USAID Iraq Civil Society and Independent Media Program (ICSP)

Final Report
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Iraq Civil Society and Independent Media Program
Final Report

America's Development Foundation (ADF) implemented the USAID-funded Iraq Civil Society and Independent Media Program (ICSP) from August 16, 2004 through June 30, 2007 under Contract number GEW-C-00-04-00001-00. The following final report for this contract responds to Deliverable 7 (a final report that aligns accomplishments with the specific paragraphs of the Scope of Work) and article F4 (a final Lessons Learned Report) of the contract.

I.   BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Iraq Civil Society and Independent Media Program responded to USAID's desire to implement a program that strengthened civil society's role in the economic, political, and social development of Iraq, with the goal of contributing to the development and institutionalization of a broad cadre of indigenous civil society organizations (CSOs) and the promotion and strengthening of democratic principles and practices in Iraq.

The objective of ICSP was to promote an informed, sustainable and active indigenous Iraqi civil society that effectively and responsibly participates within a democratic system of governance. This was to be achieved through establishing civil society resource centers to provide capacity building services to Iraqi civil society organizations (CSOs) throughout Iraq. Special attention and resources were to be provided to three types of CSOs that were judged particularly important at the early stage of Iraq's development as a nascent democracy: those undertaking civic education, women's advocacy and anti-corruption work, with human rights as a cross-cutting element. In addition to the technical assistance and training offered through the centers, ADF was to design and administer a small grants program to reinforce the training and technical assistance activities. The ICSP independent media component was to strengthen Iraq's independent media and its independent news and public affairs reporting capacities.

The USAID contract was for a base period of 17 months (August 2004 through December 2005) and included options for extending the program for two subsequent 18 month periods. One option for an 18 month extension was exercised, extending the contract through June 2007. In August 2006, a modification to the contract was made to include an additional $2 million in funding from the U.S. State Department's Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) to expand ICSP's anti-corruption work. The total value of the contract was $60,880,157.

At the start of fiscal year 2006, USAID/Iraq revised its overall democracy strategy and the Iraq Civil Society and Independent Media program was placed under USAID/Iraq's new Intermediate Result 3.2 in the 2006-2008 Transition Strategy: *Build Capacity of Civil Society to Advocate for Their Interests*. USAID's August 2006 Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) redefined this strategic element as Intermediate Result 10.3: Capacity of Civil Society to Advocate for Citizen Interests Increased, contributing to Strategic Objective 10: Capacity of National Government Institutions Improved. ADF's contract was not revised in light of the new USAID strategic orientation, although ADF expanded its reporting to include these elements.

II. SUMMARY OF KEY RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Under extraordinarily difficult circumstances, unforeseen at the time of program design, ADF's Iraq Civil Society and Independent Media Program achieved and exceeded contract deliverables, as detailed in Section III. The broader impact of ICSP went beyond these deliverables. ICSP made significant contributions to the development of civil society and democracy in Iraq that were critical to the transition period in which it took place and laid the foundation for the future of a democratic and stable Iraq. Key accomplishments include:

> ➢ A stronger, more visible role for civil society in Iraq
> ➢ Increased capacity of Iraqi CSOs
> ➢ Formation of CSO networks, coalitions and other forms of cooperation
> ➢ Critical civil society involvement in core national policies and practices
> ➢ Expanded civil society involvement in local decision-making
> ➢ Development of independent media
> ➢ Expanded civil society action for conflict mitigation and reconciliation
> ➢ Increased capacity of civil society to advocate for citizen interests
> ➢ Expanded technical resources for the ongoing development of Iraqi civil society

A STRONGER, MORE VISIBLE ROLE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY IN IRAQ

ICSP supported participatory and democratic governance in Iraq by strengthening civil society's role in the country's economic, political and social development. ICSP worked directly with Iraqi civil society organizations (CSOs) to bolster their capacity to be effective citizen-based interest groups and assume a leading role in enhancing local governance and participating in national policy-making processes. There was significant media coverage of civil society activities over the three years of the program. The more activities CSOs undertook, the more visible they became and the better understanding people had of civil society's role in Iraq's present and future. As noted in the external evaluation conducted of ICSP, over the three years of the program there was a marked expansion of civil society in Iraq, the concept of civil society's role was more broadly understood, and civil society effectively engaged government as a partner in working for the country's future.

INCREASED CAPACITY OF IRAQI CSOS

ICSP developed the organizational capacities of Iraqi CSOs working for social, economic and political reforms, resulting in increased citizen participation in decision-making processes at provincial, regional and national levels. A total of 1,964 Iraqi CSOs participated in ICSP's training and technical assistance programs building CSO capacities in operational and/or program areas. ICSP diagnosed capacity improvement needs and documented increased operational capacity through the administration of ADF's Organizational Assessment Tool (OAT), which was applied to over 1,000 Iraqi organizations. The OAT consists of 300 questions targeting the essential elements of organizational capacity in four principal areas: general management, financial management, advocacy, and internal governance, with gender as a crosscutting theme. To measure the extent of increased capacity as a result of the program, ICSP administered follow-up OATs to a representative group of approximately 25% of CSOs that

participated in operational capacity building activities. A comparison of baseline and follow-up scores reveals an average 41% improvement in overall score, with CSOs increasing from an average 104 points to 148 points of the total possible maximum score of 300. The areas with the greatest levels of improvement were general management and advocacy (each by 49%), followed by financial management (42%) and internal governance (30%). Increased capacity in program areas was demonstrated by the rapid growth of CSO actions in the four priority program areas. Many CSOs were able to obtain grants and support from other donor organizations, thanks to skills developed under ICSP. They also serve as valuable implementing partners for the international assistance community.

FORMATION OF CSO NETWORKS, COALITIONS AND OTHER FORMS OF COOPERATION

Through its emphasis on working together to achieve common goals, ICSP interventions resulted in the formation of numerous networks, coalitions and partnerships. Examples include *Women's Net* (a network of 17 CSOs dedicated to promoting women's rights), the *MAF Network* (a group of 28 CSOs seeking to influence NGO law in Kurdistan), and public-private partnerships between civil society and government institutions such as the agreement for a local CSO to provide human rights training to all new police in Diwaniya governorate and the *Defending Child Rights Network,* which brings together five CSOs and the Directorate of Human Rights of Sulaymaniya governorate.

CRITICAL CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT IN CORE NATIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

ICSP training and technical assistance facilitated civil society involvement in national decision-making processes important for fostering the growth of democracy in Iraq. The following examples highlight ICSP successes in engaging civil society in the constitutional review process, in legislative drafting, and in monitoring the legislative process.

- ICSP implemented campaigns that mobilized hundreds of Iraqi CSOs through workshops, forums and conferences to review the draft Constitution, identify needed changes, and advocate successfully for the adoption of over two dozen human rights, women's advocacy and anti-corruption provisions in the new Constitution. ICSP staff and advisors provided technical assistance and support for CSO involvement in formulating proposals for the Constitutional Review process that is currently underway. ICSP support enabled CSOs to mobilize voter participation, undertake an official monitoring role in the Constitutional Referendum, and engage Parliament, government ministries and local government on policy-making issues. CSO Legislative Observatories were established to monitor and analyze legislation as it was being developed and inform civil society of developments in the legislative process in sufficient time for them to mobilize to influence policy.

- With technical and financial support from ICSP, CSOs became actively involved in issues related to the enabling environment for civil society and formulated a draft legislative proposal for the new NGO Law. While voting on alternative laws has not yet taken place, CSO advocacy was so effective that the Ministry of Civil Society revised its own draft law, incorporating many of the points raised by CSOs and making it 90% consistent with civil society recommendations.

EXPANDED CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL DECISION-MAKING

Civil society involvement in local decision-making increased as a result of ICSP assistance. Working in tandem with the USAID-supported Local Government Program and the Provincial Reconstruction Teams, ICSP provided encouragement, training and technical support to establish Citizen Advisory Committees that provide mechanisms for citizen inputs into key decisions and for monitoring the use of public resources. Discussions between CSO representatives and members of the Governorate Councils on the relation between the state and the CSOs led to further cooperation through training of governmental officials and employees on matters related to civil society and its role within local communities. In Hillah, Najaf, Al-Kut and Tikrit, CSOs have become permanent observers at Provincial Council meetings. ICSP's anti-corruption activities also resulted in the establishment of joint working groups, consisting of civil society, local government and Commission for Public Integrity representatives, in 16 provinces. Advocacy is a primary tool for civil society, and ICSP trained more than 500 CSOs in the concepts, processes and techniques of advocacy. More than a third of the CSOs that were trained turned theory into practice by implementing advocacy campaigns on their issues.   Impact at the local level included changes in policies and practices at multiple government institutions such as hospitals, social welfare agencies, prisons and schools.

DEVELOPMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEDIA

ICSP significantly strengthened the development of independent media in Iraq. ICSP training increased the knowledge and skills of more than 8,000 media professionals (journalists, technicians, editors and managers), over 20% of whom were women. ICSP worked with journalism schools to improve the formal training journalists receive. It provided technical assistance to the Iraqi Media Network (IMN) in its development to become a public broadcasting network. ICSP supported reform of the legal and regulatory system through advocacy for sound Public Broadcasting and Freedom of Speech Laws, as well as the adoption of ethical standards by media. Institutions for reform, such as Iraqis for Public Broadcasting and the Iraqi Association for Defending Journalist Rights, were strengthened. One of ICSP's most significant achievements was supporting the establishment of the National Iraqi News Agency (NINA), an independent news agency with a national network of correspondents producing daily stories on politics, security, transparency and other information for news clients including radio, television and newspapers.

EXPANDED CIVIL SOCIETY ACTION FOR CONFLICT MITIGATION AND RECONCILIATION

As part of its civic education programs, ICSP supported the expansion of civil society action responding to the increase in sectarian fighting and advocating for the rejection of extremism and sectarianism throughout society. CSOs working with ICSP held forums and conferences, organized exhibitions, held a peace march, produced printed materials, conducted signature campaigns and produced television programs that advocate for peace and reconciliation. Titles of these actions include *"If we are really Muslim and want Peace in Iraq, Let Us Unite"*, *"Coexistence among all Religions and Ethnicities", "Role of women in building peace, mitigating conflicts & promoting national unity", "Forum for the Expelled Family",* and *"Tribal Leaders and National Reconciliation"*. Many of these forums and seminars were conducted in the high conflict areas of Iraq at the time, including Baghdad, Diyala, Salah Al-Din and Al-Anbar provinces.

INCREASED CAPACITY OF CIVIL SOCIETY TO ADVOCATE FOR CITIZEN INTERESTS

Under the USAID/Iraq strategy for 2006-2008, ICSP was expected to contribute to IR 10.3: *Capacity of civil society to advocate for citizen interests increased*. Achievement of this result is indicated both by improved scores of CSOs on the Organizational Assessment Tool (average scores rose from 105.6 on a scale of 300 to 157.5, or 49%) and by the wide range of successful advocacy campaigns conducted by civil society organizations that received ICSP's training, technical assistance and/or financial support. Successes achieved through CSO advocacy are presented throughout this report. The following sections provide an overview of results achieved by civil society in women's advocacy, anti-corruption and human rights.

Advocacy for Women's Rights and Participation

More than 200 CSOs associated with ICSP undertook advocacy actions to advance women's rights and expand their participation in democratic processes. Examples of significant results of CSO advocacy include the incorporation of 12 civil society recommendations into the Constitution, including the provision to reserve 25 percent of seats in the Council of Representatives for women; the use of the Friday sermon to speak out about the negative impact of violence against women on the family and community after a workshop in Al-Najaf governorate focused on religious leaders and Sheikhs; and the collection of over 13,000 signatures from villagers promising not to practice Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in the future and submission of the signatures to the Parliament in order to spur it to enact a law to prosecute those who practice FGM.

Advocacy Against Corruption

Iraqi CSOs engaged in advocacy against corruption conducted a wide range of activities including: educating the public and government officials on recognizing and rejecting corruption; conducting provincial surveys on public perceptions of corruption in their local government; holding town hall meetings to discuss the results of these surveys with Provincial Councils; and establishing follow-up anti-corruption working groups to take action. Networks were formed of anti-corruption activists, including the Iraq Civic Action Network, the Alnoor Universal Society, the Kurdistan Anti-Corruption Network and the Media Anti-Corruption Network. CSO actions also included identification of offices and government services where corruption was common and cooperation with agency management and/or the Commission for Public Integrity (CPI) to investigate and take action on the complaints. CSOs have used surveys to identify government offices and programs with corrupt employees. CSOs also documented corruption in ports, hospitals, schools, the food basket program and other public programs and institutions. These surveys provide the basis for anti-corruption advocacy campaigns. As a result of CSO advocacy in Hilla, the hospital now makes public the biographies of new staff to demonstrate that they are well-qualified. In Sulaymaniya, the Dean of the university now forbids political parties from using university facilities. In Ammara, the provincial council began holding weekly meetings with the heads of departments on improving services to citizens.

Advocacy for Human Rights

CSO actions to advocate for human rights, including the rights of children and detainees, substantially increased with training, technical assistance and financial support provided under ICSP. Human rights protections were not well understood by many Iraqis, including public

officials, and the number and severity of human rights violations increased with the rising insecurity. In response, many CSOs undertook massive public education campaigns to advocate for human rights. These public education campaigns included workshops, mobile theater, posters, banners, art shows and festivals. More focused advocacy actions targeted the Iraqi security sector, including police and prison officials and employees of the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defense. ICSP Human Rights staff and CSO implementing partners made successful efforts in different regions to raise police awareness of human rights, developing partnerships with police departments in Basra, Mosul, Kirkuk, Hilla, Karbala, Diwaniyah, and elsewhere. ICSP also established a strong working relationship with the Ministry of State for Human Rights and Parliament's Committee on Human Rights. ICSP provided technical assistance and guidance to these institutions, including assisting the Ministry of Human Rights in the development of a draft law which would establish an independent Human Rights Commission according to the Paris Principles for national human rights institutions.

EXPANDED TECHNICAL RESOURCES FOR ONGOING DEVELOPMENT OF IRAQI CIVIL SOCIETY

ICSP significantly expanded Iraqi resources for the development of civil society. Scores of civil society organizations and trainers were developed to deliver training and technical assistance services throughout Iraq. These CSOs and trainers, located across the country, are able to deliver training and technical assistance in such targeted technical areas as civic education, women's advocacy, anti-corruption, and human rights. Training and resource materials in Arabic and applicable to the Iraq situation were developed and widely distributed to Iraqi CSOs. Numerous Iraqi CSOs are now able to serve as resource organizations, capable of delivering training and technical assistance to others in Iraq. Although the four Civil Society Resource Centers established under ICSP did not become sustainable by the end of the short life of the Iraq contract, many individual Iraqi CSOs and trainers have become sustainable resources for the development of Iraq's civil society. Furthermore, the staff trained by ICSP has been absorbed eagerly by many international assistance programs still working in Iraq. The former ICSP staff are well trained and now serve as valuable assets for these organizations.

III. ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN RELATION TO SCOPE OF WORK

This section of ADF's final report responds to Deliverable 7 of the contract that requires the contractor to align accomplishments of the program with specific paragraphs of the scope of work. The scope of work used for this purpose is the revised program description of Modification Three, with the addition of the description of expanded anti-corruption work in Modification Nine. Attachment I to this report presents the Life of Project Status of Deliverables.

III.A   CIVIL SOCIETY COMPONENT

Establish Civil Society Resource Centers

- The contractor is to establish and make sustainable a network of no less than four Civil Society Resource Centers to promote the development of civil society throughout Iraq through the provision of training and technical assistance. As the security environment permits, these Centers will also provide space for CSOs to organize and exchange best practices.

ICSP established four Civil Society Resource Centers (CSRCs or Centers) in Baghdad, Basrah, Erbil and Hilla. The CSRCs were expected to become sustainable Iraqi institutions, following the model of successful transformation from resource centers to foundations found in Eastern Europe. The assumptions underlying this exit strategy were an increasingly permissive security environment and available indigenous donor support from both the Iraqi government and an emergent and engaged Iraqi business community. These assumptions did not hold up and were not met due to the deteriorating security situation over the life of the project, with a resulting negative impact on network sustainability. The external evaluation conducted of the program, commissioned by USAID, presented the opinion that the targets and timelines for sustainability set forth in the contract were excessively ambitious, even in the best of circumstances. Despite the obstacles, ADF was making important progress toward the sustainability of the CSRCs and the network when funding for the contract was terminated. In early 2007, CSRCs formed an umbrella organization, the Iraqi Civil Society Institute, which was formally registered in Iraq as the *Center for Development of Civil Society in Iraq.*

Despite an increasingly poor security environment, Iraqi CSOs continued to use the Centers as a safe haven for organizing, coordinating and exchanging best practices. For example, in a meeting with ICSP's Regional Director in Basrah, CSOs in that region said they considered the Center as "The House of Information" – the place where they can access information, meet with other CSOs, discuss common concerns and participate in forums, workshops and conferences without fear.

- The contractor is to hire appropriate staff for each of the Centers, identify and procure resource materials, design and implement a financial and management plan that increasingly integrates local partners into the management structure and provides for eventual sustainability, and maintain the equipment and physical infrastructure of the Centers.

Each of these requirements was met well within the time frame, with the qualification for the sustainability of the Centers as described above. Staff was hired. Resource materials were procured. A financial and management plan for each Center integrated local partners into the

management structure. The physical infrastructure and equipment for the Centers were maintained.

- The contractor is to ensure that the Centers offer a range of capacity building services, from the most basic to advanced level, to CSOs. Services to range from administrative, financial and program management to practical training on conducting advocacy campaigns, servicing communities, developing a membership base, writing grant proposals, etc. If security permitted, the centers are to provide and maintain in-house support services such as a resource library, communication resources, computer equipment and internet access and educational materials. Each center is also to serve as a hub for regionally-based networks and collectively form a national-level coordination mechanism.

Centers offered a range of capacity building services to build operational and program capacity. Core materials developed under ICSP and used by the Centers are described later in this section. Centers provided over 700 organizational development workshops and close to 1000 workshops in civic education, women's advocacy, anti-corruption and human rights. Together, the Centers conducted more than 5,000 technical assistance sessions for CSOs. A resource library was established in each center and stocked with books, manuals and other relevant material. The concept of the Centers' serving as temporary shared working space for CSOs was not able to be implemented due to security constraints. Each Center did serve as a hub for regionally-based networks and together they formed a national-level coordination mechanism. In its final report, an independent evaluation sponsored by USAID in 2007 starts off its section on key findings related to program by stating that "The ICSP has provided widespread training and technical assistance to approximately 1800 CSOs. The demand from Iraqi CSOs for training is high and growing and CSOs report high levels of satisfaction with the training that they have received."

- The Centers are to serve as an information clearinghouse and coordination mechanism for integrating the Centers into the larger panoply of USAID and other donor-funded democracy initiatives, such as civic education campaigns, civil society capacity building, and assistance to municipal and national government.

The Centers were a point of contact and reference, serving as a liaison between USAID programs such as the Local Government Program or PRTs and the Iraqi civil society community. Civil society capacity building services were offered to CSO partners of USAID and other donor-funded programs. There was collaboration on scores of conferences and forums. In the last six months of the program the Centers and their Provincial/Governorate Outreach Coordinators undertook a large effort, coordinating and collaborating more closely with the PRTs and Local Government Program, for greater involvement of citizens in local governance. For example, in May 2007 a meeting was scheduled between the Provincial Council of Baghdad and representatives of civil society in the central region. This meeting was coordinated by the PRT and both the Local Government Project (LGP) and the Center worked with their respective constituencies to prepare for what was described by the PRT representative as "a landmark Iraqi meeting, which can be historically described as the first time all levels of Baghdad local government met in an open environment with civil society organizations."

- Responsibility for management and operations of the CSRCs is to be increasingly taken over by CSOs in each region, with individual or associations of CSOs invited to play a role in the management structure as feasible. The Centers and their products and services are to be viewed by CSOs as being created with their cooperation and serving their interests.

ICSP worked with Centers and local CSOs to begin the process of transferring management and operational responsibility but the security situation and changes in USAID strategies constrained the ability to fully complete this transfer. Nevertheless, the Centers were definitely perceived by the local Iraqi community as being valuable resources for CSOs and serving their interests. The understanding that CSRCs were becoming local entities, responsive to Iraqi CSO needs, was evident in CSO discussions with USAID's independent evaluation team and in discussions with ICSP. CSOs considered the Centers as local institutions, although they knew they had funding support from USAID.

- Within six months of the award, the contractor is to establish an informal advisory council for each Center to provide advice regarding program activities. During the contract period the contractor is to initiate a USAID/Iraq approved sustainability plan that transfers control of the Centers to Boards of Directors, with day-to-day management appointed by each Board.

Each Center was supported by an Advisory Board composed of local Iraqi activists, CSO leaders and academicians. The Advisory Boards provided advice to the management of each Center, solicited input from key CSOs and other stakeholders, and helped CSOs and the Centers share approaches and coordinate activities. Advisory Boards became partners in the development of sustainability plans for the Centers and have played a major role in advocating for an improved enabling environment for civil society in Iraq. In order to facilitate the transition of the Centers to become independent Iraqi institutions, in mid-2005 each Center prepared a sustainability concept paper including a vision of revenue generation, its future structure and a transitional implementation plan. Sustainability plans were developed and submitted to USAID/Iraq for approval in early 2006. A joint strategy for sustainability was developed in June 2006 at a retreat in Erbil with the participation of a USAID contractor. Based on the decision reached during this retreat, ICSP assisted with the preparation of by-laws for an umbrella organization, the Iraqi Civil Society Institute, which later was formally registered in Iraq as the *Center for Development of Civil Society in Iraq.* The CDCSI Executive Committee includes elected members from Center Advisory Boards.

- Within 90 days of the award, an initial organizational development plan is to be developed. Each of the Centers is to possess the expertise needed to provide useful products and services to CSOs with emphasis placed on Iraqi CSOs receiving the assistance needed to incorporate internal accounting and control mechanisms adequate to meet the needs of potential donors

Staff development plans were developed and implemented each quarter as part of the overall transfer of necessary expertise to Center staff. Each Center possessed the expertise needed to provide useful products and services to CSOs. Training and technical assistance in internal accounting and control mechanisms was supplemented by practical experience through the ICSP grants program, with Center staff providing coaching and assistance to assist CSOs in meeting USAID control and reporting requirements. Several CSO partners have received funding from other donors and have demonstrated their capacity to meet the accountability needs of these donors.

- The contractor is to ensure that centers have capacity in Training (training module development, design and delivery of trainings, and facilitation of meetings, roundtables, and conferences); Codes of conduct and best practices; Public awareness (information on project and program implementation, information campaigns, and promotional materials); Community Mobilization (Coordination with the

CAP program and other organizations and programs to identify and support community initiatives which could coalesce and become effective CSOs); Technical Consultant Services (project and program design and evaluation. NGO development, financial, legal, and information technology); Facilitation of public meeting and policy dialogues (building on USAID and CPA investment to date in trained facilitators and Civic Dialogue Program); Advocacy (design and implementation of advocacy campaigns); Logistics (coordination and assistance, logistics and facilitation of conferences and events, and maintenance of office space, equipment, and supplies); Fundraising (volunteerism and fundraising campaigns); and Research (complex research and publication of reports/reviews).

ICSP provided a series of staff development sessions to develop the capacity of Centers and their staff to implement these services. Training of Trainers was provided for general training skills, provision of technical assistance, facilitation, ethics, community mobilization, internal governance, organizational management, strategic planning, financial management, proposal writing, project management, project sustainability, community dialogue, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation, and fundraising. As noted in the USAID independent evaluation, "Staff from all four centers has been hired and trained. They are motivated and competent, although further training is warranted. Twenty two training modules have been established and are given good marks by both CSOs and local CSRC staff." ICSP staff trainers and managers were recognized as superior by other international assistance programs and were aggressively (and often successfully) recruited by them throughout implementation of ICSP. As a result, ADF conducted multiple series of staff development sessions to bring new and untrained replacement staff up to required levels of competency.

-   As part of an emphasis on developing institutional sustainability, potential resources will be developed, including generating revenues through membership fees, developing a fee-for-service structure, selling products, seeking the support of other donors, and fund-raising or minimizing the cost of developing and providing specific tools and services by seeking out partners. By month 9 of the contract award date, the contractor is to present to USAID/Iraq a sustainability plan including various options for turning the program over to Iraqis—e.g., at 18 months, with one option year or with two option years.

Sustainability plans were developed and submitted to USAID in March 2006, exceeding the target date for this milestone. Sustainability plans were revised in August 2006 following work with an international consultant with USAID. The deteriorating security environment had a serious effect on the potential for local revenue generation. Techniques such as fee-for-services that were viewed as realistic in March 2006 became less realistic by the following year.

-   The contractor is to work with appropriate U.S., Iraqi and international partners to review and offer recommendations on the legal framework needed to create an enabling environment for Iraqi civil society. The contractor is to provide consultations for civil society clientele and key Iraqi government officials on legal issues such as the registration process, reporting requirements, tax issues, etc., as applicable.

ICSP invested significant time and effort in working with Iraqi CSOs to reform the existing NGO law and address specific problematic articles within it. ICSP worked with CSOs to hold workshops, forums and study groups on the relevance and principles of an NGO law. With ICSP support, Iraqi CSOs formed a national steering committee and initiated a decentralized consultative process working across the country to present and review the draft NGO law proposed by the Ministry of Civil Society, gather comments and recommendations, and develop

a draft for alternative legislation. This draft was presented at a three-day conference organized by ICSP and attended by more than 210 delegates from all provinces and by representatives of international NGOs, UNAMI, the ministries of Civil Society Affairs, Human Rights and Women's Affairs, Parliament members, diplomats and legal experts. Elements for the final proposed legislation were defined and a follow-up legislative committee refined and finalized a draft NGO law with technical assistance from experts provided by ICSP to ensure that the law would meet international standards. After review and endorsement by the main body of CSOs in regional and national forums, a final piece of alternative legislation was officially presented to the Iraqi Parliament Legislative Committee. CSOs are advocating for adoption of their proposed NGO Law, which has not yet been voted on. In addition to this support for a better enabling environment, ICSP worked with the Prime Minister's office for registration of civil society organizations to develop a handbook describing the registration process.

- The contractor is to ensure that the centers are available to support other USAID-funded programs and to avoid supporting CSOs who openly espouse extreme political or sectarian views at odds with the development of an open and pluralist democracy.

ICSP and the four Centers became important resources for other USAID and State Department funded civil society and democracy programs. Centers offered their services to ICAP programs to assist informal ICAP partner groups in becoming stronger CSOs and to support the registration process. Centers also worked closely with Provincial Reconstruction Teams, supporting their efforts and providing training to groups that PRTs had identified. While the principals of many civil society organizations have strong political ties, Centers emphasized the importance of nonpartisan action by civil society and avoided CSOs that openly espoused extreme political or sectarian views.

- It is anticipated that in addition to administrative and managerial staff, each Resource Center will be staffed by experts for each of the targeted areas of CSO support (civil society, civic education, women**,** and anti-corruption), a grants manager, a training/facilitation specialist, and an information/reporting officer, with Iraqi staff utilized to the extent possible.

Staff in the Centers included a Center Director, administrative and managerial staff, a team of trainers, a team of governance outreach coordinators, a grants management team, a monitoring and reporting team, and at least two-member teams in each of the targeted areas of support: women's advocacy, civic education, anti-corruption and human rights). All Center staff were Iraqi nationals.

Targeted Technical Assistance and training

- While the centers should serve a broad range of CSOs, the contractor is to specifically target assistance for three types of CSOs: civic education, women's advocacy, and anti-corruption. To the extent feasible and appropriate, this assistance is to be designed, coordinated and delivered through the centers.

ICSP provided targeted technical assistance and training to strengthen the operational and program capacities of more than a thousand civic education, women's advocacy, anti-corruption and human rights organizations. Programs were expanded significantly, both independently by the CSOs and with ICSP technical and financial support. The vast majority of this assistance was coordinated and delivered through the Centers.

- The contractor is to strengthen and support implementation of a broad array of **civic education** initiatives by civic education CSOs promoting democratic values, including rights and responsibilities, constitutional development, tolerance of difference, human rights, respect for the rule of law, and a pluralistic political culture. The goal is to implement programs that reach a broad cross-section of the population including geographical, tribal, ethnic, and religious identification, youth, and gender. Specific focus included the development of democratic dialogue, helping Iraqis talk with Iraqis about building an Iraqi democracy. Within this civic education component, the contractor shall also give particular support to human rights education.

ICSP strengthened civil society CSOs using training, technical assistance and forums as a means of institutional strengthening, skills enhancement, expanding understanding of civic education as a concept, advancing knowledge of specific topics, and promoting shared values. As a result, CSOs in all 18 provinces undertook expanded actions to promote democratic processes and values, participate in key national and regional democratic initiatives (the Constitution and elections), build trust within and among communities, promote respect for the rule of law and strengthen local democratic institutions. ICSP partnership with local CSOs built up civil society networks and developed mechanisms that defended citizen and human rights. Specific activities included the following:

- ICSP's Civic Education Sector delivered 348 workshops, 559 technical assistance sessions, nine staff development sessions, 259 forums, 12 regional conferences, and one national conference on civic education topics. These events had over 20,000 attendees, with more than 1,000 individual CSOs directly participating.

- ICSP supported 335 CSO activities to raise the capacity of other civil society groups for civic education work. These CSO activities included 90 workshops, three technical assistance sessions, two staff development sessions, 134 forums, 22 regional conferences, and one national conference. There were 73 additional activities including television programs, art exhibitions, and mobile theaters. CSO activities in civic education focused on educating citizens on democratic values, rights and responsibilities; promoting political participation (including participation in the Constitutional Referendum and elections processes); educating government and CSOs on the role of civil society in a democracy; promoting peace building and national reconciliation; promoting human rights; and advocating for an improved enabling environment for civil society.

- Civic education activities took place across the country and reached millions of Iraqis. Illustrative success stories are presented in the appendices to this report.

- As a result of ICSP's training and capacity building efforts, CSOs implemented the following civic education programs. ICSP funded a national legislative observatory that monitored legislation, policy, and directives considered/issued by the new Iraqi legislature and other governing bodies, More than 30 CSOs enlisted in the national observatory information dissemination network. ICSP also supported the establishment of provincial legislative watchdog coalitions to serve the same purpose at the governorate level. The legislative observatories served as an interface to both legislative bodies and organized civil society. The observatories developed networks and nurtured relationships with legislative bodies, including members of relevant parliament committees and the

specialized commissions. With the participation of regional and national legislative observatories, the following was accomplished:

- Laws were analyzed, commented upon, and debated through the provision of direct technical assistance, policy dialogues.
- Legislative articles were passed with citizens' input, reflecting impact through commentary and technical assistance.
- At least five advocacy campaigns were launched by CSOs in response to legislative commentaries and policy dialogues organized by the regional and national legislative observatories.
- Two booklets were published on the investment and appropriation law and Arabic versions of the amended investment law, anti-terrorism law and appropriation law were produced and distributed.
- The Regional Legislative Observatory in the north analyzed and commented on a draft of the Kurdistan Constitution.

- ICSP is to strengthen and support implementation of a broad array of initiatives by **women's advocacy** CSOs to promote women's political participation, advocacy, policy development, program implementation, and legal enforcement of issues affecting women's rights, legal protections and equal access to public goods and services.

ICSP strengthened women's advocacy CSOs using training, technical assistance and forums as a means of institutional strengthening, skills enhancement, expanding understanding of women's advocacy as a concept, advancing knowledge of specific topics, and developing increased levels of joint action to impact on women's issues. As a result, CSOs in all 18 provinces undertook expanded actions to educate men and women on women's rights, positively impact the legislative and policy environment for women's rights, advocate against domestic violence and violence against women; promote the political participation of women; end discrimination and enforce the application of laws; and enhance women's role in promoting peace, resolving conflicts and strengthening national unity. Specific interventions included:

- ICSP's Women's Advocacy Sector delivered 301 workshops, 921 technical assistance sessions, 5 staff development sessions, 59 forums and 2 regional conferences. These events had over 27,000 attendees, with more than 567 individual CSOs participating.

- ICSP also supported CSO activities to raise the capacity of other civil society groups for women's advocacy work. These CSO activities included 209 workshops, 81 forums, 8 regional conferences, and 3 national conferences. Additional activities including radio and television programs, art exhibitions, mobile theaters, surveys and publication of results, and the distribution of printed materials.

- With their increased capacity, CSOs undertook actions to increase women's participation in democratic and political processes, educate people on women's rights, reduce discrimination, end violence against women (including female genital mutilation), and advocate for the protection of women's rights in the Constitution, laws and practice. Under these grants, CSOs conducted training and educational programs, advocacy campaigns, mobilization drives and technical analysis of legislation.

- ▪ As an example, the *Iraqi Women's Association* held an Art Exhibition which took place over 3 days in Baghdad. More than 335 people, including students, CSO members and government officials attended the exhibition. The CSO displayed over 30 paintings that depicted the reality of women's lives compared to women's rights within the Iraqi legal framework. The idea behind the exhibition was to focus on the impact of Article 41 of the Constitution on women's lives and to garner support for amending Article 41. To further raise awareness, 1000 copies of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) were distributed during the exhibition.

- ▪ Illustrative success stories are presented in the appendices to this report.

- The contractor is to strengthen and support implementation of initiatives by CSOs committed to working with government at all levels, the private sector, and other local and international CSOs to raise public awareness and shape the public perception of **corruption**, including its economic opportunity costs; promote specific laws and regulations to prevent and combat corruption; and oversee the allocation and use of public resources by public officials.

ICSP worked with anti-corruption CSOs, using training, technical assistance and forums as a means of institutional strengthening, skills enhancement, expanding public understanding of anti-corruption as a concept, raise public awareness and rejection of corruption, and increase transparency in the use of public resources. As a result, CSOs in all 18 provinces undertook expanded actions to educate civil servants and the general public on recognizing and eliminating corruption; assess the level of corruption of individual public institutions and undertake advocacy for its elimination; survey public perception on corruption in each governorate and present those findings to provincial officials; and establish mechanisms for greater transparency in the use of public resources in those provinces.

- ▪ ICSP's Anti-corruption Sector delivered 226 workshops, 1,854 technical assistance sessions, 17 forums, and one regional conference. These events attracted more than 8,000 attendees, with over 450 individual CSOs participating.

- ▪ ICSP supported CSO activities to raise the capacity of civil society groups and government officials for anti-corruption work. These CSO activities included 811 workshops, 76 forums and 8 regional conferences. More than 22,000 people were directly involved in these activities in all 18 provinces.

- ▪ Drawing upon their increased knowledge and capacity for anti-corruption work, CSOs working with ICSP undertook initiatives to build public awareness and action against corruption, reinforce public institutions in the fight against corruption, increase transparency in the use of public resources, and build partnerships between civil society and government for decreased corruption.

- ▪ The project helped establish 18 anti corruption task forces to coordinate future anti-corruption activities with law makers. These task forces will work with local governments and provincial councils to support them with public inputs and local expertise that needed in each governorate to fight corruption.

- ▪ At least 20,000 civil servants were trained to improve their capacity to combat corruption, increase their efficiency in managing public funds, which resulted in

improved services delivery to citizens. During the life of the project ICSP and its partners succeeded in enhancing public servants skills to fight corruption in their agencies.

- Illustrative success stories are presented in the appendices to this report.

- **Human rights** awareness and education is to be treated as a cross-cutting theme to be woven thought the elements of the Civil Society Program and to be incorporated as appropriate in civil society, civic education, women's advocacy, anti-corruption and media components.

Human rights awareness and education was treated as a cross-cutting theme but training and technical assistance interventions were tracked as a separate category. In the latter half of the contract, an ICSP management unit was created for human rights. ICSP strengthened human rights CSOs using training, technical assistance and forums as a means of institutional strengthening, skills enhancement, expanding understanding of human rights as a concept, advancing knowledge of specific topics, and developing increased levels of joint action. As a result, CSOs undertook expanded actions to educate the public and government institutions about human rights; and reduce human rights abuse in Iraq's prison system;

- ICSP's human rights sector delivered 99 workshops, 421 technical assistance sessions, 3 staff development sessions, 39 forums, and one regional conference. More than 200 CSOs participated in human rights training events.

- ICSP supported 129 CSO activities focused on expanding human rights awareness, understanding and respect in Iraq. CSO activities included 163 workshops, five technical assistance sessions, 92 forums, five regional conferences, public information campaigns, and visits to prisons and work to conditions in these prisons. Together, ICSP and its supported CSO activities on human rights had over 14,500 participants.

- Illustrative success stories are presented in the appendices to this report.

Small Grants Program

- The contractor is to design and administer a $7.6 million small grants program. The purpose of the program is to reinforce the training and technical assistance activities provided through the centers, complement the targeted training and technical assistance being provided to civic education, women's advocacy, media, and anti-corruption CSOs, and support activities that increase civic activism and promote the role of CSOs in advocacy and policy-making at the national, regional, and local levels. The contractor is to manage the small grants program independently of the centers, but ensure that the CSOs reached through the centers are aware of the programs and may receive technical assistance through the centers in preparing grant proposals and applications.

ICSP designed and administered a grants program that reinforced and complemented the training and technical assistance activities provided through the centers, and supported activities that increased civic activism and the role of CSOs in advocacy and policy-making. Centers were closely involved in the grants program, serving as a means of advertising the program, transmitting proposals, and providing decentralized monitoring and support. The grants program was managed and administered from the main ICSP office.

With USAID/Iraq agreement and as formalized in the revised budgets of several modifications to the contract, the overall amount of resources allocated for the grants program was reduced. Some

of the resources allocated for grants in the original budget were used for establishing the physical infrastructure of the Centers, since USAID had anticipated that physical structures would have been built by USAID reconstruction programs prior to the start of ICSP. In addition, the capacity of Iraqi CSOs to develop projects that could qualify for funding and their capacity to manage grant funds with effectiveness and accountability was extremely low and funds were moved from the grants program to focus on developing this capacity. Finally, a portion of the grants program for media was transferred to a local subcontracts line item to provide greater flexibility to the unique needs of the independent media program, which worked with both for-profit media institutions and non-profit groups).

ICSP grants to 450 Iraqi CSOs and their partners reinforced training and technical assistance activities, increased civic activism and expanded the role of CSOs in advocacy and policy-making at the national, regional, and local levels. The grants program strengthened the capacity of CSOs in project design, planning and implementation, proposal writing, financial management, monitoring and evaluation, and donor relations. Since many grants were allocated for joint action, the funded projects brought CSOs together, encouraging networking and opening the door for civil society activists to meet and address governmental ministers, parliamentarians and political leaders, legal experts and legislative advocates. Such coalition building offered CSOs opportunities to work nationally as well as locally, in partnership, and with the potential for greater impact.

- The contractor is to recommend a detailed grants management plan that, in both an operational and thematic sense, supports the objectives of capacity development, training, and technical assistance. Individual grants will generally range from $5,000 to $50,000, with exceptions made in concurrence with USAID/Iraq. Minimum amounts for grants in priority sectors set for the base period are: $1,250,000 in sub-grants for civil society writ large; $600,000 for human rights; $1,200,000 million for civic education CSOs; $1,200,000 million for Women's CSOs; $2,150,000 million for anti-corruption CSOs; $1,200,000 for Media for a total of $7,600,000; The contractor is to set aside additional funds for a grants program during each option year, including the expansion of services, at levels mutually acceptable to the CTO and ADF as agreed upon in the implementation plans.

As noted previously, the grants program was reduced through mutual agreement with USAID/Iraq due to factors that were unforeseen or underestimated during the design of the program. ICSP awarded 538 grants to Iraqi CSOs totaling $4,845,215 with matching resources totaling $614,381.

- 87 civil society grants for a total of $719,717.
- 36 human rights grants for a total of $293,640.
- 96 civic education grants for a total of $831,910
- 113 women's advocacy grants for a total of $883,080
- 195 anti-corruption grants for a total of $1,860,074
- 11 media grants for a total of $256,794

Grants ranged from just under $1,000 to just over $50,000, with most ranging from $5,000 to $10,000.

- The contractor is to receive USAID/Iraq concurrence in defining the appropriate use of grants in support of the overall program objectives and establish a plan for coordination with USAID/Iraq and other support programs. In addition, the contractor is to establish transparent and representative grant selection procedures and criteria to ensure that grant-making mirrors genuine CSO development and community needs. In both the design and implementation of the small grants program, contractor is to liaise particularly closely with USAID's Community Action Program (CAP), the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) grantees, the core institutes of NED, and the Local Governance Program as it relates to local government partnership-building with CSOs, as well as other USG implementing partners and the broader donor community sponsoring small grant assistance. USAID/Iraq anticipates that some of these groups will develop into CSOs which will need further technical and financial support under this civil society strengthening program.

ADF and USAID/Iraq jointly agreed on the appropriate use of grants in support of overall program objectives and coordination with USAID/Iraq and other support programs. Transparent and representative grants selection procedures and criteria were established. ICSP communicated and coordinated with other USAID and USG implementing partners, as well as the broader donor community sponsoring small grant assistance for civil society. Monthly civil society inter-agency coordination meetings were a primary means of ensuring ongoing communication.

- The contractor is to monitor the financial and programmatic aspects of all grants in accordance with a detailed performance monitoring plan and evaluation plan it develops, and report to USAID/Iraq and USAID/Iraq's Monitoring & Evaluation contractor, Management Systems International (MSI), on a regular basis.

ICSP closely monitored the financial and programmatic aspects of all grants in accordance with its performance monitoring plan and the procedures established in the ICSP grants manual. Reporting took place on a weekly, monthly and quarterly basis. ICSP worked closely with USAID/Iraq's monitoring and evaluation contractors.

MEDIA ASSISTANCE COMPONENT

ADF implemented the media assistance component both directly and, from March 2005 through October 2006, through a subcontract with IREX, for the period March 2005 through October 2006.

Training Media Professionals

- The objective of this activity will be to improve the professional skills of practicing journalists, editors, production support staff, and newsroom managers. Media managers at emerging Iraqi independent media outlets will learn to use research and analysis to develop and implement strategic planning. This component also will focus on adding to the ability of editorial staff to utilize newsroom guidelines and build a management structure to implement those standards. Later the assistance will be devoted to employing set standards to produce news, public affairs related print materials and/or programming, and other media products. The contractor must provide a range of training opportunities matched to the skill levels of the participating Iraqi media professionals, ranging from basic to advanced levels of journalism skills.

ICSP provided a range of training opportunities, from basic to advanced levels of journalism skills. This training reached more than 100 media outlets and organizations, including 50 newspapers and magazines, 20 radio stations, 20 satellite and ground transmission TV stations, 10 production houses, 9 media unions and associations and 2 academic media institutions. The

total number of participants in the workshops and training courses represented 50% of the active journalists in Iraq.

Training topics included basic news writing; editorial management; coverage of constitutional processes and elections; specialized journalism (human rights, gender, economic issues, court reporting, corruption); human interest writing; investigative reports; interviewing; professional standards; TV and radio news and programming.

- The contractor must also identify the most promising Iraqi CSOs, university journalism faculties, and/or emerging media training institutions that can potentially deliver high quality training and technical assistance to local media outlets. After exploring these potential local media training organizations the contractor must make recommendations to USAID/Iraq on how best to begin developing and institutionalizing long-term domestic (Iraqi) training capacity for training media professionals.

An assessment of media training institutions with recommendations was submitted as part of the Media Implementation Plan in April 2005. ICSP enhanced the ability of the National Iraqi News Agency (NINA), the Iraq Media Network (IMN) and the Arc journalism school to provide journalism training. ICSP provided international technical expertise to universities for improving training of television journalists, editors and technicians in Kurdistan.

The National Iraqi News Agency: As part of the development of greater professionalism in the media, ICSP provided a special focus on supporting the establishment of a nonpartisan, objective and independent National Iraqi News Association (NINA) as a critical element to enabling media in Iraq to have access to fact-based news. NINA is an independent, subscriber-supported news agency. NINA operates up to 24 hours a day, providing independent, balanced and quality news reports in Arabic to Iraqi print and broadcast media, including general news, features, business news and sports. NINA also serves as a window on Iraq for international media and their correspondents in Baghdad and the region. ICSP provided significant technical assistance to enhance the management and future sustainability of NINA, as well as its infrastructure and ability to conduct business.

Media Business Development

- The contractor shall support *Media business development,* including targeted technical assistance to those private media outlets that demonstrate professional and business growth potential. Business development support may involve broader activities that improve the business environment in which private media outlets operate, such as technical assistance to initiate media audience research, to implement print and broadcast media market sector research and analysis, and to advocate for laws and regulations that enable the development of private, commercial media enterprises. Creating and implementing strategic and business plans that help guide newspapers and/or broadcast stations toward financial viability are key to the independence of media outlets.

ICSP assisted media managers in developing revenue streams for Iraqi media outlets and gaining the skills to support and manage these outlets, including promoting a culture of transparency and accountability to reinforce sound business practices. ICSP provided training in media management; media projects and plans; media strategic management; and media marketing to 40 institutions, including those from newspapers, radio stations, satellite and terrestrial TV stations and production houses. Technical assistance was provided to a number of media outlets such as

Shanasheel radio, Najaf TV, Diwanniyah TV and al-Yawm radio for the development of business plans. NINA received support in pricing/sales policy and revenue generation through establishing a range of products and the consolidation of the core Arabic service. It established professional business management and introduced a modern distribution system. An audience research survey was conducted, designed to help enhance editorial output and inform advertisers of their market share

Legal, Regulatory and Policy Environment

- The contractor shall support *Media law advocacy,* facilitating establishment of a legal, regulatory, and policy environment that enables the development of an independent media sector.

ICSP provided technical assistance to support creation of a sound legal, regulatory and business environment for an independent and free media. Particular support was provided to the watchdog group Iraqis for Public Broadcasting and for the Iraqi Media Network (IMN). ICSP assisted in developing an alternative draft law on public broadcasting and the IMN. ICSP provided technical assistance for setting up a new program structure for Al-Iraqiya and producing a number of new high quality program formats to assist Al-Iraqiya in coming closer to the concept of public broadcasting. Workshops on the IMN draft law were conducted in Baghdad and throughout the country to broaden the base for advocacy on this law. ICSP provided technical assistance to Iraqis for Public Broadcasting to strengthen its capacity to advocate a the new IMN draft law

Association Building: Media Sector Advocacy Organizations

- *Association building* to encourage the development of professional associations and industry organizations which can defend the professional interests of Iraqi journalists and the professional interests of independent Iraqi media enterprises.

ICSP provided technical assistance to both existing and newly formed professional journalist associations focused on administration reform, promotion of joint efforts in support of the new broadcast law and other media issues, protection of press freedoms and the right to free speech. A coalition of media organizations has been formed to advocate for the new draft public broadcasting law, led by Iraqis for Public Broadcasting and the Legal Culture Association. ICSP provided technical assistance to strengthen the advocacy ability of the Iraqi Association for Defending Journalist Rights.

IV. LESSONS LEARNED

Lessons learned under the Iraq Civil Society and Independent Media Program are grouped under five main headings:

    A. Lessons learned about civil society in Iraq;

    B. Lessons learned related to ICSP design;

    C. Lessons learned about implementation in times of conflict;

    D. Lessons learned about implementing programs that are politically sensitive in the U.S.; and

    E. Lessons learned about implementing civil society programs under a contract.

LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT CIVIL SOCIETY IN IRAQ

The drive to work together is high. As in many post-authoritarian countries, the drive of people to join together to represent their interests and participate in resolving problems is high in Iraq. This led to an explosion in the formation of new civil society organizations in the post-Saddam period, as people became aware of the benefits of civil society organizations for organizing in support of change. As is often the case, many such organizations were formed or dominated by a single individual. However, most of these leaders quickly grasp the importance of creating a stronger group around them to realize a shared vision. There was significant openness among Iraqi CSO leaders to the creation of networks, coalitions and partnerships as a means of achieving common goals as well as recognition the advancement of civil society as a sector is an important factor in achieving the goals of individual organizations.

Government officials are not averse to working closely with civil society, once they understand the respective roles each can play and the benefits of collaboration. While there was misunderstanding about these differing roles at first, Iraq is dissimilar to many other post-authoritarian countries in that there does not appear to be an inherent rivalry in the attitudes of officials toward civil society. There were numerous cases during ICSP implementation when government officials initially opposed CSO "intervention" in what they felt was "official business", however this opposition was relatively easily overcome with few exceptions through dialogue. This lesson learned reveals tremendous potential for civil society undertaking an effective role in Iraq's future.

The demand of CSOs for assistance in increasing capacity is high. Civil society organizations in Iraq are well aware that they are inexperienced and need to increase their capacity to be more effective. CSO demand for capacity building services from the Resource Centers and ICSP consistently surpassed the program's ability to respond. Furthermore, because the Centers were considered Iraqi institutions, CSOs understand that assistance in building capacity does not have to come from outside "experts", as is the case in some other countries. This finding highlights the importance of the capacity building resources that ICSP developed, as well as the importance of ensuring that additional efforts are invested in continuing to help build sustainable Iraqi resource organizations that throughout the country.

LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT ICSP PROGRAM DESIGN

The design of ICSP included distinct elements that often competed or even conflicted with one another as the situation in Iraq evolved and the program adapted. The elements that most often competed were the emphasis on creating sustainable centers for general capacity building versus the emphasis on developing the capacities of Iraqi CSOs in civic education, women's advocacy and anti-corruption to facilitate democratic transition; and the pairing of the media component with the civil society component.

The prospect of establishing sustainable civil society resource centers in less than the maximum potential period of the contract (4 years) was flawed from the beginning. The program design in the USAID contract forecast a base period of less than 18 months, with the potential for two 18-month extensions if follow-on options were exercised. Even if the anticipated physical structures for the resource centers had been in place at the start of the program and if the security environment had not deteriorated so drastically, the base period would have presented an unrealistic goal for achieving sustainability. The Civil Society Resource Centers were established from scratch, staff were recruited and trained and the Centers provided important assistance in developing the capacities of Iraqi CSOs to become actively involved in promoting democratic values and processes in the countries. All of this competed with the time needed to transition to sustainability. The experience of ADF and other organizations in achieving similar goals in other countries indicates that the establishment of sustainable CSO resource centers requires significant time. The establishment of a sustainable, indigenous NGO Service Center in Egypt took five years. Assisting training staff in Bosnia to create an independent and self-supporting training institution took more than three years. If conditions had not changed so drastically in Iraq and USAID priorities not shifted, it is possible that another option to extend ICSP would have been exercised and the sustainability of the Resource Centers could have been achieved prior to the end of the program.

Pairing the media component with the civil society component within the same program should be avoided. In pairing media with civil society there was competition for resources and confusion over the extent to which these two components should interface. By its very nature, a program to develop an independent media needs to foster independence and instill the values of impartiality and independence. On the other hand, civil society programs teach CSOs how to use the media for expanding their profile, conducting advocacy, and educating the public. With the media unit housed in the same structure as the civil society units, there was pressure on the media unit to utilize its contacts to facilitate the connection. This resulted in some cases in the blurring of boundaries. Rather than focusing on "advocacy" for human rights and other civil society functions, a good media program must help journalists learn the skills to cover civil society as it should cover politics, corporations, religion or government – by being impartial observers and champions of truth. Another complication arose when ICSP was asked to fit into the decentralized management structure of the provincial reconstruction teams. A media program needs to focus on national needs. Journalistic values, skills and standards cannot be compartmentalized by regional breakdowns – these are universal values, and addressing shortcomings in Iraq journalism should focus on national rather than local needs.

LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT IMPLEMENTATION IN TIMES OF CONFLICT

Strengthening civil society organizations and the sector as a whole is clearly possible and relevant, even under conflict conditions. While the importance or possibility of strengthening civil society as a sector and increasing the capacity of individual CSOs may be seen by some as irrelevant under conflict conditions as severe as in Iraq, the ICSP program has shown that this is both possible and of great importance. As conflict increasingly limits the movements of expatriate personnel or outsiders, local civil society organizations become ever more important in helping to execute assistance programs. These organizations must have the skills to be effective partners and they must have the public image and enabling environment that enables them to operate fully. CSOs are also critical agents in mitigating and resolving the conflict, if they are able to operate and implement effective programs. ICSP provided essential support to advance these goals. As important, the CSOs that ICSP worked with viewed the program as a neutral location where they could gain knowledge, skills, insights and partners that reenergized and strengthened them for the work they are doing in the conflict environment. Civil society strengthening programs are highly relevant and important under these circumstances.

Local CSOs are valuable partners in expanding outreach. As security conditions worsened, ICSP and the Centers developed local civil society organizations in both central and outlying areas as partners in expanding the outreach of services and assistance. ICSP conducted training of trainers programs to build these local CSOs as intermediary organizations, capable of providing capacity building and other assistance to other CSOs in "hot spots" or areas where travel by an outsider, even another Iraqi, might be dangerous.

Recruiting and retaining capable staff is a real challenge. Over the three years of program implementation, and particularly in the final 12 months as daily operations became more dangerous, the number of people who were willing to work in Iraq decreased and the competition for those who were willing to work there increased. This was true for Iraqi local staff as well as expatriate staff and short-term technical assistance providers. Complicating this factor was the reality that companies and organizations working in Iraq routinely recruit local and expatriate staff from other programs. With high turnover rates, the importance of transition planning and the transfer of knowledge and institutional memory became more important. Two lessons learned related to this challenge are a) the importance of making a wise choice in staffing despite an urgent vacancy, and b) the importance of working hard to retain staff and help them to balance the pressures of work in Iraq.

Balancing keeping safe with remaining active is important. It would be very possible to become paralyzed in Iraq due to the necessity to take adequate precautions for individual security. The importance of security must not be underestimated: the incident that happened to NDI in January 2007 that resulted in the suspension and eventual relocation of NDI's operations is a critical lesson. However, ICSP's experience has shown that high levels of activity for a program are possible. Working through its low profile Centers and partner CSOs, ICSP continued its base in the "red zone" and continued high levels of operation throughout the program, including directly implementing over 700 workshops, technical assistance sessions, conferences and forums in its last quarter of operation. ICSP's CSO partners conducted an additional 680 activities in the same period. Quality control must always be a key concern in program implementation, and this becomes more important as well as more complicated when

supervisors (especially expatriate supervisors) have restrictions on their movement. ADF's Arab expatriates were able to move with low profile for much of the program and ICSP implemented alternative means of monitoring its decentralized operations, including the use of video to film training workshops, conferences and forums.

Working in conflict zones inevitably leads to greater home office engagement in project implementation. Our experience is that field staff rely more on home office staff for support during project implementation in conflict areas. This is in part due to the increased complexity of implementing projects, and also to psychological needs of field staff to be more closely supported when they are working in risky environments.

LESSONS LEARNED ON IMPLEMENTING CIVIL SOCIETY PROGRAMS UNDER A CONTRACT MECHANISM

It is possible to adapt a contract to changing conditions and strategies. The ICSP program was adjusted numerous times over the three years of implementation, despite the rigid framework of the contract mechanism. This was possible due to the broadly stated purpose of the contract and the functions it was expected to accomplish.

Significant changes in program alignment or implementation should be formalized in a revised program description, to be incorporated in the contract. As ICSP was adjusted to adapt to changing circumstances and strategies it became more difficult to balance accountability under the contract. For example, when USAID/Iraq developed a new strategy in mid-2006 and the ICSP program became the main vehicle for achieving IR 10.3: Capacity of Civil Society to Advocate for Citizen Interests Increased, this new measure of success was not reflected in a revision to the program description outlining the terms of ADF's contract. ADF was therefore implementing both the revised emphasis as well as the original emphasis of the contract and its deliverables. The USAID external independent evaluation conducted in early 2007 assessed the program in terms of the revised context rather than its official terms of reference or a combination thereof.

LOP Status of Deliverables
GEW-C-00-04-00001-00 America's Development Foundation (June 2007)

Contract Deliverables and Contract References	Current Status/Comments
Modification 3 Section C VI – Page 12 Overall Contract Deliverables/Results	
(Deliverable #1)-Fully mobilize and deploy key personnel and other long-term personnel within 30 days of contract award and remaining staff within 60 days of contract award	Completed
(Deliverable #2)-Implementation plan prepared within 30 days of contractor deployment to Iraq.	Completed
(Deliverable #3)-Weekly consultations with USAID and other partners as identified by USAID/Iraq	Current and Ongoing. There is at least one weekly meeting with the CTO. ICSP is in continuous communication with USAID partners, both International and local. ICSP organized conferences in June 06 and November 2006 for all the partners working in the area of civil society.
(Deliverable #4)-Weekly activity reports submitted to USAID/Iraq	Current and Ongoing.
(Deliverable #5) -Quarterly implementation plans to be submitted 2 weeks prior to the end of the quarter	Current and Ongoing (Last implementation plan for the period April – June 2007 submitted in March 2007.)
(Deliverable #6) -Submit to the CTO within 5 working days at the end of each month, a report on the activities undertaken during the month, including financial updates	Current and Ongoing (Last monthly report for May 2007 submitted in June 2007.
(Deliverable #7) -a final report which aligns accomplishments with the specific paragraphs of the scope	Due within 60 days of end of project.
Contract Deliverables for Activity 1 – Establish Civil Society Resource Centers (page 12)	
(Deliverable #8) Contract ref - Deliverable 1.1: No less than four Civil Society Resource Centers are fully operational with essential staff and materials	Completed (Four regions submitted CSRC Status Report on 13 August 2005.) Centers are providing capacity building services and facilitating networking and coalition building activities on a daily basis to CSOs throughout the country.
(Deliverable #9) Contract ref - Deliverable 1.2: An organizational development plan for each of the centers submitted for CTO approval within 90 days of the contractor deployment date.	Completed April 2005 (Submitted Business Plans)
(Deliverable #10) Contract ref. - Deliverable 1.3: Each Center is implementing training and technical assistance that will strengthen core CSO competencies including: ▪ effective and transparent management structures and practiced institutionalized;	**Capacity Building Sector:** **854** workshops for **6,921** CSO members. **1,164** individual CSOs have benefited from training. **1,453** Technical Assistance sessions for **2,750** CSO members. **533** individual CSOs have received TA.

Contract Deliverables and Contract References	Current Status/Comments
- conducting successful advocacy, awareness, or outreach activities; - increased financial accountability, sound financial plans, and successful mobilization of public and private resources; - recruiting and effectively managing volunteers; - expanding membership base	**Advocacy Objective for all sectors:** **73** Advocacy Workshops conducted for **1207** CSO members. **449** individual CSOs have benefited from training. **209** Technical Assistance sessions for **371** CSO members. **161** individual CSO received TA in Advocacy. **Awareness raising Objective for all sectors:** **337** workshops conducted for **1,720** CSO members. **993** individual CSOs have received Awareness Raising training. **1,511** Technical Assistance sessions for **1,780** CSO members. **762** individual CSO received TA in this area.
(Deliverable #11) Contract ref - Deliverable 1.4: Within nine months of the contract award date a sustainability plan applied to each of the centers is submitted for CTO approval. The sustainability plan will be developed with the advice of and input from the respective Informal Advisory Council for each of the CSRCs	Initial sustainability plans completed and submitted August 2005. Revisions based on CTO comments submitted April 2006, and these plans are expected to be updated semiannually as experience evolves. USAID and ICSP organized a meeting in Erbil to discuss the sustainability plans. The final report of this meeting will be submitted on October 2nd 2006 and may result in revised sustainability plans.
Required Contract Deliverables for Activity 2, Targeted Technical Assistance and Training: (page 12)	
(Deliverable #12) Contract ref - Deliverable 2.1: Increasing the numbers of Iraqi citizens to understand and participate in a pluralistic and democratic Iraq through civic education and public dialogue. The contractor will accomplish this goal by achieving the following: increase capacity of CSOs to design and conduct training, workshops, and educational campaigns that promote democratic values in Iraq.	**Civic Education Sector:** **438** Workshop in Civic Education topics for a total of **5,024** CSO members. **1,109** individual CSOs have benefited from CE training. **562** Technical Assistance sessions were conducted for **1,071** CSO members. **328** individual CSOs received CE TA.
increase citizen awareness of rights and responsibilities in a pluralistic, democratic Iraq, while paying special attention to youth;	**Granted CSO Action for all sectors:** **1,029** Grants Actions were conducted by CSOs that received ICSP grants (there are only 756 actions in the database). These include workshops, forums, conferences and other activities. A total of **301,780** individuals attended CSO actions. **Grant-funded CSO Forums for all sectors:** A total of **96** forums were supported by ICSP Grants with **7,449** individual forum participants. **ICSP Forums for all sectors:**

Contract Deliverables and Contract References	**Current Status/Comments**
	Including CSO grant-funded forums, ICSP conducted or subcontracted a total of **728** Forums for **32,986** participants.
▪increased ability of Iraqi CSOs to encourage Iraqis to engage in responsible and informed political participation such as standing for election, engaging officials in dialogue, lodging complaints, and attending public meetings;	As a result of ICSP capacity building and other support, CSOs took substantial action in key areas of political participation including: Election*: 45 CSO Actions*. National Reconciliation: **50** CSO Actions. Anti-corruption Radio Programs: **35** CSO Actions. Advocacy: **512** CSO Actions.
▪identification and support for a core group of Iraqi CSOs capable of working in alliance with other leading CSOs and coalition groups to support political and economic reform;	ICSP supported partner and intermediary CSOs implemented a substantial number of **CSO Actions** for the benefit of other CSOs in Iraq. These included: **396** forums **85** National and Regional Conferences and an additional **2667** actions such as workshops and other activities.
▪ coordination with other USG supported civic education programs and incorporate efforts such as the National Agenda Dialogue, Democracy Dialogues, use of the Democracy dialogue Tool-kit and utilization of an existing cadre of trained facilitators.	ICSP coordinates and collaborates with other USAID supported programs wherever possible.
(Deliverable #13) **Contract ref - Deliverable 2.2**: Increased capacity of CSOs to educate women and men on women's legal, economic, social and political rights and advocate more effectively on behalf of those rights. Specific activities include: ▪ public awareness campaigns designed and implemented to inform men and women on women's legal, economic and political rights;	As a result of ICSP capacity building training and other support, Iraqi CSOs engaged in significant numbers of activities designed to raise awareness of key Women's issues and improve women's roles in Iraq. A total of **514** CSO actions were recorded including workshops, forums, conferences, advocacy activities, posters, mobile theaters and other important initiatives. These actions targeted key women's issues such as their legal protections under Iraq's constitution, discouraging Female Genital Mutilation in the North region and building the capacity of Iraqi CSOs to advocate for women's rights for years to come.
▪ materials developed and disseminated on domestic violence, employment discrimination, political disempowerment, and trafficking in women that includes information on how and when to receive assistance; and	Important reference materials for education and advocacy on women's issues continue to be made available to CSOs in areas as the following: - Introduction to Gender Issues, - Advocating for Women's Issues, - CEDAW – the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, - Women's Participation in Political Life, - Women in the Media, and

Contract Deliverables and Contract References	Current Status/Comments
	- Women's Rights as Human Rights.
▪ enhanced capacity of CSOs to advocate on behalf of women's rights and actively promote women's participation and recruit potential women leaders.	**Advocacy for Women's Rights and Participation:** A total of **22** workshops and **13** TA sessions designed to build the capacity of CSOs to advocate on specific women's issues were conducted (all these activities are contracted activities). As a result, CSOs conducted **88** Advocacy actions.
(Deliverable #14) Contract ref - Deliverable 2.3: Increased capacity of a network of CSOs to provide effective oversight on fighting corruption. The contractor will accomplish this by ensuring the following: ▪ a significant number of CSOs possess sufficient technical knowledge in public budgeting and finance, public policy-making, and project design and implementation to responsibly monitor the use and allocation of public resources and actively participate in economic and political decision-making;	**Anticorruption Sector:** **1,037** AC workshops were conducted for **3,077** CSO members. A total of **845** individual CSOs benefited from AC training. **1,854** Technical Assistance sessions were provided for a total of **2,143** CSO members representing **595** individual CSOs. **93** AC Forums to raise awareness were conducted involving **2,597** participants. ICSP and Partner CSOs provided anti-corruption diagnostic and reduction training to **13,044** government officials and employees.
▪ CSOs have the technical and communication skills to monitor various Iraqi government oversight/accountability institutions and to communicate findings and advocate for civil society input into such institutions; professional and trade associations in association with Chambers of Commerce address private and public sector corruption through improved ethical practices and internal accountability mechanisms. This must be coordinated with other USAID implementing partners' business development programs that support free market-based development.	CSOs are providing oversight of local government institutions in collaboration with the Commission for Public Integrity, the Inspectors General, and other government oversight/accountability institutions.
(Deliverable #15) Contract ref - Deliverable 2.4: Ensure greater awareness of both the costs and impacts of corruption throughout all sectors of Iraqi society. The contractor must ensure that: ▪ an Anti-corruption Awareness Campaign is developed and implemented using both national and local media that focus on the costs of corruption and its impact on various populations in society, its impact on reputations, and its relation to foreign direct investments, etc;	**Anti-corruption Awareness Raising actions:** **1,037** AC workshops were conducted for a total of 15, 675 attendees. **1,854** Technical Assistance sessions were provided for a total of **2,169** attendees. **93** Anti-corruption forums were implemented for **1,971** attendees**.** **2** regional conferences were implemented for **211** attendees.

Contract Deliverables and Contract References	Current Status/Comments
	These anti-corruption awareness raising capacity building activities resulted in a direct action by CSOs to spread anti-corruption messages nationwide and take direct action to reduce corruption in government services. A total of **896** CSO Actions including mass media campaigns, training workshops in government offices and other actions were implemented directly impacting **240,075** individuals.
▪ a strategy is in place that integrates the campaign with a detailed follow-up that builds on the increased awareness and understanding of corruption with concrete actions that CSOs and individual citizens can undertake.	Completed (July 2005)

Required Contractor Deliverables/Results Under the Grants Component: (Page 13)	

(Deliverable #16) -within 60 days of the contract award date, develop a Grants Manual, subject to CTO approval, that lays out: clear and transparent policies and procedures governing the implementation, management monitoring and evaluation of the small grants program, including a schedule for advertising and broadly soliciting grant applications, a format and process for the grant solicitation, award criteria, and the selection process;	Completed in 2005. The Grants Manager is currently revising the Grants Manual and will submit to USAID for approval in the last quarter 2006.
(Deliverable #17) -awarding of an array of grants on a rolling basis that build the advocacy skills of selected CSOs and contribute to the development of democracy in Iraq;	As of April 30, 2007 a total 537 grants have supported CSO initiatives contributing to the development of democracy in Iraq, for a total value of $4,930,451 million.
(Deliverable #18) -development in cooperation with USAID/Iraq of a pre-determined percentage of sub-grants to be awarded each quarter, and the plan for award and distribution will be included in the quarterly implementation plan submitted to USAID for approval; and	Projections and plans for grant awards in each quarter were included in quarterly IPs.
(Deliverable #19) -development of a cadre of highly skilled local trainers with the capacity to meet local NGOs organizational development and management needs, including grant applications and necessary accounting procedures.	Sixty-nine staff development sessions have been held. More than one hundred highly qualified local trainers exist and are currently providing organizational development services to Iraqi CSOs.

Contract Deliverables and Contract References	Current Status/Comments
Required Contract Deliverables/Results under Media Activity 1 – Training Media Professionals (page 13): (P)	
(Deliverable #20)-provide training on journalism standards to selected media outlets on basic professional journalistic practices, as well as in investigative reporting, crafting human interest stories, and specialized issue reporting (such as women's issues, environment, health, education, business and reporting about local government affairs);	ICSP Media training in professional journalism skills, media ethics and other topics has reached one out of 10 media professionals in Iraq, including **290** media outlets (**149** newspapers and magazines, **49** radio stations, **58** satellite and terrestrial TV stations, **13** media unions and **21** Academic media institutions).
(Deliverable #21) -provide specific training to journalists on accurate reporting on corruption and abuse of power, including rights and responsibilities of journalist that engage in such reporting;	Workshops about corruption and media delivered; forums on journalism ethics
(Deliverable #22) -target training and development opportunities for women journalists and technicians;	Delivered (see above). On-the-job training for NINA technicians and third-country-training in Montenegro (WiFi system).
(Deliverable #23) -provide competitively awarded grants to media outlets to produce high quality news (e.g. for relatively expensive investigative journalism and long-term, in-depth research, analysis, and monitoring of policy or social issues	Current and Ongoing; Five media grants have been awarded. Additional potential programs being selected.
(Deliverable #24) -provide measurable results, such as a) measurements to demonstrate that media outlets after training activities employ higher professional production and editorial standards in their operations. Or also, for example, b) measurements demonstrating that assisted media outlets seek audience input through collective and individual research initiatives, and respond to audience needs for news, information and entertainment content;	Iraq Media Sustainability Index (MSI) finished and published; it will be distributed to media outlets. Iraq wide media survey finished and submitted.
(Deliverable #25)-as part of its sustainability plan submitted during the 9th month of the base period, the contractor must provide USAID/Iraq with an assessment of; a) existing Iraqi university journalism faculties, b) mid-career media training institutions, and c) media-sector CSOs with training capacities. Attached to this assessment, the contractor will provide at least one plan (or alternative planning scenarios if the contractor wishes) to develop domestic (Iraq) institutions that would be capable of providing to prospective journalists and media professionals in the future;	a) Refer to April 2005 assessment as part of first Media IP b & c- NINA and IMN provide training; the *Arc* journalism school conducted 7 TV training workshops for Iraqia and other satellite channels as part of its overall development). NINA and IMN are still providing capacity building interventions to their staff members and to other media professionals.

Contract Deliverables and Contract References	Current Status/Comments
Required contract deliverables/results under Media Activity 2 - Business Development Programs include (page 13):	
(Deliverable #26)-provide practical and systematic (rather than ad hoc) training to media managers of partner media outlets in business skills, including management of financial, personnel, and production operations of media enterprises;	80 workshops and 150 technical assistance sessions (in particular NINA and IMN, in addition to 50 media outlets making use of management training, including 20 newspapers, 15 radio stations, 10 satellite and terrestrial TV stations and 5 production houses.)
(Deliverable #27)-train media managers from prospective independent media firms how to write strategic business plans and seek bank loans and/or investment from outside sources;	The Media workshops and technical assistance sessions trained to date **800** media managers, marketing managers, media management staff and chief editors. Consultation was provided to NINA, Tawasul Media Research and Distribution Co., the watchdog group, the National Council of Iraqi Journalists in addition to a number of media outlets such as Shanasheel radio, Najaf TV., Diwanniyah TV and al-Yawm radio. (See above)
(Deliverable #28)-train appropriate staff from media partners in design, production, sales and marketing, promotion campaigns, and other skills to increase revenue;	NINA generating revenue as result of training
(Deliverable #29)-provide measurable results, such as evidence that assisted media outlets progressively master more professional business management practices in their operations, demonstrating their increased chances for financial viability in Iraq's emerging media marketplace. Or, also for example, evidence of increased number of private enterprises offering affordable quality newspapers and quality local broadcast programming in the marketplace.	There are business plans for the above organizations in place. The Ayinda Media Monitoring project observed and assessed the quality of coverage during the election. The unit provided an informed, objective analysis of media coverage of crucial events such as procedural and other, more egregious, violations of the election process. Tawasul and IMN showed evidence of their adopting more professional business management practices in their operations through restructuring. IMN provided quality programs. Tawasul projects of encouraging reading through distributing boxes to houses and the media survey conducted were the first projects of this kind in Iraq.

Contract Deliverables and Contract References	Current Status/Comments
Required contract deliverables/results under Media Activity 3 include:	
(Deliverable #30)-design and implementation of training seminars for professional media associations and media defense groups on how to more effectively advocate on behalf of freedom of the press, to improve the legal and regulatory environment and to increase adherence to it	Showcase Iraqis for Public Broadcasting watchdog; lobbying for PBS draft law; Iraqis apply monitoring and awareness raising strategy, build coalition to promote PBS law draft. The Iraqi Association for Defending Journalists Rights conducted a conference that advocate for freedom of expression.
(Deliverable #31) -provide grant assistance to the above groups to implement advocacy action plans	ICSP supported a coalition of media organizations in their advocacy for a draft public broadcasting law that seeks to eliminate the government's role in nominating IMN board members. Once parliamentary committees are formed, this coalition will lobby parliamentarians to sponsor the draft law. The organization Iraqis for Public Broadcasting is the driving force behind the coalition's ongoing work, along with Legal Culture Association.
Required contract deliverables/results to improve association –building include (page 14):	
(Deliverable #32) -support the development of existing journalist and media associations, and the formation of new media-sector CSOs, to become effective advocacy organizations. For example, new (or reformed pre-existing) professional associations and industry interest groups a) become organized; b) begin to advocate for an enabling environment for the development of independent media; c) protect the interests of journalists and the ability of journalists to report on critical social/political issues; and/or d) facilitate progress towards progressively higher standards of professionalism in news and public affairs reporting;	ICSP supported the Iraqis for Public Broadcasting watchdog group formed by a dozen eminent media and civil society personalities to monitor IMN programming, advocate for public broadcasting reform, and raise national awareness of public broadcasting principles. This watchdog group successfully advocated for a reorganization of IMN programming according to professional journalism standards. ICSP also provides support to the National Council of Iraqi Journalists, which promotes/defends higher standards of public affairs reporting after training.
(Deliverable #33)-strengthen capacity of domestic professional organizations to monitor and publicize violations of press freedom or actions taken to protect press freedom; and	Completed with various watchdog organizations across Iraq (see names above). ICSP in cooperation with the watchdog groups finished the final version of the IMN draft law to be submitted to the Council of Representatives.
(Deliverable #34)-support the development of journalist protection programs that monitor threats and violence against individual journalists and media outlets	Watchdog monitoring ongoing. ICSP supported the development of the Iraqi Association for Defending Journalists Rights thought technical assistance sessions in restructuring and in providing them with the monitoring tools to monitor and follow up the

Contract Deliverables and Contract References	Current Status/Comments
	violence against journalists and other media professionals
Performance Monitoring/Indicators	
(Deliverable #35)- within 30 days of contract award date, and subject to USAID approval, the contractor must propose program performance indicators	Completed October 2004.
(Deliverable #36) – Within 30 days from signing of the award, the contractor shall submit for USAID approval a Performance Monitoring Plan. The plan will necessitate the collection of baseline data for the measurement of progress throughout the program. The will include methodology on how data will be collected, interim and final targets, and a timeline for collecting data.	Completed April 2005. The PMP underwent several revisions during the life of the project with the final version submitted and approved in January of 2007.
(Deliverable #37) – The contractor will submit a semi-annual Performance Monitoring Report that details benchmarks toward achievement of performance indicators and results, the data collected, and the method of collection. The specific format will be proposed by the contractor to USAID for approval within 90 days of the contract award date.	Final PMR was submitted in May of 2007

USAID Iraq Civil Society Program (ICSP)

Iraq Civil Society Program

Preliminary Analysis of the ICSP Organizational Assessment Tool

September 2006

Contract Number:
GEW-C-00-04-00001-00
Baghdad, Iraq

Prepared by:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ICSP's Capacity Building activities to Iraqi CSOs are an essential part of the project's efforts to build and support a vibrant and effective civil society. In order to ensure that training interventions are tailored to the individual needs of CSO beneficiaries, ICSP utilizes a comprehensive Organizational Assessment Tool (OAT). This assessment documents existing capacity and serves as a baseline of CSO strengths and weaknesses.

This analysis focuses on the results of 352 OATs conducted with Iraqi CSOs from the beginning of the project until August 31, 2006. These assessments were conducted before any ICSP capacity building activities were initiated with the CSOs. In general, the scores illustrate low levels of capacity in nearly all of the 23 indicators produced by the OAT. Only two of the indicators showed scored above 50% - *1.2 Participation* and *1.1 Clarity of Purpose* - while CSOs scored under 25% for five indicators: *2.7 Monitoring for Advocacy*; *3.1 Planning for Management*; *3.3 Volunteer Management; 4.2 Financial Accountability*; and *4.3 Financial Sustainability*.

OAT INTRODUCTION

ICSP's Capacity Building activities to Iraqi CSOs are an essential part of the project's efforts to build and support a vibrant and effective civil society. In order to ensure that training interventions are tailored to the individual needs of CSO beneficiaries, ICSP utilizes a comprehensive Organizational Assessment Tool (OAT). This assessment documents existing capacity and serves as a baseline of CSO strengths and weaknesses. By repeating the OAT at regular intervals, the tool also serves an important monitoring function, documenting organizational capacity development among Iraqi CSOs and the development of a vibrant civil society sector operating within a pluralistic and democratic Iraq.

The OAT consists of 300 questions targeting the essential elements of organizational capacity in four principal areas: general management, financial management, advocacy, and internal governance. Gender is a crosscutting theme for all four of the major headings. Under each main topic there are between two and seven sub-headings as detailed in the table below:

Internal Governance	Advocacy	General Management	Financial Management
1.1 Clarity of Purpose	2.1 Planning for Advocacy	3.1 Planning for Management	4.1 Financial Accounting
1.2 Participation	2.2 Constituency Building	3.2 Personnel Management	4.2 Financial Accountability
1.3 Accountability	2.3 Research and Monitoring	3.3 Volunteer Management	4.3 Financial Sustainability
1.4 Transparency	2.4 Public Education	3.4 Information Management	4.4 Financial Planning

1.5 Constituency Representation	2.5 Media Relations	3.5 CSO Management Capacity for an Intermediary Role	
1.6 Board Elections and the Rotation of Leadership Responsibility	2.6 Networking & Community Relations		
1.7 Definition and Clarity of Board Roles	2.7 Monitoring for Advocacy		
G E N D E R			

The majority of the questions are simple "Yes / No" statements that reflect the presence or absence of CSO policies, processes and capacities. Some questions are scored on a one to three or one to four scale reflecting specific levels of development in particular areas. Clear and specific measurement units are the most important feature of this tool. By making each question as clear, concise and specific as possible, it is possible to compare scores between CSOs and provide an index for Iraq's civil society sector as a whole.

ANALYSIS

Overall findings

For this purposes of this paper, OAT scores were averaged across the spectrum of 352 CSOs assessed by ICSP through August 31, 2006. The scores were broken down into the 23 Indicators presented below in Table 1.

Table 1. Indicator scores for all CSOs assessed (N=352)

OAT Heading	Mean % score for all CSOs Assessed
1.0 Internal Governance	
1.1 Clarity of Purpose	**56**
1.2 Participation	**64**
1.3 Accountability	**29**
1.4 Transparency	**37**
1.5 Constituency Representation	**45**
1.6 Board Elections and the Rotation of Leadership Responsibility	**36**
1.7 Definition and Clarity of Board Roles	**47**
Total Internal Governance	**47**
2.0 Advocacy	
2.1 Planning for Advocacy	**41**
2.2 Constituency Building	**34**
2.3 Research and Monitoring	**29**
2.4 Public Education	**46**

2.5 Media Relations	**40**
2.6 Networking and Community Relations	**38**
2.7 Monitoring for Advocacy	**20**
Total Advocacy	**37**
3.0 General Management	
3.1 Planning for Management	**20**
3.2 Personnel Management	**41**
3.3 Volunteer Management	**24**
3.4 Information Management	**44**
3.5 NGO Management Capacity for an Intermediary Role	**28**
Total General Management	**27**
4.0 Financial Management	
4.1 Financial Accounting	**34**
4.2 Financial Accountability	**21**
4.3 Financial Sustainability	**23**
4.4 Financial Planning	**35**
Total Financial Management	**31**

An initial scan of the analysis results highlights a few key findings.

In general, the OAT assessments highlight substantial need in baseline performance by CSOs in all aspects of organizational development. While there is wide variation among individual organizations and among the regions, none of the scores reported for the 23 indicators reached above 65%. While neither minimum thresholds for acceptable performance nor critical items for individual elements or indicators have been identified to date, these results clearly indicate that CSO support projects such as ICSP have a substantial amount of work to accomplish across the range of organizational capacities if CSO performance is to be elevated to acceptable levels.

In considering the overall categories of organizational capacity, organizations scored highest in Internal Governance, followed by Advocacy, Financial Management and General Management.

CSOs scored under 25% for five indicators: *2.7 Monitoring for Advocacy*; *3.1 Planning for Management*; *3.3 Volunteer Management; 4.2 Financial Accountability*; and *4.3 Financial Sustainability*. It is particularly troubling to note the low average scores for Financial Accountability and Sustainability – 21% and 23% respectively. A strong system of accountability for CSO funds is a crucial prerequisite for many donors and may have substantial implications for CSOs to solicit outside sources of funding for their activities. Low performance in financial sustainability raises troubling questions for the long-term viability of CSOs in Iraq. If ICSP and other support activities are to have the desired effect of creating a vibrant, sustainable civil society in Iraq, these areas of deficit must be at the forefront of the Project's interventions.

The lowest average scores are reported for Indicators *2.7 Monitoring for Advocacy and 3.1 Planning for Management*. The first indicator measures a CSO's capacity and practices in monitoring its advocacy and outreach activities. The second indicator includes such components

as the presence and content of Strategic Plans; Planning for Organizational Development, such as staff training; systems for soliciting and integrating consumer input into planning and programs.

The highest average scores are reported for *Indicator 1.2 Participation* and *Indicator 1.1 Clarity of Purpose*. Indicator 1.2 measures CSO performance in: the composition and management of its Board of Directors; decision-making processes of the Board; and the gender balance and gender awareness capacity of the Board. A strong finding in this area indicates that CSOs, generally speaking, do a better job of managing the conduct, composition and knowledge of the Boards of Managers. Indicator 1.1 is constructed of four organizational elements concerning the presence of a written mission statement and its dissemination to the governing entities of the CSO and through publications. It is important to note that the creation of a mission statement is, in itself, a fairly simple accomplishment. Since this indicator is dependent on the existence of a Board of Directors, a General Assembly and some degree of publishing expertise, the relatively high average score is indicative of more well-developed CSOs than it might first appear.

Table 2. Indicator scores for all CSOs assessed in Order from Highest to Lowest (N=352)

OAT Indicator	Mean % score for all CSOs Assessed
50% or Higher	
1.2 Participation	64
1.1 Clarity of Purpose	56
25 – 50%	
1.7 Definition and Clarity of Board Roles	47
2.4 Public Education	46
1.5 Constituency Representation	45
3.4 Information Management	44
3.2 Personnel Management	41
2.1 Planning for Advocacy	41
2.5 Media Relations	40
2.6 Networking and Community Relations	38
1.4 Transparency	37
1.6 Board Elections and the Rotation of Leadership Responsibility	36
4.4 Financial Planning	35
2.2 Constituency Building	34
4.1 Financial Accounting	34
1.3 Accountability	29
2.3 Research and Monitoring	29
3.5 NGO Management Capacity for an Intermediary Role	28
3.3 Volunteer Management	24
Under 25%	
4.3 Financial Sustainability	23
4.2 Financial Accountability	21
2.7 Monitoring for Advocacy	20
3.1 Planning for Management	20

Regional Analysis

A regional analysis of the OAT results is useful for several reasons. First and foremost, such a breakdown may highlight important differences among CSOs in organizational capacity in such a way that regional programming and capacity building can be tailored to meet those particular needs.

Of the 352 OATS performed up to August 31, 2006, 76 are from Central Region, 78 are from North Region, 91 are from South Region and 107 are from South Central Region.

On average, CSOs in Central Region scored higher on all elements of the OAT. This is probably due to the overall higher levels of development in the capital city. Baghdad residents are generally better educated and wealthier than for the nation as a whole. As a result, it can be expected that CSOs in the area would have higher capacity staff and higher overall levels of financial and organizational support from capital residents.

Table 3. Regional Distribution of OAT Scores by Heading (N=352)

	Internal Governance	Advocacy	General Management	Financial Management
Central Region	59%	52%	46%	44%
South Region	46%	33%	24%	23%
North Region	42%	41%	28%	36%
South Central Region	44%	27%	17%	26%
Average	47%	37%	27%	31%

The tables below show the breakdown of the individual indicators within each area of organizational capacity by region. These results are being further analyzed by regional and sector staff to develop recommendations for programming that are responsive to the most pressing needs.

Table 4. Internal Governance Indicators by Region (N=352)

	South Region	Central Region	North Region	South Central Region	Mean % score for all regions
1.1 Clarity of Purpose	57	81	54	39	56
1.2 Participation	68	78	58	54	64
1.3 Accountability	25	42	31	21	29
1.4 Transparency	40	23	42	41	37

1.5 Constituency Representation	42	59	33	47	45
1.6 Total Board Election	32	37	36	37	36
1.7 Total Definition and Clarity	38	67	47	41	47
Total Internal Governance	46	59	42	27	47

Table 5. Advocacy Indicators by Region (N=352)

	South Region	**Central Region**	**North Region**	**South Central Region**	**Mean % score for all regions**
2.1 Planning for Advocacy	37	50	47	33	41
2.2 Constituency Building	31	54	41	18	34
2.3 Research and Monitoring	28	45	31	17	29
2.4 Public Education	43	65	50	33	46
2.5 Media Relations	35	53	47	28	40
2.6 Networking and Community	31	54	43	29	38
2.7 Monitoring for Advocacy	20	33	18	13	20
Total Advocacy	33	52	41	27	37

Table 6. General Management Indicators by Region (N=352)

	South Region	**Central Region**	**North Region**	**South Central Region**	**Mean % score for all regions**
3.1 Planning for Management	18	35	19	11	20
3.2 Personal Management	30	66	45	31	41
3.3 Volunteer Management	25	47	28	6	24
3.4 Information Management	45	66	41	30	44
3.5 NGO Management	27	40	30	21	28

Capacity					
Total Management	24	46	28	17	27

Table 7. Financial Indicators by Region (N=352)

	South Region	**Central Region**	**North Region**	**South Central Region**	**Mean % score for all regions**
4.1 Financial Accounting	23	47	45	28	34
4.2 Financial Accountability	18	30	28	13	21
4.3 Financial Sustainability	21	35	20	19	23
4.4 Financial Planning	33	52	21	34	35
Total Financial	23	44	36	26	31

PROGRAMMATIC IMPLICATIONS

ICSP program managers and regional directors will utilize these and other analyses of OAT findings in developing their annual and quarterly plans. Particular attention will be made to ensure that the regions have an appropriate distribution of staff capacity to implement the required mix of capacity building activities according to their needs.

USAID Iraq Civil Society Program (ICSP)

Iraq Civil Society Program

Analysis of Improvements of Iraqi CSO Organizational Capacity Due to ICSP Support

June 2007

Contract Number:
GEW-C-00-04-00001-00
Baghdad, Iraq

Prepared by:

AMERICA'S DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

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Prepared for:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ICSP's Capacity Building activities to Iraqi CSOs are an essential part of the project's efforts to build and support a vibrant and effective civil society. In order to ensure that training interventions are tailored to the individual needs of CSO beneficiaries, ICSP utilizes a comprehensive Organizational Assessment Tool (OAT). This assessment documents existing capacity and serves as a baseline of CSO strengths and weaknesses.

This analysis focuses on the results of 317 CSOs that have received baseline and follow-up organizational assessments after participating in ICSP capacity building training and technical assistance. Baseline OAT scores in Iraq for the organizations that had two assessments were 34.8% of the total possible maximum score of 300 overall, with 48.1% in Internal Governance, 35.2% in Advocacy, 27.4% in General Management and 30.9% in Financial Management. The average percentage scores at reassessment rose substantially and significantly to 49.2% overall, with 62.5% in Internal Governance, 52.5% in Advocacy, 40.7% in General Management and 43.8% in Financial Management.

These results clearly demonstrate the substantial improvements in institutional capacity produced by ICSP's targeted training and technical assistance over the life of the project.

OAT INTRODUCTION

ICSP's Capacity Building activities to Iraqi CSOs are an essential part of the project's efforts to build and support a vibrant and effective civil society. In order to ensure that training interventions are tailored to the individual needs of CSO beneficiaries, ICSP utilizes a comprehensive Organizational Assessment Tool (OAT). This assessment documents existing capacity and serves as a baseline of CSO strengths and weaknesses. By repeating the OAT at regular intervals, the tool also serves an important monitoring function, documenting organizational capacity development among Iraqi CSOs and the development of a vibrant civil society sector operating within a pluralistic and democratic Iraq.

The OAT consists of 300 questions targeting the essential elements of organizational capacity in four principal areas: general management, financial management, advocacy, and internal governance. Gender is a crosscutting theme for all four of the major headings. Under each main topic there are between two and seven sub-headings as detailed in the table below:

Internal Governance	Advocacy	General Management	Financial Management
1.1 Clarity of Purpose	2.1 Planning for Advocacy	3.1 Planning for Management	4.1 Financial Accounting
1.2 Participation	2.2 Constituency Building	3.2 Personnel Management	4.2 Financial Accountability

1.3 Accountability	2.3 Research and Monitoring	3.3 Volunteer Management	4.3 Financial Sustainability
1.4 Transparency	2.4 Public Education	3.4 Information Management	4.4 Financial Planning
1.5 Constituency Representation	2.5 Media Relations	3.5 CSO Management Capacity for an Intermediary Role	
1.6 Board Elections and the Rotation of Leadership Responsibility	2.6 Networking & Community Relations		
1.7 Definition and Clarity of Board Roles	2.7 Monitoring for Advocacy		
G E N D E R			

The majority of the questions are simple "Yes / No" statements that reflect the presence or absence of CSO policies, processes and capacities. Some questions are scored on a one to three or one to four scale reflecting specific levels of development in particular areas. Clear and specific measurement units are the most important feature of this tool. By making each question as clear, concise and specific as possible, it is possible to compare scores between CSOs and provide an index for Iraq's civil society sector as a whole.

ANALYSIS

Overall findings

For this purposes of this paper, OAT scores were averaged across the spectrum of 317 CSOs assessed and reassessed by ICSP through May 30, 2007. The scores were broken down into the four main headings of the OAT presented below in Table 1. The numbers represent the mean of the percentage of satisfaction of the OAT items. The highest possible number would be 100% as a result.

Table 1. Indicator scores for all CSOs assessed (N=317)

OAT Heading	Mean % score for all CSOs First Assessment	Mean % score for all CSOs Second Assessment
Total Internal Governance	48.1	62.5*
Total Advocacy	35.2	52.5*
Total General Management	27.4	40.7*
Total Financial Management	30.9	43.8*
Total OAT score	34.8	49.2*

(*p<.01)

Another way of quantifying the substantial and impressive improvements in organizational capacity is to look at the percent change between the assessments. As Table 2 illustrates below, large gains were recorded in each of the four main areas of the OAT with General Management showing the greatest change at 115%.

Table 2. Percent change in Heading scores between assessments for all CSOs assessed (N=317)

OAT Heading	% Change
Total Internal Governance	29.9
Total Advocacy	20.7
Total General Management	48.5
Total Financial Management	41.7
Total OAT score	41.4

Regional Analysis

Of the 317 CSOs with initial and follow-up assessments as of May 30, 2007, 57 (18.0%) are from Central Region, 63 (19.8%) are from North Region, 77 (24.3%) are from South Region and 120 (37.9%) are from South Central Region.

On average, CSOs in Central Region scored higher on all elements of the OAT. This is probably due to the overall higher levels of development in the capital city. Baghdad residents are generally better educated and wealthier than for the nation as a whole. As a result, it can be expected that CSOs in the area would have higher capacity staff and higher overall levels of financial and organizational capacity within their organizations.

Table 3. Regional Distribution of Mean Percentage Scores by OAT Heading (N=317)

Region	Assessment	Total OAT Score	Internal Governance	Advocacy	General Management	Financial Management
Central	First	45.3	58.8	44.8	43.8	36.7
	Second	63.7	73.0	64.9	60.7	58.4
South	First	29.6	45.7	29.9	22.5	23.3
	Second	37.5	53.9	40.3	28.9	30.3
North	First	40.4	45.0	43.7	31.6	42.0
	Second	52.2	57.0	59.0	43.0	50.9

South Central	First	30.2	46.1	29.7	20.5	27.2
	Second	48.2	65.9	51.0	37.7	41.7
Average	First	34.8	48.1	35.2	27.4	30.9
	Second	49.2	62.5	52.5	40.7	43.8

Table 4. Percent change in Heading scores between assessments by Region (N=317)

Region	Total OAT Score	Total Internal Governance	Total Advocacy	Total General Management	Total Financial Management
Central	**40.6**	**24.1**	**44.9**	**38.6**	**59.1**
North	**29.2**	**26.7**	**35.0**	**36.1**	**21.2**
South	**26.7**	**17.9**	**34.8**	**28.4**	**30.0**
South Central	**59.6**	**43.0**	**71.7**	**83.9**	**53.3**
Total OAT score	**41.4**	**29.9**	**49.1**	**48.5**	**41.7**

ILLUSTRATIVE SUCCESS STORIES

"Our Constitution" Develops Iraqi Media, Debates Issues

[*Our Constitution* is] "a small parliament that includes all the factions of the Iraqi people."
—comment by audience member, Baghdad, Iraq

Every Sunday evening from July to October, 2005, millions of Iraqis tuned into the new *Our Constitution* TV program to hear debate over key constitutional issues. From the role of women to a possible return to monarchy to the extent to which Iraq should function as an Islamic state, *Our Constitution* showcased political leaders, civil society activists, drafters of the Constitution, and pundits offering widely divergent views on the future shape of Iraq. *Our Constitution* was produced and broadcast by Al-Iraqiya TV, which received crucial support from the USAID-funded Iraq Civil Society Program (ICSP) in its quest to become Iraq's first truly public broadcaster.

Al-Iraqiya offers the widest terrestrial footprint of all TV stations in Iraq's "twin-river country" of the Tigris and Euphrates.[1] The network, for the first time in Iraqi history, delivered unfettered constitutional debate to most every Iraqi household. *Our Constitution* was one of Al-Iraqiya's signature initiatives to transform from a government mouthpiece to an independent and credible public broadcaster. Iraqi viewers have responded to these efforts through e-mails commending the network and encouraging it to continue on this path.

Our Constitution format

In this weekly prime-time program, Iraqis engage constitution drafters and experts in lively debate and submit ideas and requests to panelists. The audience consists of women and men of various ages in the studio representing all shades of ethnicity, beliefs and opinions. They engage in a lively discussion never before presented on Iraqi television, thus making a critical demonstration of a freedom to speak now enshrined in the Iraqi constitution, and actualized by the audience participation of *Our Constitution*.

The programs usually began with a short introductory discussion between panelists. Members of the studio audience of approximately 60 people (sometimes at the studio's full capacity of 80) then engaged the speakers. It was not uncommon for the audience to spend more time interacting among themselves in response to the discussion points of the panelists – a unique but not unexpected trait considering the wholly new experience for Iraqis to sit in a studio audience not as silent props for government programming, but active participants discussing sensitive, unscripted issues.

Also a first for the network, one episode featured commercial ads promoting shampoo, washing powder, and pampers. Al-Iraqiya found itself in a position of earning money to discuss political issues that may have earned citizens detention and torture just a few years before.

Our Constitution episodes

The inaugural episode, in July 2005, discussed whether Iraq should stay a Republic or go back to being a Kingdom. This seemingly esoteric topic proved an able catalyst of audience discussion that was not overly charged by the pressing issues faced by Iraqis. The next week's discussion could then delve into

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[1] Of course, contemporary journalism is not the first to try for simple but catchy monikers. An ancient name for the region, Mesopotamia, is Greek for "between the rivers."

more uncertain terrain – such as whether Islam should be the only source of legislation in an Islamic state, or but one source of guidance in an inclusive and tolerant, but ultimately secular, state. It was an issue, Iraqis later reported, that nobody dared to discuss in public before. Members of the constitutional committee in the studio argued in favor of using Islam as only one source of legislation. Other discussants pressed for legislation that was entirely secular – an opinion perhaps expressed for the first time before an Iraqi audience of millions.

An episode on women's rights was described by one international observer as "a charming clash of cultures." Two representatives of the Constitutional Committee wore veils closely tied about the face and neck. Two other panelists represented civil society organizations active in promoting women's rights. One appeared without a veil, while the other sported a fashionable scarf loosely arranged over her head – displaying rather than hiding her hair. Approximately sixty women were in the audience, dressed as they liked or as religion demanded – from jeans and t-shirts to dresses and power suits.

The topics of the discussion were the issue of equality between men and women, the wearing of a veil, and discriminating practices against women at universities, government ministries, and the public sphere in general. The exchanges generally demonstrated a culture of debate as if such talk shows had long been the order of the day, but in fact this was the first time in Iraq's history for women to speak about these issues freely in front of millions of viewers. Panelists presented their arguments earnestly, with a smile, even exchanging jokes – displaying a high degree of tolerance between lifestyles that might seem far apart. One Iraqi later remarked, "This should be shown all over the Middle East to prove that in Iraq it is possible to do what seems to be impossible elsewhere."

The fourth episode dealt with human rights in the constitution, and again a lively debate took place. Some audience members even appeared better prepared than the "expert" panelists. In fact, Al-Iraqia later received a letter criticizing a panelist's on-screen performance.

An episode on federalism predictably exposed nationalists tendencies, with a Kurdish panelist asserting a right to form an independent nation. The same delegate, however, also accepted federalism as a viable alternative, with only final status details – such as the inclusion of Kirkuk province within Iraqi Kurdistan – to be resolved.

Another panelist described the concept of federalism as an advanced notion that Iraqis needed time to understand and appreciate. But the packed audience seemed quite ready for debate, with members putting forth versions of centralized or decentralized government as alternatives. One audience member described Kurdish aspirations as confederalism, as compared to federalism. Any consensus was to be found in abstraction – that trust between Iraq's peoples and factions needed to be built to move the country forward.

Perhaps the most successful episode was broadcast one day before the deadline for submitting the constitution draft, and engaged controversial constitutional issues head on. Constitutional drafters from the major factions, Shiite, Sunni, and Kurdish, were present, and also included a human rights activist and an academic at the University of Baghdad college of Law and Politics. A live feed even allowed an academic from Basrah University to discuss the impact of federalism on the southern provinces.

As the episode concluded, audience members were given the opportunity to cast their votes in a mock referendum. Audience opinions about controversial issues in the constitution varied, while others were more lopsided. For example, 96 percent advocated for centrally distributing the wealth of the country, against four percent for regionally distributing it. Similarly, only four percent of the audience accepted an unqualified right of self-determination for Kurds.

Sustainability

After the successful October 15 constitutional referendum, production of *Our Constitution* ceased after 12 episodes out of a contracted-for 32-episode season. While some remaining episodes have aired under the title *Elect for Iraq*, *Our Constitution* will resume when Iraq's first democratically elected permanent parliament convenes and deliberates over constitutional amendments.

In many ways, *Elect for Iraq* is a successor to *Our Constitution*. While retaining much of *Our Constitution*'s format, *Elect for Iraq* downplays a "Crossfire" style of debate and controversy, and puts more emphasis on information and reasoned discussion befitting the solemnity of Iraqi government's first legislative session, but without losing either its journalistic integrity or entertaining character.

Our Constitution was a resounding success in its aim to introduce and broaden transparent and inclusive national debate on Iraq's fundamental political structure and the relations between peoples within Iraq that would shape the nation's future. *Elect for Iraq* anticipates as much or more of the same success, as the Iraq Civil Society and Independent Media Program continues exercising its mandate to galvanize the nation building process through citizen participation and the free dissemination of information and ideas.

About the Iraq Civil Society Program

The Iraq Civil Society Support Program (ICSP) is a $40 million U.S. Government initiative to promote an informed, sustainable, and active Iraqi civil society participating within a democratic system of governance. ICSP is implemented by America's Development Foundation (ADF) on behalf of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

ICSP builds the organizational and advocacy capacity of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) by establishing four Civil Society Resource Centers (CSRCs) to serve as regional hubs for the delivery of training and technical assistance and help Iraqi CSOs serve their constituents and mission. The resource centers are entirely Iraqi staffed and operated, and provide a full range of capacity building assistance. Special efforts are paid to Iraqi CSOs engaged in civic education, women's advocacy, media, anti-corruption, and human rights. A small grants fund is reserved for specific actions in support of these issue areas.

ICSP has engaged approximately 2,000 Iraqi CSOs, awarded 391 grants worth over $6 million in small grant support, and delivered roughly 3,600 training and technical assistance sessions reaching over 30,000 CSO members. ICSP awareness raising activities – forums and regional and national conferences – have reached another 13,000 Iraqis. Thirty-eight percent of all Iraqis reached by ICSP activities are women.

The impact of ICSP is manifest in the independent actions of Iraqi CSOs in response to training or technical assistance from ICSP resource centers, small grant assistance, or both. As of March 2006, ICSP has officially documented 449 instances of CSOs exercising their right to assembly, awareness raising, and advocacy that is the hallmark of a vibrant civil society within a pluralistic and democratic Iraq.

ICSP PARTNER REFORMS EDUCATION TO PROMOTE DEMOCRACY

The Kurdish Organization for Civilization and Development (KOCD) knows that nurturing democracy and human rights in Northern Iraq requires starting at the roots. In a society where the basic tenets of democracy have been an acceptable topic of conversation for less than two decades, the Erbil-based civil society organization developed an innovative strategy to promote democracy, human rights, and civic education in the classroom. Through a series of workshops that took a broad view of civic education, KOCD gave teachers the skills to exemplify the same democratic practices that they were teaching the students.

In partnership with the Ministry of Education in Kurdistan, KOCD planned three workshops for 40 young teachers who worked with elementary age children. KOCD asked the Ministry of Education to recruit participants who were beginning of their careers to ensure that their training was used in the classroom for decades to come. The workshop taught practices that were especially appropriate for instructing younger children. ICSP encouraged the partnership between KOCD and the Ministry of Education, funded the workshop, and taught some of the speakers using training-of-trainers methodology.

Unlike other civic education trainings, KOCD's workshop did not limit itself to helping teachers understand the tenets of democracy and human rights or improving their teaching methods, although it did cover these topics. Instead, the teachers were trained to manage their students using the same principles that are required for living in a thriving democracy. The first lecture focused on Children's Psychology. Taught by a consultant to the Ministry of Education, the lecture emphasized the formative affect that teachers could have on their students' development.

The second and third lectures emphasized that a vibrant, functioning democracy begins with youth in the classroom. It helped teachers draw a link between violence and instability in society with discipline in the classroom, and discouraged physical punishment of students. Striking students for misbehavior is regularly used by teachers to control their students, but not conducive to participation in a civilized democracy. The workshops helped teachers devise punishments for students that were fair and transparent. Students should be encouraged to discuss these issues with their teachers, much as citizens work with their government. "Changing these practices is difficult, but not impossible," explained Dr. Rashid Aziz Ahmed, the trainer at the second workshop and a Ministry of Education consultant.

The teachers, for their part, questioned the proposition that education should be more democratic. "If education should replicate a democracy, shouldn't we be able to choose our principals and headmasters?" asked one. Ahmed replied that although headmasters are often an obstacle to success for some teachers, using a vote to select a school's principal is unrealistic. However, teachers should feel free to bring their concerns to the headmaster without fear of the consequences, just as students should approach their own teachers.

Improving civic education and classroom instruction is only one step toward bringing democracy to Northern Iraq, where there are many pressing concerns. "The price of oil is rising thanks to Turkey, and Iran is creating instability – these are our problems," said Nori Pal, an art teacher. Though no one downplays the difficult situation facing the people of Northern Iraq, ICSP knows that the civic education training that changes teachers and their students has the potential to create a flourishing, vibrant civil society in the future.

KURDISTAN YOUTH EMPOWERMENT ORGANIZATION

The old, deteriorating offices in the Kurdish Communist Party are an unlikely location to plant the seeds for the growth of civil society in Iraq. The yellow plastered walls are peeling, the tiles are stained, broken, and missing, and the few lights that work are exposed bulbs and dangle from the ceiling by their wiring. Yet behind one of these doors is a functioning studio that the Kurdistan Youth Empowerment Organization (KYEO) rents to broadcast a message about improving civic education to thousands of Iraqi viewers.

Founded in late 2005 by a group of teenagers and twenty-somethings with experience in media and journalism, KYEO is well suited to launch a massive print, radio, poster and TV campaign. Unaffiliated with any political party, KYEO received funding from ICSP for their first project, "Youth Rehabilitation through Civic Education" which seeks to increase dialogue on civic education and involve more Iraqis on issues related to rule of law.

KYEO's strategy tapped the resources of its media-savvy staff and volunteers. First, KYEO designed a striking poster that featured a large eye looming above the message "developing civic education is the only way to solve the political, cultural, and social problems." The posters were prominently displayed around Northern Iraq. Though the staff was skilled in poster design and printing, this became one of the most difficult parts of the project. To reach greater numbers, the group wanted to hang the posters in sensitive locations in Kurdistan, which required a long wait for government approvals, according to one of KYEO's founders, Shad Mohammed. The posters were also printed in *Azari*, a local newspaper.

The posters were displayed to coincide with KYEO's radio and television broadcasts. KYEO rented broadcast studios, and using their staff's expertise, produced radio and television programs that were professional in form and content. The television component of the project included eight different shows, each with a moderator, an expert on civil society, and two youth representing their peers.

Dr. Othman, an education specialist who appeared on one of the episodes, said that his discussion was important because it emphasized the "need for separation between political parties and education," which is the key to education reform. His moderated conversation with two Kurdish youth also covered issues of textbook reform, the role of the family in civic education, and reconciling Islam with secular civic education, among other topics. The programs were aired on Abadi, a local TV network, and on Zagros satellite TV, reaching a viewing audience of thousands.

KYEO's radio broadcast was equally successful. Partnering with the popular Kurdistan Voice Broadcast, the CSO aired four two-hour programs that devoted a portion of the broadcast to audience calls. One young female caller from Erbil who introduced herself as Raheel, suggested that "in order to establish a dynamic civil society, we need to have equality, transparency and support from all social sectors." Other listeners emphasized the role of educational institutions in developing civil society and said that a new generation who believe in democracy begins in kindergarten. ICSP has witnessed how vibrant discussions of these important issues can create meaningful change and produce a more democratic Iraq.

With "Youth Rehabilitation through Civic Education" in its final stages, KYEO is eager to build on their success. The CSO is considering a National Youth Parliament, which will bring together young Iraqis from around the country to discuss and strategize ways to improve civic education in Iraq. Other ideas include expanded broadcasts on national television to reach the entire country, and an initiative that will make the philosophical tenets of civic education more understandable. Despite their many talents, KYEO knows that they face many obstacles to realizing their goals and achieving their future projects. Unlike many of the CSOs in Kurdistan, KYEO has remained fiercely independent, explained Mohammed, one of their founders. KYEO refrained from aligning itself with either of the two main political parties, the KDP and PUK. These two major political parties support and influence most CSOs in Kurdistan. KYEO hopes that they can continue to execute meaningful projects that stimulate public dialogue and reflection, while remaining autonomous.

IRAQI YOUTH "AMBASSADORS FOR DEMOCRACY" ADVOCATE FOR IMPROVED GOVERNANCE

Iraqis are serious about democracy. The problem, as the Public Aid Organization (PAO) sees it, is that the centers of power that control Iraq do not appreciate citizens' desire for a voice. The Erbil-based CSO, PAO, believed that meaningful change in Iraq is indeed possible if informed Iraqi citizens could convincingly demonstrate an appreciation for democracy. PAO then designed and implemented a project that raised indigenous Iraqi concerns over the emerging democracy to the government and other stakeholders.

PAO's "Ambassadors for Democracy" project first trained ten motivated Iraqi youth in public dialogue and facilitation skills, while providing solid foundation of key concepts of democracy. Although these Ambassadors for Democracy, came from diverse backgrounds—including graduate students and government consultants—they shared an enthusiasm to build a strong and democratic Iraqi.

Next, PAO assigned pairs of Ambassadors to hold a two and a half hour discussion on specific aspects of democracy with targeted groups of Iraqis. These meetings, or Dialogues on Democracy, engaged 192 Iraqis who represented an astonishing range of organizations. One pair of Ambassadors met with a group from the Ministry of Justice, while another pair met with members of the Dwarves Association. Other Ambassadors met with the Akkad Sports Club, the Labors Syndicate, and a group from the Institute of Art, among others. The participants also represented the ethnic diversity of the region: Arabs, Kurds, Turkomen, and Assyrians. Each Dialogue included an instruction, structured discussion, and open dialogue session. At the end of each workshop, the Ambassadors conducted a survey.

Project manager Hogr Chato presents the groups findings at one of many press conferences arranged by PAO.

The survey results were illuminating. Using questions like "are free and fair elections possible in Iraq?" and "can you safely and freely criticize the government?" and then inquiring about the reasons behind their response, PAO compiled the numbers from all of the participants, analyzed the results and developed three important findings. First, the findings indicated that an important step to building democracy is increasing citizens' participation. Second, CSOs have a major role to play in the emerging democracy. In addition, CSOs need to serve as a bridge between the Iraqi citizens and the government. Lastly, PAO discovered that Iraqis want to be more involved in democracy, but that government officials and representatives must be more receptive to the voice of Iraqis.

To ensure that the Ambassadors' findings were acted on, the Ambassadors met with 20 Iraqi agents of change, including representatives from over a dozen government agencies, such a the Ministry of Human Rights, Kurdistan Parliaments, Erbil Governorate, and numerous bureaus within the KDP and PUK. PAO also presented their findings to international organizations, such as UNAMI, Norwegian Public Affairs, IRI, RTI, among others. According to Hogr Chato, PAO's project manager for Ambassadors for Democracy, the most promising response came from the speaker of the Parliament of Kurdistan. The Ambassadors for Democracy's message "would be published faithfully and without interference," Chato said.

ICSP expects that PAO's Ambassadors for Democracy project, which was fully funded by an ICSP grant, will be one of many successes. PAO is now working with many other international partners who first learned about PAO when it was presenting their findings. PAO's subsequent projects build on the experience gained from Ambassadors for Democracy and work to strengthen the vital partnership between CSOs, the government, and the people.

PROGRESSIVE THEATRE ADVANCES WOMEN RIGHTS

No one knows why the election supervisor in Diwaniya told the women that they were not qualified to work the polls on the day of Iraq's historic constitutional referendum. There may have been enough poll workers already, and gender was identified the easiest criteria to decide who should be employed. Perhaps the supervisor truly believed that women were incapable of handling the task. Whatever the reason behind their dismissal, the women who were told to leave the polling stations did not accept their marching orders passively. They turned to ICSP.

The story moved Inaam Al-Yasiry, the ICSP women's advocacy coordinator who received the dismissed women. ICSP mobilized dozens of CSOs to monitor the vote, track referendum-related media, and report vote improprieties. She notified this network. Because ICSP does not lobby the government directly and promotes advocacy activities through partner CSOs, Al-Yasiry encouraged on the CSOs to take action.

Many of the CSOs who monitored the referendum included the women's experience in their final reports. The Broadcasting Union, a CSO that previously received training, technical assistance, and grants from ICSP, reasoned that the good way to fight future discrimination was through awareness-raising. Inspired by the women's story, the Broadcasting Union prepared a play, "Yes, They Are Qualified to Work," which tells the women's story. Written and directed by members of the CSO, the story uses symbolism and imagery to communicate a message of gender equality.

"Indeed they are qualified to work" uses symbolism to illustrate the plight of women.

The play begins with a scene used to represent the plight of women. In one of many scenes laden with symbolism, a door laying parallel to floor is closed as a woman crawls through. Next, the recurrent plot of the play begins with two women who are seeking work at the polling center. The center supervisor makes disparaging remarks about the women to his male friends, while he encourages the women about opportunities for work. When a journalist uncovers that the women were lured with false promises, the men successfully silence the journalist through bribes. Toward the end of the play, the men learn that they are related to each of the women, and that by repressing the women, they have been hurting themselves and their country. The performance ends with another image, a white dove. Each wing of the dove represents a gender, and to fly properly both wings must be unfettered.

The play, which debuted in Hilla before a packed house, was well received and continued for two more nights thanks to the audience's warm reception. The cast of six actors, all staff of the Broadcasting Union, felt that the play owed its success to the compelling message and the powerful script. The playwright, Zuhair who crafted the script had previous experience using theatre to convey the difficulties of life in Iraq.

Al-Yasiry, the ICSP gender specialist who alerted the Broadcasting Union to the women's case, believes that this is a powerful tool to advance women's rights. Unlike workshops, forum, conferences and trainings, theatre "can speak to the audience's heart. It can help them feel the women's plight, and makes them want to change society," Al-Yasiry explained. Based on the success of the initial performances, ICSP will be funding the Broadcasting Union to perform the play in other cities, such as Diwaniya and Najaf.

Iraq Civil Society Program

HUMAN RIGHTS AND CSO ADVOCACY

In mid-November, ICSP human rights specialist Haider Al-Shebab trained *The Culture and Law Organization of Zubair* to work with a group that had been overlooked in previous CSO campaigns: prison inmates. In a cramped room between several cells in the depths of Basrah's Al-Ma'akle jail, representatives from *The Culture and Law Organization of Zubair* explained to inmates the basics of human rights law and its implications, using material designed by ICSP. During the training, the staff of the *The Culture and Law Organization of Zubair* made a crucial discovery. The prisoners' ignorance of their rights was extending their prison sentence.

Haider's work with *The Culture and Law Organization of Zubair* and the Al-Ma'akle prisoners was the result of a key partnership between ICSP and several government ministries in Basrah. The collaboration began when ICSP set up offices in Basrah in September 2004. The Ministry of Human Rights in Basrah, was eager to tap ICSP's connections to CSOs operating in the region. ICSP nurtured the partnership, encouraging Ministry of Human Rights staff members to attend CSO workshops, lectures, forums, and conferences. Meanwhile, ICSP was building the capacity of partner CSOs to present many of its activities and trainings with ICSP guidance and support. Soon, partnerships developed between the Ministry Human Rights and ICSP's partner CSOs for training to government officials.

Through a partner CSO, ICSP began work in Basrah's Al-Ma'akle Prison

The Culture and Law Organization of Zubair sought to reach pockets of Iraqis that had not been touched by the work of ICSP or other international NGOs and targeted prisons. Because of the trust between the Ministry of Human Rights, ICSP, and its partner CSOs, the Ministry of Human Rights encouraged the initiative. But the reach of the Ministry of Human Rights had limits. The prisons were maintained by the Ministry of Justice and staffed by the Ministry of the Interior. Several employees from the Ministry of the Interior who worked as prison guards attended some ICSP-sponsored workshops. ICSP and the *Culture of Law Organization of Zubair* won support for their work among these staff members. The prison training session was approved, and Haider and several ICSP human-rights trainers prepared the lesson plan. It catered to the concerns of prisoners by focusing on issues of police brutality and judicial appeal.

When the CSO presented its lecture, they found that the prisoners were unaware of the Government of Iraq's parole law. After two-thirds of their sentence was completed, the prisoners should have been eligible to have their case reviewed. This policy, however, was not followed. *The Culture and Law Organization of Zubair,* with support from the Ministry of Human Rights, took the prisoner's concerns to the Ministry of Justice. *The Culture and Law Organization of Zubair* continues to advocate that the law be justly applied and believes that the Ministry of Justice is now providing prisoners with a proper review. When *The Culture and Law Organization of Zubair* conducts the next training session, it will verify the prison's compliance with the parole law.

The change in prison policy is one of many accomplishments that ICSP expects *The Culture and Law Organization of Zubair* will achieve. The organization has been awarded a grant in the upcoming grant cycle. It will build on its partnership with the Ministry of Human Rights by managing a radio program that will allow callers to query Ministry of Human Rights officials. The program will air on the Basrah station, Shanasheel, and will encourage even greater interaction between citizens and their government.

ICSP has received official recognition for facilitating these crucial partnerships. In addition to connecting human rights CSOs to government agencies, ICSP has also sponsored CSO publications that raised awareness of human rights issues. The police directorate of Basrah, one of the government bodies that participated in the workshop, delivered a certificate of appreciation to the ICSP regional office to recognize their commitment to the community.

ICSP PARTNER FIGHTS ANTI-CORRUPTION AMIDST VIOLENCE

When the Fallujah-based Al-Safa Friendship Association, a local Civil Society Organization (CSO), wanted to offer more training in Al-Anbar governorate, they did not let a day of particularly fierce violence in December affect their plans. While US and Iraqi forces battled insurgents nearby, the Al-Safa's trainer continued with his lesson plan, which was developed with ICSP assistance. To the Al-Safa staff, the turmoil in Al-Anbar was not a deterrent, but a reality that underscored the need for anti-corruption training to Iraqis.

Al-Safa sees their anti-corruption workshops, entitled "Introduction to Corruption and Anti-Corruption Strategies" and "Introduction to Anti-Corruption Awareness Raising Tools," as a key to the long-term stability in their community. Administrative corruption is known to be rampant in Al-Anbar. While some of the money secured through corruption fills the pockets of government officials, some funds make their way to terrorist activities. By fighting corruption, Al-Safa is taking an important step toward bringing stability and security to their community.

At a workshop in Al-Anbar governorate, an Al-Safa staffer who was trained by ICSP discussed anti-corruption and proposed measures the community could take to combat the problem.
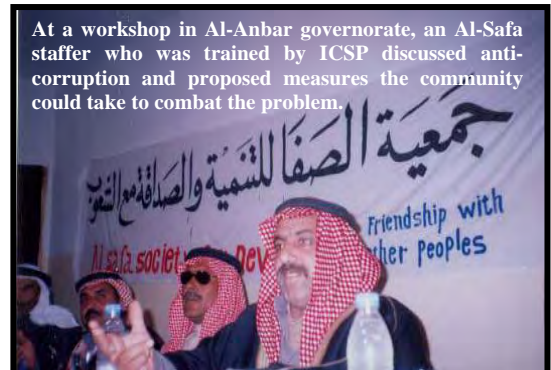
ICSP was pleased to support Al-Safa's efforts, and the workshops were the result of a long partnership between the two organizations. Over several months, representatives from Al-Safa attended ICSP workshops, where ICSP specialists shared international anti-corruption techniques and helped Al-Safa design a strategy to fight corruption in their community. One of the ICSP workshops attended by Al-Safa was conducted by an international consultant, who outlined the legal measures that different CSOs have used in other countries to stem corruption. ICSP used the training-of-trainers approach to ensure that Al-Safa staff were equipped to replicate the same anti-corruption courses to citizens of Al-Anbar.

After months of building Al-Safa's capacity, the CSO applied for and won a grant for eight workshops in Al-Anbar. Al-Safa chose the following locations: Fallujah, Khaldiya, Ramadi, Amiriyat Al-Fallujah, Saklawiya, Karma, Hit, and Qaim. The need for the training was particularly acute in the smaller villages of Karma and Hit, areas often neglected in an effort to reach larger, more prominent neighbors. Using their network of contacts, Al-Safa solicited participants interested in learning how to combat corruption from local schools, mosques, and government ministries.

Each workshop, which drew an average of 28 participants, drafted with an action plan. The attendees were encouraged to think about how their collective action could confront the issues discussed. Each workshop produced different follow-up measures, appropriate for the community's need. Following the Saklawiya workshop, an eight-member committee was formed to investigate a possible illegitimate arrangements a nearby fuel station and distribution center. In Khaldiya, the committee decided to monitor the municipality and its activities.

As the military works to expel the insurgents, ICSP and Al-Safa are partnering to address other factors that fuel the terrorism, such as corruption. Ultimately, the stability of these communities hinges on a transparent system of government that is accountable to the Iraqi people.

ICSP CAMPAIGN FIGHTS CORRUPTION AND HIGHLIGHTS NEW ARTIST

Drawing on the talents of hundreds of professional artists, ICSP knew that its funding for *Iraqi Culture Center for Arabic Calligraphy and Decoration* would produce some stunning material for the anti-corruption awareness campaign as well as a quality exhibition. Yet no one ever expected that the project would reach thousands of Iraqis and bring a new, deaf-mute artist to regional acclaim.

Dedicated to its mission of using art as a tool to help solve society's problems, the *Iraqi Culture Center for Arabic Calligraphy and Decoration* was a perfect partner for ICSP's anti-corruption campaign. Part of ICSP's efforts to promote civil society in Iraq, the anti-corruption component seeks to reach 2.5 million Iraqis through posters and other awareness-raising materials. ICSP partners with local CSOs who are able to create material that is culturally sensitive and regionally specific. To date, ICSP has funded hundreds of posters and other materials across all of Iraq's 18 governorates and is well on its way to reaching its goals.

The exhibit prepared by the *Iraqi Culture Center for Arabic Calligraphy and Decoration* received a larger turnout than expected.

With a membership of trained calligraphers, *Iraqi Culture Center for Arabic Calligraphy and Decoration* prepared a series of posters that were not only eye-catching but were also significant works of art in their own right. Many of the posters vividly depicted the glorious history of Iraq and connected a return to that period with a need for government accountability and an end to corruption. After *Iraqi Culture Center for Arabic Calligraphy and Decoration* prepared 168 works, the art was displayed in an exhibition in Diwaniyah.

Osman communicates the importance of his work to an exhibition visitor.

The first exhibition was hailed by the hundreds of attendees for the creativity and beauty in the works. The event drew a larger turnout than anticipated, including 60 government officials from local ministries, and was extended for several more days to accommodate additional visitors. Another CSO; *The Shaheed Allah Culture Foundation*, which has a religious focus asked to borrow some of the works to display in an upcoming exhibition. Several of the works found their way into the hall of Najaf's Imam Ali mosque, where the art was viewed by hundreds of daily worshippers.

Although the organizers were pleased with the recognition for their efforts, they were especially satisfied that they helped a fledgling artist gain national recognition. Many of the Diwaniyah artists knew Osman Satar Mathy, a 15-year-old deaf-mute boy who worked as a mechanic's assistant in the neighborhood where most of the artistic community was based. He would pass by their studios and communicated an interest in their work. He played with their paints and began to prepare some of his own art.

Several of Osman's pieces made their way into the Diwaniyah exhibition. One used the image of a flower forcing its way through a barren rock to represent that role the anti-corruption could play in improving the most hopeless conditions. Another pictured greedy men carving apart a bloody map of Iraq. According to ICSP staff in attendance, the governor of Babil noticed the talent behind the paintings before he was introduced to the young artist, Osman. He awarded Osman a scholarship of 50,000 Iraqi Dinars to help encourage his work.

ICSP's funding for CSOs in the fight against corruption not only funds their campaign materials but also helps these grassroots CSOs advance their mission. Continued support for community-based CSOs regularly benefits Iraqis like Osman in ways that far exceed the grant expenditure.

SUCCESS STORY

NEW INDEPENDENT PAPER EMERGES IN NORTHERN IRAQ

In Kurdistan, where most of the media remains government-affiliated, the creation of a second independent newspaper is another step toward democratization. In addition to providing unbiased, accurate reporting, *Awene* aspires to be the first independent media corporation in the region. ICSP is helping the Sulymaniyah-based *Awene* achieve its goals by supporting the paper's growth and staff development.

Independent media institutions in Kurdistan that are not funded by one of the two main political parties or Baghdad are relatively new phenomena. *Awene*'s largest competitor, *Hawlati*, was the first independent newspaper in the region. Formed in 2000 using the regional autonomy that was granted following the gulf war, the paper took full advantage of the freedom of speech that was previously unknown. The paper's success was due in large part to the dedication of the five journalists who started *Hawlati*. Asos Hardi, who founded *Awene*, was among the group.

Independent media, like *Hawlati* and *Awene*, serve as welcome mechanisms for checks and balances in the emerging democracy for Kurdish readers. Since *Awene*'s first issue on January 5, 2006, Iraqi readers are still taking note of the new paper. There is every indication that the paper will compete with its larger rival for the attention of the Kurdish readership, whose circulation stands at 17,000. Learning from his experience with *Hawlati* and international advisors, Hardi created *Awene* with a diverse board of directors who are also shareholders in the company. The group includes lawyers, doctors, NGO representatives, and intellectuals. *Awene*'s business plan sets a course for the newspaper to be a profitable, independent institution within five years.

Awene reporter Zanko Ahmoud works at his desk. Ahmoud used free training from ICSP to prepare his an expose about black market cars.

Hardi adamantly opposes the easy path to profitability: government support. The regional authority has a program that pays each newspaper a large stipend to encourage "independent" media. This would ensure that *Awene* remains afloat. Though the payment does not come with any explicit conditions, Hardi wants to remain fully independent of the government and accountable only to his board of directors. Consequently, he sought free training and capacity-building support from ICSP.

Zanko Ahmoud, one of *Awene*'s energetic young journalists, has benefited from several training sessions conducted by ICSP. To improve his reporting skills before the December vote, he attended an ICSP training that taught reporters how to carefully observe the elections and tactfully report violations. Other trainings included topics such as gender in the media, and accuracy in reporting. Ahmoud enjoyed the ICSP workshops, and praises the lively discussion and the opportunity to interact with his counterparts at other newspapers. He has also put his newly-acquired skills to good use in a recent expose, when Ahmoud investigated ring of violent car robberies in Suleymaniyah. Ahmoud applied many of the techniques he had learned from ICSP media training when researching for article that described the local black market where the cars were sold. When printed, the headline read "I am sure the owner will not come back, because I killed him myself."

By partnering with ICSP, Hardi ensures that *Awene* remains independent. ICSP trainings also improve the skills of his staff and the quality of their reporting. Equally important, the free trainings do not affect the paper's bottom line. Support for *Awene* advances other issues important to ICSP, such as anti-corruption. *Awene* devotes two of its 20 pages to economic issues, including a candid discussion of fraud, waste, and other economic inefficiencies. The partnership gives Hardi the opportunity to focus on other obstacles to *Awene*'s success.

TOP STRATEGIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN IRAQ

December, 2006

CREATING A CIVIL SOCIETY AND MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

The overall goal of USAID's Iraq Civil Society and Media Program (ICSP), is to support USG efforts to foster participatory democratic governance in Iraq by implementing a program that strengthens civil society's role in its economic, political and social development. Apart from civic education and independent media, ICSP programs teach Iraqis to use democratic processes to fight corruption, and address human rights and gender issues.

USAID's experts trained and assisted over 1,000 Iraqi Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), over 50,000 individuals, in the areas of women's advocacy, anti-corruption, constitutional awareness and human rights and media in order to directly impact Iraq's emerging democratic processes and institutions. USAID has awarded over 250 small grants to CSOs to reinforce training and support advocacy and public awareness projects and activities.

Through training and workshops, ICSP is developing an independent media with the goal to engage media outlets throughout the country that provide accurate, high quality information to their audiences. USAID has provided the foundation for a media friendly environment that includes support to public broadcasting. USAID also guides media law advocacy geared toward establishing a legal environment supportive of an independent media.

A young woman learns to sew at a CAP-funded women's center in Khabat

COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM

USAID's Iraq Community Action Program's (CAP) overarching objective was to promote grassroots democracy and better local governance through demand-driven community development. Working directly through Community Action Groups (CAGs) and in consultation with local government counterparts, CAP is continuing to create representative and participatory community groups.

To date, USAID has committed over $271 million to 5,906 CAP projects while Iraqi communities have contributed more than $74 million. CAP has established over 1,400 community associations in all 18 governorates and created more than 2 million days of employment and 33,000 long-term jobs.

CAP partners received additional funding to assist civilian victims of armed conflict. The Marla Ruzicka Iraq War Victims Fund ensures that victims of conflict are specifically highlighted for funds to provide relief from severe suffering caused by conflict.

Fighting Corruption Through Civil Society
Helping build local capacity to advance transparent and accountable governance

Since 2004, the Iraq Civil Society and Independent Media Program (ICSP) has worked with civil society groups throughout Iraq, building local capacity to combat corruption and promote transparent and responsive local governance. Emphasizing transparency in public institutions, ICSP has provided training, technical assistance, and grants to civil society organizations (CSOs) as they conduct nationwide awareness campaigns and advocacy efforts. As a result of these activities, anti-corruption program activities have broken new ground in Iraq.

ICSP and local anti-corruption efforts have received national attention. After government officials attended an ICSP-funded workshop conducted by *Iraqi Center for Administrative Anti-Corruption* at the Petroleum Culture Center, Iraqi Prime Minister Dr. Ibrahim Al-Jafari praised the efforts of ICSP. Iraqi President Jalal Talabani pledged support to the efforts of a local, USAID-supported group, including the translation of anti-corruption materials into Kurdish.

INCREASED LOCAL CAPACITY

A special emphasis is placed on giving Iraqi CSOs the necessary skills to independently conduct effective awareness raising campaigns, effective tools in the fight against corruption.

- More than **700 CSOs have increased their knowledge and capacity** to undertake anti-corruption work as a result of **128 training workshops and 773 technical assistance sessions**

- ICSP also supported **nine forums involving 350 participants from the civil society sector** to network and plan joint activities.

- ICSP and partner CSOs have provided **training to 6,000 government officials** at the national, regional, and local levels, and provided of cutting-edge mentoring and technical assistance in transparency and accountability.

NATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The ICSP **Anti-Corruption Awareness Raising Campaign**—comprising print media (posters, banners, signs, pamphlets, brochures, booklets, and billboards) and the work of Iraqi artists (mobile theaters, art exhibitions, and cartoon displays)—has **reached an estimated 1 million Iraqis to date.** Weekly anti-corruption TV and radio programs were highly visible and effective CSO initiatives to expose corruption and waste, and hold government accountable to the Iraqi people.

IRAQI WATCHDOG GROUPS

ICSP has nurtured the **establishment and effective operation of more than 40 Iraqi watchdog organizations** across the country. These groups have conducted anti-corruption surveys, monitored and reported on corruption, trained government officials in transparency and accountability techniques.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The USAID Iraq Civil Society and Independent Media Program (ICSP) has been active in Iraq since September 2004. USAID's implementing partners include America's Development Foundation (ADF) and, focusing on independent media, the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX).

The civil society component focuses on establishing civil society resource centers and building the capacity of Iraqi civil society organizations to be effective public actors. Special targeted assistance supports work in civic education, women's advocacy, anticorruption, and human rights.

USAID: Civil Society and Media Development
http://www.usaid.gov/iraq/accomplishments/civsoc.html

USAID: Fighting Corruption
http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/technical_areas/anti-corruption/

USAID/Iraq
http://www.usaid.gov/iraq/

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

Civil Society Resource Centers

- Conducted 1,144 training workshops followed by technical assistance to develop CSO core capacities
- Led 275 Forums and 30 National and Regional Conferences, bringing CSOs together
- 3,000 CSOs have received training and technical assistance
- 43,000 CSO participants have increased their knowledge, skills and operations
- 6,000 government officials have been trained and/or participated in workshops, forums, and conferences.

Anticorruption

- Supported CSOs lobbying for the addition of 13 anticorruption provisions to the Iraqi Constitution
- 6,000 government officials—at the national, regional, and local levels—received training and technical assistance in transparency and accountability
- Reached 1 million Iraqis through a national awareness raising campaign featuring innovative programs by Iraqi organizations

Women's Advocacy

- Supported women's rights CSOs lobbying for the adoption of 12 constitutional provisions benefiting women
- Over 600 CSOs have received training and assistance, increasing their capacity to advocate for the advancement of women;
- Led events and conferences, bringing women's CSOs together to network, organize coalitions, and develop advocacy campaigns

Human Rights

- Over 4,000 CSO and government employees received training and technical assistance on human rights
- Many CSOs have improved their abilities to monitor and report on human rights abuses, including poor conditions of detention centers and unlawful detention
- CSOs have developed partnerships with police departments, human rights departments and other government agencies to support the protection of human rights

Civic Education

- Assisted CSOs who mobilized citizens to participate in Iraq's constitutional referendum and the electoral processes
- Hundreds of CSOs have participated in regional and national conferences to advocate for civil society legislation
- Supported Iraqi-driven campaigns to reform inadequate laws affecting women

Independent Media

- Helped establish and continues to help build the capacity of the first independent news agency and the first independent Public Broadcasting Service in the Arab world
- Increased the knowledge and skills of over 1,000 journalists and media professionals
- Established an Iraqi media watchdog group

ADVOCACY FOR ENHANCED ANTI-CORRUPTION

Nearly **80 CSOs successfully advocated for the adoption of 13 anti-corruption provisions** in the Iraqi Constitution. Leading up to the *National Conference on Incorporating Transparency and Accountability in the Iraqi Constitution* in July 2005, the ICSP held a number of Anti-Corruption activities, including preparatory workshops and the regional conferences on transparency and accountability in the Iraqi constitution. The regional conferences enjoyed local, national, and international media coverage. The conference was the driving force behind the inclusion of key anti corruption principles in the Iraqi constitution.

ICSP and CSOs are conducting **important advocacy on anti-corruption issues**, coordinating with Iraq's major public integrity agency, the Commission for Public Integrity (CPI), and working for legislative reform on access to information legislation, establishment of a public integrity agency, and whistleblower protection legislation.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

ICSP Partner CSOs have improved mechanisms to secure transparency and accountability in the public sector through constitutional work, legal reform efforts, and establishment of CSO-public partnerships providing training and advocacy to a wide array of government agencies, including the Commission for Public Integrity (CPI), government ministries, parliament, provincial councils, ministry directorates, local governments, hospitals, schools, and universities.

Iraqis have presented anti-corruption workshops in a variety of government agencies including city halls, ministry directorates of Health and Education in several governorates, government employees from health, education, culture, finance, housing, and social affairs ministries, communications officials in one governorate and health workers in another, government media workers, and workers at the national ministries of Industry and Municipalities. CSOs continue to cultivate **CSO-public partnerships** that facilitate training in government agencies and advocacy work
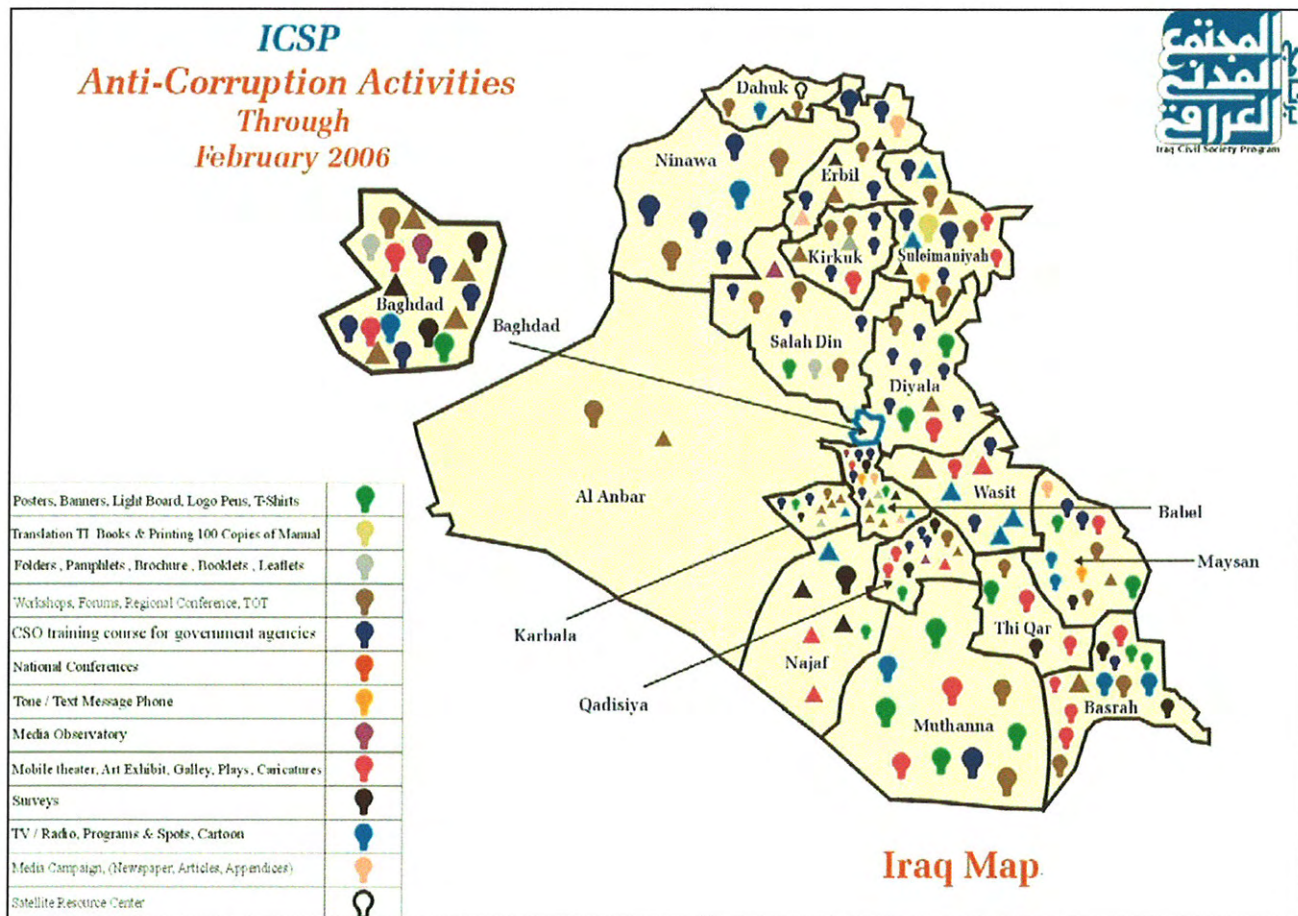
CSOs have conducted **public opinion and satisfaction polls** as part of documentation of corruption in ports, hospitals, schools, the food basket program and other public programs and institutions. These polls provide the basis for **anti-corruption campaigns**. For example, a partner CSO has conducted customer surveys documenting corruption in the food basket program of the Ministry of Trade. Follow up advocacy to improve delivery of services is leading to increased public awareness and participation, administrative reform, and reduction of corruption and waste.

ICSP supports a popular **anti-corruption TV program**, in which cases of administrative corruption are exposed. Iraqi viewers and even government officials praise the program. Other ICSP programs have led to corrupt or unresponsive officials being removed from office and in subsequent improvement in management and public service delivery. Iraqi viewers and even government officials praise the program.

Several CSOs have used **artistic models as part of an integrated plan to battle corruption**, including dramas that deal with administrative corruption in government offices and "The Opera House Injuries", mobile caricature galleries and an exhibition of cartoon strips in newspapers and other venues. The cartoons were designed as part of a simple study conducted by the CSO that described the types of corruption and waste occurring in government agencies.

Upon learning of some of these ICSP-funded anti-corruption projects one central Iraqi governor pledged his support for the local groups and the Anti-Corruption campaign in an official letter. Governors and public officials are frequent participants in ICSP programs.

ICSP Anti-Corruption Activities Through February 2006

Posters, Banners, Light Board, Logo Pens, T-Shirts	
Translation TI Books & Printing 100 Copies of Manual	
Folders , Pamphlets , Brochure , Booklets , Leaflets	
Workshops, Forums, Regional Conference, TOT	
CSO training course for government agencies	
National Conferences	
Tone / Text Message Phone	
Media Observatory	
Mobile theater, Art Exhibit, Galley, Plays, Caricatures	
Surveys	
TV / Radio, Programs & Spots, Cartoon	
Media Campaign, (Newspaper, Articles, Appendices)	
Satellite Resource Center	

Iraq Map

SUCCESS STORY

By the People, For the People

Eleven human rights articles by the Iraqi people are included in the new constitution.

Members of Iraqi Civil Society Organizations debate human rights issues to be included in the constitution during a three day national conference geared to give the people a voice in the constitution.

The three day "Incorporating Human Rights into the Constitution" national convention fostered debate and dialogue about human rights issues within the constitution and resulted in eleven recommendations being incorporated into the final draft of the constitution. Through the Iraqi Civil Society Program, USAID provided the forum for Iraqis to instill their voice within the pages of the constitution.

The "voice of the civil society" now resounds in the articles of the draft constitution. Eleven human rights recommendations drafted by Iraqi civil society organizations were incorporated into the draft constitution. These articles are the fruits of a three-day national human rights conference sponsored by USAID's Iraq Civil Society Program (ICSP) in April 2005. Over 80 participants attended the three day conference, representing all 18 governorates and a mosaic of ethnic and religious backgrounds. One of the conference organizers explained that the drafting committee accepted the articles "because they represented the public needs."

The 11 articles include basic human rights, which have not been activated in Iraq for decades, such as due process, freedom of religion, gender equality, and the right to privacy. Other articles demand that the constitution follow international declarations protecting human, children's, and women's rights. The constitutional drafting committee also included numerous suggestions from the ICSP regarding the care of the elderly, disabled, and social safety nets.

The April conference was the culmination of four regional conferences held in Baghdad, Erbil, Hillah, and Basrah, the four operating centers of the ICSP. With nearly 1,100 civil society organizations and countless country-wide training events, consultancies, and technical assistance, the ICSP has worked diligently to build a strong civil society and independent media in Iraq following the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime. Apart from civic education and independent media, ICSP programs also help fight corruption, address human rights, and gender issues.

The ICSP sponsored a weekly prime time TV program entitled *Our Constitution* aired by al-Iraqiya TV, Iraq's public broadcasting service. The 90-minute show discusses controversial constitutional issues and offers drafters, experts, and a diverse studio audience a forum to speak out. This innovative program based on a concept and advice from ICSP was singled out by the United Nations as example of cultivating social dialogue.

SUCCESS STORY

Art Rallies Constitutional Support

Art Exhibition at National Assembly Rallies Constitutional Support

"The blue hands represent Iraq emerging from their barbed wire bonds of oppression" explains a veteran Iraqi artist. The constitutional art exhibit featured twenty six paintings by different Iraqi artists, sponsored by USAID's Iraq Civil Society Program to rally support for the October 15 referendum.

USAID's Iraq Civil Society Program sponsored a constitutional art exhibit which toured Iraq a week prior to the referendum, encouraging people to vote. The exhibit also showcased other ICSP programs including anti-corruption, women's rights, and human rights educational and advocacy programs.

To rally support for the October 2005 constitutional referendum, six Iraqi artists showcased their perspectives on *Our Constitution* in a touring art exhibition, including an exhibition at the National Assembly. The exhibit is a small part of a much larger USAID supported "get out the vote" campaign which resulted in record turnouts at the Iraqi polls.

Assembly members wander through the exhibition, awarding them a rare opportunity to hear the "voice of the civil society," said Dr. Issam Adawi, head of the USAID sponsored Civil Society and Media Program. One of the key drafters of the constitution was moved to tears when he saw a picture depicting Iraqi children living in a land free from corruption.

Many of the paintings depict Iraq emerging from a struggle. Some are hopeful, others a simple map of Iraq with the word "constitution" boldly in the center. All of the paintings demonstrate hope for the future and a freedom of expression unparalleled in Iraq for years. "The artist is a combination of freedom and imagination; these two concepts were not in the dictionary of the former regime," said Basil, a veteran artist from Basrah.

"Artists are sensitive about the environment surrounding them. With the constitution, we can now breathe freedom," explained one of the artists.

The art show, sponsored by a Basrah community, complements USAID's Iraq Civil Society Program (ICSP). This program establishes community councils throughout the country and educates voters about the constitution including women's rights, human rights, and anti-corruption. ICSP succeeded in including fifteen human rights recommendations in the final draft constitution.

USAID distributed hundreds of thousands of posters, and pamphlets throughout Iraq, held thousands of constitutional dialogues, and sponsored weekly television programs to educate voters about the constitution. The efforts paid off when 1.5 million more Iraqis at the polls than the January 2005 elections.