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Evaluation of “Empowering Female Candidates in Iraq (EFC)” Program

Implemented by Iraq Foundation#

8/30/2013

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this report Integrity M&E Ltd presents the findings of evaluating “Empowering Female Candidates (EFC) in Iraq” which was implemented by Iraq Foundation (IF). The evaluation was mostly summative and focused on training of candidates in the Kurdistan governorates only. Thirty structured/semi-structured interviews with candidates were conducted after training and before the provincial election.

The evaluation revealed that IF and its partner in Kurdistan, Women Empowerment Organization (WEO), successfully implemented the EFC program. The two organizations delivered high quality training of ten political subjects to 284 candidates through a series of workshops in the three Northern governorates (Erbil, Sulaiy and Duhok).

The interviewed candidates highly rated the implementing organization, the topics of the training, and the usefulness of the learned knowledge. The candidates not only recommended such training to be conducted during political events but on a regular basis to empower the candidates and improve their performance.

The report also highlights a few areas that need to be improved and many ideas and suggestions of the candidates to enrich such training in future.

BACKGROUND ON EMPOWERING FEMALE CANDIDATES (EFC) PROGRAM

This program was meant to build the capacity of female candidates for the provincial elections through a series of trainings. This also required building the capacity of a number of local NGOs in order to be qualified to deliver the training. To achieve this goal, the program set the following objectives:

Objective 1: Provide TOT to NGOs to enable them to train women candidates in the Iraqi provincial elections and the KRG parliamentary elections.

Objective 2: Provide simultaneous “cascade” training to 400 women candidates in 5 provinces for the provincial elections and on-going mentoring sessions

Objective 3: Provide “cascade” training to 375 women candidates in the KRG for parliamentary elections and on-going mentoring sessions

To assure the quality and effectiveness of the training, a fourth objective was set to monitor and evaluate the outputs and outcomes of the activities of this program. The final evaluation of the program is part of the activities of this objective.

EVALUATION OF THE EFC PROGRAM

In complying with objective 4 of this program, the main activities of the program were

evaluated to measure the effectiveness of the training on the implementing NGO partners and candidates. This document reports the results of evaluating part of the program which was implemented in the KRG only. Results of evaluating the other part of the program, which was implemented in other five Iraqi governorates, are reported elsewhere.

Data Collection Methods:

Two main methods were used to collect the data:

1. Review of documents
2. Interviews with candidates by phone

Documents such as program proposal and agreement, action plans, training materials, training schedules, progress reports, M&E reports, and lists and photos of beneficiaries and their contact information were reviewed. Review of documents helped in the evaluation as well as in the development of assessment questionnaires.

Once the assessment questionnaires were developed for the candidates, the interviews were conducted. Mostly quantitative data - and some qualitative data, were collected for the survey of candidates. The survey was conducted mostly by telephone calls to lower the cost and lessen the time required. A questionnaire was developed (Annex A) for the survey of candidates. It consisted of three groups of questions meant to assess the implementing partner, the quality of training and the relevance of the training topics to the political career of the candidates.

Sample Size and Methodology:

For the findings of the candidates' survey to be significant and generalized, sufficient data had to be collected. Because of time constraints, however, only 30 candidates (out of 284) were interviewed. This sample size gives a significant level of 90% and significant interval of 15% or better. Based on the number of candidates who participated from each governorate (106 from Suli, 103 from Erbil & 75 from Duhok), 11 candidates were selected from Suli, 11 from Erbil and 8 from Duhok. The candidates were selected randomly using a random number generating routine. In general, the cooperation of the candidates was great. Two surveyors who speak English, Arabic and Kurdish fluently were deployed to interview the candidates. The interviews lasted 2 – 3 days in addition to one day for training.

Data Analysis:

A simple user friendly access database was developed to help data collectors enter the collected data electronically instead of using paper forms. The database was customized to suit the collected data, minimize wrong data entry, and allowed for proper correlation between different sets of data. Quantitative data was then transferred to Excel and SPSS for analysis. MS Word was used to analyze qualitative data. A database/SPSS manager was deployed to

administer the database and to train the surveyors on how to enter data into the proper fields and check for validity.

EVALUATION RESULTS

Reviewing Documents:

Integrity staff reviewed many documents including, but not limited to: grant proposal, training materials, training schedules, trainers' CVs, lists of beneficiaries, relevant websites, advertising materials, evaluation sheets, and progress reports. Those documents helped in developing the evaluation questionnaires and revealed the following information:

- A TOT training workshop was organized and conducted by Iraq Foundation in Erbil during the period from April 13 to April 16, 2013. Twenty four (24) potential trainers, representing six local NGOs (including Women Empowerment Organization – WEO - from Kurdistan) attended the workshop.
- Ten (10) main topics were covered during the TOT workshop, and were the following:
 - Campaigning/managing election campaign
 - Leadership skills
 - How successful political leaders think
 - Management & planning/Managing changes
 - Communications & media skills
 - Networking/Searching for volunteers
 - Party platforms and political mobilization
 - Public opinion research
 - Decision making & strategic thinking
- Ten (10) academic and professional trainers participated in training the above topics.
- As a result of this TOT workshop, the Women Empowerment Organization (WEO) succeeded to conduct x cascade training for female candidates in KRG (4 workshops in Erbil, 4 in Suli and 3 in Duhok) during the period from May to June 2013.
- Prior to those cascade training workshops, IF and WEO explored various ways to advertise for the training sessions to encourage candidates to register. These methods included, but were not limited to, using radio stations and directly calling candidates. Of the 450 invitations, 284 candidates responded and successfully completed the training, which equates to approximately 76% of the target number (375). One reason for not reaching the target was that many political parties had their own training programs for their candidates.

Results of the Interviews:

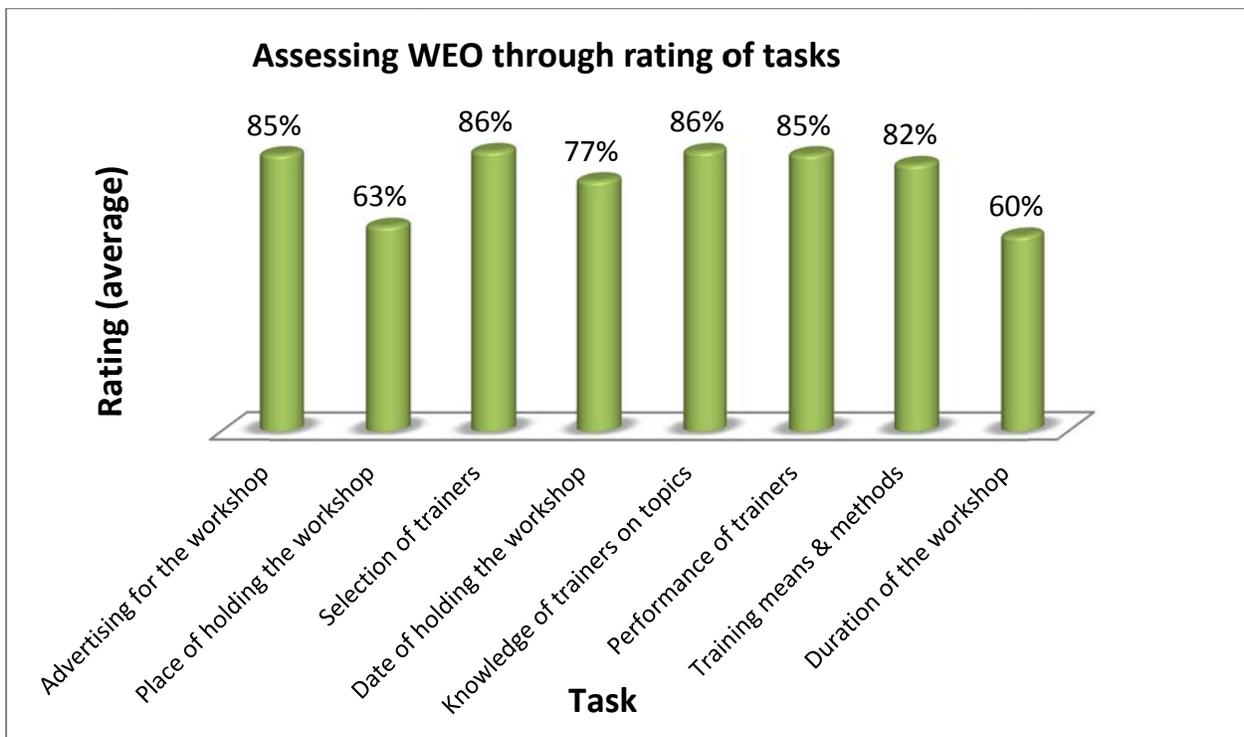
The main group of interviews was that of the candidates (candidates' survey). The survey's questionnaire was developed to cover three areas: evaluation of the implementing NGO (WEO),

evaluation of the topics of the training and how relevant they were to the political career of the candidates, and finally, an evaluation of the impact of the training on the political life of the candidates.

Evaluating the Implementing NGO (WEO):

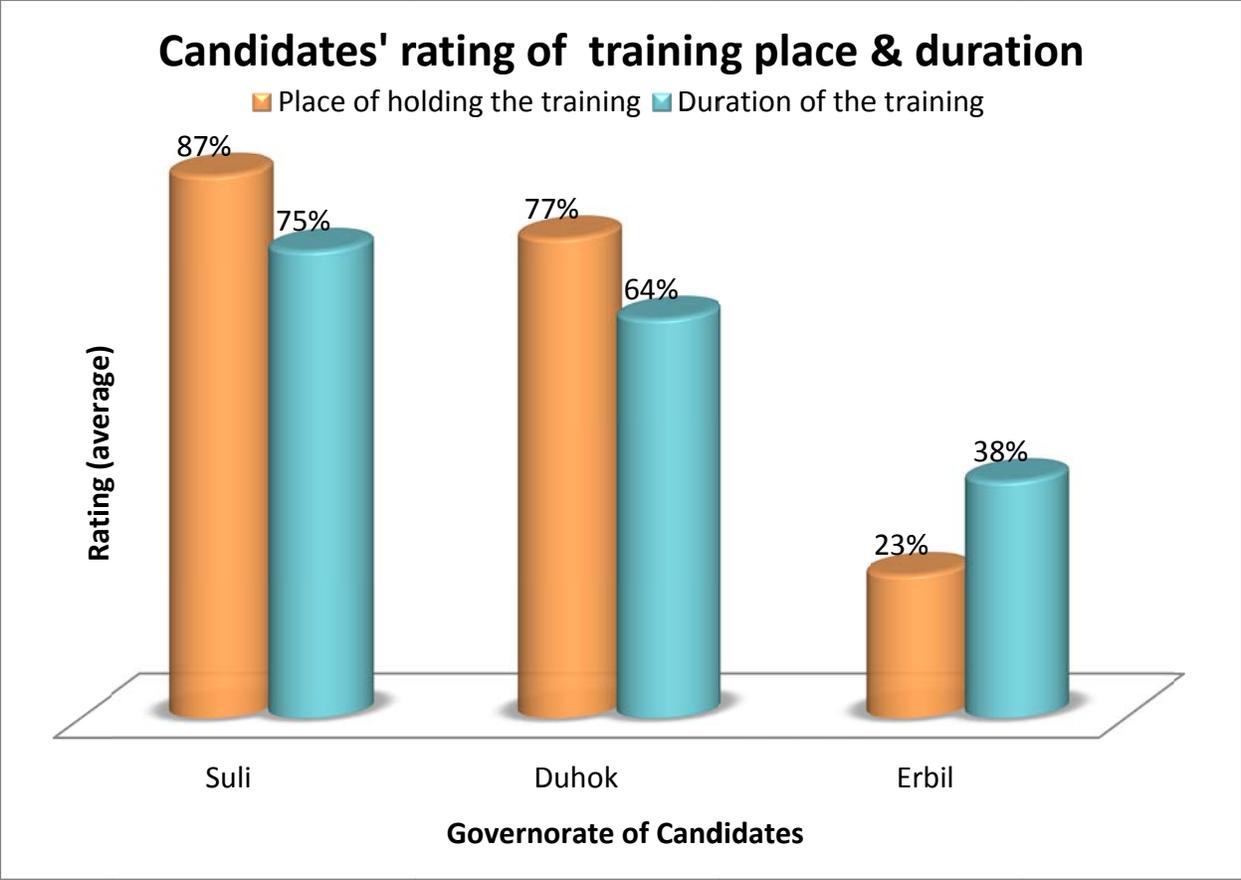
The selected candidates (30 candidates) were asked to evaluate the implementing NGO by rating eight tasks that the organization had implemented of relevance to the training. In addition, the candidates were requested to answer two semi-open questions (see Annex A - Assessing the NGO for listing of these questions). Ratings of the eight tasks by the selected candidates are shown in Chart 1 as the average percentage.

Chart 1: Assessment of WEO by Rating Eight Relevant Tasks



As you can see, the candidates rated most of the tasks highly, particularly those tasks related to trainers which are necessary for delivering quality and effective training. Two tasks, however, were rated relatively low: Selection of the training place and the duration of the training. Breaking these two ratings into geographic regions reveals that these low ratings were affected mainly by the ratings from the Erbil candidates (Chart 2). Their rating was so low a major improvement is definitely required. A follow up assessment may be needed to understand the details behind these poor ratings.

Chart 2: Rating of Training Place and Duration as Seen by Candidates of Different Governorates



As for identifying points of weaknesses and strengths in the performance of the organization, the candidates prioritized these points as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Weaknesses and Strengths in WEQ’s Performance as Prioritized by the Selected Candidates

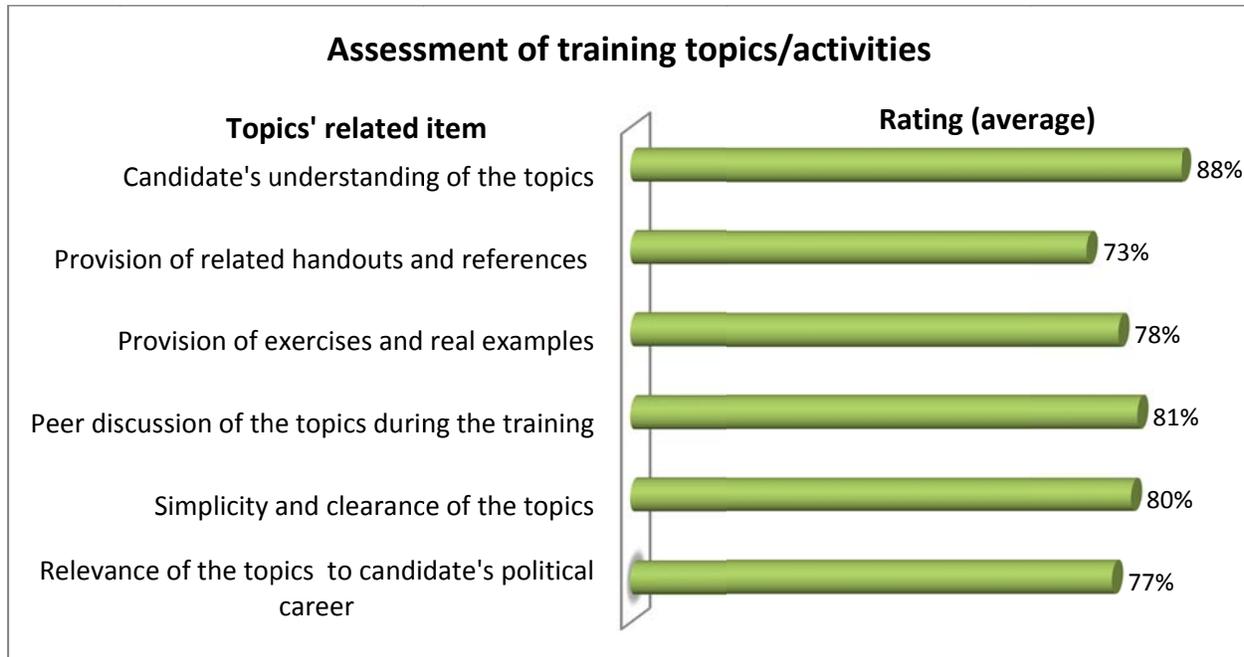
Priority	Weakness	Strength
1	None	Quality & quantity of information
2	Short training duration	Performance of trainers
3	Inconvenience of training place	Focusing on women
4	Using Arabic language only	Participation of multi-party candidates in the discussions
5	Logistics of the workshops	Diversity in teaching methods
6	Performance of lawyer trainers	Good utilization of time

Evaluating the Training Topics/Activities:

In assessing the topics/activities of the training, the candidates were asked to rate six items and answer three semi-closed questions (see Annex A - Assessing the Topics/Activities for listing of these questions). The ratings of the items are illustrated in Chart 3. The chart shows mostly

high ratings of the topics' relevant items with the lowest rating of 73% for provision of related handouts and references. This area may need improvement in future training. Looking at the distribution of answers, a correlation between the ratings and the geographic locations of the candidates could not be seen, making the relatively low rating general. Chart 3 also shows that the candidates believe that they understood the subjects covered in this training very well. Indeed, understanding the topics was rated the highest (88%) among the topics' related items.

Chart 3: Assessing the Training Topics/Activities



In asking the candidates about the three most important subjects covered in the training, the majority listed the legal aspect of the election, constitution, and parliament as the top. Empowering women politically and helping them get elected was second. And other subjects such as conflict resolution, strategic thinking, and the role of the media in elections were almost equally important in the third place.

Surprisingly enough, 29 of the selected candidates believed that the training workshops covered almost all essential topics relevant to their political careers and no need to add other topics to the training package. Only one candidate suggested that the following subjects should be added:

- Developing a plan to utilize political ideas in leading political parties
- Increasing female presence in politics
- Improving female political knowledge

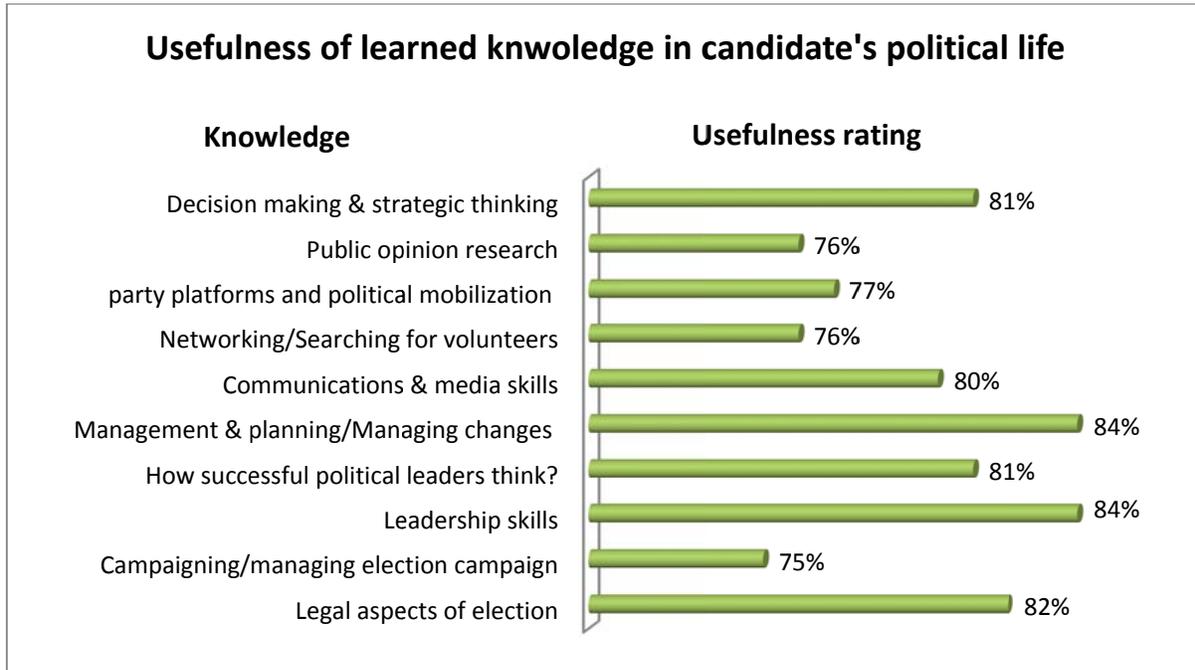
Finally, there was unanimous agreement among the selected candidates that such training is

very beneficial, and politicians are encouraged to attend such training.

Evaluating the Impact of the Training:

The actual impact of the training is hard to measure because the provincial elections have not taken place yet. Measuring the outcomes accurately is also difficult and time consuming. For this quick evaluation a set of questions were developed to roughly measure the effects of the training on the daily political life of the candidates as estimated by the candidates themselves. The questions focused on the ten training subjects, and whether the learned knowledge is utilized in practice. Rating the practicality of these subjects in the candidates' political life is represented in Chart 4. The chart shows a good utilization of learned knowledge in the political life of candidates. The collected data further indicates that the ratings are almost equally valid, regardless of the location of candidates.

Chart 4: Practical Use of Learned Knowledge in the Political Life of Candidates



The chart also shows that subjects that are indirectly related to elections (such as leadership skills, and management and planning) are more useful to the candidates in Kurdistan than directly related subjects such as campaigning, public opinion research, and networking/searching for volunteers.

When candidates were asked for suggestions to improve these trainings in the future they suggested the following (in order of frequency):

- Extend the participation of these workshops to cover all Iraqi governorates
- Conduct these workshops periodically or more often

- Linking the candidates with the trainers
- Use more advanced teaching methods
- Extend the duration of the workshops
- Bring international figures (trainers and others)
- Improve the training logistically

The candidates further suggested other types of (specialized) training to empower female candidates such as:

- Empowering/raising the awareness of women politically and legally
- Advanced training for the current participants
- Strategic management
- Public awareness on how and whom to elect
- Communication with other politicians/parties' representatives
- Public awareness on gender based violence/woman rights in election
- Female leaders
- Management & leadership

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As far as the training in the KRG is concerned, IF and its partner (WEO) were very successful in delivering quality and useful training to empower female candidates for the provincial election. The candidates highly rated the implementing NGO for advertising for the training, selecting qualified trainers, and organizing the workshops. The majority of the candidates who participated, however, felt that the duration of the training was short. In addition, candidates in Erbil seemed unsatisfied about some logistical issues.

The candidates expressed their appreciation for the topics of the training in relevance to their political careers, the ways the subjects were delivered, and for the supporting materials that were provided to the participants. All the interviewed candidates encouraged such training to be repeated and other politicians to participate in these trainings. Many candidates would like to upgrade the learned knowledge through advanced follow-up trainings.

In asking the interviewed candidates whether the learned knowledge is helping in their political careers, the candidates believe that the learned knowledge was very practical and beneficial in their political lives. The candidates brought forth many ideas to improve future trainings and empower female candidates.

In light of the above findings, IME recommend that:

- This training is repeated at least once a year and made available to all female members of the Iraqi political parties.

- The duration of the training session is extended to five days to allow better participation and understanding of the trainees. Sharing experiences of winners from other governorates or countries, as suggested by some candidates, may be useful.
- An advanced or follow up training is offered for those who participated in this training to refresh and enhance their knowledge and skills.
- An advanced training is offered for the winners and other female members of the provincial councils in which other topics related to their new positions are introduced and discussed.
- Other specialized trainings, suggested by the candidates, are offered for interested female politicians.
- A more comprehensive evaluation is conducted in which changes in knowledge, attitude and practice of the candidates are assessed.

Finally, it should be noted that this evaluation is not comprehensive. It is limited to certain areas of evaluation and areas of coverage. In addition, the findings can only be generalized within the accuracy specified in this report.

ANNEX A: CANDIDATES' SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Assessing the NGO		تقييم المنظمة المدربة
1. Rate the followings:	1 - 10	1. قيم الأمور التالية:
Scale: 1 low 10 high		المقياس: أقل مستوى 1 أعلى مستوى 10
• Advertising for the workshop		• الدعاية للبرنامج
• Place of holding the workshop		• مكان الدورة
• Selection of trainers		• اختيار المنظمة للمدربين
• Date of holding the workshop		• زمان انعقاد الدورة
• Knowledge of trainers on topics		• معرفة المدربين بمواد الدورة
• Performance of trainers		• أداء المدربين
• Training means & methods		• طرق ووسائل التعليم المتبعة
• Duration of the workshop		• فترة الدورة
2. What are the weaknesses of the NGO in conducting this workshop?		2. ما هي نقاط الضعف في أداء المنظمة؟
•		•
•		•
•		•
3. What are the strengths of the NGO in conducting this workshop?		3. ما هي نقاط القوة في أداء المنظمة؟
•		•
•		•
•		•

Assessing the topics/activities of the workshop		تقييم مواد وفعاليات الدورة
1. Rate the followings	1 - 10	1. قيم ما يلي:
Scale: 1 low 10 high		المقياس: أقل مستوى 1 أعلى مستوى 10
• Relevance of the topics of the workshop to your political career		• علاقة مواد الدورة بعملك السياسي
• Simplicity and clearance of the topics		• سهولة ووضوح مواد الدورة
• Peer discussion of the topics during the training		• النقاشات التي اثيرت مع المشاركين بخصوص مواد الدورة
• Exercises and real examples provided		• التمارين والتجارب الميدانية (الواقعية) المتعلقة بمواد الدورة

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of related handouts and references 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> الملازم والمراجع الموزعة وذات العلاقة بمواد الدورة
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your understanding of the topics 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> فهمك لمواد الدورة
2. What are the most three important topics that were discussed pertaining to your political career		2. ما أهم ثلاثة مواد تمت مناقشتها فيما يتعلق بعملك السياسي؟
•		•
•		•
•		•
3. Are there other important topics relevant to your political career that you like to learn and were not covered in this workshop?		3. هل هناك مواضيع مهمة لعملك السياسي لم تغطها هذه الدورة
•		•
•		•
•		•
4. Do you encourage other politicians to attend similar workshops in future?	Y N ? نعم لا لاادري	4. هل تشجع السياسيين بالتسجيل لمثل هذه الدورة لو عقدت مرة أخرى؟ لماذا؟

Practicability of the learned topics		التطبيق العملي لمواد الدورة
Scale: Percentage		المقياس: نسبة مئوية
1. How much of the following learned topic will be used in your daily political life?	%	1. ما نسبة استفادتك من المواد التدريبية التالية في حياتك السياسية العملية؟
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal aspects of election/ 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> المواد القانونية التي تعلمتها / نظام الحكم البرلماني
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Campaigning/managing election campaign 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> الحملات الدعائية/ ادارة الحملة الانتخابية
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership skills 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> المهارات القيادية
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How successful political leaders think? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> كيف يفكر القيايدي السياسي الناجح
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management & planning/Managing changes 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> التخطيط والادارة/ ادارة التغيير
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications & media skills 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> التواصل ومهارات الإعلام
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Networking/Searching for volunteers 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> التشبيك/العثور على المتطوعين
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> party platforms and political 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> التعبئة الحزبية والبرنامج الحزبي

mobilization		
• Public opinion research		• استطلاع الرأي العام
• Decision making & strategic thinking		• اتخاذ القرار والتفكير على الامد البعيد

Suggestions		مقترحات
What do you suggest to improve such programs in future		ما هي مقترحاتك لتطوير مثل هذه الدورات في المستقبل؟
•		•
•		•
•		•
What other future workshops do you need for your political career?		ما هي الدورات التدريبية المستقبلية التي تحتاجونها في عملكم السياسي؟
•		•
•		•
•		•