



Iraq Foundation
المعهد العراقي

1012 14th St. NW, Suite 1110
Washington, DC 20005
Tel: (202) 347-4662
Fax: (202) 347-7897
Email: iraq@iraqFoundation.org

Empowering Iraqi Widows to Thrive project (EIWT)

Progress Report

October 1, 2011 – December 31, 2011

Executive Summary:

During this reporting period, the Iraq Foundation (IF) accomplished the third training cycle in three training centers: Shat Al Arab (Basra), Chabaysh (Dhi Qar) and Maysan. IF is continuing the third training cycle in the other four centers: Karkh (Baghdad), Risafa (Baghdad), Hamdania (Mosul), and Madina (Basra). IF also held graduation ceremonies during this reporting period to honor the widows' successful completion of the second training cycle in Baghdad, Basra and Mosul (Ba'ashiqa). These ceremonies received attention from the local government councils, diplomats, civic and senior officials and tribal leaders. The ceremonies were well covered by the local and national media.

IF is pleased to announce that EIWT project staff succeeded in training more than double the predicted number of widows as part of the vocational training component during the third cycle. IF expected to train 70 widows but succeeded in training 174 after receiving 104 additional requests.

IF empowered 57 widows from cycle three to become economically self-sufficient and generate income through providing them with access to several resources, which include: small grants to start their own home-based businesses, use of their developed skills to provide services for their community and seize the opportunities provided through IF's outreach. They join 60 other widows from the previous EIWT cycles, who have benefited from our vocational and entrepreneurial training this year and are using their newly acquired skills for economic sustainability. IF congratulates these women on their hard work and determination and wishes them great success with their new ventures.

IF continued to conduct surveys during this reporting period and all the results were sent to Dr. Sadoun Chithir, M&E expert, for his analysis and report.

EIWT mentoring continued throughout the seven training centers. Notably, IF arranged mentoring sessions with Baghdad Provincial Council members: Ms. Bushra Abdulmir, member of the Services Committee and Ms. Basima Abdul Ameer Al Sa'ady, head of the Social Welfare Committee. IF conducted meetings with Relief International (RI) and Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF), to explore collaboration opportunities to benefit the widows. IF also attended a social care forum.

Addendums include:

- Graduation pictures - Cycle 2
- http://www.iraqfoundation.org/projects_new/EIWT/cycle2-Graduation-Oct-Sept2011.html
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- EIWT Cycle 2 & 3 – Training Update

- http://www.iraqfoundation.org/projects_new/EIWT/cycle2-3-Update-Sept2011.html
- December 2011- Success stories
- http://www.iraqfoundation.org/projects_new/EIWT/SuccessStory-Dec2011.html
- Cycle 3 Update for December 2011
- http://www.iraqfoundation.org/projects_new/EIWT/cycle3-Update-Dec2011.html

I. Activities and Evaluation of Progress towards Goals / Objectives:

Objective 1: Increase women’s participation in public life as confident and informed citizens with constitutionally mandated rights; enhance widows’ quality of life by improving family health and well-being, interpersonal relations, and coping strategies.

Activities to support this objective:

Activity 1: Conduct education on citizenship and women's rights to a diverse group of Iraqi widows in seven locations nation-wide.

Target:

- a) 28 educational training programs in seven locations
- b) 1,120 widows trained over the course of four training cycles on citizenship and women's rights, responsibilities and civic participation

Description of activities during this reporting period:

To achieve stated objectives, IF made all resources available : IF’s Democracy and Women’s Rights curriculum, well trained staff and partner NGOs which continue to engage the widows in the training activities.

Details of the third training cycle in all seven training centers are described below:

- Baghdad: On October 9, 2011, IF started the training in Karkh at Saydia Vocational High School and in Risafa at Risafa Vocational High School. 40 widows participated in each center.
- Basra: On September 17, 2011, IF started the training in Shat Al Arab at Al Amwaj Foundation for Human Rights. On December 20, 2011 IF completed the training cycle in Shat Al Arab. On September 20, 2011 the training started in Madina at Madina training center. 40 widows participated in each center. 40 widows in Shat Al Arab center completed the training.
- Maysan: On September 17, 2011, IF in collaboration with Woman Organization in Maysan, started the training at the partner’s headquarters. On November 21, 2011 the training was completed. 40 widows completed the training.
- Dhi Qar: On September 20, 2011, IF in collaboration with Nature Iraq Organization in Chabaysh, started the training at al Shati’ Hall. On November 27, 2011 the training was completed. 40 widows completed the training.

- Mosul: On November 4, 2011, IF collaborated with Eyzidy Solidarity Correlations in Ba'ashiqa to start the training at Comita NGO headquarters in Hamdania. 40 widows participated in the training.

Status: IF completed the third cycle in Shat Al Arab, Chabaysh and Maysan. In total, 280 widows participated in the training program's educational component. 120 widows have already graduated. The remaining four centers will complete training in the next reporting period.

Impact: The educational training had a significant impact on the widows' lifestyle, attitudes and ways of thinking; following the training, widows are more knowledgeable about their rights, employment options and opportunities. Impact of the above objective is well-demonstrated on end of cycle surveys. Please see Section III: Other Impact /Project Surveys.

Activity 2: Conduct education training on life skills education, including family health and well-being, interpersonal relations, and coping skills.

Target:

- a) 28 Educational Training Programs in seven locations
- b) 1,120 widows trained on life skills education, including family health and well-being, interpersonal relations, and coping strategies.

Description of activities during this reporting period:

IF continued to use the life skills training manual / curriculum that was created explicitly to promote the objectives of the project. The training covered interpersonal skills, inter-family relations, cooperation and team work, confidence-building skills and coping strategies. The training was delivered by IF's experienced EIWT staff and well-trained partners.

The family health and well-being training was delivered in collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MoH). The training material included, family health and hygiene, preventive care, especially for infants and children, and basic female health which included lessons on breast care and parenting. The training was delivered in seven training centers over five locations by MoH representatives.

Status: IF completed the third cycle in Shat Al Arab, Chabaysh and Maysan. In total, 280 widows participated in the training program's educational component. 120 widows have already graduated. The remaining four centers will complete training in the next reporting period (160 participants).

Impact: This training led to education of widows on many health-related issues and to increased awareness of life skills. Improved interpersonal communications skills were clearly visible among the widows themselves as they often engaged in collaborate efforts to complete tasks or solve problems. These new-found skills are clearly demonstrated at the end of cycle surveys. Please see Section III: Other Impact /Project Surveys.

Objective 2: Empower widows to participate effectively in the economy and achieve sustainable income generation.

Activities to support this objective:

Activity 1: Hold multiple vocational skills training programs in seven locations throughout Iraq

Target:

- a) 280 widows receive vocational skills training
- b) Total of 28 vocational training programs launched in five governorates (seven training locations)

Description of activities during this reporting period:

IF continues to deliver vocational training as part of cycle three in most of the training centers. IF carefully crafted the objectives of each training to the needs of the widows and demands of the local market. The vocational training included English language (for the first time), computer skills, hairdressing, and traditional sewing. While EIWT originally planned to train 10 widows from each center, due to unexpectedly high demand from the widows, each center was able to accommodate more widows than originally planned. Fortunately, these additions resulted in no additional costs, as the result of the efforts of local communities and trainers that committed to take on extra widows at no charge to IF or our partners. In addition to the 70 widows that IF predicted for training, 104 additional widows asked to participate in the vocational training during this period. A total of 174 widows received vocational training in cycle three.

Cycle three breakdown for the vocational trainings is outlined below:

- Baghdad
 - 24 widows continued the vocational trainings in Karkh in the following trades (see breakdown below):
 - 8 widows: cosmetology and hairdressing at Saydia Vocational High School.
 - 13 widows: traditional sewing at Saydia Vocational High School
 - 3 widows: computer skills training at Saydia Vocational High School
 - 25 widows continued the vocational trainings in Risafa:
 - 6 widows: cosmetology and hairdressing at Women Kingdom Salon
 - 4 widows: computer skills at Risafa Vocational High School
 - 15 widows: traditional sewing at Risafa Vocational High School
- Basra
 - 25 widows started vocational trainings in Madina:
 - 20 widows: traditional sewing at Madina training center
 - 5 widows: computer skills at Madina training center
 - 20 widows completed vocational trainings in Shat Al Arab:
 - 14 widows: traditional sewing at Al Amwaj NGO.
 - 6 widows: English language & computer skills at Al Amwaj NGO.
- Maysan

- 30 widows completed vocational trainings on traditional sewing at Woman Organization training center.
- Dhi Qar
 - 10 widows completed the vocational trainings on traditional sewing at the Nature Iraq organization in Chabaysh.
- Mosul
 - 40 widows continued the vocational training in traditional sewing in collaboration with the Eyzidy Solidarity Correlations at Comita NGO head quarter in Hamdania.

Status: IF completed the vocational skills training of 60 widows in three centers: Shat Al Arab, Maysan and Chabaysh. Vocational training is ongoing in the other 4 centers, which include: two centers in Baghdad (Karkh & Risafa) one center in Basra (Madaina) and one center in Mosul (Hamdania). 114 widows participated in training. A total of 174 widows participated in the vocational training in all training centers in cycle three.

Impact: IF noticed a significant attitude change among the widows as they reported confidence that the vocational skill training is a key step in finding a job; while they acknowledged the difficulty of obtaining employment, they realize that they now have better chances. As a result, IF established a proposal writing session during vocational training periods to assist widows in applying for mini- grants and micro-loans. Impact in terms of employment, job opportunities and other income generating opportunities are detailed in Section III: Other Impact /Project Surveys.

Objective 3: Enable widows to gain greater access to social services and to the income generating opportunities available in their communities and achieve family stability.

Activities to support this objective:

Activity 1: *Conduct Life Skills Mentoring*

Target: 1,120 Widows develop personal goals and an action plan to achieve those goals.

Description of activities during this reporting period:

The Iraq Foundation EIWT staff and IF's partner NGOs delivered mentoring to the widows in the form of:

- One-to-one sessions
- Group mentoring lectures
- Peer to peer

Examples of mentoring activities that IF conducted include the following:

Baghdad

- Ms. Basima Abdul Ameer Al Sa'ady, Baghdad Provincial Council member and head of the Social Welfare Committee, visited the Risafa training center and met with the widows. Ms. Al Sa'ady updated the widows on recent legislation and laws that will specifically benefit them. She informed the widows that the Ministry of State for Women's Affairs has adopted a microloans project for women and that the Ministry of Agriculture adopted a similar project for women in

rural areas. Ms. Al Sa'ady relayed that a proposal has been submitted to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs to give loans to the widows and unemployed women to enter the workforce.

- Ms. Bushra Abdulmir, a member of the Baghdad Provincial Council, representative of the Chairman of the Executive Committee and member of the Services Committee, addressed the issues, concerns and questions of local widows. Topics discussed included lack of readily accessible transportation, lack of employment opportunities in local schools, lack of school tuition subsidies for the widows' children, and the insignificance of social welfare stipends offered to widows. Ms. Abdulmir promised to bring complaints to the attention of relevant ministries and departments. IF staff will follow-up with Ms. Abdulmir as well as Ms. Samira Ahmad Jaafar, District Council member, to ensure that the issues raised by the widows will be properly addressed in council sessions.
- IF met with Mr. Azuldin Jama, Head, Committee for Community Action in Risafa. Mr. Jama briefed the widows on various aspects of first aid training according to the curriculum, approved by the Ministry of Health (MoH) that outlines basic measures to treat minor injuries, cuts and burns. Each training lasted seven days.
- IF Baghdad conducted educational mentoring sessions with Eman Abdul Rahman, a lawyer and successful widow. During this session, Ms. Abdul Rahman shared her experience and offered legal advice. She introduced them to Suhad Abdullah, a lawyer specializing in personal status law.
- IF Baghdad invited thriving widows from the previous training cycles to share their experience and success stories with the current widows. The following women presented to other widows on how to benefit most from IF's workshops: Majida Kathum, Shema'a Hassan, Kawthar Mahmood, Zainab Hamid, Lamia'a Dawood and Shatha Fadil Abbas. Ms. Abbas spoke on the sewing training she received as part of the second cycle of IF's workshops. Shatha described the dramatic change she has seen in her life and the new hope and happiness she feels as the result of her regular income and independence. She commented on IF's commitment and assistance and specifically, mentioned the sewing machine purchased for her by IF. Shatha advised other widows that if they use the information presented in the workshops, they will be on the path to success.
- Ms. Afrah Shawqi, reporter for *Al Mada* newspaper, met the widows in Baghdad. Ms. Shawqi shared her personal experience as a female reporter in a male-dominated community. She described her family's negative reaction to her work. Ms. Shawqi emphasized that the widows must reach out to the officials and claim their rights. She mentioned the Prime Minister's statement, "We should empower women and combat all sources of violence against them." The widows agreed on this point and IF will coordinate with Ms. Shawqi to discuss the details of a potential event where EIWT widows can meet high level governmental officials.
- Ms. Inshad Mohammed Ali, coordinator at the Faili Kurds Association, visited the widows in Risafa, she talked to them about how to overcome their difficult situation, recognize their rights and the procedures on getting their stipends. She described her work with the widows in her

neighborhood and she offered her assistance to the EIWT widows as well. Ms. Nawal Ali Hussien, a social mentor and a widow, was also invited to meet the widows and share her experience and successes.

Basra

- IF staff in Basra along with three EIWT widows met with Shannon D. Quinn, Democracy Coordinator, Embassy of the USA, Baghdad, Iraq. IF staff gave a thorough update on IF's project activities in Basra province, including EIWT. IF described the project's achievements as well as obstacles to implementation. The US Embassy staff discussed the widows' achievements following the completion of EIWT trainings.
- Ms. Natika Namir Sheya'a visited EIWT widows in Basra. The mentoring session covered three main topics: the salary increase in the Women's Wellness Department, which distributes social welfare stipends, and the new stipend beneficiaries, role of women in society and the importance of women's education.
- Two representatives from the Family Protection Unit (FPU) to combat domestic violence in Basra, Ms. Baida Abdul Ghani, a social worker, Reem Abdul Kathem, a lawyer, visited widows in the Shat Al Arab training center. These units contain police personnel as well as lawyers, social workers and medical doctors to respond to domestic violence complaints and offer a support system for victims and their families. Ms. Abdul Ghani and Ms. Abdul Kathem briefed women on the FPU's activities and the issue of domestic violence. As a result of this briefing, two widows, Hura Abdul Samid and Nihaya Najam provided information regarding the activities and services of the unit to two battered women in the community. As a result of their efforts, the husbands of these two women met with the social worker at the Center to discuss family issues.
- IF connected widows in the Shat al-Arab Center with Fadil Yousef Moussa, a member of the District Council, who provided them with an overview of social welfare stipends and means to access them. He also described the relevant governmental committees involved in the establishment and distribution of stipends. Mr. Moussa responded to the widows' questions and concerns.
- The head of the Bar Association in Madaina , Mr. Salah Abdulhassan accompanied by Ms. Yasamine Khalid, a lawyer, and Mr. Saud Aziz, a lawyer, visited the widows in Madaina's training center to provide them with legal assistance and advise them on means to claim their rights.

Maysan

- Mentoring sessions took place in the Maysan center. IF cooperated with the Women's NGO of Maysan to conduct educational mentoring sessions. IF invited Dr. Maysoon Abdul Jabbar, Head of Women Issues, Department in Maysan to discuss the widows' stipends and address some of their pending issues.
- A successful EIWT participant and widow, Karima Qasim, spoke to the widows about her experience in establishing a business. She began by describing the need to work to provide for

her three children. After learning life skills from EIWT trainings, she decided to sell basic food goods from her home. She began to sell items to family members and neighbors and with her profits was able to expand her business and care for her children.

- Dr. Zamil Shya'a, Director General, Maysan Health, met selected EIWT widows that participated in all three EIWT training cycles. Dr. Shya'a provided valuable information on his department work and how the widows can benefit from it. Dr. Shya'a also described major health issues at the governorate level and his department's plan to overcome these issues.

Dhi Qar – Chabaysh

- IF, in collaboration with Nature Iraq organization, continues to work with Mr. Raad Thamir, head of the Subcommittee for the Social Services in the District Council in Chabaysh, who met with the widows to present general information on the stipends program and the family members adding process. He also explained the obstacles and challenges the widows might face.

Mosul – Hamdania (formerly in Ba'ashiqah)

- IF worked with the Eyzidy Solidarity Correlations in Ba'ashiqah in conducting educational mentoring sessions. Mr. Hussien Kujar, Head of Democratic Organization Center in Mosul, and Mr. Younis Ahmed, a political party official, participated in these sessions and are also working to assist widows with unresolved stipend issues.
- IF, in collaboration with the Eyzidy Solidarity Correlations in Ba'ashiqah, conducted an educational mentoring session with Mr. Faisal Jarallah Hamo, head of the Committee for Social Welfare, Hamdania District Council, Dr. Abbas Nasir Hussien, former Mosul Provincial Council member and Ms. Yusra Mohamed Rajab, head of Hamdania Committee at the Women's Social Care Department. Visitors listened to the widows as they described obstacles in accessing stipends. The visitors promised to assist the widows in overcoming their continuing issues.
- Six EIWT widows participated in a three-day program sponsored by IRD offering lectures on democracy and women's leadership. This workshop contributes to capacity building activities. The lectures took place in the Ba'ashiqah Center.
- Amna Mohammed Ali, EIWT Program Manager, visited the training center in Mosul at the Hamdaniya Organization's headquarters and met with the 40 widows enrolled in the sewing workshop. Ms. Ali asked EIWT participants to describe their reactions to lectures and training. The widows expressed their interest and the positive effect of the workshops in building their self-confidence and hope that they can better their situations.
- Life skills trainer, Najla Ali Alfit, obtained the social welfare stipend for a widow and cancer patient, Khitam Salim Shaya. Najla reached out to the Mosul Office for Social Welfare and the District Council to ensure the delivery of the stipend to Khitam, who had been suffering from a dire economic situation compounded by her failing health.

- IF, in cooperation with the Women’s Network, funded by USAID, recorded the complaints of two widows, and assisted them to organize their legal documents to present them to the Justice Project, which maintains a legal clinic focusing on women’s issues.

Status: IF completed the third cycle in Shat Al Arab (Basra), Chabaysh (Dhi Qar) and Maysan.

IF started educational mentoring sessions in seven centers. 280 widows participated in these sessions. 120 widows developed their personal action plan; 160 widows continue to work on developing their own action plans. Each widow had three individual mentoring sessions.

Impact: For the third cycle, 110 of widows out of 120 have achieved their personal goals established at the beginning the training. IF anticipates reporting on the remaining widows of cycle three in the next reporting period.

To date, 596 of widows out of 680 have achieved their personal goal for the project.

Goals identified include: Learning a vocational skill; raising their awareness and education; reintegrating into the community again; accessing social benefits; gaining experience in democracy; gaining skills in handling social, cultural and health related issues; learning inter-personal communication skills; improving family relationships; and starting a business.

Activity 2: Mentoring for economic sustainability

Target: 280 widows received vocational mentoring to enable them to begin generating income locally

Description of activities during this reporting period:

- IF conducted a group vocational mentoring session with *Tijara* coordinator in Baghdad, Mr. Saif Majid. *Tijara* is a USAID project that offers microfinance loans. Mr. Majid indicated that loans offered range from \$100-\$5000. He also specified that the applicant must be between 18-35 years old and that 15% operating costs will be deducted from the loan amount in the first three months and the rest will be deducted over 12 months. Furthermore, any cosigners must be non-police government employees. When there are 12 beneficiaries, *Tijara* will conduct a workshop on how to establish a successful project. These stringent conditions will be difficult to meet for many widows.
- IF conducted a group vocational mentoring session with *Hemam* Association in Baghdad, Mr. Adel Abd Ali reviewed the widows proposals and their budgets, specified the resources required of each project and formatted it for IF’s files. Widows’ project ideas were diverse. Some ideas included: starting a stationary business, grocery store, and a hair salon (requiring home appliances).
- As part of our close collaboration with the Red Cross, IF arranges a regular mentoring session for the widows in Madaina center with Ms. Aseel Al Hashimi, coordinator for the Red Cross’ Widow Support Program. Ms. Hashimi explains the forms and conditions the RC requires from the widows and the type of assistance offered.

Status: IF completed the third cycle in Shat Al Arab (Basra), Chabaysh (Dhi Qar) and Maysan. IF started vocational mentoring sessions in all seven centers. 280 widows participated in the sessions.

Impact:

During this reporting period 126 of job opportunities have been identified and 57 widows accepted job offers.

Since the start of the project and to date, 320 of job opportunities have been identified and 117 widows accepted job offers.

IF was able to provide the following opportunities: in Baghdad, IF was able to provide 25 opportunities for widows to generate income, 14 of them already started their first profession. In Basra, IF was able to offer 54 opportunities for widows, 33 already started their first profession. In Maysan, IF was able to provide 28 opportunities for widows, 10 of them accepted the job offers. In Chabaysh, IF was able to provide 10 opportunities for widows. In Ba'ashiqa, IF was able to provide 9 opportunities for widows. Please see Section III: Other Impact /Project Surveys.

II. Deliverables

Obj. 1

Number of educational training programs conducted in seven locations:

Target=28

Three educational training completed in this reporting period / 17 overall

Number of widows trained on citizenship, rights, life skills

Target = 1,120

120 Number this reporting period / 680 overall

Obj. 2

Number of widows receiving vocational training

target = 280

60 Number this reporting period / 414 overall

Obj. 3

Number of widows receive mentoring on personal goals

Target = 1,120

120 Number this reporting period / 680 overall

III. Other impact / success stories (not mentioned in description of implementation of project activities)

IF is pleased to report that in addition to the 70 widows that were predicted to receive EWIT vocational training, an additional 104 widows showed interest and insisted in participating in trainings (174 total trained) during the third training cycle. With the help of IF's NGO partners, local businesses, and civil society organizations, IF was able to successfully provide training for these widows without exceeding the project's approved budget for vocational training.

Baghdad:

- Widows in Karkh center were exemplary of cooperation among themselves; they garnered their scant resources to provide a blood transfusion to the daughter of a fellow widow, Nathera Kareem.
- A widow from Risafa center, Khawla Marush decided to reject a marriage proposal to her young daughter as the result of EIWT's trainings on women's freedom, which, according to Khawla, motivated her to give her young daughter the opportunity to select her own spouse.
- Four EIWT widows in Risafa started using their hairdressing training to offer services to their neighborhood. They began to generate income from their business.
- An EIWT widow, Naima Hamud, said that she has begun to use knitting skills to supplement her household income. She encouraged other widows to use their skills as a business asset.
- IF Baghdad conducted site visits to Huda Mutashar, a widow, who was able to start a hairdressing business out of her home as the result of the skills she learned in her IF vocational training. Ms. Mutashar's business is rapidly expanding and becoming well-known in her neighborhood.
- Two EIWT widows trained at the Risafa training center volunteered as health education representatives to the Ministry of Health (MoH). These widows contributed to a larger campaign to advocate for public health in their neighborhood. They will meet with an MoH representative periodically to update their information and receive training on certain skills in special workshops. They are quoted as saying, "IF opened our eyes to the active role that we can play to help our community."

Basra:

- As part of IF's outreach to the community, two engineers from the Basra Businesswomen Association, Fatima Abdul Zahra Badr and Nisrene Al-Hijaz, presented gifts to the widows at the graduation ceremony.
- EIWT widows in Basra visited a female health center, which aims to detect breast cancer at an early stage. These widows were accompanied by a number of women from their community.
- With IF's guidance, five widows received Red Cross Committee mini-grants to start their first businesses:
 1. Sajida Nouri received hairdressing equipment to start a salon out of her home.
 2. Fakhria Abdulsada received sewing equipment to start a home-based workshop.
 3. Jenan Rahman received hairdressing equipment to start a salon out of her home.
 4. Fatima Badr Muhsin received hairdressing equipment to start a salon out of her home.
 5. Mayada Habib Ahmed received sewing equipment to start a salon out of her home.

- On another round of the Red Cross mini-grants, RC has supplied seven widows in Shat Al-Arab with home appliances and/or sewing equipment to furnish their small business. These widows include Hura Abdul Samid and Nadia Abbas, Awatif Muhassan, Samia Taha Salman, Intisar Taha Salman, Iklas Tama, Selwa Mahdi. IF staff followed up with these widows to determine their progress. Hura and Nadia have expanded their successful *abaya* business and now offer a variety of items, including fabric and make-up. Awatif reports her growing customer base and the increasing demand for her items. She expressed happiness and described the enthusiasm of her family with the business' success.
- During the last round of the Red Cross mini-grants in this reporting period, five widows have received supplies from the Red Cross for the implementation of their small businesses. IF claims the highest number of applicants for Red Cross mini-grants.
 1. Hanaa Ali, Huwair, received supplies for her grocery store.
 2. Zenoba Yaqub Abdullah, Abi Khaseeb, received a sewing machine and sewing supplies to establish a workshop out of her home.
 3. Atur Sadan, Abi Khaseeb, received industrial supplies to start her business.
 4. Khayria Aziz Ali, Abi Khaseeb, received clothing and home supplies for her business.
 5. Besna Saber, Mudaina, received supplies for her grocery store.
- Asmaa Abdul Rasul, an EIWT widow, carried out sewing training and became the principal instructor. She received her first payment in exchange for her instruction.
- In order to train the maximum number of widows in vocational sessions, we have reached out to NGO and individual partners and local businesswomen for assistance. As a result, we were able to increase the number of widows trained. Furthermore, Natiqa Namir, District Council member, and two local business women contributed to transportation costs. Widows agreed among themselves to share the cost of transportation to the training centers.

Maysan:

- EIWT widow, Suaad Hameed, won a Red Cross mini-grant to start her first business. Ms. Hameed received a sewing machine and supplies to establish a workshop out of her home.
- Seven EIWT widows started their own business and for the first time, generated income through tailoring their business to the needs of their community.
- EIWT widow, Ban Ali, started her first profession as a typist at the Committee of Women & Family, Maysan Provincial Council.
- EIWT widow, Sanaa Abdulkareem, started her first profession as security personnel.

Dhi Qar:

- As a result of the educational training, EIWT widows in Chabaysh are pushing for an awareness campaign to combat violence against women spearheaded by a coalition of the government and local CSOs.
- In Chabaysh training center, widows stated that 50% of them are forced into working labor-intensive jobs, such as using reeds and papyrus to create floor mats. One widow stated, “We believe it’s a type of violence against women. We need the support to get fair education and employment opportunities so we are not forced to work under such conditions.”

Mosul:

- As a result of the advocacy of IF and the Eyzidy Solidarity Correlations, Mr. Hussien Kujer, head of the Democratic Organization in Mosul, donated three sewing machines to the widows.
- Hanaa Ishaq Boutrus lost the property rights to her husband’s land following his death leaving her with no income to provide for her two children. IF connected Hanaa with the legal resources of a partner organization that provides legal counseling to the poor and needy. Hanaa reported in an IF site visit to Mosul that she “wants to build confidence in herself and ensure that her voice is heard.”
- A group of widows, inspired by a series of lectures they attended as part of IF’s workshops on the rights of women and the power of unions and NGOs, decided to start their own civil society organization. IF will assist the women in establishing their CSO.

GOI Benefits:

Due to the mentoring sessions that IF and partners provide, 280 widows were informed on how to obtain their stipends, five received their government benefits.

Project Surveys:

During this reporting period, IF conducted end of cycle three evaluations in three centers, Shat Al Arab (Basra), Chabaysh (Dhi Qar), and Maysan, to measure the success of several key project areas as outlined in the EIWT grant. IF is still compiling survey questions for activities of cycle three the results of which will be included in the next progress report.

Conduct education on citizenship, women's rights to diverse Iraqi widows in seven locations throughout Iraq

96% of the widows in cycle three of EIWT believed that they had more knowledge on women's rights under the Iraqi Constitution and the International Declarations, 93% had more knowledge on democracy, and 96% had more knowledge on citizenship responsibilities & rights. 96% of the widows in the cycle three of EIWT believed that they had enhanced civic empowerment, expanded range of choices and increased their participation in the public sphere.

Conduct education training component on life skills education, including family health and well-being, interpersonal relations, and coping and life skills

97% of the widows believed that they are more knowledgeable in family health and hygiene, preventative care, women's health, parenting, and legal services for women and children. 97% of the widows believed that they are more knowledgeable in interpersonal skills, intra-family relations, cooperation and teamwork, confidence-building, coping and self-management skills and coping with the needs of their families.

Hold multiple vocational skills training programs in seven locations throughout Iraq

90% of the widows believed that they enhanced their vocational skills. 89% of the widows believed that they increased knowledge in the one of the following vocational skills: traditional sewing, computer and hairdressing skills.

Conduct educational component mentoring

92% of the widows completed cycle three in three centers believed that they achieved their personal goal. 100% of the widows completed the training in cycle three believed they have better access to GOI benefits.

IV. Framework Indicators

Element 2.4: Civil Society

Number of people who have completed USG assisted civic education programs

Target: 1,120 from seven training locations

Number receiving training during this reporting period: 280

Total number who have received training as a result of this project: 840

Number of civil society organizations using USG assistance to improve internal organizational capacity

Target: 3 NGO partners

Number during reporting period: 3

Total number assisted: 3

V. Other

Meetings / Workshops / Other Events:

- Baghdad: On October 6, IF celebrated the graduation of the second cycle of EIWT widows in the Cultural Hall of the Ministry of Oil. Approximately 100 guests attended including: Ms. Khawla Ta'i, Director, Ministry of State for Women's Affairs, Ayman Saleh Mumaez, Member, Finance Ministry, Mohammed Al-Rubeiy, Member, Provincial Council and Head, Strategic Planning Committee, and Ms. Basima Abdul Ameer Al Sa'ady, Member, Provincial Council and Head, Social Welfare Committee. The ceremony was well-covered by members of the media. Prominent civil society leaders were also in attendance. The ceremony began with speeches by the Iraq Foundation and the Minister of State for Women's Affairs, who emphasized the need to assist Iraqi widows and orphans. Mohammed Al-Rubeiy echoed these sentiments and added the need for laws that apply the provisions of the Iraqi constitution and aim to empower Iraqi widows to live with dignity. Ms.

Basima Abdul Ameer Al Sa'ady spoke on a number of plans at the provincial level to assist the economic situation of widows. Ayman Saleh Mumaez described IF's work an important step in working to empower Iraqi widows to foster a sense of independence. Following the distribution of diplomas to graduates, IF awarded certificates of achievement to some widows. The General Directorate of Vocational Education, A'ain Institute and local council members distributed gifts.

- Basra: On November 2, IF held a graduation ceremony for Basra's two centers (Abu Al Khaseeb & Madina). This event was attended by Mr. Jaafar Mohammed Baqr, head of the Religious Committee, Basra Provincial Council, Major General Hassan Al Maiahi, Head, Family Protection unit, Mr. Faroq Qaemaqchi, Turkish consulate delegation in Basra, Mr. Abdulrazaq Abdulhakeem, head of NGO department in Basra and Mr. Qasim Al Maliki, Representative, Security Committee, Basra Provincial Council. The event was well covered by the media. Sewing machines and blenders were distributed to the widows as gifts for their participation.
- Mosul: On November 25, IF celebrated the graduation of the second cycle of widows from the Ba'ashiqqa Center in cooperation with the Ezidy Solidarity Correlation. The ceremony was held at the Correlation's main hall. Organizations represented included: the Center of Democratic Organizations, Committee of National Unity of Kurdistan, Badr Organization, High Council, and Ministry of State for Women's Affairs, Office of Azidi Affairs, Ninawa Network of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Iraqi Council for Peace and Solidarity, Organization of Journalists in Kurdistan. The ceremony was well-attended by members of the media.

i. Update on Expenditures during the quarter:

We are on track for EIWT expenses. IF received complaints regarding the shortage of the transportation fees in some of the centers. IF will monitor these complaints and report in the next progress report period.

VI. Challenges, Remedial Actions, Staff Changes:

Challenges / Remedial Actions:

- EIWT cycle three witnessed several major obstacles implementation of the program including the observance of several religious occasions as well as the deterioration of the security situation. Road closures due to high intensity of pilgrims and following bombings or explosions made transportation to workshops very difficult for many widows.
 - November 5-11: *Eid* Observance
 - December 2-9: IF's activities were delayed due to observance of *Muharram*
 - December 11: Officers at Saidya checkpoint were all killed in the morning, the same area of our Karkh center in Baghdad, prohibiting our staff and widows from reaching the training location.

- December 22: An explosion in Baghdad resulted in the closure of many areas. One widow reported that she attempted to travel to the training site in Sayidia but was unable to enter.
- Family circumstances sometimes hinder the success of the project as some family members are wary of the widows attending workshops. IF addresses these issues through home visits with family members and honest discussion regarding the goal and procedures of the program. One widow, Mowha Jibar described being kicked out of her home, which she shared with her daughter and son-in-law, after her son-in-law discovered she was attending IF's workshops. IF met with the son-in-law to clarify the goal of the program to teach widows economic self-sufficiency and provide them with a valuable set of skills to obtain employment. As a result of IF's activism for our widows, Mowha was allowed to return to the workshop and to her home.
- The condition and regulation for obtaining microloan from *Tijara* and UNIDO are difficult for the widows to meet. *Tijara* requirements include providing government official to co-signer and 15% interest rate, which will be deducted out of the loan upon approval. There is also no grace period on the loan and the monthly payment starts immediately after the loan is approved. Finally, the loan needs to be repaid in 12 months. Other microloan sources offer even more difficult conditions.
- The third cycle was challenging in terms of obtaining employment opportunities for the widows due to generally high levels of unemployment resulting from a weak national economy and security concerns as well as discriminatory regulations set by the Iraqi Government in terms of gender.
- Red Cross mini- grants are only available to certain category of widows. Therefore, not all EIWT widows are eligible for RCC grants.
- IF found it challenging to recruit enough number of widows in the Abu Al Khaseeb center for cycle three. IF selected an alternative of Shat Al Arab center. IF in collaboration with the Ezyidi Solidarity Correlation changed the Ba'ashiqqa center to Hamdania Qada'a at Comita NGO headquarters. IF was able to find all requirements to proceed with cycle three in the new location.

Staffing:

- IF had new structure for the EIWT management. Ms. Zainab Al Fartoosi will manage the overall project with direct emphasis on the southern centers assisted by Ms. Zuhor Al Hattab. Ms. Zainab Al Etabi will be the project officer for the Baghdad centers and Mosul and will be assisted by the new program assistant, Wissal Ghazi.