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**Empowering Iraqi Widows to Thrive project (EIWT)
Progress Report
July 1, 2011 – September 30, 2011**

Executive Summary:

During this reporting period, the Iraq Foundation (IF) successfully accomplished the 2nd training cycle and held graduation ceremonies to honor the widows' achievements in Maysan, and Chabaysh (Dhi Qar province) . These ceremonies received high attention from the local government councils, selected figures from the Council of Representative (CoR), tribal and civil leaders. The ceremonies were well covered by the local and national media.

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.

During this reporting period, IF participated in "Supporting and Defending the Rights of Widows in Iraq" conference, hosted by Relief International and under the auspices of the Speaker of the Iraqi Council of Representatives.

As part of IF's efforts to find job opportunities for EIWT widows, IF staff along with the Principal of the Saydia Vocational school in Karkh – Baghdad Province - and a number of selected widows visited Mr. Yonadime Kanna, head of labor and social affairs committee at the CoR and Sheikh Hussien Al Yaseen, clerk of Al Yaseen Musk in Kadhumya. Also, IF staff in Basra conducted meetings with the Minister of Women (MOW) Ibtihal Kasid Al Zaidy, CoR member Jenan Bresam, Basra Provincial Council (BPC) women members and the Business Women Association in Basra. The other meeting was with Officers of the DRL, US Embassy and US Consulate in Basra.

IF was able to find 91 job opportunities to EIWT widows, where 24 widows accepted job offers. In addition, IF assisted 8 widows to receive their Social Services stipends. 79 widows are receiving vocational training in all 4 centers of cycle 3.

IF EIWT team in Baghdad and Basra continued to monitor and supervise IF's partner NGOs in Mosul, Maysan and Dhi Qar through visits, emails and phone call to ensure the implementation of the project according to EIWT's proposal objectives.

Also during this reporting period, IF began the project's 3rd training cycle in 4 centers, which includes two centers in Basra province (Shat Al Arab and Al Madina), one center in Maysan province and one center in Dhi Qar province (Chibayish). Contracts & MOUs been signed with Trainers, MOH, partner NGOs and local centers. Surveys been distributed and filled by the widows in each center and been sent to the expert for evaluation. IF also completed the recruitment of the widows and prepared all

requirements for the 3rd cycle for Baghdad's two centers (Karkh & Rusafa) and Ba'ashiq'a's – Mosul - center.

Addendums include:

- EIWT activities - Cycle 2 – All training location
http://www.iraqfoundation.org/projects_new/EIWT/cycle2-Update-July2011.html
EIWT completes Cycle 2
http://www.iraqfoundation.org/projects_new/EIWT/cycle2-Complete-Aug2011.html
- Graduation pictures - Cycle 2
http://www.iraqfoundation.org/projects_new/EIWT/cycle2-Graduation-Sept2011.html
- Success story: EIWT Widows Awarded Micro Grants
http://www.iraqfoundation.org/projects_new/EIWT/SuccessStory-Maysan-Sept2011.html
- Success story: Sewing Machines donated to help Maysan Center widows
http://www.iraqfoundation.org/projects_new/EIWT/SuccessStory-Maysan-Sept2011-sewing.html
- EIWT Cycle 2 & 3 – Training Update
http://www.iraqfoundation.org/projects_new/EIWT/cycle2-3-Update-Sept2011.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; and improve the quality of life by improving family health and family well-being, interpersonal relations, and coping capacities

Activities to support this objective:

Activity 1: Conduct Education on Citizenship, women's rights to diverse Iraqi widows in 7 locations throughout Iraq

Target:

- a) 28 Educational Training Programs in 7 locations
- b) 1,120 widows trained over the course of 4 training cycles on citizenship and women's rights, responsibilities and civic participation

Description of Activity during this reporting period:

In order to achieve the objective of this activity, IF continue to use IF's Democracy and Women's Rights curriculum that was proven to be extremely successful and useful. Our well trained staff and partner NGO continue to engage the widows in the training activities. IF completed the 2nd cycle on September

3rd, 2011, in all 7 training centers. In total, 280 widows completed the training program's educational component.

Details of the 3rd training cycle in all 7 training centers follows:

- Baghdad: During this reporting period IF staff completed the recruitment process for the widows and is planning to start the 3rd cycle in both centers on the first week of October.
- Basra: On September 17, 2011, IF started the training in Shat Al Arab at Al Amwaj Foundation for Human Rights meeting hall. On September 20, 2011 the training started in Al Madina at Madina training Center. 40 widows participated in each center
- Maysan: On September 17, 2011, IF in collaboration with the Woman Organization in Maysan started the training at the partner organization headquarter. 40 widows participated in the training.
- Dhi Qar: On September 20, 2011, IF in collaboration with Nature Iraq Organization in Chabaysh, started the training at al Shati' Hall. 40 widows participated in the training.
- Mosul: During this reporting period IF staff completed the recruitment process for the widows and is planning to start the 3rd cycle in the third week of October.

Status: IF completed the 2nd cycle on September 3rd, 2011 and started the 3rd cycle on September 17th, 2011. We anticipate reporting the end of the cycle on the next progress report on end of December.

Educational training on citizenship, women's rights is being covered in all 4 locations as part of cycle 3. 40 widows participated in each center, for a total of 160 widows as part of the 3rd cycle during this reporting period.

Impact: The Educational training had a great impact on changing the lifestyle of the widows by becoming more knowledgeable about their rights. For example, the widows demanded to know more about the Personal Status law and the laws that regulate inheritance in order to know their rights of how to retain their residence, often contested by their late-husband's family. They know now that they have the option to take their claims to the legal channels whenever is needed. Another example, the widows became aware that discriminations takes place not only on the family level but also on the private and state level, when they learned that Baghdad Municipality only offers 4% of its job opportunities for women and the Ministry of Education offers only 10% of its employment for women, an EIWT widows stated *"It's a clear discrimination against women and it's a violation to the constitution and the international declaration"*.

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

Target:

a) 28 Educational Training Programs in 7 locations

b) 1,120 widows trained on life skills education, including family health and well-being, interpersonal relations, and coping.

Description of Activity 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, and designed by experts and approved by IF. The training covered interpersonal skills, intra-family relations, cooperation and team work, confidence-building skills and coping, and self management skills. The training was delivered by IF's experienced EIWT staff and well-trained partners.

The family health and family-wellbeing 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 women health which included element on breast care and parenting. The training was delivered in 4 locations by MoH representatives.

Status: IF completed the 2nd cycle on September 3rd, 2011 and started the 3rd cycle on September 17th, 2011. We anticipate reporting the end of the cycle on the next progress report on end of December.

280 widows completed cycle 2 life skills training during this period. IF started cycle 3 life skills training in the 4 centers mentioned above. 40 widows participated in each center for a total of 160 widows.

Impact: As the base line surveys and discussion with the widow's participants indicated that the widows were completely ignorant about many life skills concepts. Their interpersonal communications skills were lacking, which resulted in numerous problems with their families and others as well as led to a sense of frustration and hopelessness in the widows themselves.

As a result of the life skills component, IF noticed a great change in attitude and improved interpersonal communications skills ability to work together effectively. This new-found clarity is demonstrated through some of the widows' quotations, *"These skills made us more organized and focused; we were able to express alternative positions, tackle real life issues, and explore different options on how to handle our problems"*.

This training led to educate the widows on many health-related issues and to raise their awareness. For example, the widows in Maysan continued to visit the health department on regular basis for breast cancer screening and detections.

Impact of the above objective is well-demonstrated on 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 7 locations throughout Iraq*

Target:

- a) 280 widows receive vocational skills training
- b) Total of 28 vocational training programs launched in 5 governorates (7 training locations)

Description of Activity during this reporting period:

IF started delivering the vocational training, which varied from center to the other according to the needs of the widows and the market aspects. The vocational training included English language (for the first time during this reporting period), computer skills, hairdressing, and traditional sewing. The EIWT project originally planned to train 10 widows from each center; however, due to demand from the widows, each center was able to accommodate more widows than originally planned for. These additions thankfully resulted in no additional costs, thanks in great part to the communities and trainers that committed to take on the training of the additional widows at no charge to IF or our partners. In addition to the 40 widows approved by EIWT proposal 39 more widows requested and insisted to participate in the vocational training during this period. A total of 79 widows are receiving vocational training in cycle 3.

For cycle 2, the vocational training ended on September 3, 2011 in all training centers. A total of 154 completed vocational training during that cycle (participant breakdown by center in previous quarterly report).

Cycle 3 breakdown for the vocational trainings is outlined below:

- Baghdad
 - IF will start Cycle 3 the first week of October.
- Basra
 - 29 widows started vocational trainings in Al Madina in the following trades:
 - 25 Traditional sewing at Al Madina training Center.
 - 4 Computer skills at Al Madina training Center.
 - 20 widows, started vocational trainings in Shat Al Arab in the following trades:
 - 15 Traditional sewing at Al Amwaj NGO.
 - 5 English Language & Computer skills at Al Amwaj NGO.
- Maysan
 - 20 widows started vocational trainings on Traditional sewing at Woman Org, training center
- Dhi Qar
 - 10 widows started the vocational trainings on Traditional sewing
- Mosul
 - The 3rd cycle will start third week of October.

Status: IF completed the 2nd cycle on September 3rd, 2011 and started the 3rd cycle on September 17th, 2011. We anticipate reporting the end of the cycle on the next progress report on end of December. IF started the Vocational skills training in 4 centers. 79 widows participated. Vocational training will begin in the remaining 3 centers early in the next reporting period.

Impact: IF noticed that the widows were proud of the vocational skill training; they do believe it's hard to get a job but they knew it's a step towards finding one and expanding their options. For example, widow Anhar Mohammed Saeed, who has a bachelor degree, is taking the computer skills training because this training along with her education will widen her opportunities. Another widow, who has 8 daughters said "*computer training is still new to our community and I believe I will be able to find a job with that skill*". Due to the recent success of several widows in winning small grants from international

fundress, IF started a proposal writing session during vocational training periods to assist other widows in applying for similar grants.

Impact in terms of employment, job opportunities and other income generating opportunities are detailed in Objective 3, Activity 2 Vocational Mentoring Impact.

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 Activity 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 session
- Group mentoring
- Pier to pier

Examples mentoring activities that IF conducted the following:

Baghdad

- Widows who were successful in obtaining social benefits provided pier-to-pier mentoring to EIWT widows and shared their experience on how they were able to obtain stipends and adding their children. The positive engagement among the widows in the course of the training helped other widows to follow up their pending applications.
- As part of the mentoring session, IF was able to refer widow Suhad Majeed to seek legal advice to reclaim a land that was give to her husband and then was taken back after his death. The matter is still in progress.
- Widow Sahar Abbas Mohammed, a successful widow from the ^{1st} cycle who is working now as a hairdresser, was invited to meet the widows and share her experience and successes.
- Widow Shaymaa Majeed Ali, hairdresser trainer, was invited to talk about her work experience and how was she able to overcome all the obstacles to thrive and open her own beauty center.

Basra

- Mr. Abdulraheem Al Johar, head of the district council in Mdaina, had an open discussion to address widows' problems, such as assistance in finding job opportunities for their grown up children. Mr. Al Johar informed the widows that some of the mega petrol companies will be present in the area soon which will give the local residents the priority with jobs. Mr. Al-Johar addressed the widows concern in receiving electricity by promising to contact several generator owners in the area for that matter.

- Ms. Saleema Nofi, the head of the women committee at the social service office, helped the widows to solve some of their stipends problems; she was able to help 3 widows retain their stipends.
- IF staff hold a group mentoring session to explain the Marla Project and explore the conditions for eligibility. Several case files were prepared and submitted to the Bahjat Al Fuad center for the necessary approvals.
- IF Basra is in direct contact with Ms. Linda Mahdi Al Bahadily, an official at the social care program who agreed on full cooperation to assist new applicant for social stipend to follow up on their cases for approval as soon as the council of ministers release the new coverage phase. IF Basra is on regular contact with Ms. Linda to get updates on that program which will cover widows in Basra, Maysan, Dhi Qar and Muthana provinces.

Maysan

- Ms. Fatima Jasim Mohammed, Maysan Provincial Council member, visited the widows and had a great speech on widows' participation in these trainings to raise their awareness and integrate widows to their local community. She shared her experience participating in the public awareness, which led her to be elected to the PC. Ms. Mohammed also offered several resources to help the widows in their struggle to find income generating opportunities.
- Ms. Lina Radhi, a lawyer specialized in Personal Status Law, is working pro-bono with one of the participating widow to obtain her children custody under the law from her husband family who threatened to take her children. This case is now going to court.

Dhi Qar – Chabaysh

- Mr. Raad Thamir, head of the subcommittee for the Social Services in the District Council in Chabaysh, 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 in the process

Mosul – Ba'ashiq

- Mr. Hussien Kujr, head of the Democracy center in Mosul, met with the widows to help them finalize their problems with the social service. He was able to help 3 widows to access social benefits.

Status: IF completed the 2nd cycle on September 3rd, 2011 and started the 3rd cycle on September 17th, 2011. We anticipate reporting the end of the cycle on the next progress report on end of December.

IF started the mentoring in 4 centers. 160 widows participated. 160 widows were able to develop a personal action plan; each widow will have 3 individual mentoring sessions to achieve their goals.

Impact: For the 2nd cycle, 240 of widows out of 280 have achieved the goals they set for themselves when beginning the training.

To date, 486 of widows out of 560 have achieved their personal goal for the project

Goals identified include:

- Learning a vocational skill

- Raising their awareness and education
- Getting a job
- Get reintegrated into the community again
- Accessing the social benefits
- Gain experience in democracy and legal culture
- Gain skills in handling social, cultural and health related issues
- Communication and create new friends
- Improving the relationship with the family
- Starting a business

Activity 2: Mentoring for economic sustainability

Target: 280 widows receive vocational mentoring to enable them to access locally available income generating opportunities

Description of Activity during this reporting period:

- IF's EIWT staff and our NGO partner in Ba'ashiqah met with a representative of the Ninawa PRT and UNIDO, Mr. Mohsin Shahan to discuss opportunities of microloans for EIWT widows in Ba'ashiqah. Mr. Shahan explained the conditions for eligibility for UNIDO's microloans. Each micro loan recipient is required to have a co-signer. In addition he stated that the interest rate for these loans is 15% with short payback period
- IF Basra met with the Minister of Women (MOW) Ibtihal Kasid Al Zaidy, CoR Jenan Bresam, Basra Provincial Council (BPC) women members including Ms. Natika Shiya'a, who is a great advocate for women's rights and a supporter to IF's work with widows. Also present at the meeting was the Business Women Association in Basra. IF staff with support from Ms. Shiya'a, BPC member, discussed with the MOW the status of EIWT widows proposals submitted to Ministry of Women, as well as the support of the Ministry for Women to help the widows to find employment and job opportunities.
- IF Basra staff Ms. Zainab Al-Fartousi and Ms. Zouhur Zaidan met with members of the US Embassy
 - Dianna M. James, DRL Grant Officer
 - Richard Hanrahan, Political Officer- United States Embassy Baghdad
 - John F. McNamara, Democracy Advisor-- United States Embassy Baghdad
 - Tim Davis, Political Chief – Consulate General Basra

IF staff gave a thorough update on IF's project activities in Basra province including EIWT. IF described the achievements and the challenges of EIWT. IF and the US Embassy staff discussed the possibilities of women participation in the security forces. IF explained that there is interest from women in Basra city to join the armed forces and the police force. IF explained that there is one woman in Basra city who joined the police force as a traffic officer. In addition, IF staff presented

some of the EIWT widows' products to the US Embassy staff as gifts, which impressed them with the quality of the products.

- IF Basra visited the widows in Maysan, and conducted a group mentoring to the widows on the Ministry of women's projects, how to choose the right project that reflects the need of the community in the project. IF advised the widows those projects with group participation and low cost will have more chances to be realized than individual high cost projects.
- IF Basra, conducted a mentoring session on the micro-finance opportunities with the Housing Foundation, Izdharuna Foundation and Trade Organization. IF staff offered the widows who were interested to a follow up meeting with the representative of Housing Foundation in Mdaina.
- IF Basra conducted 2 meeting for the 1st, 2nd & 3rd cycle's widows in Basra (one at Abu Al Khaseeb center and the other at Al Mdaina center) with the Red Cross Committee (RCC) representative Ms. Aseel Al- Hashimi. IF staff assisted the widows to fill out RCC forms and to discuss the information with the RCC representative, who stated clearly that RCC grant is only available for widows whom their husbands were killed due to violence or military actions. Ms. Al-Hashimi also stated that each widow who will receive a grant will be monitored and evaluated for 6 months. The monitoring will in the of visit from RCC members who in some cases will men or non-Iraqis. This created another challenge for the widows as their family might object or this might subject them to attacks by the extremists. Despite of this challenge, 21 proposals were submitted to the RCC in Basra.
- On August 11th, IF staff, Principal of the Saydia Vocational school in Karkh and 4 of EIWT widows met with MP Yonadime Kanna, head of labor and social affairs committee at the CoR. EIWT goal and objectives were explained to Mr. Kanna and he offered the committee support for the widows and that the committee will coordinate with the Ministry of Labor to include them among their data to provide them with grants and job opportunities. Mr. Kanna invited IF to be part of the CoR sessions hearings, so that IF will be updated on all recent CoR activities. IF welcomed the idea and informed Mr. Kanna to include IF among the NGO lists. IF sent the widows information to the committee.
- On September 21st IF had a follow up meeting with MP Mr. Salih Al Asady, deputy president of the labor and social affairs committee, and MP Mr. Ali Kurdi Al Hussieni, a member in the committee to discuss developments of finding job opportunities for the widows. The members assured IF that the widows are listed in the committee's data and they will be contacted whenever there is an opportunity.
- On the 21st September, IF Baghdad met with MP Ms. Shafa'a Al Nuaimy, a member of the Women, Family and Childhood committee in the CoR, IF briefed the CoR member on EIWT activities and asked for assistance in finding job opportunities for the widows. The CoR member asked for the documents for the widows especially the ones with University degrees and she promised to do her best.
- On August 10th, IF staff visited Shiekh Hussien Al Yaseen, clerck of Al Yaseen Musk in Kadhumya along with the Principal of the Saydia Vocational school in Karkh and 9 of EIWT widows. That meeting was to seek his assistance in finding job opportunities for EIWT widows.
- IF participated in "Supporting and Defending the Rights of Widows in Iraq" conference, hosted by Relief International and under the auspices of the Speaker of the Iraqi Council of Representatives, IF joint the activities of the legislative committee in that conference and shared ideas based on the experience from EIWT and suggested possible cooperation with RI on possible opportunities for the Iraqi widows and to work together on legislating laws that supports widows. As a direct outcome of the conference a network was established under "Kefayat Al Aramil" network.
- As part of IF outreach initiatives to the CoR and to allow the widows to meet the elected , executive officials and clerks to advocate their rights. IF send meeting requests to Ms. Intisar Al Jiboury, head

of women, family and child committee, Ms. Wihda Al Jumaily, Mr. Saleem Al Jibory, Minister of Women (MOW) Ibtihal Kasid Al Zaidy and Ayatu Allah Hussien Al Saidr

- IF Baghdad and in coordination with Umtona NGO was able to provide opportunities for the widows to buy sewing machines in a reduced monthly payments.
- IF Basra conducted 3 meetings with The Business Women Association to seek job opportunities to the widows as well as gratitude gifts for the graduated widows. The BWA promised to forward any job opportunity for EIWT widows. IF submitted widows lists and documents to add them to the BWA data for any future opportunity. Also three business women donated gratitude gifts to the widows.

Status: IF completed the 2nd cycle on September 3rd, 2011 and started the 3rd cycle on September 17th, 2011. We anticipate reporting the end of the cycle on the next progress report on end of December.

IF started the vocational mentoring in 4 centers. 160 widows participated. 160 widows were able to develop a personal action plan; each widow will have 3 individual mentoring sessions to achieve their goals.

Impact:

During this reporting period, 91 of job opportunities have been identified and 24 widows accepted job offers.

Since the start of the project and to date, 194 of job opportunities have been identified and 60 widows accepted job offers.

- IF was able to provide the following opportunities; in Baghdad, 4 widows will start working on nursery and child care. IF also coordinated with the women, child and family affairs committee in the CoR to appoint 5 widows in governmental jobs. IF helped the widows to submit 12 proposals to the labor and social affairs committee in the CoR that will coordinate with the Ministry of labor to grant these projects. One of the widows started a hairdressing profession at her house and another widow was selected by the hair dressing trainer to be her assistant. More than 27 job opportunities were offered to the widows. In Basra, IF was able to offer 47 job opportunities, 37 mini grants in cooperation with the Red Cross, 3 administrative work and 7 starting their own business. In Maysan, IF was able to provide 49 job opportunities, 35 mini grants in cooperation with the Red Cross, 2 administrative work and 12 starting their own business. In Chabaysh, 6 widows started their first profession as tailors and 36 mini grants in cooperation with the Red Cross. More than 42 job opportunities were offered to the widows. In Ba'ashiq, 4 widows started their first hairdressing saloon, 2 widows started their sewing profession one of them is working in a major store and the other started the business out of her house. 3 widows after the completion of the computer training, decide to go back to school to finish their education. They were offered job opportunities at the district council but the education was an obstacle. Our NGO partner offered them a grant to complete their education and widen their opportunities. More than 29 job opportunities were offered to the widows

II. Deliverables

Obj. 1

Number of educational training programs conducted in 7 locations:

Target=28

7 educational training completed in this reporting period / 14 overall

Number of widows trained on citizenship, rights, life skills

Target = 1,120

280 Number this reporting period / 560 overall

Obj. 2

Number of widows receiving vocational training

target = 280

79 Number this reporting period / 354

Obj. 3

Number of widows receive mentoring on personal goals

Target = 1,120

160 Number this reporting period / 560

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 covered by EWIT vocational training a total of 84 other widows showed interest and insisted in participating in the vocational training (154 total) during the 2nd 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:

- 2 EIWT widows trained at Karkh center started a beauty salon business.
- EIWT mentoring made the widows self-confident and focused on the problems and issues that they face. The widows became aware that their rights under the constitution lacked the legal framework that put these legislations in power. The widows became aware that their late husbands' families have no right to take their children away from them.
- Widow Faiza Mohammed Ali - during the vocational training - started her profession as a hairdresser out of her house. She informed her customers that she is using the skills that she is acquiring from the special EIWT vocational training.
- IF's EIWT hairdressing trainer at Karkh center hired one of EIWT's widows who administered high qualifications and skills as an assistant in her business.
- EIWT vocational training enhanced the widows' expectations and self-esteem: *" We don't want to surrender to our destiny, we would like to go out of our houses and explore our options, we highly suggest adding trainings in English language and driving lessons we believe we will expand our opportunities if we had these skills".*
- In a show of sisterhood and solidarity, widow Sana'a Abbas, who completed her hairdressing vocational training successfully offered her services to other widows for free, especially that many couldn't afford to pay for such services.
- One of the widows suggested that the widows organize a fundraising event to help each other establish their first project.

- With the help of IF, one of the widows hired an attorney to stand against her husband family whom evacuated her from her house by force. This case is now in court.

Basra:

- IF have noticed significant changes in the personal behavior of the graduated widows. The widows started to have hope and ambition which was reflected even the way they started to dress and take care of their appearance. The widows started discussing ways to secure enough resources among themselves to start their own professional projects. They started sharing their hopes ideas with their families, who in turn encouraged them to move forward. This is a significant change from before, as widows were bound by the negative perception of their communities and families. EIWT widows started to have the courage to identify their rights in all aspects of life.
- Widows in Abu Al Khaseeb center, continued to meet after the completion of the 2nd cycle. They are now members of Al Klm Al Taib Correlation. They started to convene once a week to discuss their daily life issues and to advice each other. They even brought their daughters to the meetings.

Maysan:

- 3 widows were able to get the Red Cross committee grants to start their first business and as follows:
 - The first awarded widow Suad Salih Jbarah who supports a family of four, was able to get a grant and she is selling house appliances
 - The second awarded widow Widad Saleem Ghadeer who supports a family of five, was able to open her small Market store out of her house to sell clothes and house appliances.
 - The third awarded widow Zuhra Juhi A'dhaib who also supports a family of four, was able to get a grant and she has started her ready food industry business
- IF's partner in Maysan, The Women NGO was able to provide the widows through generous charity in Maysan 20 sewing machine, to support them and allow them to start their own businesses out of their houses.
- As part of our educational mentoring sessions, the widows in Maysan expressed their wishes for EIWT training to continue for a longer period, because they became more confident and aware of their rights. Because of EIWT training the widows started to reconsider their options in daily life issues, such as their voting rights, the right for their daughters' education, and their rights to peaceful demonstration to advocate for women' rights in general and widows' rights in particular.

Dhi Qar

- Six widows were able to start tailoring business their houses. They are receiving high attention in their neighborhood, and were able to generate income.

Mosul

- In coordination between the Yazidi Solidarity Correlation in Ba'ashiq and Mr. Hussien Kujer, head of the democratic organization in Mosul, participants Bushra Kamil, Nafla Hamid and Aziza Mohammed start receiving stipends from the social services.
- 3 widows after the completion of the computer training, decide to go back to school to finish their education. They were offered job opportunities at the district council but the education

was an obstacle. Our NGO partner offered them a grant to complete their education and widen their opportunities.

- 4 EIWT widows trained at Ba'ashiqa center started a beauty salon business.
- 2 EIWT widows trained at Ba'ashiqa center started sewing profession, one out of her house and the other is working with a huge store in Burtilla.

GOI Benefits:

Due to the mentoring sessions that IF and partners provide, 280 Widows were informed on how to obtain their stipends, 8 received their government benefits.

Project Surveys:

During this reporting period, IF conducted end of cycle 2 evaluations in order to measure the success of several key project areas in the EIWT grant. IF is still compiling survey questions for the beginning activities of cycle 3 which results will be included in the next progress report.

Conduct Education on Citizenship, women's rights to diverse Iraqi widows in 7 locations throughout Iraq

IF is pleased to report that:

89% of the widows in the 2nd cycle of EIWT believed that they had more knowledge on women's rights under the Iraq constitution and the International Declarations, 95% had more knowledge on democracy, and 93% had more knowledge on Citizenship responsibilities & rights.

90% of the widows in the 2nd cycle of EIWT believed that they had enhanced the 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

93% of the widows believed that they are more knowledgeable in family health and hygiene, preventative care, women's health, parenting, legal services for women and children,

90% 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 7 locations throughout Iraq

84% of the widows believed that they enhanced vocational skills.

100% 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

85% of the widows believed that they achieved their personal goal

IV. Framework Indicators

Element 2.4: Civil Society

Number of people who have completed USG assisted civic education programs

Target: 1,120 from 7 training locations

Number receiving training during this reporting period: 280

Total number who have received training as a result of this project: 560

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:

i. Graduation Ceremonies

- In Baghdad, during this reporting period, this activity was not conducted
- In Basra, during this reporting period, this activity was not conducted.
- Maysan: the graduation ceremony was conducted in the Woman NGO HQ. The attendees included: Ms. Muntaha Hussien & Ms. Fatima Jasim Mohammed, Maysan Provincial council members, Ms. Maysoon Abdul Jabbar, Head of Women care department, and Dr. Khalid Al Zubaidy, Dean of Al Imam Al Sadiq University. Both Provincial Council members have praised IF' work. Ms. Fatima said, " *I think IF is the first organization that brought this kind of training to the province especially the life skills and the vocational training.*" Ms. Muntaha urged IF and the Woman NGO to keep up the hard work as the province need a lot of efforts to raise the awareness of its people and stressed on the role of civil society to develop the communities. The graduation event was covered by Al Masar Satellite channel, Maysan Province media and Baghdad newspaper.
- Dhi Qar: the graduation ceremony was conducted in the Nature Iraq NGO HQ. Among the attendees were Mr. Raad Thamir, member of the district council, and Mr. Ya'arub Qasim, a tribal figure in Al Qada'a. This ceremony was covered by Al Fayhaa satellite channel which conduct interviews with the NGO members, widows and the officials. They all expressed their gratefulness to IF for all the effort for the widows and encouraged IF to continue the great work in AL Qada.
- Mosul: During this reporting period, this activity was not conducted

ii. Update on Expenditures during the quarter:

We are on track for EIWT expenses. IF received complaints about 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:

- 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, and the loan needs to be fulfilled in 12 months. Other microloan sources offer less favorable conditions and are even more difficult for widows to meet.
- Intimidation and control by the late husbands' families are among the challenges the widows are facing on a continuous basis. Through EIWT mentoring the widows were advised on how to handle the situation and when to use legal assistance.
- The second cycle was more challenging in terms of finding jobs for the widows due to a general lack of job opportunities (weak general economy) as well as discriminatory regulations set by the Iraqi Government in terms of gender and who is eligible for martyr benefits.
- Rural areas like Chabaysh, Madina have no operating factories since 2003. They also lack Mega markets or malls. Even the government departments can only employ small numbers of workers. These factors make finding employment opportunities in these areas extremely challenging. IF is encouraging the widows to start their private businesses according to the skills acquired by EIWT programs.
- RCC grants are only available to certain categories of widows. Therefore, not all EIWT widows are eligible for RCC grants.
- For cycle 3 IF found it challenging to recruit enough number of widows in Abu Al Khaseeb center, therefore, IF selected an alternative of Shat Al Arab center and was able to recruit the required number of widows for the training.
- The hot summer weather, lack of electricity, and occasion of the holy month of Ramadan were challenges for IF EIWT staff and widows. IF made the training schedule flexible and provided to its best ability electricity from mobile generators which allowed the training to go on schedule.

- Decision based on sectarian bases – especially among government officials and departments - are a challenge to IF EIWT team in finding employment opportunities for the widows as well as accessing social service benefits. IF EIWT team is trying to overcome this challenge by reaching out to wider resources.

- IF was surprised and disappointed with the lack of interest that the MOW showed in helping the widows. The MOW indicated that unemployment is a big issue in the community and that her ministry cannot concentrate on one segment (the widows) of the community. The MOW hoped that the private sector will fill in the gaps. As a result of that meeting, the Business Women Association in Basra and after noticing the enthusiasm of our staff, offered job opportunities for the widows as well as providing supporting gifts for the graduated widows.

Staffing:

IF had no changes of staff during this reporting period.