



## Quarterly Progress Report Women Power in Politics Program Iraq

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## Scope of Work

**Goal 1:** More women in leadership positions in parliament and federal government

**Outcome A:** Female aspirants are skilled and confident candidates in the election campaign

**Output 1:** 816 female election candidates in all 18 governorates of Iraq have been trained and supported in the run-up of the federal parliamentary elections

**Activities 1 (Capacity building and assistance to female aspirants):**

- 1.0. Preparatory meeting for training of trainers
- 1.1. Training of trainers
- 1.2. Local seminars for basic skills
- 1.3. Assistance during elections

**Output 2:** 311 high potential female candidates have received intense capacity building and support, and are connected with civil society at grassroots level

**Activities 2 (Capacity building and assistance to high potentials):**

- 2.0. Training of trainers
- 2.1. Selection of high potentials
- 2.2. Support to trainers
- 2.3. Advanced trainings and networking sessions for high potentials
- 2.4. Practical support to high potentials

**Outcome C:** Female representatives in parliament and federal government are more effective leaders who can promote women's rights, and engage in grassroots outreach

**Output 3:** 40-50 elected female members of parliament have received long-term support and assistance until almost a year after the elections

**Activities 3 (Long term assistance to female MPs):**

- 3.1. Training of trainers
- 3.2. Continuous support to female MPs and institutions
- 3.3. Advanced training workshops to elected MPs in Baghdad or elsewhere
- 3.4. Advanced training workshops to elected MPs in Erbil or elsewhere
- 3.5. Exchange with MPs from the Netherlands plus advanced training to female MPs in Baghdad (MP training #4)
- 3.6. Meetings to create more support from civil society
- 3.7. Training to gender units of ministries and governmental commissions

**Outcome B:** Political parties show more gender sensitivity by offering women's leadership training and women's support programs, and appointing more women in influential positions

**Output 4:** 8-15 political parties received information and support on engaging women on influential positions, offering women leadership training and gender support programs

**Activities 4 (Engagement of political parties):**

- 4.1. Discussion and educational meetings with Iraqi political parties
- 4.2. Exchange with Dutch political parties
- 4.3. Training and engagement of high potentials in influencing parties

**Goal 2:** Legislation and environment that is supportive of women's rights

**Outcome C:** Female representatives are more effective leaders who can promote a legislative agenda, supportive of women's rights, and engage in grassroots outreach (see also under goal 1)

**Outcome D:** Media have more attention for female politicians and their contributions to politics, show more balanced media coverage of female politicians

**Output 5:** The wider public (voters), authorities and other stakeholders have received balanced and correct information about the contribution of women to the democratic development of the country

**Activities 5 (Awareness raising and education of voters):**

- 5.1. Regional stakeholder conferences
- 5.2. Local community meetings for direct awareness raising
- 5.3. Engaging and informing influential media and journalists
- 5.4. Workshop with journalists and media professionals
- 5.5. Collection and publication of portraits and experiences of WPP women
- 5.6. Regular news releases about WPP program and female politicians
- 5.7. Involvement of female MPs in promotion of gender equality and Agenda 1325

**Activities 6 (evaluation and sharing for learning and awareness):**

- 6.1. Mid-term review
- 6.2. End term evaluation
- 6.3. End conference to share results of the program incl. findings of research

## Summary

The focus of our work in the second quarter of 2015 was on the preparations of two new trainings for MPs, one of them in close cooperation with the National Democratic Institute (NDI), as well as an additional training about gender and state/ministerial policies to staff of the gender units of ministries. However, none of these training workshops could actually take place during the past quarter. The focus was also on the organization of the exchange visit to Baghdad, which will include the fourth training to MPs. Also, we started to collect the profiles and experiences of women (for the Portraits of Women publication) and to organize the end term evaluation. So, during the past quarter, we have been preparing various events, but this had not lead to many concrete results yet. We needed to request for another three months no cost extension of this project, which we offered to implement for substantially reduced staff costs and no indirect or administrative costs. This NCE request was approved, so this report does not reflect the final stage yet – that will be the next quarter (July-August-September 2015).

## Context: Relevant Developments

The federal parliament had its vacations during the whole month of June 2015, which was in fact extended to July during the fasting month of Ramadan.

An interesting thing is going on in the Iraqi National Alliance<sup>1</sup>, which tends to go unnoticed. After the Alliance's chairman Mr Ibrahim Al-Jaafari became minister of Foreign Affairs in September 2014, the position of chairman remained a vacancy. In the meantime, the Alliance's deputy chairperson, Ms Majida Al-Tamimi is fulfilling the role as interim chairperson. MP Al-Tamimi is a prominent member of the Parliamentary Finance Committee. The Iraqi National Alliance is an important coalition, with the majority in the federal Parliament.



*MP Majida Al-Tamimi  
interim chairperson of the Iraqi National Alliance*

## Program Progress by Program Objectives

**Program Objective #1:** Compared to the current situation, more women will be in leadership positions in parliament and national/federal government.

### **Significant program activities related to PO #1 during past quarter:**

**Counselling work with new-coming female MPs (activity 3.2):** During the past quarter 9 MPs have received individual counselling support by telephone and face-to-face. The advices focused on the role of MPs and their relations with actors within and outside the Parliament.

**MP training on women's leadership, communication skills, facilitation skills, and strategic thinking (activity 3.3):** The MPs who had participated in the MP training of March had indicated their needs and wishes for future training with a focus on: (1) mechanisms of the legislation process, (2) international agreements and their relation with national laws and legislation, (3) communication with media and the audience, preparation for media performances and public speeches, mechanisms to prevent

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<sup>1</sup> الائتلاف الوطني العراقي

embarrassing questions. It had already been planned that the next training to MPs would cover women's leadership, communication skills, facilitation skills, and strategic thinking, so this next training could meet many of the expectations of the MPs. In addition, the individual counselling to MPs would also meet such needs. The MP training on women's leadership, communication skills, facilitation skills, and strategic thinking was first planned for May and later for early June, but had to be postponed until the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2015 due to the fact that the federal parliament had its vacations from the beginning of June on. Preparations for this training took place in April-May, but have not lead to the intended concrete result (an in-person training workshop with MPs) during the past quarter.

**MP training on presentation skills and communication with media, rules, procedures and bylaws of the federal parliament (activity 3.4):** The joint training with the National Democratic Institute was planned for May, but had to be postponed as well. We developed the programme and the modalities of the joint workshop in April-May. It was agreed that NDI would conduct a 2-day training on presentation skills and communication with media, and that we would conduct a 1-day training about rules, procedures and bylaws of the federal parliament. We had furthermore agreed that the costs would be divided accordingly (ratio 2:1) and that NDI would take care of the invitations to the MPs. The workshop would take place in the premises of NDI in Erbil. In Mid-May it became clear that there was possibly a problem with the invitations and the timing of the workshop. NDI later informed us that *"Regrettably for our timing, as I am sure you are aware, the CoR has extended its session until the end of May. As a result of this development--as well as because of the religious holiday--we are forced to delay our seminar until, at the earliest, early July."* NDI added that it *"would be more than happy to present on some of the discussed topics should you desire it"* on our MP training in June, which was postponed to the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter as well (see above). In short, preparations for this joint training took place in April-May, but have not lead to the intended concrete result (an in-person training workshop with MPs) during the past quarter.

**Exchange visit including MP training (activity 3.5):** The 4<sup>th</sup> training to MPs is connected to the exchange visit to Baghdad. Further preparatory work to organize this exchange visit took place in April and then again in June. The visit to Baghdad was planned for May 2015, and the preparations were going well, until in April the Iraqi Parliament changed its planning of sessions and vacations and we needed to postpone the exchange visit again! It was then decided to organize the exchange in August-September 2015. The preparations restarted in June. The plan was and still is that there will be two simultaneous exchanges during this visit to Baghdad: an exchange of Dutch and Iraqi MPs (under Program Objective #1) and an exchange of representatives of Dutch and Iraqi political parties (under PO #2). 3 MPs and 3 representatives of three Dutch parties will participate in this exchange, mostly women. We may decide to organize a counter-visit of a selection of dedicated Iraqi MPs to the Dutch Parliament, as follow-up of the exchange visit. This counter-visit might take place in late 2015 or early 2016, outside the framework of the WPP program.

**Meetings to create more support from civil society (activity 3.6):** Preparations were made for meetings with human rights and women's rights activists in Kirkuk, Baghdad, Dohuk and Basra or Maisan, to take place in July and August 2015. The preparatory work has not lead to the intended concrete result (in-person meetings with MPs and civil society activists) during the past quarter.

**Training about gender and state/ministerial policies to gender units of ministries (activity 3.7):** Besides these trainings for MPs, we developed and proposed to DRL the idea of organizing an additional training to the staff of gender units of a number of different ministries of the federal government, about gender and state/ministerial policies. Both women and men would participate in this training, because the gender units in the ministries mainly consist of women, but the coordinators from the state ministry for women's affairs and the general secretary for the council of ministries are both men and women. The gender units promote and develop the position and roles of women within ministries. We had chosen for this training to the gender units of ministries, because we believe that this is well in line with the 1<sup>st</sup> program goal of the WPP program ('more women will be in leadership positions in parliament and government') as well as the 2<sup>nd</sup> program goal ('more female leaders, supported by an enabling institutional structure, will be more capable to develop and promote women-friendly legislation'). Preparations for this training started in June, the training will take place in August.

**Key successes/outcomes related to PO #1 during past quarter:**

Concluding, preparations took place in April, May and June, but have not lead to the intended concrete results during the past quarter: in-person training workshops and meetings, as well as exchange. The only

concrete results under PO #1 are the individual consultations to the MPs. We find this very disappointing. The next quarter, the final stage of the WPP program, must lead to the intended concrete results.

**Program Objective #2:** Legislation and an environment that is supportive of women's rights.

**Significant program activities related to PO #2 during past quarter:**

**Exchange visit political parties (activity 4.2):** Also during the past quarter, the preparations for the exchange visit for political parties took place. The exchange of the political parties is meant to contribute to a more supportive environment for women's political participation (PO #2). The preparatory work to organize this exchange visit took place in April and then again in June (see above). The exchange visit is now planned for August-September. There will be two simultaneous exchanges during this visit to Baghdad: an exchange of Dutch and Iraqi MPs (under Program Objective #1) and an exchange of representatives of Dutch and Iraqi political parties (under PO #2). On the Dutch side, three political parties will participate in this exchange – the same three that have been involved in the WPP program from the beginning: Liberal Party (VVD), Labor Party (PvdA) and the Christian-Democratic Party (CDA). On the Iraqi side, four political parties and blocs are particularly involved: Hakim List (Al-Majlis Al-Islami Al-Alaa), the Sadrist Movement (Ahrar), the Da'wa Party-Iraq (member of Dawlat Al-Qanun) and the Sunni Bloc (Itihad Al-Quwa Al-Iraqiya).

**Portraits of Women publication (activity 5.5):** In addition, we set further concrete steps in the realization of the Portraits of Women, inspiring examples of women who participate in decision making and public life in Iraq, as part of the awareness raising and education of female voters – a way to contribute to a more supportive environment in society. The selection, editing and translation of the draft texts will be done in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2015, as well as the design and printing, publication and distribution of the Portraits of Women. The texts are made by Iraqi journalists, the photos by professional Iraqi photography agencies.

**MPs involvement in gender-related issues (activity 5.7):** On basis of our first training to federal MPs in March 2015 we had the strong feeling that not many new-coming female MPs would support and promote gender equality or the UNSCR 1325 Agenda for Iraq. For that reason, a selection of female MPs were invited to participate in the international conference 'Women's Resistance to Extremism and Terrorism, and their Struggle for their Rights, Peace and Security' (Erbil, 10-11 May 2015). This conference was organized by Al-Amal on behalf of the 1325 MENA Women Security Forum. 6 female MPs have participated indeed – four new-coming MPs and two more senior MPs. Three of them had participated in our MP training of March 2015. Two female MPs had declined the invitation.

**Key successes/outcomes related to PO #2 during past quarter:**

The preparations for the exchange visit to Baghdad and the portraits of inspiring women have not lead to concrete results during the past quarter yet: the exchange and the publication, but we still have time in the last quarter. The only concrete results under PO #2 is the involvement of 6 MPs in our conference on 'Women's Resistance to Extremism and Terrorism, and their Struggle for their Rights, Peace and Security', through which we are trying to motivate these MPs to become more active on gender-related topics. As a direct result of their participation in our conference, two female MPs have been invited for a regional conference on women's political participation, organized by the Egyptian NGO Nazira (to be held in Beirut, Lebanon, on 23-25 July 2015). The outcomes of these efforts in Parliament should become visible in the months to follow.

**Significant other program activities during past quarter:**

**Finalization mid-term review (activity 6.1):** During the past quarter, the report of the mid-term review (MTR) was translated into Arabic and discussed between Hivos and Al-Amal. We also received feedback from DRL to the MTR report. The MTR did not lead to significant changes in the WPP program.

**End term evaluation (activity 6.2):** In June we have started to organize the end term evaluation. The terms of reference for the end term evaluation were drafted and shared with DRL for feedback. The end term evaluation is planned for August-September 2015, so the results (the observations, conclusions and recommendations) can be discussed in the end conference of the WPP program in September.

**Cooperation with NDI:** Finally, we managed to find a workable form of cooperation with the National Democratic Institute. This did not come easily, but when we found it, the communication went very smoothly. We developed a joint training. However, the cooperation has not yet resulted in a concrete training yet (see above).

**Discussions with DRL:** In April, Hivos participated in the DRL Iraq Implementer's Workshop Follow-up Meeting in Washington DC. The purpose of this workshop was to discuss the results of the Iraq Implementers Workshop (February 2015) with the US based staff of DRL grantees and to give feedback on DRL's programming priorities in Iraq within the country's current context. In addition, Hivos had a separate meeting with DRL team members (6 key staff in the area of women's political participation and Agenda 1325) to discuss challenges and lessons learned from the WPP program. We presented these for the WPP program as a whole, as well as for the training to MPs in March 2015, each of them linked to how we want to anticipate to these challenges in the next trainings:

**Challenges WPP programme:**

1. The demands and expectations of the MPs
2. The number of participants in our training
3. The commitment and attendance level of the MPs during the training
4. The sessions and vacation schedule of the Iraqi Parliament / the combination of the schedules of the Iraqi and Dutch Parliaments
5. Cost-sharing by the Iraqi Parliament or MPs
6. Visa applications

**Main overall lesson learned:**

During the pre-election stage it was important and urgent that we focused on capacity building of the women –the female candidates on party lists– but the work with political parties and the wider audience (partly through media) was too limited to change their mindsets about gender stereotypes and create political will among party leaders to have more women on key positions.

**Key successes/outcomes related to other activities during past quarter:**

The cooperation with NDI was effectuated, but did not lead to the intended concrete result: a joint training workshop for MPs yet. We had valuable discussions with DRL and DRL grantees in Iraq.

**Updated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan**

Please see the updated M&E Plan in the Annex 1 to this report.

**Challenges and Lessons Learned**

Based on the analysis that the capacities of new-coming female politicians in Iraq needed to be developed/strengthened, and that a more supportive environment towards women's political participation and women's leadership should be created, we have realized something on the ground in two years time. In the months before the elections, we trained 816 new-coming election candidates from all provinces of Iraq and from a wide variety of political parties. We supported 311 of them more intensively. 17 women have entered the Iraqi federal parliament as first-time MPs after having received training and support through WPP. In addition, we engaged and educated a variety of political parties on gender sensitivity, various media on balanced news coverage, and authorities and voters on biases against and obstacles for women in politics. After the elections, we offered training and counseling support to some 20 new-coming female MPs, and have been preparing more training to MPs, an exchange with foreign MPs and political parties, and participation in conferences on gender-related topics (e.g. UNSCR 1325). By the end of the program we will also have trained gender units of ministries and governmental commissions, and furthermore published a book highlighting women in Iraqi politics and their experiences, to raise public awareness on this topic.

There certainly were challenges. The primary focus of the WPP program was on capacity development of female politicians, to get more and more capable/confident women in parliament, and less on the political

parties, media and wider public. We managed to get skilled and confident women in parliament, but we did not manage to get substantially more women in parliament. Despite the fact that much more women were elected into parliament by majority vote (4.5 times more than in the previous parliamentary elections), this initially did not lead to more female MPs than the required quota of 25%, and later it became just slightly more (26% women). This was disappointing. Also the number of women in the council of ministers was disappointingly low (just 2 out of 33 ministers, and only with the traditional women's portfolios of health care and women's and family affairs). Our expectation that thanks to our work, Iraqi political parties would show more gender-sensitivity and political will to appointing more women in parliament and leadership positions did not come true, not even among the progressive secular parties. So, this was a challenge that we have not been able to meet effectively. We concluded that the primary focus on capacity building of women was justified, but the lower emphasis on working with political parties was not. The mid-term review confirmed this.

In addition, the interest of most of the new-coming female MPs for promoting gender equality and gender-related issues turned out to be much lower than we had expected. Our assumption has never been that getting more and more capable women in parliament would automatically lead to more gender-sensitive or even women-friendly policies and legislation. As a deliberate strategy, we have worked with women from a wide variety of political parties, including conservative and religious parties, not just with more or less like-minded progressive parties. Despite our efforts to make the new-coming female MPs more gender-aware and familiar with gender related issues and with gender responsible budgeting, we have not been able to meet this challenge effectively. In fact, it was our gender training to MPs that made this clearer.

Other challenges in the WPP program included the safety situation and political instability in Iraq, to which we have anticipated effectively by a very flexible way of working which made it possible to train and support female election candidates in all 18 provinces of Iraq (sometimes realized on a safe location elsewhere). Another challenge for the female election candidates were the strong gender stereotypes, biases and disapproval from their environments, which these courageous women met and challenged with our help, some of them very successfully.

An additional challenge was the changing attitude of women after they have been installed as MPs with the corresponding status, as well as their communications with others. We have learned that working with female election candidates was much easier than working with them as MPs.

There were challenges in the cooperation with others. On top of our own resources, we have made use of different expertise from different sources, in particular on gender equality, women's political participation, and capacity building of politicians and members of parliament. This expertise was brought in by Hivos's and Al-Amal's own senior staff, the foundations of three Dutch political parties, the Women's Democracy Network and the National Democratic Institute, as well as individual trainers and advisors from Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt and Morocco and members of parliament and political party representatives from the Netherlands. To a limited extent, the Iraqi Women's Network was involved as well. This has enriched our own expertise in these fields and made the work more effective. Challenges in this field were discrepancies in the level of expected and delivered engagement and ownership for this project (in particular among the three Dutch political foundations involved), invalid expectations concerning the level of involvement in the project (particular with WDN) and tensions concerning possible conflicting interests and competition (in particular with NDI). Hivos has always kept an open approach and tried to build trust. In practical terms, we have met challenges concerning the planning of the Iraqi parliament, as well as visa applications for Iraq. The Parliamentary schedule of sessions and vacations frequently changes, while the planning of our training workshops and exchange visit depends on this schedule. We have learned to accept that working with Parliament means unpredictability in planning and slow progress. The visa application process restricts our travel planning to federal Iraq beyond Kurdistan. We have learned that visa applications take several months, that the procedures are frequently changing, and that good intentions and promises from Iraqi authorities do not bring concrete results. The Iraqi Parliament wants to organize visa for the exchange visit only, not for monitoring visits of Hivos staff. The visa for the evaluator of the mid-term review was issued too late, after the MTR had been finalized, which has influenced the quality of the evaluation.

### **Proposed Activities for Next Quarter**

The activities planned for the following quarter (Q3 2015) are shown in the overview below. The adapted timeline for the complete project period is shown in annex 2.



Because we have been granted another no-cost project extension for three extra months, until 30 September 2015, this will be the last quarter of the WPP program, the finalization stage.

	Quarter:	Q3 2015		
	Months:	#22	#23	#24
		Jul	Aug	Sep
<b>3. Long term assistance to elected female representatives</b>				
3.2. Continuous support to female MPs		x		
3.3. Advanced training to female MPs in Baghdad or elsewhere (MP training #3)			x	
3.4. Advanced training to female MPs in Erbil or elsewhere (MP training #2) – joint training with NDI			x	
3.5. Exchange with Dutch MPs plus advanced training to female MPs in Baghdad (MP training #4)			x	x
3.6. Meetings to create more support from civil society		x	x	
3.7. Training to gender units of ministries and governmental commissions				x
<b>4. Engagement of political parties</b>				
4.1. Discussion and educational meetings with Iraqi political parties		x	x	
4.2. Exchange with reps of Dutch political parties			x	x
<b>5. Awareness raising and education of female voters</b>				
5.5. Publication Portraits of Women: Experiences		x	x	x
5.6. Regular news releases about WPP program and female politicians				x
5.7. Involvement of female MPs in promotion of gender equality and Agenda 1325		x	x	
<b>6. Monitoring &amp; evaluation</b>				
6.2. End term evaluation			x	x
6.3. End conference				x
6.4. Regular monitoring		x	x	x
6.5. Planning and monitoring visits			x	x
6.6. Financial audit				x
6.7. Quarterly reporting				x

So, with September 30<sup>th</sup> 2015 as the new end date of the WPP program, we will be able to organize/produce in the next quarter:

- 2 training workshops for MPs (one of them as a joint training with NDI <sup>2</sup>)
- 1 gender training workshop for staff of gender units of ministries of the federal government
- 1 exchange of Iraqi and Dutch MPs (plus 4<sup>th</sup> training to MPs, connected to this exchange visit)
- 1 parallel exchange of representatives of Iraqi and Dutch political parties
- 5-6 meetings of MPs with civil society activists
- 1 book containing portraits and experiences
- 1 end term evaluation
- 1 end conference

#### Coordination with other Donors

We have been coordinating with the Dutch government, the co-donor of the WPP program, mainly concerning the exchange visit of MPs and political parties to Baghdad. Also, we have discussed the WPP program with the newly appointed Dutch ambassador to Iraq (from July on). In June, we informed the EU

<sup>2</sup> On condition that the cooperation with NDI remains well and NDI manages to realize its part of the agreement, including the invitations.



Delegation about the WPP program and other activities of Hivos in Iraq. Beyond that, we did not coordinate with other donor agencies.

### **Sustainability**

The report of the mid-term review mentioned observations and challenges concerning the sustainability of the WPP program. It also included three recommendations to increase the sustainability. These were: (1) more in-depth gender training for MPs as well as candidates in next elections, but also for political parties, men, husbands, etc, (2) more in-depth studies on barriers of women participation, and (3) collaboration with other donors/INGOs. These are all recommendations that go beyond the WPP program. Hivos is currently developing a program on women's political participation in the MENA region, taking the lessons from the WPP into consideration. This new program does not include Iraq, due to geographical restrictions determined by a donor agency for a specific call for proposals.

In the months following the end date of the contract with DRL, September 30<sup>th</sup> 2015, we may organize a counter-visit of a selection of Iraqi MPs to the Netherlands, with funds from the Dutch government or other donors. The cooperation with NDI may be continued as well, depending on the experiences of our first joint training. Hopefully we can also ensure follow-up by Iraqi MPs on promotion of gender equality and the implementation of the Iraqi National Action Plan 1325, as a result of the exchange visit, our training, and their participation in our conference.