AND HEALTH IN IRAQ

## **Background**

The health care system in Iraq was, for many years, well funded at or above the level of surrounding nations. Due to economic devastation from war and sanctions, the Iraqi government dramatically decreased spending on health care to as low as 0.2 dinars per person during 1991-1995. In recent years, lack of security in Iraq has taken a heavy toll on health care services. Many doctors were targeted and killed by militia, while others fled the country. Most have yet to return. During this time the quality of medical education has also suffered, creating the potential that new doctors entering the field are less prepared than their predecessors. Women especially have suffered from the lack of qualified, experienced female medical personnel.

Though government funding for health remains low, stakeholder interviews revealed that access to quality health care is a top priority for most Iraqis-- particularly women. There is also a perception that international donor assistance has been focused more on emergency medical assistance than on sustainable health care system rehabilitation and development. Coordination between stakeholders is weak and collaboration is limited. Likewise, inter-ministerial coordination within the GoI, including between the Ministries of Health, Finance, Planning, Water and Environment, which is critical to creating a well-functioning national health care system, is very limited. Key concerns in the area of healthcare raised during stakeholder interviews include the poor condition of most healthcare facilities, the low standard of care and the lack of trained, qualified health care workers. Women in particular are suffering from lack of access to and information about their rights to basic health services.

## **Infrastructure**

The 2006 report entitled *The Status of Women in Iraq: Update to the Assessment of Iraq's De Jure and De Facto Compliance with International Legal Standards- Update* cited the overall deterioration in healthcare facilities and services brought on by economic sanctions, governmental neglect and war as the single greatest risk to women's health in Iraq (Matta, 2006, 33). Men also suffer from a lack of adequate health services. Infrastructure for hospitals and health centers is still at substandard levels and has not been a focus of donor investment in recent years (USAID Health Assessment, 2009). While many donors focused on the infrastructure in the early years after the war, the demand is still greater than the current network can support and most of the hospitals and clinics that were built or renovated are now in need of maintenance. A general surgeon interviewed in Sulaymaniyah indicated that some hospitals are located in buildings not designed to be medical facilities, such as schools. There are also cases of doctors renting space in a building to practice medicine or even performing surgery with no regulation or quality control. The general shortage of clean water and steady electricity also causes major problems in hospitals and clinics. In many cases, especially in rural areas, the distance to the closest Primary Health Center (PHC) is so great that many cannot afford to travel except in cases of severe emergency or illness. This deficit of preventative and general health care results in many illnesses going undiagnosed and untreated in early stages, which is when they are easier to cure.

## **Medical Personnel**

The primary area of concern for most stakeholders interviewed about healthcare is the lack of qualified, experienced health care professionals at all levels. Prior to 2003, Iraq suffered from an inadequate supply of health professionals and this problem has only been exacerbated by the

war. A recent report by the Brookings Institution shows that of Iraq's 34,000 physicians, approximately 20,000 have been killed or have fled the country since 2003. Since then, approximately 200 physicians returned in 2007, 1000 in 2008 and 325 as of April 2009 (O'Hanlon and Livingston, 2010, 35). The estimated number of physicians in Iraq in 2008 was 16,000, which means a ratio of approximately 7 physicians per 10,000 people. Iraq would require an additional 46,000 physicians to achieve the patient-to-physician ration of neighboring Jordan (24 per 10,000 people). It is estimated that 2,000 Iraqi physicians have been murdered since 2003, thus making security a large deterrent for returning. The low average annual salary for Iraqi physicians (approximately 7.5million ID or \$5,100 per year) is also a disincentive and has forced many remaining doctors to work in both public and private hospitals. This situation simultaneously lowers the standard of care and provides avenues for corruption.

The lack of a sufficient number of trained nurses has forced doctors to take on many of the responsibilities that would traditionally be done by nursing staff, limiting the quantity and quality of post-operative care and contributing to unsafe, unsanitary hospitals. Patients suffering major injuries are not able to access the full extent of medical care available because of lack of advanced equipment and a shortage of doctors. There are reports of hospitals having medical equipment that stands unused because there is no one trained to operate it. There are also reports of patients attempting to access free care at a public hospital but being told that they need a test or scan that is only available at a private hospital where the costs are prohibitive for many. The hospitals themselves are not following any code of sanitation and hygiene, so the risk of infection is especially high. People who can afford to travel and pay the fees are leaving the country for safer and more advanced care in Jordan, Lebanon and even as far as India.

The lack of female health care providers is a deterrent for many female patients, particularly in rural and conservative areas of the country. Many women, regardless of socio-economic status, would prefer to see a female doctor (especially for gynecological exams) but do not have the option. Women are also underrepresented in the field of nursing. Currently 80% of nursing staff in Iraq are male. Medical professionals, government officials and other stakeholders interviewed indicated that the primary reason is the stigma attached to female nurses (who may be required to stay outside the home for night shifts and have contact with male patients and medical staff) and the low prestige of the nursing occupation in general. Nursing is considered a low-level service occupation and due to poor training, nurses are often treated as glorified custodians.

### **Public Outreach and Education**

The MOH and the SMOWA have conducted several public outreach health campaigns in recent years targeting issues such as breast cancer and HINI (ongoing). The SMOWA in collaboration with the MoH initiated a campaign for breast cancer awareness. The campaign included media spots, brochures and seminars to educate women on the importance of self-exams. The anecdotal evidence showed an increase in the number of women going to health care providers about abnormalities they found during self-exams. However, public awareness of many health issues remains limited. According to the 2006 Iraq Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), only 38.5 percent of children in Iraq (47% in KRG) were fully immunized. Awareness-raising is a key component of prevention. Also, many citizens do not know their rights to health care, or which services are provided by the Gol and which are the responsibility of the patient. Costs of treatment vary widely and stakeholders interviewed reported that patients must often bribe medical staff and attendants in order to receive care. This engenders a lack of trust in the medical system, further undermining effective prevention and treatment of disease.

## GENDER ISSUES IN HEALTH

### Access to Care

According to the 2006/7 Iraq Family Health Survey, only 86.1 percent of households can afford to pay for health services out of their current income. Almost a third of households must use other means of obtaining funds to pay for health care. The survey found that more than one-fifth of households surveyed (22.6%) had experienced a “catastrophic health expenditure,” meaning a situation where health care payments equal or exceed 10 percent of the household’s ability to pay. Especially for female-headed households where income is lower and employment options more limited, economic factors severely limit access to healthcare. For those men and women who have taken their widowed relatives and their children into their households, the burden of cost increases as well.

### HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

Though there are currently a very small number of known cases of HIV/AIDS in Iraq, the lack of knowledge about the disease and how to get tested along with the limited use of condoms contribute to an environment ripe for the spread of infection. Other STDs are on the rise, including Human Papillomavirus (HPV), which has led to an increase in cases of cervical cancer; in spite of these trends, social conservatism and taboos about extra-marital sex mean that there is fear and a lack of knowledge among many about prevention and testing.

HIV/AIDS: Knowledge and Attitudes (%)	Iraq	KRG
Comprehensive knowledge about HIV prevention among young people	2.1	0.7
Knowledge of mother-to-child transmission of HIV	18.5	20.7
Attitude towards people with HIV/AIDS*	8	7.6
Women who know where to be tested for HIV	6.1	3.4
Women who have been tested for HIV	2.8	0.5

\*Percentage of people who did not agree with any discriminatory statements. Source: MICS 2006, UNICEF

### Family Planning and Contraceptive Use

Iraq’s current population is estimated at 28.5 million, with an annual growth rate of 2.4% (WHO, 2008). Its fertility rate is 4.3 (UNICEF, 2006), which is closer to the fertility rates of Cameroon (4.31), Sudan (4.23) and Guatemala (4.15) (UN, 2006) than to other Arab states like Jordan (3.2) and Egypt (3.0). Family planning and contraception are only researched or discussed with married women of childbearing age, so the incidence of usage of contraceptives outside of marriage is unknown. The most popular methods of birth control are the contraceptive pill (15%) and intra-uterine devices (IUDs) (12%), while the least popular are condoms and injectables (UNICEF, 2006). About half of currently married women are using contraception, but cultural and religious objections to family planning and contraception (even within marriage) remain.

## **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)**

Sexual and gender-based violence and domestic abuse were cited repeatedly by stakeholders interviewed, including government officials, civil society leaders and women from varying socio-economic backgrounds, as a major problem for women and girls. Underlying this problem is a belief among many that such violence is allowable. UNICEF research indicates a very high percentage (59%) of women that believe there are circumstances in which a husband is justified for beating his wife, including going out without telling the husband, refusing sex, and “burning the food” (UNICEF 2006). A more recent survey of youth aged 10-30 found that more than 50 percent of male respondents and 26 percent of female respondents believe that a husband has the right to beat his wife if she disobeys him (Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2009, 42). In the Iraq Family Health Survey (2006/07), women were questioned about the prevalence of controlling behavior, emotional violence and physical violence in their lives. Examples of controlling behavior are jealousy or anger, having to know where the woman is at all times or insisting that women ask permission to seek medical care. In the report, 83.1 percent of women reported at least one form of marital control and 66.9 percent of women reported having to ask permission to seek medical care. A total of 33.4 percent of women reported some form of emotional abuse and 21.2 percent of women reported physical abuse in the past twelve months.

Treatment for victims of sexual assault remains limited. According to the International Rescue Committee (IRC), three doctors are required to examine victims of suspected rape. The examination is primarily done to determine whether the hymen is intact, rather than to test for DNA or STDs, and many hospitals don't have the rape kits necessary to conduct these tests. It is believed that crimes often go unreported because women fear being blamed for damaging the honor of their families and subsequent reprisals. Honor killings, including immolation, are not uncommon and many are uninvestigated or are written off as suicides. Women who report abuse and sexual assault are forced to seek protection in shelters, where they may stay for years to avoid being killed or attacked by their own families. Though shelters provide a critical service to victims of SGBV, most are under-resourced and lack sufficient security. There are also reports that women in shelters have been exploited and trafficked because of their extremely vulnerable status. The stigma attached to going to a shelter, which is often seen as a “point of no return,” discourages some women from seeking help.

## **Female Genital Cutting (FGC)**

Though a number Iraqis interviewed expressed shock and/or disbelief that FGC (also referred to as female genital mutilation or female circumcision) exists in Iraq, recent research has revealed that it is more prevalent than previously thought. It is most often practiced in the KRG, with some incidence in the South/Central region as well. Results of a 2010 study by a German NGO show that rates vary by age from 57 percent in the 14-19 age bracket to 95.7 percent in the 80-89 age bracket, indicating a generational decrease in prevalence. Rates also vary by region and literacy rate. Erbil has the lowest rate of FGC and the highest literacy rate while Garmyan and New Kirkuk have the highest rates of FGC and the lowest literacy rates. The practice is primarily done by an older woman in the community, who is not usually trained in a medical field, or in some instances by a midwife. The procedure is not always sanitary and there is a chance of infection or heavy bleeding. Psychological problems come not only from the trauma of the procedure but also from ‘problems with husband’ reported by older women. Further research needs to be done on this topic, as there are limitations to the information found in the study. Though FGC is commonly performed between the ages of four and twelve, the research only reports rates for girls over age fourteen. Additional research is needed, therefore, to determine the current prevalence of FGC.

## **Mental Health Care**

After years of insecurity and violence, the issue of mental health care is a particularly important one for Iraq. A 2006/07 Iraq Mental Health Survey reported that 16.5 percent of Iraqis suffer from mental health issues but only 6.12 percent have access to treatment (Ministry of Health/Iraq, 43, 90). The report also found that the resiliency of the Iraqi people is very high. Given that more than half of the survey participants have experienced at least one major trauma, the prevalence of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is relatively low. Data shows that women suffer more from anxiety, behavioral and mood disorders than men and have higher rates of suicidal thoughts. This is especially true of separated, widowed or divorced women. Men, on the other hand, are more likely to experience trauma and or struggle with substance abuse. The mental health portion of the Iraq Family Health Survey 2006/07 reports that more than half of respondents have felt nervous, worried or tense in the previous month and a large number of participants indicated that they feel tired all the time or have frequent headaches. Women report more physical symptoms of stress such as headaches, hands shaking and crying more than usual. More than 30 percent of men and 40 percent of women have a mental health score of at least seven, which indicates significant psychological distress.

## **Promising Approaches**

Many donors, partners and NGOs are tackling health issues in Iraq. Mobile health clinics and community dialogue programs run by local and international NGOs are providing opportunities for education and unprecedented space for men and women to discuss health care issues and sensitive topics like SGBV. Outreach and awareness campaigns were identified in multiple interviews as key to improving individual capacity to advocate for improved health care. In addition to the efforts mentioned in the previous section, there are many promising approaches to addressing gender-specific health needs that should be studied for replication and up-scaling potential, including:

### ***Developing the Female Nursing Workforce***

In an effort to address the shortage of medical personnel, the KRG Ministry of Planning is launching a three-tiered approach to increasing the quantity and quality of nurses and paramedical staff. The educational track for nurses, which can begin as early as age fourteen and continues through the Master's degree level, has been recently overhauled to improve standards. If successful, this approach could be replicated throughout Iraq to improve the skills of nurses and, ideally, to increase the prestige of the profession. A GoI official interviewed also proposed that the MoH explore the possibility of providing financial incentives to encourage women to pursue nursing careers and to recruit nurses from outside Iraq (e.g. Southeast Asia) to help meet immediate needs while serving as role models for young women.

### ***Mobile Health Teams***

An Erbil-based women-focused NGO reports success with an approach that sends mobile health teams consisting of a female doctor, assistant and NGO worker to schools in rural areas. The mobile teams provide health care and education on sexual and reproductive health to adolescent girls (and female teachers as well) who often have very limited access to these kinds of services. Additional support is needed to scale up the program and increase its sustainability for the long-term.

### ***Engaging Religious Leaders to Eradicate Female Genital Cutting (FGC)***

Though discussion of FGC remains limited and even taboo in certain circumstances, dialogue and activism among Iraqis on this issue appears to be growing. The SMOWA conducted an awareness campaign for Gol ministry officials and are seeking support to expand it nationwide. In Kurdistan, one NGO has printed and distributed copies of *fatwas* (religious decrees) declaring FGC un-Islamic. These materials have been used as part of the organization's awareness campaign in urban and rural areas.

### ***Training Female Law Enforcement Officers***

Fear of approaching the police also prevents women from seeking justice and protection in cases of abuse. It is unusual for a woman to file a report with the police if unescorted by a male family member, which presents a problem for women who are suffering abuse at the hands of men in their families. In KRG these issues are primarily dealt with by the Ministry of Social Affairs, which established a "Violence against Women" committee at the Prime Minister's decree. There is also new initiative in Baghdad to bring female officers into the police force to deal with cases of SGBV. The first group of fifty officers graduated in late 2009. Though police work is not generally thought of as "suitable" employment for women, it is hoped that increasing the number of trained female law enforcement officers will facilitate the reporting and prosecution of SGBV and pave the way for increased female participation in the law enforcement field.

### **Areas for Future Focus and Research**

Many in Iraq describe the health care system as poor quality, broken and corrupt. This is a problem that affects every level of society and both men and women, boys and girls. Many stakeholders interviewed, including those from privileged sectors of society, recounted personal stories that highlighted the difficulty most Iraqis face in accessing high quality and affordable healthcare services. Suggested areas for future focus and research include:

- Accurate and up-to-date gender research and gender disaggregated data on all aspects of health are necessary for developing appropriate and effective health care policies and improving the quality of care.
- Further research is needed on the proposed legal framework for health care policy. There also needs to be a strategy to disseminate information to people about their rights and responsibilities with regard to health care.
- Further study of sex trafficking and forced prostitution in Iraq is required to determine the scale of the problem and to develop effective means of addressing it.
- There is a perception among some Iraqis that the rising incidence of breast cancer and other cancers is the result of environmental pollution, specifically contaminated water. Research is needed to pinpoint and educate Iraqis about the likely causes of high cancer rates.
- Successfully addressing health care issues, particularly for women, requires a holistic and cross-sectoral approach that involves education, peace and security and Rule of Law. Likewise, the subject of health has great potential to galvanize cooperation among women in the government across party and sectarian lines to support and enact reform.

## **USAID/IRAQ HEALTH PROGRAM**

### **Program Summary**

Since 2003, USAID/Iraq has implemented a number of health-focused programs in Iraq, including projects aimed at restoring essential health services through renovation of primary care centers, provision of staff training, a childhood immunization campaign and a program to distribute nutritional supplements to pregnant women. Through the *Tatweer* National Capacity Development Project, USAID currently provides technical assistance to the MoH on human resources, fiscal management, information technology and leadership and communication. The next phase of USAID/Iraq's health program is in the design and competition stage and consists of two key programs:

### **Health Promotion (HP) Program**

Launched in October 2009, the HP program is a twelve-month program designed to build the capacity of the Ministry of Health (MoH) (with particular focus on the Health Promotion Department (HPD) of the Public Health and Primary Care Directorate) to design, implement and evaluate behavior change communication (BCC) activities in Iraq. The program focuses on eight goals and activities:

- Institutional and technical leadership development within the MoH for health communication programs;
- Strengthen research, monitoring and evaluation systems for BCC activities;
- Strengthen MoH technical capabilities in development of BCC materials;
- Increase communication skills of HPD staff and for health providers;
- Organize a study tour for MoH staff to learn from another country's experience of implementing BCC;
- Improve knowledge management/information sharing within the HPD and MoH;
- Improve MoH's Emergency communication and crisis information management;
- Enhance MoH capacity to update and implement H1N1 communications strategy.

### **Primary Health Care (PHC) Project**

On April 19, 2010, USAID/Iraq issued a request for proposals (RFP) for a Primary Health Care (PHC) project. The PHC project will be a comprehensive program to support the Iraq MOH to achieve its strategic goal for better quality PHC services by strengthening the PHC delivery system in Iraq. The project will be on the national scale and will target the ministry, provincial and clinical levels, as well as MoH partners such as NGOs and universities. The primary focus will be on building the leadership role of the MoH and quality improvement of overall health delivery processes. The project identifies three inter-related results that must be accomplished in order to meet the overall goal of strengthening the PHC delivery system in Iraq:

- Strengthened management systems and processes that support clinical care;
- Improved delivery of quality PHC according to evidence-based standards;
- Expanded, effective community partnerships for PHC.

The desired result of this project is that the Iraqi people are able to positively identify improvement in their access to and the quality of primary health care.

## **PROGRAM GENDER ANALYSIS**

Because the SOW and workplan for the HP project are currently in the design phase, analysis of gender integration is based on a brief workplan summary made available to PERFORM and an interview with the project implementing partner on April 1, 2010. Likewise, the PHC project is in the competitive bidding stages and so project gender analysis is limited to the publicly-available RFP.

### **Health Promotion Program**

Launched in October 2009, the Health Promotion (HP) program is in the process of finalizing a revised Scope of Work (SOW) and creating a workplan and PMP. In initial strategy discussions, the MoH has chosen obesity as the focus of the BCC campaign it will develop and launch with the help of the HP program. Research shows that obesity is a growing problem in Iraq for both women and men, which could set the stage for an increase in diabetes, heart disease, hypertension and other health problems in the future. According to 2006 WHO data, the prevalence of obesity between women aged 25-65 is 38.2 percent and in men of the same age range it is 26.2 percent. More than 63 percent of men and nearly 70 percent of women have a Body Mass Index greater than 25, which is considered overweight (WHO, 2006).

Discussions with USAID/Iraq's implementing partner indicated that a gender-sensitive approach was taken in the identification and design of the HP project, including assessing gender roles in the health care sector. In an interview with PERFORM, the HPP staff indicated their plan to develop an inter-ministerial committee to enhance communication and coordination on health communication and their intention to include the SMOVA. The HP project will also train the MoH to separate male and female audience profiles. The design of BCC programs will consider the secondary audience as well as the primary, so that if a program is targeted specifically at women, men will also be considered in the design and implementation (and vice-versa). Gender is not specifically mentioned in the two-page workplan summary, which outlines the project objective, activities and tasks. However, if the final SOW and workplan clearly articulate the gender-sensitive approach described in the interview, they could be used as examples for other USAID/Iraq projects going forward.

The HP project itself also currently reflects a gender-balanced team of approximately 50 percent female and 50 percent male staff. Gender balance at the junior, mid- and senior levels is unknown, but the current Chief of Party is one of the few female project leaders in USAID/Iraq's portfolio. As stated previously in this report, striving for gender balance within project staffing is important because it can contribute to gender-sensitive design and implementation and also because it provides a demonstrator effect for Iraqi partners.

### **Recommendations for Integration of Gender into the HP Program**

- The HP project emphasizes MoH-led decision-making and design. Gender integration training should be provided to HP project partners at the beginning of the project in order to ensure gender-sensitivity without undermining the participation and autonomy of the MoH.

- Ensure that trainings, trainings-of-trainers and the “Guest Lecture” program implemented as part of the HP project are gender-balanced. Gender-disaggregated data on MoH staff will facilitate this process.
- It will be crucial to approach the development of MoH’s capacity to conduct research on and evaluate public knowledge about health issues, perceptions and information gathering practices through a gender lens. In addition to having different health concerns and priorities, men and women may also have differing levels of health knowledge and different channels for accessing information about health. Women’s knowledge and information access may be limited by their higher rates of illiteracy and by their limited freedom of movement outside of the home relative to men.
- Build on the SMOWA’s existing interest and capacity in designing and implementing public awareness campaigns related to women’s health. Capture and utilize lessons learned from the SMOWA breast cancer awareness campaign in the development of the MoH obesity campaign.
- As part of the HP project’s knowledge management and information sharing strategy, an online clearinghouse of BCC materials will be developed in both English and Arabic that will be managed by the MoH. It will be important to ensure that materials, information, lessons learned and best practices housed in the clearinghouse are gender, age, education and location-specific, so that the GoI, healthcare providers, NGOs and donors can benefit from the lessons learned as they design and implement BCC for both male and female audiences of all ages and from all sectors of society.

### **Primary Health Care Project**

A review of the PHC project RFP indicates a greater emphasis on gender integration than most USAID/Iraq RFPs (of those available for review). A key principle of the project, articulated at the beginning of the SOW, sets the stage for a gender-sensitive approach:

“Gender issues among health care providers (i.e. limited number of female nurses and doctors available for women’s health care services) and among patients (i.e. limited ability of women in some areas to independently seek health care for themselves and their children or to provide input regarding health care needs) play a significant role in the delivery of, and access to, quality health care” (15).

This resonates with PERFORM’s research findings, in terms of the current roles, needs and constraints that affect women’s and girl’s access to health care. Identifying this as a guiding principle of the forth-coming project increases the chances that the future implementing partner will integrate gender considerations throughout the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the project.

Unfortunately, gender considerations remain implied at best throughout the remainder of the SOW, with the exception of a brief reminder on page 22 that, “as previously noted, gender considerations and a participatory, team-based approach are essential to successful achievement of project results” and a notation that community partnerships can provide an opportunity for women and other vulnerable groups to play a role in decision-making processes on health care issues (28).

## Recommendations for Integrating Gender in the PHC Project

- Ensure that trainings and other capacity building efforts, including the Primary Health Care Leadership and Management Training Program are gender balanced and gender sensitive. Emphasize the development of women's leadership skills.
- Ensure that gender specific and gender-disaggregated data are included in the Primary Health Care Patient Records System.
- Ensure gender integration into the implementation (and revision, if needed) of the *Policies and Procedures for Establishing National Primary Health Standards of Care* and the *Handbook of Quality Standards and Operational Guidelines for Clinical Service Delivery in Primary Care Clinics*. Improve training on care and treatment for survivors of sexual and gender based violence in the development and updating of treatment protocols for doctors, nurses and clinicians in primary care clinics, based on a review of existing curricula and training.
- Set gender-specific targets related to the expansion of the Primary Health Care Quality Improvement (QI) Program. Potential targets could include the number of clinics that increase female staff by a particular percentage. Integrate gender into the Primary Health Care In-Service Training Program and set gender-specific targets for participation at all levels, based on baseline data.
- Leverage the widespread interest on the part of Iraqi women, including NGO and community leaders, in the improvement of PHC in Iraq. Set gender-specific targets for the involvement of women, minorities and IDPs in the community partnership component of the project.
- In the development and strengthening of human resource management systems, the roles and norms for men and women in the medical field should be addressed.
- When designing the programs and training medical staff to improve the quality of health care, women should be targeted to play a central role in the research and development of these strategies. Both men and women should be targeted when designing training for and research on family planning and reproductive health. Raising awareness and providing easy access on these issues will provide the capacity for them to make informed decisions.
- When developing the capacity of personnel in patient care, patient rights, security and confidentiality, emphasize the role this will play in the treatment and care for survivors of SGBV. Developing local health committees will provide a platform for the Iraqi people to seek improvement and raise concerns about the quality of and access to health care. Inclusion of women in these committees will leverage their concern for the health of their families to advocate for quality and equality.
- Collaborate with the USAID/Iraq HP project to strengthen the MoH's ability to raise awareness of patient rights, particularly female patients, in conjunction with the development of a National Statement of Patients' Rights in PHC.
- Ensure that the project supports the development and expansion of mobile clinic programs, which are a critical link to PHC and education for communities without a local clinic. This is particularly true for women and girls, who are often less able or less free to travel to seek health care.

# INTERNATIONAL DONORS' GENDER STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS

## UNITED NATIONS (UN)

### UN Gender Strategy

The UN has a gender mainstreaming policy that applies across the entire UN system. A commitment was made at the Beijing Conference in 1995 to include women in the design, implementation and monitoring of programs and established policies to 'foster the empowerment and advancement of women'. To achieve this goal the UN articulated a set of principles and strategies to operationalize the gender mainstreaming perspective. Some of these principles are:

- Issues across all areas of activity should be defined in such a manner that gender differences can be diagnosed - that is, gender-neutrality should not be assumed.
- Responsibility for translating gender mainstreaming into practice is system-wide and rests at the highest levels. Accountability for outcomes needs to be monitored constantly.
- Gender mainstreaming also requires that every effort be made to broaden women's participation at all levels of decision-making.

The UN includes strategies for mainstreaming gender into the intergovernmental process, requiring gender mainstreaming in all institutional policies and programs. There are also outlined strategies for the role of gender units and gender focal points in the process of gender mainstreaming. The strategy also acknowledges the need for capacity building to achieve gender mainstreaming goals.

### UN Programs in Iraq

- **Water processing-** The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is working to improve and increase the processing power of the Karama water treatment plant. Access to clean water supply is a vital service for Iraqis and especially women as they are most often the persons who collect water for the family. The goal of the project is to render the plant capable of supplying clean water to approximately one million residents of the Karkah area of Baghdad.
- **Independent Media Project-** UNDP is partnering with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) on a media campaign to improve the capacity of the Iraqi media, provide assistance in incorporating the media into the elections, and improve the position of women in the media. They developed the independent news agency Aswat al Iraq and held a conference on "The Role of Media and Technology in Increasing the Number and Effectiveness of Women in Politics" in Amman in October 2009.

## **WORLD BANK**

### **World Bank Gender Strategy**

According to *Integrating Gender into the World Bank's Work: A Strategy for Action* (2002), the World Bank recognizes the importance of mainstreaming gender for business practices and strives to work with government and civil society to understand the best ways to work around gender-related barriers and capitalize on opportunities. The process is comprised of three main steps:

1. Prepare, for each country in which the Bank has an active lending program, a periodic Country Gender Assessment (CGA) analyzing the gender dimensions of development across sectors and identifying the gender-responsive actions that are important for poverty reduction, economic growth, human well-being and development effectiveness, and use it to inform the Bank's country assistance program;
2. Develop and implement, as part of the country assistance program, priority policy and operational interventions (if any) that respond to the CGA; and
3. Monitor the implementation and results of these policy and operational interventions.

They have also developed internal actions to facilitate this basic process and an implementation timetable. With country specific strategies they hope to provide evidence of clear links between gender, growth and poverty reduction. The actions the World Bank will take to facilitate the basic process are as follows:

1. Integrate the gender dimension into relevant analytical work;
2. Support the strategic integration of gender issues into Bank operations;
3. Align resources with the elements of the strategy; and,
4. Develop and implement an effective system to monitor and evaluate the process of gender mainstreaming and its impact on the ground.

(World Bank, 2002)

### **World Bank Programs in Iraq**

- **Strengthening Emergency Health Response in Northern Iraq (RHERP)** is a capacity building program assisting the KRG to improve response to health emergencies. There are many emergency needs due to acts of violence, accidents or natural disasters. The United National Office of Projects Services (UNOPS) will act as the implementing agency.
- **Iraq: Banking Sector Reform:** The project goals are to strengthen and improve the supervisory framework and institutional capacity of banking institutions. The areas that this strategy will focus on are institutional, financial and operational restructuring of the two main state-owned commercial banks. They will also work on regulatory and supervisory functions of the Central Bank of Iraq.

## **UNITED NATIONS FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO)**

### **FAO Gender Strategy**

FAO has recognized that although institutional gender mainstreaming policies are in place, they have not been consistently implemented. Where these policies have been implemented, the process has been challenging. FAO follows the lead of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in regarding gender mainstreaming as a process and not an end product, and continues its efforts under the Gender and Development Plan of Action (2008-2013). The tools FAO uses for gender mainstreaming include the Gender and Development Plan of Action, the gender focal point system, and the Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis (SEAGA) Approach. FAO plans to continue using its existing gender mainstreaming framework, but is working to improve its practice with a more targeted approach (FAO, 2007).

### **FAO Programs in Iraq**

- **Emergency and Rehabilitation:** FAO is implementing a number of programs which will have a direct impact on women. These include programs to increase employment in the areas of dairy processing, bee keeping, fish farming and cottage industries. The FAO is also working on the improvement and expansion of food processing capacity and food safety. These programs are expected to be completed in 2011.
- **Iraqi Marshlands Initiative, FAO/MOSM Joint Programming Strategy:** The Joint Programming Strategy is designed to help the people of the Iraqi Marshlands by supporting various agricultural industries, including horticulture, livestock and fisheries. The collaboration between FAO in Iraq and the Ministry of State for the Marshlands Affairs (MOSM) will also develop capacity in agro-industries, GIS applications and food safety.

## **UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN (UNIFEM)**

### **UNIFEM Gender Strategy**

The work of UNIFEM centers on gender equality and the advancement of women's human rights. UNIFEM focuses on the areas of economic security, violence against women, HIV/AIDS and gender justice in democratic governance.

### **UNIFEM Programs in Iraq**

- **Theater program in Baghdad:** In 2006, UNICEF supported a mobile theater program to raise awareness about issues such as Article 41 in the new constitution. The program's goal is to raise women's awareness of the current Personal Status Law and to encourage women to advocate for an amendment to Article 41.
- **Women's Caucus Established within Iraqi Parliament:** In 2006-2007, UNIFEM facilitated a number of meetings, including a workshop in Amman for women parliamentarians from KRG, to support the establishment of a women's caucus in parliament. The purpose of the caucus, which was established in September 2007, is to promote cooperation among female parliamentarians on issues such as gender equality and women's human rights.

### **Current Collaborative Efforts and Future Potential**

Currently there is limited collaboration among international donors and many interviewees raised this as a major constraint to donor effectiveness. Some collaboration has been effective within the UN system such as the joint UNESCO and UNAMI independent media project. USAID partnered with UNESCO and UNICEF on its previous education projects (RISE I and II) and a recent assessment found that these partnerships were critical to project effectiveness (Dall *et al.*, 2009, 4). There has also been collaboration within the Gender Task Force chaired by UNAMI, which serves as a forum for donors to discuss current issues in Iraq and potential for joint programming. USAID has recently joined this task force and should continue to prioritize participation. There is much potential for future collaboration and information sharing that will enable international donors to improve outcomes for Iraq.

# FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The preceding sections have included a detailed analysis of current gender issues and constraints in Iraq, as well as assessments, findings and recommendations for each sector in which USAID implements programs. The following section outlines overarching findings and recommendations to assist the USAID Mission in Iraq as it works to integrate gender more effectively into its 2010-2012 Country Strategy and into current and forthcoming projects.

## **The Need for Gender Integration in USAID/Iraq Strategy and Programs**

Gender disparities are prevalent in Iraq and their persistence threatens the effectiveness of national stabilization and development efforts. Development outcomes in Iraq suffer not only because of the high levels of insecurity, they also falter because of the gender gap. Gender inequality prevents women, men, boys and girls from participating fully, contributing equally and benefiting consistently from initiatives intended to promote health, education, economic growth and good governance. By making gender equality a top development priority, the GoI can avail itself of the “double dividend,” whereby investing in women also benefits their children. The health and education status of Iraq’s next generation will blossom and can become a driving force in the country’s growth and development. This is why it is critical that USAID/Iraq take the necessary steps to further integrate gender in its country strategy and its assistance programs. Not only will programs become more effective, the levels of extremism and terrorism may also decline as the gender gap closes and women and girls contribute to the country’s stability and growth.

Integrating gender in USAID/Iraq’s work also requires a concerted effort to support initiatives to end violence against women in Iraq. Even as the level of political and sectarian violence wanes, there has been an alarming increase in domestic violence and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence- a growing pattern not only in Iraq but also in most post-conflict societies. This violence reduces women’s and girls’ participation in society and brings with it high economic and social costs. Women’s status in society is a tell-tale measure of a state’s stability and prosperity. If women are highly disadvantaged *vis à vis* men, chances are high that their country is also a weak, fragile state.

The gender needs of men, particularly male youth, should also be a central focus in an Iraq strategy. Iraq is a young society and if the life options of youth remain dismal, as they currently are, insecurity is likely to rise even in the absence of an insurgency or increased globalization. Labor force participation for young men and for women is central to economic growth and a sustainable economy. Accession to the World Trade Organization will mean little if in the end there is no significant decrease in unemployment and if young men and women in Iraq cannot adequately provide for themselves and their families.

As USAID begins new activities in governance, national capacity building, access to justice, education, health and economic growth, steps should be taken to identify gender goals for each sector for incorporation in upcoming RFPs. But gender goals and targets are not enough. USAID/Iraq leadership, staff and implementing partners must comply with the gender requirements of the automated directives system (ADS) and make gender integration real in all the stages of the program cycle from conception to evaluation. The creation of a strategy for

gender integration and an accompanying gender action plan can help USAID/Iraq mainstream gender in its work and facilitate more effective and lasting change for Iraq.

### **Findings from the Gender Assessment of USAID/Iraq**

PERFORM's Gender Assessment found limited evidence of gender integration in the mission's strategy, projects and project evaluations. USAID's ADS requires all missions and agency employees to adhere to the policy directives and required procedures for the integration of gender in project design, implementation, assessment and evaluation. This assessment report includes the findings of a gender analysis of USAID/Iraq's strategy and programs and a set of recommendations for mainstreaming gender considerations into programs in democratic governance and rule of law, national capacity strengthening, economic growth, private sector development, integrated agriculture development, health and education.

### **Recommendations for USAID/Iraq**

The four-part strategy below is recommended for effective gender integration. This strategy will assist the USAID/Iraq Mission in addressing the key gender issues identified in the assessment and link gender-focused assistance approaches to the realization of the strategic objectives for Iraq. The four part strategy calls on USAID/Iraq to:

- Enhance accountability by requiring consistent compliance with the gender integration policies of the ADS and other Mission gender policies and directives.
- Increase Mission technical capacity in gender planning and gender analysis and select implementing partners with strong gender expertise and/or gender track records.
- Commission sector specific gender research and analysis and integrate findings in development of new programs.
- Expand partnerships with US Government (USG), Government of Iraq (GoI), civil society and international development agencies committed to the promotion of women's rights and gender equality.

### **Consistent Accountability**

While USAID/Iraq has a solid gender policy framework on which to rely for the promotion of gender integration in programs, compliance with the Agency's ADS gender policies is inconsistent. The ADS calls for integration of gender throughout the entire cycle of the assistance process- from strategy development and requests for proposals to implementing partner contracting, program implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Too often these requirements are given cursory attention with a couple sentences in required documents, a recycled paragraph on gender or the inclusion of the number of women trained in quarterly reports. Serious attention by Mission and implementing partner staff to the impact of gender relations on program effectiveness or the impact of assistance interventions on gender relations- though required and integral to Mission success-- is missing.

One policy document that may help link the larger agency directive with the Mission's work on the ground in Iraq is the Mission Order for Gender Integration, a draft of which has been developed. This order should be reviewed, approved and used as a mechanism to ensure compliance. Another important entry point for compliance is at the contracting stage. The inclusion of gender integration requirements in implementing partner contracts which are legally binding documents may also increase compliance with the ADS. Mission staff and implementing

partners alike should be evaluated on their compliance with the gender integration requirements. The full set of recommendations for the realization of consistent accountability can be found in the section on the USAID/Iraq Country Strategy and in Appendix A.I, which outlines recommendations for the development of a Mission Gender Action Plan.

### **Technical Capacity**

Strong technical capacity in gender integration is an important prerequisite for equitable and effective programs. The Iraq Mission should invest in the development of staff capacity in gender analysis and gender planning and should also invest in the recruitment of an Iraqi gender specialist. Research interns could also provide support for the Program Office and technical offices as they assess past performance and develop new programs and intervention strategies. The Mission Gender Officer is a key post and the lead technical staff for gender, so keeping that post filled by a program staff member with gender expertise should be a priority. Similarly, the selection of implementing partners with a track record on gender programming in their sectors of expertise and/or with experienced gender specialists on their teams should be part of selection criteria. Additional, sector-specific recommendations for developing technical capacity can be found in the previous sector-specific chapters on democratic governance and national capacity strengthening, economic growth, integrated agriculture development, education and health.

### **Gender Research and Analysis**

There is a need for more research and analysis of gender relations in Iraq and in particular the impact of gender relations on economic growth, private sector development, health, education and access to justice. USAID should support the collection of gender statistics and gender disaggregated data at both the national government level and at the implementing partner level. Most of the disaggregated data that PERFORM was able to collect from implementing partners were prepared specifically for the gender assessment and there was little indication that this data is regularly assembled or used for program learning or mid-term program adjustments. Additional research and sector specific gender analysis can help produce the appropriate gender indicators for inclusion in performance management plans and to provide evidence of program effectiveness. Sector-specific topics for research and areas where gender disaggregated data can be most helpful are discussed in the previous sector-specific chapters.

### **Partnerships**

Sometimes agencies think that they must go it alone in the development and promotion of a gender integration initiative, but that is not the case. There are many agencies, organizations and other stakeholders who are committed to the promotion of gender equality and who are working on their own gender mainstreaming initiatives. Building partnerships with these entities can strengthen USAID's gender integration efforts. Partnerships are a good source of technical information and contacts and provide a more comprehensive picture of the landscape of gender issues, best practices and promising approaches. The Iraq Mission should take advantage of the expertise of the following partners: The USAID EGAT/WID Office; the UNAMI Gender Task Force; the Gender Focal Points in various Iraq government ministries; and the US Embassy Women's Issues Working Group. The Appendix includes a list of Gol and civil society contacts and research institutions that the Iraq Mission can connect with for expertise and knowledge on gender issues in Iraq.

While the Mission's success in integrating gender is limited, there are several key forthcoming opportunities for the Mission to come into alignment with USAID directives for gender

integration to promote more effective development results. These opportunities include the following:

- Mission Strategic Plan
- Mission Gender Action Plan
- New project designs
- Forthcoming RFPs, Contracts, PMPs, Assessments and Evaluations

Specific action items for gender integration in USAID's work in Iraq are:

- Revise and adapt a Mission Order on gender integration and ensure compliance with the Mission Order.
- Fully integrate gender objectives in RFPs, contracts, project plans, PMPs, reporting and assessments.
- Include gender analysis in feasibility studies, baseline studies and market assessments.
- Develop gender targets for program outreach and program impact.
- Collect and analyze gender indicators and sex-disaggregated data for all programs and to inform future project design.
- Include gender disaggregated, pre- and post-training capacity and participation measures and gender baseline data to enhance assessments and evaluations.
- Integrate gender issues and topics in future Mission national capacity strengthening efforts and in the provision of technical assistance.

Sector-specific recommendations for the eight program areas of USAID/Iraq's assistance strategy are included at the end of sections IV, V, VI and VII. A set of recommendations for a Mission Gender Action Plan is included in Appendix A.1

# APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL DELIVERABLES

## I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USAID/IRAQ GENDER ACTION PLAN

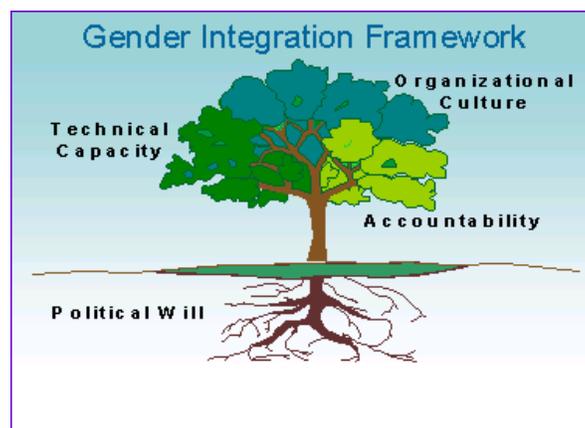
USAID/Iraq is planning to develop a mission-wide Gender Action Plan to outline the steps the office will take to integrate gender in the range of reconstruction, stabilization and development activities it is engaged in and to ensure full compliance with the ADS gender policies. The Gender Assessment Team was tasked with developing of a set of recommendations for USAID/IRAQ's use in the development of the Gender Action Plan. The Assessment Team used the Gender Integration Framework designed by InterAction's Commission on the Advancement of Women (CAW) to develop recommendations for the development of a Mission Gender Action Plan. The CAW's Gender Integration Framework aids organizations in going beyond individual capacity for gender mainstreaming to strengthening *institutional* capacity through the following four key elements:

**Political Will** - Ways in which leaders use their position of power to communicate and demonstrate their support, leadership, enthusiasm for and commitment to working toward gender equality in the organization.

**Technical Capacity** - Abilities, qualifications and skills individuals in an organization need to carry out the practical aspects of gender integration for enhanced program quality, as well as the extent to which gender equitable processes are institutionalized within the organization.

**Accountability** -Mechanisms by which an organization determines the extent to which it is "walking the talk" in terms of integrating gender equality in its programs and organizational structures.

**Organizational Culture** -Norms, customs, beliefs and codes of behavior in an organization that support or undermine gender equality-- how people relate; what are seen as acceptable ideas; how people are expected to behave; and what behaviors are rewarded.



(GIF Framework developed by InterAction's Commission on the Advancement of Women)

The Gender Integration Framework is a key factor in the process of transforming gender blind organizations into gender responsive ones. Key assumptions that underpin the Gender Integration Framework and from which the four elements emerge are as follows:

- Gender inequality is often embedded in an organization's values, culture, processes and programs.
- Organizational and programmatic change in support of gender equality involves changes in women's and men's roles and relations, opportunities and benefits.
- Gender equality can enhance organizations' effectiveness and efficiency because gender considerations cut across every sector, section, and process within organizations.

In the process of conducting an organizational Gender Audit, the elements of the Gender Integration Framework are often used to craft a Gender Action Plan ensuring that the gender integration initiative includes all four elements to ensure maximum impact and sustainability. Successful Gender Action Plans include action items from each element described in the Gender Integration Framework. Gender Action Plan recommendations for USAID/Iraq for the four elements are:

### **Accountability Recommendations**

- Require involvement of a Gender Specialist in program planning, particularly in the project design phase.
- Include tangible and specific gender goals, targets and indicators in RFPs.
- Ensure that gender integration requirements for project design, implementation and M&E are articulated clearly in contracts; avoid recycling vague language on gender.
- Require gender targets and gender disaggregated data in PMPs.
- Include gender goals in the performance review process.
- Require inclusion of a Gender Specialist or gender evaluation competency on Assessment and Evaluation Teams.
- Enforce adherence to ADS requirements through the revision and adaption of a Gender Mission Order.

### **Technical Capacity Recommendations**

- Recruit and retain a Senior Gender Specialist on Mission staff.
- Create a Mission Gender Task Force.
- Conduct gender programming and gender analysis training for staff of technical offices.
- Enhance knowledge management systems and cross-sector pollination on gender issues.

### **Political Will Recommendations**

- Demonstrate senior management support of gender integration as a Mission goal and priority.
- Budget adequate human and financial resources for the Mission Gender Action Plan.
- Promote and work towards diversity in recruitment and gender balance in staffing.

### **Organizational Culture Recommendations**

- Build mechanisms for outreach for gender input from Iraqi stakeholders.
- Increase coordination with international gender experts.
- Promote promising implementation strategies and best practices in a gender newsletter.
- Assess organizational culture via a Gender Audit.

## 2. QUICK GUIDE TO ADS GENDER INTEGRATION AND ANALYSIS REQUIREMENTS<sup>4</sup>

The Automated Directives System (ADS), USAID's directives management program, is the primary vehicle for outlining USAID's requirements for gender integration in the planning and programming cycle.

**Gender integration** involves the identification and subsequent treatment of gender differences and inequalities during program/project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Gender integration often involves a focus on women, because women have traditionally been subject to subordination and marginalization by virtue of their gender, but successful gender integration must take into account the gendered roles, responsibilities, needs and opportunities of men and boys as well as of women and girls.

Experience and empirical research has shown that assessing, analyzing and addressing gender inequalities and constraints leads to stronger and more effective development programming.

USAID policy and procedures related to gender integration are found in the following sections of the ADS:

- 201.3.8** Program Planning: Assistance Objective (AO)
- 201.3.9.3** Gender Analysis
- 201.3.11.6** Project/Activity Planning Step 2: Conduct Project-Level Analyses as Needed
- 203.3.4.3** Reflecting Gender Issues in Performance Indicators
- 203.3.6.1** When Is an Evaluation Appropriate?
- 203.3.6.2** Planning Evaluations
- 302.3.5.15** Incorporating Gender Issues into Solicitations
- 303.3.6.3** Evaluation Criteria

### **Gender Analysis:**

**Gender analysis at the project/activity level is mandatory.** USAID's approach to gender analysis centers on two key questions:

- a. How will the different roles and status of women and men within the community, political sphere, workplace and household (for example, roles in decision-making and different access to and control over resources and services) affect the work to be undertaken?
- b. How will the anticipated results of the work affect women and men differently?

Sex-disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data (obtained through desk research, focus groups, interviews and surveys, for example) can provide the empirical foundation for the gender analysis.

### **Long-term Planning:** (see [ADS 201.3.9.3](#))

"...USAID's gender integration approach requires that gender analysis be applied to the range of technical issues that are considered in the development of a given strategic plan, AOs, programs and activities."

### **Project and Activity Planning:** (see [ADS 201.3.11.6](#) and [ADS 201.3.9.3](#))

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<sup>4</sup> This is an abridged version of the *Guide to Gender Integration and Analysis: Additional Help for ADS Chapters 201 and 203*; New Reference: 03/26/2010; Responsible Office: EGAT/WID; File Name: 201sab\_032610. Material is directly sourced and paraphrased from the above.

All projects and activities must address gender issues in a manner consistent with the findings of any analytical work performed during development of the Mission's long-term plan or for project or activity design. The AO team must document the conclusion of any gender analyses in the Activity Approval Document (AAD). If the AO Team determines that gender is not a significant issue, this must be stated in the AAD.

**Performance Indicators:** (see [ADS 203.3.4.3](#))

When the technical analyses supporting the AO, project or activity demonstrate that a) the different roles and status of women and men affect the activities to be undertaken and b) the anticipated results of the work would affect women and men differently, then performance management systems and evaluations must include gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data.

**Issuance of Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and Requests for Applications (RFAs):**

(see [ADS 302.3.5.15](#) regarding contracts and [ADS 303.3.6.3](#) regarding grants)

- The **Contract or Agreement Officer** must ensure that the requiring office integrates gender issues into the procurement request or include a rationale for not addressing gender in the project or activity.
- Gender must be integrated into the different performance components of an RFP or RFA (e.g. Statement of Work, Program Description, project deliverables).
- The Contract or Agreement Officer must ensure that gender is also integrated into the corresponding technical evaluation criteria for RFPs or APSs.

**Key Resources:**

This short guide is based on *USAID's Guide to Gender Integration and Analysis: Additional Help for ADS Chapters 201 and 203*, which provides more detailed information on ADS gender-related directives. This guide also includes a number of useful resources including:

- Sample follow-on questions and guidance for:
  - Gender analysis
  - Analysis of gender roles and responsibilities/sexual division of labor
  - Assessment of access to and control over resources
  - Examination of decision-making patterns
  - Examination of data from a gender perspective
  - Integrating gender into USAID programming
- List of resources for further guidance
- Glossary of key terms in gender analysis

Other useful resources include:

- *The Automated Directives System (ADS)*: <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/adsl/>
- *Issuance of Revised ADS Chapters 200, 201, 203, 302, and 303, Strengthening Gender Integration in USAID Planning and Programming*; Interim Update: 10/09
- *Guidance for Conducting Gender Analysis during Project Design*; Elizabeth Duban, E&E Bureau (2008).

### 3. FOCUS GROUP RESULTS



**USAID | IRAQ**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



## GENDER ASSESSMENT FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

May 2010

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*"The poor security situation negatively affects both men and women but in general women's roles are still weak due to prevailing traditions and customs."*

*-Anbar Group Participant*

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### Focus Groups on Gender Held across Iraq

In April the QED Perform project conducted focus group discussions across the country as part of a gender assessment of USAID/Iraq programs. Focus group discussions were held in 18 out of 19 provinces in Iraq; all but Dohuk. The focus groups were conducted with civil society members, the ultimate target of USAID/Iraq programs, to get their feedback on the impact of USAID programs on gender relations in Iraq. A total of 31 focus group discussions were held with 323 participants in groups ranging in size from 8 to 12 participants. Two thirds (64%) of the focus group participants were women and one third (36%) were men. Participants came from various sectors of the society including health (5%), education (18%), agriculture (4%), non-governmental organizations (34%), homemakers (2%) and other sectors (37%) consisting of retired employees, some government representatives, handicraft entrepreneurs, shop owners and

Please see *Focus Groups* on page 2

### Change in Gender Relations Slow Participants Say

Focus group members were asked a series of questions on the general context of gender relations and gender issues in Iraq. Discussions centered on how the roles and responsibilities of men, women, boys and girls have changed during the last three years. Across the board, focus group members reported slow progress in the transformation of gender disparities between women and men. Focus group participants noted that while in general Iraq remains a male dominated society, changes in the security situation in Iraq brought about some changes in gender roles for women and men. During periods of high insecurity some men have not been able to fulfill their breadwinner roles while some women have been able to enter the workplace as the security situation has improved. Focus

Please see *Change in Gender* on page 3

## Among Iraqis, Confidence in Government Capacity Low

Focus group participants expressed a lack of confidence in both the national and provincial government's ability to meet the differing needs of women and men in Iraqi society. Some participants felt that the national government paid more attention to men than to women. Others noted that the disparity in education between men and women and the lack of equal opportunity in services reduced their confidence in the government's capacity. Additional factors that reduced participants' confidence in government included:

- Poor government performance
- Government's inability to address the needs of the internally displaced population in Kirkuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah
- Government lack of attention to rural areas and in particular the needs of rural women
- Government failure to address sectarian violence, ethnic/national discrimination and corruption
- Lack of government staff's capacity and low level of human resources in both skills and leadership
- Government's inability to significantly reduce insecurity

Focus group participants also pointed out the need for government to promote public awareness about gender equality to help improve women's and girls' roles and status in Iraqi society. Participants also identified the critical role government can play in ensuring equal protection under the law for both women and men and improving and equalizing protection and enforcement mechanisms.

*Focus Groups from page 1*

representatives from selected institutes. The focus group discussions were designed to gather opinions, beliefs, and attitudes from members of Iraq's civil society on the gender dimension of reconstruction and development in Iraq. Participants were asked to provide feedback on opportunities and constraints in achieving gender equality; culturally appropriate program approaches and strategies and gender issues and areas requiring more analysis, research or international development assistance.

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*"Both men and women have no trust or confidence in the national government due to the prevalence of corruption, lack of qualified leadership and the arbitrary distribution of post and professions."*

*-Muthanna Group  
Participant*

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## Agriculture, Health Awareness and Education Infrastructure Keys to Growth

Focus group participants identified agriculture growth, education, economic growth and health as priority areas for USAID/Iraq development assistance. In the case of agriculture, focus group participants highlighted the need for a strong emphasis on agricultural development, training and education for farmers particularly women to strengthen production capacity and agricultural skills. For education, participants called attention to the need for more school buildings, a modern curriculum, training and capacity building for teachers, literacy training for adults, especially women and community mobilization efforts to promote awareness of the value of women's and girls' education. Participants identified more training and microfinance loans for women and the building and reopening of factories to provide jobs for women and men as critical areas for increased economic growth. Health education and awareness, health facilities particularly those equipped for maternity and birthing needs, water and sanitation issues, environmental pollution and the spread of cancer were identified by focus group participants as pressing health needs requiring immediate attention.

*Change in Gender from page 1*

group participants also noted that religious and cultural beliefs, customs and practices tend to benefit the social status of men and are less advantageous for women. Government corruption was also noted as a barrier to men's and women's ability to benefit equally from reconstruction and development efforts with women being more susceptible to corruption's negative impact. The lack of quality education for boys and girls along with the growing issue of child labor were also identified as critical areas for attention. Focus group participants identified a number of actions that could be taken to ensure that attitudes, norms and practices do not remain barriers to women and men's equal access to resources, opportunities or education. Some promising actions include (1) education and awareness programs on the benefits of gender equality for women and men; (2) the enactment of legislation to guarantee women's equality; (3) the elimination of corruption in government; (4) improvement in the security situation; (5) guaranteed complete education for children especially girls; and (6) the integration of lessons on gender equality in school curriculum.

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*"Women do not have equal access to development assistance and services. Men have the advantage due to society's traditions."*  
 -Mosul Group Participant

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## Civil Society Recommendations for Gender Equality

Focus group participants also identified additional issues critical to the promotion of women's, men's, boys' and girls' equal participation in and benefit from reconstruction and development efforts. Top issues identified by focus group participants were:

- Human rights and access to justice for both genders
- Continuing gender disparities among women and men
- Lack of adequate health services for women and girls
- Low education attainment for girls and low completion rates for boys
- High levels of adult illiteracy particularly among women
- Insecurity and growing community and domestic violence including sexual and gender based violence

Recommendations from focus group participants for addressing these and other gender issues include the following:

- Increased training and education programs for women and girls
- Expanded provision of microfinance loan programs for female entrepreneurs
- Investments in the development of health infrastructure including health facilities in rural areas and improvements in reproductive health services
- Investments in the education sector including new education facilities, gender sensitive curriculum, training and capacity strengthening for teachers, and expanded adult literacy programs particularly for women.
- Development of a national initiative targeting socially excluded populations including widows, ANFIL survivors, internally displaced and returnee populations, female headed households and the elderly.
- The establishment of a national institute for women's leadership.

## 4. USAID/IRAQ PERFORM GENDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

### Performance Evaluation and Reporting for Results Management (PERFORM)

# GENDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

## Introduction

The importance of gender considerations and mainstreaming in international development has been emphasized for many years, given the fact that the benefits of such development can be unequally distributed and purposeful planning, implementation, and measurement hence is required in order for gender equality to be assured. The concept of gender refers to “the economic, social, political, and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female.”<sup>5</sup> Assuring that gender is integrated into the work of development assistance involves “taking account of both the differences and inequalities between men and women in program planning, implementing, and assessing.”<sup>6</sup>

In order to assure gender equality, gender must be analyzed during the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation phases of assistance. Gender analysis is the foundation for assuring this desired equality and involves the application of “socio-economic methodologies that identify and interpret the consequences of gender differences and relations for achieving development objectives.”<sup>7</sup> A critical component of gender analysis includes the “collection of sex-disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data” which estimate the potential impact of gender relations on the development assistance planned or in its implementation phase and which also illustrate the actual relative benefits of the assistance to men and women.

Since Performance Evaluation and Reporting for Results Management (PERFORM) assists USAID/Iraq in making design-oriented assessments, monitors and evaluates USAID projects and programs, and writes a number of stories and reports, gender analysis is central to our work. This Gender Engagement Plan, hence, lays out how: (1) we will conduct gender analyzes, assess gender issues, discuss and measure gender impacts, and include gender-disaggregated data where applicable in PERFORM’s assessments, monitoring and evaluation tasks, and in our thematic reports and success stories and training; (2) we will determine whether implementers are applying gender analysis, integration, and mainstreaming to their work during our monitoring and evaluation of USAID’s activities in Iraq; (3) we will conduct reflective evaluations of how gender is treated in and impacted by USAID/Iraq’s activities; and (4) we will apply sound and equitable gender standards and policies in the operation of our PERFORM office in Iraq.

## USAID/Iraq’s Gender Policy

USAID/Iraq recently has written a draft Mission Order, not yet approved, on Gender Integration and Analysis. The stated purpose of this Mission Order is to: “(a) establish a policy

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<sup>5</sup> DAC Guideline for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development Cooperation, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Paris, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> A Guide to Gender Integration and Analysis: Annex to ADS 200 Series.  
Inside.usaid.gov/AFR/sectors/gender/project\_cycle/ads200genderintegrationanalysis.pdf -2005-04-10

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

on the integration of gender into relevant programs and activities; and (b) describe procedures, clarify role and responsibilities to ensure that gender mainstreaming is incorporated into USAID Iraq's objectives and programs.<sup>8</sup>

According to the draft Mission Order, "gender is a priority area of concern and should be addressed in a cross-cutting manner in all strategic and special objectives encompassed by USAID/Iraq programs, and included in all relevant program and activity design, procurement, and reporting documents."<sup>9</sup> Gender is to be mainstreamed, the draft Mission Order states, by "assessing the gender issues for men, as well as women, as they relate to proposed programs and projects; and by identifying and analyzing potential gender differences and integrating them throughout the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of programs and projects."<sup>10</sup>

USAID/Iraq Performance Reports (PR) are required to track the effect of programs on the status of women relative to men. This requires, the draft Mission Order asserts, the collection and analysis of baseline information about the situation of both men and women at the initiation of the activity (such as an indicator which measures the proportion of seats held by men and women in Parliament); and a close tracking of the impact of the activity on both men and women throughout and following implementation. Specific indicators and sex-aggregated baseline information up front form the foundation for setting specific targets for addressing gender constraints and inequalities. Both quantitative and qualitative indicators can be employed.<sup>11</sup>

All evaluations and assessments of activities and sectors in which gender is a relevant factor must discuss the extent to which both sexes participate and benefit, the degree to which the project designed and contributed to reducing gender disparities and improved the situation of disadvantaged girls/women and/or boys/men. Lessons learned with regard to gender must be highlighted and scopes-of-work for assessment and evaluations must specifically address gender and also ensure that gender expertise is included on the assessment/evaluation team, according to the draft Mission Order.<sup>12</sup>

Likewise, during the project identification and design phase, it must be determined whether gender is relevant and in what ways, the draft Mission Order requires. Gender considerations are mandatory according to USAID's ADS and should be documented. If gender is determine to be relevant, recommendations should be made as to how the proposed activity will address and help overcome gender disparities. If gender is determined not to be relevant, that fact and its justification must be documented in accordance with ADS 201.3.9.3.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> USAID/Iraq, *Draft Mission Order on Gender Integration and Analysis*, 11/09/2009.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> USAID, *Automated Directives System (ADS)*, No 201: "Planning"

### **How PERFORM will approach Gender in Our Tasks:**

PERFORM will apply the most recently accepted principles of gender mainstreaming in conducting all of our tasks for USAID/Iraq. We interpret gender mainstreaming as the United Nations does, as “the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men benefits equally and inequality is not perpetuated.”<sup>14</sup> Gender analysis forms the basis of gender mainstreaming by interpreting data and information about a given or potential situation from a gender perspective.<sup>15</sup>

As stated in our Field Monitoring Protocol, the PERFORM team will guide the collection and analysis of data showing how gender relations impact the achievement of women’s participation in the USAID/Iraq development efforts as well as overall program targets and results. Data collected will be gender-disaggregated. The goal will be to ensure that men and women are able to equally benefit from program activities and ensure that women are not disproportionately excluded in the program delivery. PERFORM will strive to move beyond simply counting numbers of men and women participants to more carefully analyzing gender relations, designing appropriate gender inclusive and empowerment measures, and indicating how USAID programs are affecting the relative status of men and women. Analyzing the sex-disaggregated data for gender-based constraints and opportunities will facilitate regular assessment of USAID/Iraq programs targets of women’s participation, support systemic institutionalization of gender efforts, and the ability to conduct meaningful impact evaluations and assessments. The PERFORM team’s gender perspective will interpret data and information according to established sociological (or other) theories about relations between men and women.<sup>16</sup>

### **Scopes-of-Work and Team Composition for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Assessment Tasks:**

In accordance with USAID/Iraq’s draft Mission Order, all scopes-of-work which the PERFORM team drafts will include a consideration of gender issues and require the collection gender-disaggregated data toward an analysis of gender discrepancies which should be remedied by the project being monitored, evaluated, or designed. Likewise, when USAID/Iraq drafts a scope-of-work for a PERFORM assignment, PERFORM will verify that gender issues have been adequately treated. All teams which PERFORM fields to carry out the scopes-of-work will include gender expertise and will also be gender balanced to the extent possible. As stated in the OECD’s *DAC Source Book on Concepts and Approaches Linked to Gender Equality*, standard clauses in scopes-of-work requiring attention to equality issues are insufficient and such scopes “must include explicit and feasible directions for the analysis of equality issues in order to produce a report that includes these” and is helpful for assuring that projects do, in fact, promote gender equality.<sup>17</sup> PERFORM will assure that scopes-of-work provide clear gender-related tasks.

PERFORM will also assure that our field-work sub-contractor selects and trains data collectors who understand gender issues, who are committed to gender equality, and who implement data

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<sup>14</sup> United Nations Development Program (UNDP), *Gender Mainstreaming in Practice: A Toolkit*, 2007, pg. 11.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, pg 88.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, pg 89.

<sup>17</sup> OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), *DAC Source Book on Concepts and Approaches Linked to Gender Equality*, 1998, pg. 36.

gathering with sensitivity to gender differences. The subcontractor will also seek a gender balance when hiring their data collectors and will field female-only teams to interview or survey women where cultural practices prohibit males from so doing. Male-only teams will be selected to collect data in situations where female-only teams may be at risk. Otherwise, mixed male-female teams will be the norm.

### **Gender Considerations in Data Collection**

As stated in our Field Monitoring Protocol, the PERFORM team believes in evidenced-based data using multiple data collection methodologies as the conditions in the districts warrant. Our approach emphasizes principled and systematic selection of our survey respondents, key informants, focus group participants, community meetings, direct observation, and mini-surveys with a purposeful consideration of gender balance appropriate to the population being measured. Where men and women will not meet together in focus groups or community meetings, PERFORM will form gender-separate groups in order to assure that both male and female perspectives are taken into consideration. In formal surveys and sampling, in order to reduce bias and over-representation of one gender over another, the PERFORM team will, as stated in our Field Monitoring Protocol, employ a multi-stage sampling process in order to account for gender variations. After defining the broader group from which data will be collected, we will categorize remaining populations and, continue to narrow the sample group until the target populations are defined. This sampling process will guard against over representation of either gender, assuring accurate analysis of opinions and themes uncovered. Some questions may also be gender specific and care will be taken to assure that the target gender receives the appropriate questions.

### **Analysis and Interpretation of Data**

In accordance with guidance in the *DAC Source Book on Concepts and Approaches Linked to Gender Equality*,<sup>18</sup> the PERFORM team will make comparisons between men and women in the target group and the impact of project activities and outcomes on both men and women throughout our monitoring and evaluation tasks rather than separate out and report on women in isolation. Further, our conclusions about project benefits and impact on gender will be evidence-based and hence supported by data and analysis.

### **Sector Assessments and Thematic Reports**

It is critical to integrate a gender perspective into sector assessments and thematic reports in order to fully understand how a sector functions, how stakeholders interact, and how beneficiaries are impacted. When sector assessments and thematic reports are geared toward the design of programs and projects, a gender mainstreaming approach is particularly important in order to assure that gender equality is furthered. The analysis of the sector institutional framework, stakeholders, and beneficiaries must include an analysis of gender policies, participation, roles, and benefits.

In assessing the sector institutional framework, the PERFORM team will determine whether there are any gender specific policies and whether any policies have a potentially negative impact on one gender or the other. We will also ascertain whether there is gender balance in the

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<sup>18</sup> OECD, op. cit., pg. 36.

various sector-specific public and private organizations, and if not, what the contributing factors to this inequality are. In identifying sector stakeholders, we will map the stakeholders by gender and determine who the decision makers are, and if men and women are represented unequally in this group, investigate why. We will also analyze the roles, status, and incomes of the various stakeholders by gender to expose any inequalities and the reasons behind these inequalities. Likewise, beneficiaries of the products or services the sector provides will also be analyzed according to gender to determine if there is inequality of benefits.

In drawing conclusions regarding the major challenges facing a particular sector, we will ask whether the challenges affect men and women in different ways and identify the gender dimensions which need to be addressed if USAID/Iraq decides to design and implement a project in that sector.

Some specific questions the PERFORM team will ask and answer in our assessments and relevant thematic reports include:<sup>19</sup>

- (1) What is the current situation of men and women in the sector or issue being assessed? Where are there differences in the roles and responsibilities of men and women? In what areas is there greater participation of men? Of women? Are there barriers to a more equitable division of labor?
- (2) Who has access to and control over resources and assets?
- (3) What kind of decision-making processes do men and women participate in, at the governmental, community, and household levels?<sup>20</sup>
- (4) Do policies in the sector reflect a gender perspective?
- (5) Is there a mandate or statement or concrete evidence of political will for enhancing gender equality in the sector?
- (6) What kind of activities could contribute to gender equity?
- (7) What kind of project or policies could break down or challenge existing inequities in the situation of men and women?
- (8) What kind of project or policies could change the perception or stereotypes about men and women and their roles in any way?
- (9) What options should be considered to strengthen a gender perspective?

### **Success Stories**

The PERFORM team will be writing success stories about our monitoring, evaluation, and assessment tasks. In so doing, we will emphasize the gender balance and gender perspectives of our team members who we may be featuring in our stories, as well as the positive impact on gender of the projects we are monitoring or evaluating, or the sectors and issues we are assessing. Photographs accompanying our stories will be carefully selected to illustrate gender equity also.

### **PERFORM Monitoring and Evaluation Training**

The PERFORM team will hold three monitoring and evaluation training workshops per year, for USAID/Iraq mission staff, for implementer Chiefs-of Party, and for implementer monitoring and evaluation staff. The integration of a gender perspective into monitoring and evaluation will be

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<sup>19</sup> UNDP, *op.cit.*, pg 95.

<sup>20</sup> USAID/Kenya, *For Implementers: Gender at USAID*, website resources: [www.usaid.kenya.gov](http://www.usaid.kenya.gov).

incorporated into the training. We will provide information on how to develop gender-specific indicators, how to collect sex-disaggregated data, techniques of data collection which are gender sensitive, how to derive conclusions from data which inform gender relations and progress toward gender equity, and how to monitor whether gender is being addressed in projects.

## **Reviewing USAID/Iraq Project Implementers Progress in Gender Mainstreaming**

A critical component of the PERFORM team's work will be to ensure that USAID/Iraq project implementers are following USAID guidance regarding gender mainstreaming. We will review their commitment and progress in so doing during our Data Quality Assessments (DQAs), routine and investigative monitoring, and various evaluation tasks.

During DQAs, PERFORM will ensure that partners have gender specific indicators and targets when appropriate and that the gender equality goal is integrated into their specification of results and their ongoing performance management practices. We will test the validity, objectivity, reliability, practicability, usefulness, and ownership of these indicators. We will also assist implementers develop such indicators when requested. We will verify their data collection methods to determine whether information is being collected to fully measure their gender-specific indicators and whether sex-disaggregated data is being collected on all indicators where relevant. We will also determine whether they are using gender-sensitive techniques in their data collection so that information from both men and women is being collected in culturally sensitive ways so as to obtain a complete picture.

During routine and investigative monitoring, we will ensure that implementers are collecting and reporting on gender specific indicators and also collecting sex-disaggregated data on other indicators where appropriate. We will also determine whether they are using this data to inform the implementation of their projects and making adjustments to project activities to improve gender equity where indicated. We will make recommendations regarding how to better collect and integrate sex-disaggregated data if necessary. We will also determine whether implementers are involving their Iraqi counterparts and the project stakeholders in their commitment to gender equity and whether the project is strengthening counterpart capacity for gender responsive and participatory analysis, planning, and implementation.<sup>21</sup>

During formative evaluations, we will determine whether project activities are in fact improving gender equity and make recommendations where indicated as to how to modify project activities in order to increase the impact on equity. Some of the questions we will seek to answer include:<sup>22</sup>

- (1) Are both men and women equally involved in the process of implementation?
- (2) Is progress towards any specific objectives related to men or women on track?
- (3) Was the mapping accurate of how gender would be impacted by the project?
- (4) Have any gender issues arisen that were not identified at the project/policy design stage?  
How can they be addressed?
- (5) Are there any hindrances or barriers in the process toward gender balance?
- (6) Is there a need to reassess the goals?

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<sup>21</sup> Hunt, Juliet, *Effective Strategies for Promoting Gender Equality*, OECD DAC Network on Gender Equality, April 2004.

<sup>22</sup> UNDP, op cit., pg 95.

Summative evaluations will afford us the opportunity not only to determine whether the project activities of a specific project positively impacted gender equity, but also to draw broader lessons learned regarding how such equity can be assured in other projects. Such lessons learned can be applied by other USAID/Iraq implementers and can also inform the broader audience of development practitioners by adding to the gender equity literature. It is important to carefully document and assess what works under what conditions in order to identify cost-effective strategies and take equality strategies forward.

Some typical questions to be asked during a summative evaluation include:<sup>23</sup>

- (1) Did the project or policy change the situation of men or women? If so, for better or worse?
- (2) Has the perception of men and women (norms, stereotypes, values) been altered during the course of this project or policy?
- (3) If gender equality objectives were articulated during the planning phase, to what extent have these objectives been met?
- (4) Have there been any unexpected or unintentional gendered effects of the project or policy change?
- (5) What lessons learned in the project or policy change can be added to the literature on gender in order to be applied to other USAID/Iraq projects or to the broader development community?

### **Reflective Evaluation of How Gender is Treated in and Impacted by USAID/Iraq Activities**

USAID/Iraq has also requested that the PERFORM team provide them a more reflective evaluation of gender in the USAID/Iraq portfolio of projects. We will do so by looking closely at the sex-aggregated data which we and the implementers collect and by drawing conclusions regarding the implications of this data on gender equity among project stakeholders and beneficiaries. If necessary, we will conduct additional data collection through focus groups, interviews, or surveys to ascertain whether gender equity is being positively impacted and whether project staff themselves are committed to promoting such equity and are working with a positive gender perspective.

The PERFORM team's reflective evaluations will assess gender relations and progress toward gender equity in USAID projects by applying generally accepted sociological theories about gender. Some of these include:<sup>24</sup>

- (1) Society is traditionally shaped by a gender-based power structure which values the contribution of men and women unequally;
- (2) The gender-based power structure is systemic and shapes institutions;
- (3) Gender is a cultural and social construct and hence gender roles can change;
- (4) The gendered division of labor is often the starting point for gender imbalances and often leads to the limitation of women's choices and opportunities;
- (5) Control over resources, where resources include materials, time, knowledge, and information is generally unevenly distributed by gender;
- (6) Legal gender equality does not always translate into practical equality;

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, pg. 95

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, pg. 90.

(7) Culture, attitudes, and stereotypes influence access to and control over resources.

We will also assess gender equity and challenges to this equity within the Iraq-specific cultural and religious context. There is a growing body of literature regarding gender equity in the Muslim context which we will apply to our analysis. We will familiarize ourselves with movements within Iraq toward gender equality, such as those against early marriage.<sup>25</sup> The impact of conflict in Iraq on gender relations has become a great concern, since women have had to assume more previously masculine roles because their spouses have been killed or need to hide because of threats on their lives. Moreover, the reconstruction of Iraq has been plagued by gender challenges.<sup>26</sup> In Anbar, more female nurses are needed but religious sanctions against women working with male patients have hindered this.<sup>27</sup> These, and other issues as they impact USAID/Iraq funded projects, will be examined. Additionally, the gender mainstreaming literature has a body of knowledge regarding gender relations and successes in achieving gender equity sector-by-sector. This literature will be tapped into and applied to the various sectors in which USAID/Iraq works in order to reflectively evaluate whether Iraq is progressing toward gender equity.

In our Annual Mission Performance Monitoring Report, we will look more holistically at how gender is treated in and impacted by the Mission's activities as a portfolio and whether there is an overall commitment to promoting gender equity. We will also assess at the implications of the data gathered by implementers and by our team to determine whether gender equity in Iraq, in fact, is being furthered by USAID projects, as illustrated in policies, hiring practices, employment rates, numbers of women in positions of authority, and other variables.

### **Gender Policies of PERFORM**

The PERFORM office practices high standards of gender equity and applies the gender policies of The QED Group, LLC. As a woman-owned firm, The QED Group, LLC was founded upon the principles of gender equity and diversity and has firm anti-discrimination policies. QED strives for gender balance and women as well as men hold senior positions. The PERFORM office mirrors QED's principles. In hiring our PERFORM staff, we have purposefully sought and achieved a gender balance. All of our staff possess university degrees and we work as a unified team. We approach our work collaboratively and every voice is counted in our office operations and in the way we conduct our tasks.

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<sup>25</sup> Hopkins, Adrienne and Patel, Kirit, "Reflecting on Gender Equality in Muslim Contexts" in Oxfam GB, "Gender and Development, Vol. 14, No. 3, November 2006.

<sup>26</sup> "Iraq: Continued Violence Causing Gender Role Swap," IRIN Middle East, February 2, 2007. Online resource: [www.irinnews.com](http://www.irinnews.com)

<sup>27</sup> "Gender Issues Worsen Iraq's Medical Woes," MSNBC Online, May 9, 2009. Online resource: [www.msnbc.com](http://www.msnbc.com)

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## 5. KEY SOURCES OF GENDER DATA

Data Sources		
Title	Author(s)/Prepared by	Date
Iraq Household Socio-Economic Survey	COSIT, KRSO, World Bank	07/01/09
Ministry of Finance: Data site survey and recommendations	Bearing Point Management Technology Consultants	04/20/09
Micro Enterprise SME Credit: Nationwide Demand Survey	Iraq Foundation commissioned by the Bearing Point Team	06/26/09
Initial Survey of Potential Legislative Initiatives in Commercial Law		09/01/08
Local Governance Program: Iraq Quality of Life 4 Survey	RTI International Monitoring and Evaluation	01/01/05
Republic of Iraq- Iraq Family Health Survey Report IFHS 2007	IFHS, WHO, Republic of Iraq	2006/7
Micro SME Credit Demand Survey in Baghdad		06/27/09
Iraq Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey	UNICEF, COSIT, KRSO	2006
World Health Statistics, Iraq	WHO	2008

## 6. INTERNATIONAL DONOR ACTIVITIES

### Non-USAID Programs for Potential Collaboration

#### ***United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) Mandate under UN Security Council resolution 1830 (2008) and The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)***

UNAMI works to “promote the protection of human rights and judicial and legal reform in order to strengthen the rule of law in Iraq” by engaging in the promotion and protection of human rights and the rule of law in close collaboration with the GoI, the KRG government, and NGOs. It also conducts capacity-building activities for CSOs, working in close collaboration with local human rights groups and victims and witnesses of human rights violations.

#### ***NDI’s National Platform for Women: A Unified Vision for a New Path***

In the Gender Assessment Team’s meeting with United States Ambassador Patricia Haslach, she strongly recommended coordinating with NDI, in light of their recently introduced tool, “National Platform for Women”, created as a culmination of a three-month collaboration and consensus-building effort by political party members, civil society activists and government officials from across Iraq. Launched in Baghdad in anticipation of Iraq’s March 7 parliamentary elections, the platform spells out recommendations for government policy and political party action and is presently being distributed to civil society leaders, political parties and legislators. Core working groups were established for each policy area of significance to Iraqi women (healthcare, education, economic empowerment and political participation) and participants formed an advocacy committee to advance proposals in each of these areas.

The intention is to incorporate these priorities into the national debate. Deputy Prime Minister Rafi al-Esawi endorsed the platform as a way to increase the participation of women in Iraq’s reconstruction, noting that advancing the status of women is a prerequisite to improving the economy, standard of living, human rights, and peace and security. Minister of Human Rights Wijdan Mikha’il Salim also endorsed the Platform, stating, “There are many elements that negatively affect Iraqi women and prevent them from demanding their rights...Launching the platform will motivate women to participate in political action and to follow-up with legislation to ensure a decent life.”

Ala Talabani, chair of the Council of Representatives Committee on Civil Society, ‘described the platform as a timely step toward further advancing their status and said, “I consider economic empowerment for women as the most important issue...If a woman is well-situated economically, she will be able to participate and have a greater role in all areas of life,” and called upon the Committee on Women, Family, and Childhood to establish stronger links with civil society actors in Iraq. Minister of Environment Narmin Othman reiterated that women are not yet fully included in decision-making processes, noting that “access to higher positions in the government will provide the best opportunity for women to defend their rights.” Given these realities, Othman said, women should be increasingly supportive of female colleagues who work for change. She recommended that female candidates and MPs use the platform to focus the debate and carry out policies that positively impact Iraqi women and that civil society activists use the platform as a mechanism for holding the government accountable to its promises.’

(National Democratic Institute, *Introduction of the National Platform for Women: A Unified Vision for a New Path*, 2010)

## 7. RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS AND RESOURCES

Research in Iraq	Website
Women for Women International	<a href="http://www.womenforwomen.org/global-initiatives-helping-women/help-women-iraq.php">http://www.womenforwomen.org/global-initiatives-helping-women/help-women-iraq.php</a>
Central Organization for Statistics and Information Technology (COSIT)	<a href="http://cosit.gov.iq/english/">http://cosit.gov.iq/english/</a>
Kurdistan Regional Statistics Office (KRSO)	<a href="http://www.krso.net/">http://www.krso.net/</a>
Online Resource Centers and Web Sites	
Coalition Against Trafficking in Women - International	<a href="http://www.catwinternational.org">www.catwinternational.org</a>
Honour Crimes Project	<a href="http://www.soas.ac.uk/honourcrimes">www.soas.ac.uk/honourcrimes</a>
Women's Human Rights Resources Programme of the Bora Laskin Law Library	<a href="http://www.law-lib.utoronto.ca/diana/credits.htm">www.law-lib.utoronto.ca/diana/credits.htm</a>
Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children	<a href="http://www.crvawc.ca">www.crvawc.ca</a>
Gender-based Violence, United Nations Population Fund	<a href="http://www.unfpa.org/gender/violence.htm">www.unfpa.org/gender/violence.htm</a>
Gender-Based Violence Prevention Network	<a href="http://www.preventgbv africa.org/.../human-trafficking-form-modern-day-slavery">www.preventgbv africa.org/.../human-trafficking-form-modern-day-slavery</a>
Women's Empowerment Base, Q Web Sweden	<a href="http://www.lygus.lt/ITC">www.lygus.lt/ITC</a>
Sexual Violence Research Initiative	<a href="http://www.svri.org">www.svri.org</a>
Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Its Causes And Consequences, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	<a href="http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/news/unwvaw.html">www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/news/unwvaw.html</a>
Stop Violence Against Women, Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights (MAHR)	<a href="http://www.l.umn.edu/humanrts/center/uppermidwest/allfellowships.html">www.l.umn.edu/humanrts/center/uppermidwest/allfellowships.html</a>
Women's Human Rights & Stop Violence Against Women Campaign, Amnesty International - USA	<a href="http://www.amnestyusa.org/violence-against-women/stop-violence-against-women-svaw">www.amnestyusa.org/violence-against-women/stop-violence-against-women-svaw</a>
Institute for Human Rights, Abo Akademi University, Finland	<a href="http://www.abo.fi/instut/imr">www.abo.fi/instut/imr</a>
INTERIGHTS, International Centre for the Legal Protection of Human Rights	<a href="http://www.interights.org">www.interights.org</a>
Model Questionnaires for Communications/Complaints, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights	<a href="http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/religion/complaints.htm">www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/religion/complaints.htm</a>
National CEDAW Watch Network Center	<a href="http://www.owc.org.mn/cedaw/introduction.html">www.owc.org.mn/cedaw/introduction.html</a>

Women's Institute for Leadership Development for Human Rights (WILD for Human Rights)	<a href="http://www.wildforhumanrights.org">www.wildforhumanrights.org</a>
Center for Women's Global Leadership, Rutgers University	<a href="http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu">www.cwgl.rutgers.edu</a>
How to Make a Complaint to the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies Online-	<a href="http://www.bayefsky.com">www.bayefsky.com</a>

<b>Relevant UN Conventions (<a href="http://www.un.org">www.un.org</a>)</b>	
Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action	
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	
Concluding Comments adopted by the Committee To Eliminate Discrimination Against Women - 39th Session 2007	
Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages	
Recommendation on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages	
Convention on the Political Rights of Women	
Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others	
Convention on the Nationality of Married Women	
Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children	
Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention	
Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa	
Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women	
Equal Remuneration Convention	
Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict	
Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women	
Convention against Discrimination in Education	

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# APPENDIX B: GENDER ASSESSMENT BACKGROUND MATERIALS

## I. SCOPE OF WORK

February 22, 2010

### I INTRODUCTION

USAID/Iraq is currently developing a new Strategic Plan that will cover the fiscal years 2010-2012. Parameters have been set for the new strategy that will focus on Democratic Governance, National Capacity Development, Economic Growth, Private Sector Development, Integrated Agricultural Development, Health, Education, and Reintegration of IDPs and Returnees.

ADS 201.3.9.3. States: “Gender issues are central to the achievement of strategic plans and Assistance Objectives (AO) and USAID is striving deliberately to promote gender equality...” Accordingly, USAID planning in the development of strategic plans and AOs must take into account gender roles and relationships. Gender analysis can help guide long-term planning and ensure desired results are achieved. However, gender is not a separate topic to be analyzed and reported on in isolation. USAID’s gender mainstreaming approach requires that appropriate gender analysis be applied to the range of technical issues that are considered in the development of a given strategic plan, AOs, and activities. “

Specifically, analytical work performed in the planning and development of results frameworks must consider the following two questions: (1) how will the different roles and status of women and men affect the work to be undertaken? and (2) How will the anticipated results of the work affect women and men differently? Carrying out a gender assessment of mission programs prior to the finalization of the SP will help to guide the SP design and formulation and insure gender integration into the final product.

USAID/Iraq program consists of local democratic governance, economic growth, agri-business development, community stabilization efforts and capacity building for the national government activities. USAID is active in all of Iraq’s 18 provinces, has staff based in the Baghdad office and representatives at the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Teams (ePRTs). USAID’s PRT representatives coordinate a network of partners that implement development activities in the field. With expertise in a variety of disciplines – economic development, public administration and finance, agriculture, democratic governance and engineering, among others – USAID representatives and partners provide technical assistance to support Iraqi responses to a variety of community needs and challenges. PRTs assist in facilitating positive interactions with and among Iraqis, helping to bolster moderate factions that are committed to non-violence and promote reconciliation across sectarian divides.

## II PURPOSE

The purpose of the Gender Assessment is to identify key gender issues and gender constraints that need to be addressed in USAID/Iraq program as part of the process for developing the new strategic plan for FY 2010-2012 and to make recommendations on how USAID/Iraq can achieve greater gender integration in its programs. Specifically, the assessment is intended to facilitate the statement of appropriate gender equity goals for the Mission, identify any needs for gender training, clarify additional topics for further gender analysis, provide preliminary guidance or language on incorporating gender into the draft SP and help to draft a gender action plan that grows out of the current Strategy and informs the new one.

## III BACKGROUND

Both Iraqi men and women face numerous challenges to personal advancement and full economic, social and political participation for themselves and their families. However, women continue to be disadvantaged relative to men in several key areas that significantly impact Iraq's ability to achieve its development goals. Women in Iraq contribute substantially to the development of their country and to the support of their families. As a result of the war, there are an estimated 740,000 widows between the ages of 15-80 that are juggling their new roles while helping with the reconstruction of their country. Even if women are active players in the government, business and social environments, they face numerous constraints, including poverty, limited access to resources such as land and capital, and limited political and decision-making power. As a result, women remain economically marginalized. Addressing gender inequalities can therefore contribute to many positive development outcomes.

Each AO, as it develops its Results Framework, will address how gender relations will affect the sustainable achievement of its results, and how expected results will affect the relative status of men and women. All Mission programs will work to increase women's access to and participation in their activities.

## IV TASKS

The tasks of the consultants are to:

**A.** Identify gender factors that inform the development of USAID's programs in Iraq in the targeted sectors in the new Mission strategy, help guide the design and formulation of new projects and thus ensure gender integration at AO levels.

- Review key gender issues and gender-based constraints.
- Analyze the GOI Gender Policy and its implementation across relevant sectors.
- Examine Iraqi institutional, legal and regulatory environments for gender considerations.
- Identify local expertise on gender (e.g. NGOs, academics, research institutions, government ministries) that can be called on to provide in-depth technical assistance.

**B.** Carry out an assessment of the Mission's efforts to integrate gender into its ongoing and proposed programs. This will include:

Review the Mission's present and proposed strategic frameworks, results framework, and the program portfolio for their attention to gender and to identify key gender-based constraints, and assess how potential gender issues might be integrated into the new strategic framework.

- Produce an assessment of possible entry points for incorporation of gender and other considerations in carryover activities and potential new programs of the new strategy.
- Provide statements of the key gender-based constraints relevant to each Assistance Objective.
- Identify resources and sources of sex-disaggregated data (and possibly other variables as appropriate e.g., age, income, and ethnicity) for developing gender-appropriate indicators.

The assessment is to be organized and shaped by: USAID/Iraq Results Framework; USAID's approach to mainstreaming gender (as per ADS chapters 201, 203, 302, 303 to strengthen gender integration in USAID Planning and Programming); and USAID's evolving Strategic Plan 2010-2012.

C. Based on this assessment, recommendations for developing a gender action plan will be produced, which lays out the steps for mainstreaming gender in Mission policies and activities. These recommendations should be practical and address the perspective of both technical and support offices. The recommendations will be used by the Mission to produce a gender integration action plan based upon the Consultants' gender assessment.

D. Review the new Strategic Plan during drafting phase, providing comments and recommendations to ensure adequate and appropriate Mission approaches to mainstreaming gender.

## **V ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

The Gender Assessment will draw on three sets of information:

### I. Document Review

The first task for the consultants will be to conduct an analysis of pertinent literature and documents, including, but not limited to policy and planning documents, background information available on gender issues in Iraq and other in-country data, and gender assessment reports and action plans from other partners or donors. For example: The Mission's Concept Paper; Strategic Plan; Strategic Planning Parameters; Annual Reports; Preliminary technical analyses for Strategic Planning concept paper; Studies and assessments conducted by donors, NGOs, national governments, regional organizations, and the academic community; Recent literature that addresses gender issues in specific sectors and areas of strategic interest to the Mission.

### 2. Interviews with Mission Staff (in Baghdad and in PRTs), AO Teams.

The consultants will meet with the staff involved in developing the new Strategic Plan. These shall include:

- Entry briefings with the Gender Officer, the Program Officer and the Front Office.
- A preliminary briefing session for Mission staff on the ADS requirements for addressing gender in the strategic planning process.
- Meeting with AO teams on specific sectors and areas of interest, to identify possible links to gender issues in each proposed AO and determine whether these issues are adequately considered in the proposed strategy; to identify possible entry points for the incorporation of gender considerations into ongoing (as appropriate) and future activities; and to verify whether gender considerations are adequately treated in the Mission strategy and results framework;
- A presentation of the draft gender analysis to obtain feedback from USAID/Iraq staff; and

- Exit briefings with the Gender Officer, the Program Office and the Front Office.

3. Interviews with selected key stakeholders and implementing partners involved in current and proposed programs, including local gender expert resource groups, about problems, successes, and potentialities for improving attention to gender in the new Strategic Plan. Field visits are a valuable part of this component.

## **VI LEVEL OF EFFORT**

The consultant team will be composed of three to five persons, including one Middle East gender specialists and one Islamic gender specialist and if possible an experienced USAID gender specialist. The team will be expected to travel throughout the country. Foreign-language capabilities are required, English (5/5) for the US specialist and Arabic (5/5) for at least one person. Required expertise may include, but is not limited to, the following: expertise working on gender related issues, post-conflict specialists, local capacity development specialists, domestic violence experts, trafficking experts. The consultants should have extensive experience in the Middle East and preferably in conflict zones.

## **VII PERFORMANCE PERIOD**

The gender analysis will require approximately six weeks of effort (based on a six-day work week). The document review and the methodological framework will take the first week. Consultants will have 4 weeks for data collection. The report will be finalized during the last week.

## **VIII DELIVERABLES**

There are two written deliverables expected from this SOW: 1. The Gender Assessment; and, 2.) Recommendations for the Mission Gender Action Plan. Drawing on data from interviews and secondary sources, these documents will assess the appropriate technical areas for gender emphasis and make recommendations for future actions for gender and other integration, described above. The document may also be the basis for further technical assistance provided by USAID/Washington.

A preliminary list of findings and recommendations will be submitted to the Mission upon completion of the fieldwork, during a debrief/review with Mission staff (electronic and hard copies). The Mission shall provide additional written comments electronically within 5 working days of the debrief.

The Final Gender Assessment & recommendations for Action Plan will be submitted to the Mission within 5 working days after receiving comments on the revised draft.

An electronic copy is to be submitted in MS-Word Format. A revised draft report, incorporating those comments shall be submitted to the Mission no later than 5 working days after receiving the aforementioned comments. The Final report will be submitted within 10 working days of receiving comments on the revised draft. The final assessment shall contain a stand-alone executive summary (2-5 pages) that can be utilized as a briefing paper. In addition to the assessment it is expected that the team will leave a list of the people interviewed, summary notes from the meetings attended, and questionnaire (as appropriate).

## 2. GENDER ANALYSIS TOOLS

Checklist for Gender Assessment Desk Review			
No.	QUESTION	No/Limited/Extensive	DETAILS
1	Does the document use a gender lens to review, assess or describe governance, economic development, and peace and security issues in Iraq?		
2	Does the document identify needs and opportunities for Iraqi women, men, boys and girls? What needs and opportunities for promoting gender equality are identified in the document?		
3	How do these needs and opportunities affect and are affected by reconstruction and development initiatives in the sector (s) covered in the document?		
4	Have women, men, boys, girls and/or civil society organizations been directly consulted in identifying such needs and opportunities?		
5	Does the document identify challenges and constraints in achieving gender equality for Iraqi women, men, boys and girls?		
6	What challenges and constraints to gender equality are identified in the document?		
7	How do these challenges and constraints affect (or are affected by) reconstruction and development interventions in various sectors?		
8	Have women, men, boys, girls and/or civil society organizations been directly consulted in identifying challenges and constraint to their equality?		
9	Does the document discuss, identify or address inequalities among women and men; among boys and girls? If so what are they?		
10	Is gender equality in beneficiary access to resources and program benefits reflected in the documents? If so what are they?		
11	Is gender equality in beneficiary control of resources and program benefits reflected in the documents? If so what are they?		
12	Are differential factors in participation among women and men or among boys and girls included, analyzed or explained in the document? If so what are they?		
13	Does the document explore how gender relations among Iraqi males and females affect reconstruction and development efforts? If so what patterns have been identified?		

14	Does the document explore how reconstruction and development efforts affect Iraqi gender relations? If so what patterns have been identified?		
15	Does the document identify best practice or lessons learned for gender programming and the promotion of equitable relations among Iraqi women and men? If so what are they?		
16	Does the document identify new areas for equitable reconstruction and development interventions? Humanitarian assistance? If so what are they?		
17	Does the document identify new areas for research on Iraqi gender relations? If so what are they?		

<b>Checklist For Gender Integration in the Project Cycle</b>	
<b>[Name of Project] [Funder] [Implementing Partner] [Dates]</b>	
<b>Summary Comments:</b>	
<b>PROJECT IDENTIFICATION</b>	
<b>Assessing Needs</b>	
1. What needs and opportunities exist for reducing gender inequalities in the project sector?	
2. How do these needs and opportunities relate to the country's other general and sectoral development needs and opportunities?	
3. Have female and male project beneficiaries been directly consulted in identifying such needs and opportunities?	
<b>Defining Project Objectives</b>	
1. Are project objectives explicitly related to women's empowerment and gender equality?	
2. Do these objectives reflect the gender needs of women and men; boys and girls?	
3. Have female and male project beneficiaries participated in setting those objectives?	
4. How has the present project proposal built on any earlier efforts and lessons learned in programming for gender equality?	
<b>Identifying Possible Negative Effects</b>	
1. Might the project adversely affect female and male project beneficiaries in the project area?	

2. What are the projected effects of the project in the short and longer term?	
<b>PROJECT DESIGN</b>	
<b>Project impact on gender relations</b>	
1. What activities (policy, legal, protection, treatment, behavior change, advocacy, community mobilization or other) does the project affect?	
2. Is the project intended to maintain or transform current gender roles that affect the project sector?	
3. Is the project intended to maintain or transform current gender-based hierarchies?	
4. Are changes in the root causes of gender relations feasible/desirable and what positive or negative effects would there be on the project participants?	
<b>Project impact on access and control</b>	
1. How will the project affect female and male access to project assistance and resources assistance?	
2. How will female and male beneficiaries benefit from the project?	
3. What forces will be put in place to induce further exploration of constraints and possible improvement to the project?	
<b>PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION</b>	
<b>Personnel</b>	
1. Are project personnel aware of and sympathetic to the different needs of female and male beneficiaries?	
2. Do personnel have the necessary skills to provide any special inputs required by female and male beneficiaries?	
3. Are there appropriate opportunities for female and male beneficiaries to participate in project management positions?	
<b>Operations and Structures</b>	
1. Are the delivery channels (personnel, location, and timing) accessible to both female and male beneficiaries?	
2. Do control procedures exist to ensure dependable delivery or program services and benefits to both female and male beneficiaries?	
3. Are there mechanisms to ensure that the project resources and benefits are not usurped by unintended beneficiaries?	
<b>Funding</b>	
1. Are funding levels adequate to promote the equal participation of female and male beneficiaries in the project?	
2. Do women and men receive a similar proportion and quality of	

benefits from the project?	
3.Do funding mechanisms exist to ensure project continuity?	
<b>Flexibility</b>	
1.Does the project have a management information system which will allow it to detect the effects of the operation on both female and male beneficiaries?	
2.Will the project have enough flexibility to adapt its structures and operation to meet the changing or new-found situation of female and male beneficiaries?	
<b>PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION</b>	
<b>Data Requirements</b>	
1.Does the project's monitoring and evaluation system explicitly measure the projects effect on both female and male beneficiaries?	
2.Does it also collect data on project impact on gender relations?	
3.Are female and male beneficiaries involved in designating data requirements?	
<b>Data Collection and Analysis</b>	
1. Are the data collected with sufficient frequency so that necessary project adjustments could be made during the project?	
2.Are the data fed back to project personnel and female and male beneficiaries in an understandable form and on a timely basis to allow project adjustments?	
3. Are female and male beneficiaries involved in the collection and interpretation of data?	
4.Are data analyzed so as to provide guidance to gender integration in the design of other projects?	
5.Are key areas and new directions for gender research identified?	

### **3. GENDER ASSESSMENT INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS**

#### **Key Informant Interview Questions**

- A. What impact has the security situation had on men, women, boys and girls in the past three-year crisis-period?
- B. How have the prevailing attitudes, religious and cultural norms and practices affected men, women, boys' and girls' ability to contribute to and benefit from recovery and reconstruction efforts?
- C. Are there any particular strategies and approaches you have used or witnessed that help overcome barriers to women's and men's equal participation in reconstruction and development efforts in Iraq?
- D. Does the context in which women find themselves, such as urban or rural location, individual ethnicity or religion affect gender relations in particular parts of the country?
- E. USAID/Iraq has supported and/or plans to continue assistance in the following program areas: (1) Democracy and Governance, (2) National Capacity Development, (3) Economic Growth, (4) Private Sector Development, (5) Integrated Agriculture Development, (6) Health and (7) Education. Do you think that these are critical areas for assistance? Why or why not?
- F. What are the top democracy and governance and capacity development gender issues in Iraq? Have you seen differences by province? For men, for women?
- G. What are the top gender issues for economic growth and private sector development or agriculture development in Iraq? Have you seen differences by province? For women for men?
- H. What are the top gender issues in health and education in Iraq? Have you seen differences by province? For women and men? For boys and girls?
- I. What measures can be taken to ensure that women and men and boys and girls benefit equally from development assistance and services in Iraq?
  - For democracy and governance and capacity development programs?
  - For economic growth, private sector development or agriculture programs?
  - For health and education programs?
- J. Are there any other issues you think are critical to the promotion of gender sensitive reconstruction and development efforts in Iraq that are not being addressed?

#### **Focus Group Questions**

- A. Questions on the general context of gender issues in Iraq:
  - a. How have the roles and responsibilities of men's, women's, boys and girls changed during the last three-year crisis-period?
    - i. What needs have been created?
    - ii. How do you think these needs should be addressed?

- iii. What opportunities have been created?
    - iv. How should these opportunities be supported?
  - b. What are the prevailing attitudes, religious and cultural norms and practices that affect men's, women's, boys' and girls' ability to contribute to and benefit from recovery and reconstruction efforts?
    - i. For men?
    - ii. For women?
    - iii. For boys?
    - iv. For girls?
  - c. How can we ensure that these attitudes, norms and practices are not a barrier to women and girls' and men and boys' enjoying equal access to resources, opportunities, education, etc.?
    - i. For men?
    - ii. For women?
    - iii. For boys?
    - iv. For girls?
- B. Questions on USAID/Iraq programs.
  - a. USAID/Iraq has supported and/or plans to continue assistance to Iraq in the following program areas: (1) Democracy and Governance, (2) National Capacity Development, (3) Economic Growth, (4) Private Sector Development, (5) Integrated Agriculture Development, (6) Health and (7) Education. Do you think that these are critical areas for assistance? Why or why not? What areas do you think are most important?
    - i. Does the level of confidence in the national government differ between men and women in your province? What about in the local government? Why or why not? Do you think men and women have the same access to legal protection in your province?
    - ii. What are the most pressing economic issues for women in your province? For men?
    - iii. What are the most pressing health needs or concerns in your province for women? For men? For boys? For girls?
    - iv. What are the most pressing educational needs (including adult education, literacy training, etc.) or concerns in your province for women? For men? For boys? For girls?
  - b. Do women, men, boys and girls access and benefit from development assistance and services in your province equally? If not, what are some of the barriers to access? How can these barriers be overcome?
    - i. For democracy and governance and capacity development programs?
    - ii. For economic growth, private sector development or agriculture programs?
    - iii. For health programs?
    - iv. For Education programs?
  - c. What measures or incentives can be taken to ensure that women and men and boys and girls benefit equally from development assistance and services in your province? Are there any projects or efforts that have been particularly successful in helping underserved populations gain access to and benefit from development assistance and services in your province?
    - i. For democracy and governance and capacity development programs?
    - ii. For economic growth, private sector development or agriculture programs?
    - iii. For health programs?
    - iv. For Education programs?

- C. Are there other issues that you think are critical to ensure that women, men, boys and girls participate in and benefit equally from reconstruction and development efforts?
- a. If yes, what are they?
  - b. What do you recommend be done?

### **Processing and Preparation of Discussion Results**

- After each focus group session the facilitator and recorder(s) should meet to review and complete the notes taken during the discussion. This is the right moment to evaluate how the focus group went and what changes might be made when facilitating the next focus group.
- Immediately afterwards a full report of the discussion should be prepared which reflects the discussion as completely as possible, *using the participants' own words*. List the key statements, ideas, and attitudes expressed for each topic of discussion.
- After the transcript of the discussion is prepared, write comments (your first interpretation of the data) in the right margin. Formulate additional questions if certain issues are still unclear and include them in the next focus group discussion. Further categorize the statements for each topic, if appropriate.
- When you have all the data, summarize it in a compilation list organizing the comments/findings per question/topic. Number the focus group discussion interviews and use key words to summarize group statements in the compilation sheet so that you can always go back to the full statement in the notes. For different group members, e.g., male and female, you can summarize the information from the male and female group members under headings for 'male' and 'female' on the compilation sheets. Use separate compilation sheets for rural and urban groups.
- You should then do a comparison between groups (male vs. female; rural vs. urban; and North vs. Central and South) on all topics.
- The next step is to put the major findings for different study populations on one sheet. Sometimes you may also wish to use diagrams when summarizing the causes or components of the gender issues under study. These sheets will be used in the preparation of the assessment report.

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