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Empowering Iraqi Widows to Thrive project (EIWT)

Progress Report

April 1, 2012 – June 30, 2012

Executive Summary:

During this reporting period, the Iraq Foundation (IF) successfully completed the fourth cycle of EIWT in Baghdad's two centers, (Karkh & Risafa), Basra's two centers, (Zubair & Qurna), Maysan's center, Dhi Qar's Fuhood center, and Nainawa's Hamdania center. Moreover, IF held a graduation ceremony to honor the widows' successful completion of the fourth training cycle in Dhi Qar's Fuhood center. IF invited representatives from the local government councils, as well as senior officials, civic and tribal leaders. The ceremony was well covered by the local media. (Please see section V. Other: Meetings / Workshops / Other Events).

IF is pleased to announce that EIWT project staff succeeded in training more than double the predicted number of widows in vocational skills instruction during the fourth cycle without exceeding the project's approved budget. While IF planned to train 70 widows, staff and local partners succeeded in training 141 after receiving 71 additional requests from other widows to participate in the vocational training. IF is also pleased to report that staff connected 41 widows with small grants and several other resources that provided them with the means to generate income and thus become economically self-sufficient. Widows used these grants to establish small businesses based out of their homes, which provided services for their community. They join 140 other widows from the previous EIWT cycles, who have benefited from EIWT's vocational and entrepreneurial training.

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

Addendums include:

- EIWT Fourth Training Cycle – April Update
http://www.iraqfoundation.org/projects_new/EIWT/cycle4-update-April2012.html
- EIWT Fourth Training Cycle – May Update
http://www.iraqfoundation.org/projects_new/EIWT/cycle4-update-May2012.html
- EIWT Fourth Training Cycle – June Update
http://www.iraqfoundation.org/projects_new/EIWT/cycle4-update-June2012.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 centers over 5 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 continued to engage the widows in the training activities.

Details of the **fourth** training cycles in seven training centers are described below:

- Baghdad: On June 4, 2012, IF completed the training of the fourth cycle in Karkh at Saydia Vocational High School. 22 widows graduated from this center. On May 30, IF completed the training in Risafa at Risafa Vocational High School. 25 widows graduated from this center. In order to meet the objective of the EIWT activities, IF decided to hold an extension for both centers in Baghdad . Details regarding this **extension** are as follows:
 - On June 10, 2012, IF started the extension for the Karkh center at Risala district council. 17 widows participated
 - On June 16, 2012, IF started the extension for the Risafa center at Women and the Future NGO. 14 widows participated
- Basra: On May 31, 2012, IF completed the training of the fourth cycle in Zubair at Zubair Youth Center. On June 28, 2012, IF completed the training of the fourth cycle in Qurna at Al Qurna Qaimmaqamiah. 40 widows graduated from each center.
- Maysan: On April 9, 2012, IF in collaboration with Woman Organization in Maysan, completed the fourth cycle educational component training at the partner organization's headquarters. 40 widows graduated.
- Dhi Qar: On April 22, 2012, IF, in collaboration with Nature Iraq, completed the fourth cycle educational component training in Fuhood at the Fuhood district council. 40 widows graduated.
- Mosul: On April 24, 2012, IF in collaboration with the Eyzidy Solidarity Correlations in Ba'ashiq, Mosul started the training at Karmlese, Hamdania. On June 12, 2012, the training was completed. 40 widows graduated.

Status: During this reporting cycle IF successfully completed the training of fourth cycle in all seven centers. 247 widows completed the training. The two centers in Baghdad faced some difficulties, as widows withdrew from the program due to personal reasons. Therefore, IF decided to conduct an extension period for both centers in order to compensate for the number of widows that withdrew from the program. 31 widows participated in the extension that conducted at no extra cost to project budget.

Impact: The educational training had a significant impact on the widows' lifestyle, attitudes and ways of thinking; following the training, widows were 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 / success stories

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 manual covers 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 information on breast care and parenting. The training was delivered by MoH representatives.

Status: During this reporting cycle IF successfully completed fourth cycle training in all seven centers. 247 widows completed the training. Baghdad centers faced some difficulties, as widows withdrew due to personal reasons. Therefore, IF decided to conduct an extension for both centers to compensate for the number of withdrawn participants. 31 widows participated in the extension that IF conducted at no extra cost to the project's budget.

Impact: As a result of this training, widows learned basic health and 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 / success stories

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 EIWT's fourth cycle in seven 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 computer skills, cosmetology/hairdressing, and traditional sewing. While EIWT originally planned to train 10 widows from each center in each cycle, due to unexpectedly high demand from the widows, each center was able to accommodate more widows than originally planned. Due to collaboration between IF and its partner NGOs, as well as the commitment of the local community, and the trainers, the additional training took place at no additional cost. In

addition to the 70 widows IF had originally planned to train as per the project's approved proposal, IF trained an additional 71 widows. A total of 141 widows received vocational training in the fourth cycle.

Cycle Four breakdown for the vocational trainings is outlined below:

- Baghdad
 - 22 widows continued the vocational trainings in Karkh in the following trades (see breakdown below):
 - 8 widows: cosmetology and hairdressing at Saydia Vocational High School.
 - 14 widows: traditional sewing at Saydia Vocational High School
 - 25 widows continued the vocational trainings in Risafa:
 - 5 widows: cosmetology and hairdressing at Women Kingdom Salon
 - 5 widows: computer skills at Risafa Vocational High School
 - 15 widows: traditional sewing at Risafa Vocational High School
- Extension of Baghdad centers was as follows:
 - 17 widows in Karkh center(7 cosmetology, 7 sewing and 3 computer skills)
 - 14 widows in Risafa center(6 cosmetology, 5 sewing and 3 computer skills)
- Basra
 - 12 widows started vocational trainings on hairdressing in Qurna
 - 15 widows completed vocational trainings on computer skills in Zubair
- Maysan
 - 15 widows started vocational trainings on food manufacturing at Woman Organization training center.
- Dhi Qar
 - 12 widows started the vocational trainings on traditional sewing at the district council meeting hall in Fuhood.
- Mosul
 - 40 widows continued the vocational trainings in Karmlese, Hamdania in the following trades (see breakdown below):
 - 16 widows: cosmetology and hairdressing
 - 24 widows: traditional sewing

Status: During this reporting cycle IF successfully completed the fourth cycle training in all seven centers. 141 widows completed the training. Baghdad centers faced some difficulties, as widows withdrew due to personal reasons. Therefore, IF decided to conduct an extension for both centers to compensate for the number of withdrawn participants. 31 widows participated in the training at no extra cost to the project's budget.

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. Impact in terms of employment, job opportunities and other income generating opportunities are detailed in Section III. Other impact / success stories

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

Details of mentoring activities that IF conducted include the following:

Baghdad

- IF staff in Baghdad conducted mentoring sessions to EIWT's fourth widows by inviting Ms. Dhefah Al Jarahi, IF's financial manager. Ms. Al Jarahi provided guidance on how to manage expenses and how to create a budget.
- IF collaborated with Relief International (RI) to provide assistance to the widows through their programs. RI encouraged the widows to collaborate and emphasize on the women role in the society.

Basra

- IF staff invited Lawyer. Shafa'a Raheem, Head, Qurna Center for Development, to explore widows' career and general life options
- IF staff invited Mr. Mohammed Nasih, Mayor of Qurna Qada'a. Mr. Nasih encouraged the widows to benefit from EIWT activities and promised to provide assistance to the widows in the Qada'a.
- IF staff invited lawyer Nabeel Major, to provide the widows with legal aid. Mr. Major was able to provide assistance to EIWT widows on obtaining their rights through the legal system.

Maysan

- Nurya Alwan, a successful EIWT widow, was invited by IF and Women NGO in Maysan to speak to the widows about her personal experience and how was she able to benefit from the project.
- IF, in collaboration with Women NGO in Maysan, invited Ms. Israa Badai, Head, Women Welfare Department in Maysan. Ms. Badai offered help to the widows in their needs with the department. She informed them that a smart card department has been launched at their location to ease the difficulties on the widows to obtain their cards.

Dhi Qar – Fuhood

- IF, in collaboration with Nature Iraq organization, held a mentoring session for the widows in Fuhood center. Mr. Ahmed Kadhum, member, Fuhood District Council, promised the widows to suggest them for any job opportunity that might arise within the council.

Mosul – Hamdania (formerly in Ba’ashiqa)

- IF staff, in collaboration with the partner organization, held a mentoring session for the widows in karmlese, Hamdania center. Ms. Zainab Fartoosi and Ms. Sahira Al Janabi encouraged the widows to explore their options in life and work. IF staff was pleased to know the EIWT widows in Hamdania are conducting mentoring sessions with other widows in the neighborhood and have demanded that IF and other organization should pay more attention to marginalized women in general rather than widows only.

Status: During this reporting cycle IF successfully completed the activities of fourth cycle in all seven centers. 247 widows graduated. 741 mentoring sessions were completed during this reporting period. 1087 widows to date received educational mentoring.

Impact: For the fourth cycle, 226 of widows out of 247 have achieved their personal goals established at the beginning the training. To date, 980 of widows out of 1087 have achieved their personal goal for the project.

Goals identified include: Learning a vocational skill; raising their awareness and education; reintegrating into the community; accessing social benefits; gaining experience in democracy; improving social skills as well as knowledge of 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:

- As a response to the widows’ request IF held vocational training on handicrafts, a professional trainer delivered training on best seller products, which widows can use to start their own professions. IF views this as another opportunity for the widows. That training took place during the fourth cycle vocational training in Baghdad’s Karkh center, specifically during the traditional sewing training. 18 widows benefited from that training.
- IF, in collaboration with CHF International, conducted a group vocational mentoring session with EIWT widows in Baghdad’s Karkh center. CHF presented their microloans program, which include loans from \$5000 -\$25000 that should be paid off in a year. There must be a co signer or they should have a property as insurance for the loan. They also study the financial situation for the debtor before approving her. These conditions are still assessed to be difficult for the widows to match.
- As part of our collaboration with local NGOs in Basra, IF arranged a mentoring sessions for the widows in Qurna center to examine their eligibility for the CHF microloans. Future Iraq (local CHF partner in Basra) presented the 3 and 6 million loan. This loan category has similar requirements in addition to the restrictive age limit (18-35).

- IF continued working with local child-care providers to obtain employment opportunities in the Al-Saidiya District for widows at the Al-Karkh Center. IF staff has reached out to the managers of several kindergartens and child care centers. Managers will contact staff when they have positions open for child care providers and office workers.
- IF's staff in Basra held a mentoring sessions to EIWT widows on the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) mini grants. IF invited prior ICRC grantees (EIWT widows) to talk about their experience in obtaining these mini-grants with IF's support.
- IF, in collaboration with Nature Iraq, conducted a mentoring session with EIWT widow Rahima Juma'a. Ms. Juma'a was qualified for the Marla Project but her business plan conflicted with the project requirement. IF staff supported Ms. Juma'a in her research. She decided to change the business plan and start identifying the needs of her specific market as well as competitors.

Status: During this reporting cycle IF successfully completed the activities of fourth cycle in all seven centers. 247 widows graduated. 1087 widows to date received vocational mentoring

Impact:

During this reporting period 64 job opportunities have been identified and 41 widows accepted job offers.

Since the start of the project and to date, 449 of job opportunities have been identified and 181 widows accepted job offers.

Please see Section III. Other impact / success stories

II. Deliverables:

Obj. 1

Number of educational training programs conducted in seven locations:

Target=28

Seven educational training completed in this reporting period / 28 overall

Number of widows trained on citizenship, rights, life skills

Target = 1,120

247 Number of widows trained during this reporting period / 1087 overall

Obj. 2

Number of widows receiving vocational training

target = 280

141 Number of widows trained during this reporting period / 669 overall

Obj. 3

Number of widows receive mentoring on personal goals

Target = 1,120

247 Number this reporting period / 1087 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 EIWT vocational training, an additional 71 widows showed interest and insisted on participating in trainings (141 total are receiving vocational training). 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.

- EIWT widows, Wurud Tawfeeq, Fatin Ibraheem and Anhar Saeed, decided to provide vocational skills training on hairdressing, sewing and computer skills free of charge for the widows during the extension of the project.
- Widows in Baghdad asked IF to link them with a professional driving education office, to start a driving profession for their relatives and female students in their neighborhood.
- After participating in the "Orphans Day" activity to sell some of their products, EIWT widows Faidha and Zahra Abbas were able to identify a sustainable market for their products.
- As an example of solidarity among the widows and their mutual support, Sherene, a talented EIWT widow in hairdressing, Risafa center in Baghdad, found her first job opportunity working from home and she has been highly successful thus far. Sherene contacted other widows from her center to help her when she gained more costumers.
- 11 EIWT widows from the fourth cycle started working from home using the skills they gained during EIWT activities and they have started generating income.
- IF, in collaboration with Women for Peace NGO, was able to find 10 job opportunities for the widows to work as security inspectors during the holy visit of Imam Musa Al Kadhum. This allowed our widows to made ID50000 (approx. \$40)/ day for four days period.
- EIWT widow, Sena'a Kareem, find a job in Al Karama Company as a direct result of IF's support. She is making ID300, 000(approx. \$240)/month.
- After participating in the craftworks training, EIWT widow, Shahbaa, was able to sell her products through a nearby store to her house; Ms. Shabaa stated that her chocolate box is her best selling product.
- EIWT widow, Hasna Usman, an excellent seamstress who has coached other widows. After expressing her intention to start working as a civil activist, she gained the opportunity to work closely with the Ezidy Solidarity Correlation to improve the lives of children suffering from autism and other disabilities. She was also able to find a job with an International organization "Bridge" with a starting monthly salary of \$500.
- As a result of the Family Hygiene and Wellbeing Program, IF facilitated the delivery of the Tetanus vaccine to all 40 widows in Al Qurna center, nearly half of whom did not have the vaccine previously.
- Two EIWT widows were able to open their first salon for cosmetology and hairdressing.
- Four EIWT widows signed contracts to work with Mercy organization in Mosul.
- EIWT widows, Samira Abdulrazaq, Safia Baket, Buthaina Adnan and Intisar Salih, were appointed among the mobile squads to implement health and vaccination campaigns.
- 23 out of 40 EIWT widows in Zubair center visited the center for breast detection to receive check-ups.
- EIWT widows, Dalal Muhsin Ali, Hashmia Kadhum and Rasmia Salih, participated in an advanced computer skills workshop. They were honored for their enthusiasm and skills. Those widows

invited IF to participate in their graduation and mentioned that before entering EIWT vocational training, they knew very little about computers.

- Four widows in Basra received Red Cross grants to start small businesses out of their homes. IF assisted in the establishment of these businesses through direct consultation with the widows on their interests and the needs of the market. Grantees were:
 - Intisar Salih
 - Sundus Mohammed
 - Sabiha Abdul Sada
 - Karima Abdul Hussien
- EIWT widow, Atia Hussien Alwan, was able to get a grant from Marla project. Her grant was in the amount of \$10000 of electrical appliances to start her first store. IF staff visited Ms. Alwan in her new store and offered assistance and advice in her new project.
- EIWT widows, Khadija Mushari and Sundis Mushari, were able to get a job as literacy teachers at al Zubair center in Basra. They have both proven their professionalism and enthusiasm for EIWT activities.

GOI Benefits:

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

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: 278

Total number who have received training as a result of this project: 1118

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 April 9, IF met with IRD cadre to discuss terms of collaboration in supporting women household in general and marginalized women in particular.
- On April 16, 2012, IF arranged, in coordination with the Women and Childhood Committee in Risala District Council, for EIWT widows to participate in the “Orphans Day” activity to sell some of their products. The widows’ products received high attention from the attendees and our widows were able to sell all their goods.
- On May 21, 2012, IF staff met with Ms. Mahdia Abd Hasan, Member, Baghdad Provincial Council and members of the Social Solidarity NGO to discuss possible options to help the widows generate income opportunities.
- On May 31, 2012, IF staff met with Ms. Shatha Naji, Dead, Women for Peace NGO, to discuss possible options to help the widows find job opportunities.

- Dhi Qar:
 - On May 21, 2012, the graduation ceremony was conducted in the Fuhood District Council. Among the attendees were Mr. Zaki Hussien Mahmoud, Chairman, Fuhood District Council, and Mr. Ahmed Kadhum, Member, Fuhood District Council. 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.

VI. Challenges, Remedial Actions, Staff Changes:

Challenges / Remedial Actions:

- Baghdad centers faced some difficulties, as widows withdrew due to personal reasons and last year exams for their kids. Therefore, IF decided to conduct an extension for both centers to compensate for the number of withdrawn participants. 31 widows participated in the extension that IF conducted at no extra cost to project's budget.
- The conditions and regulations for obtaining microloan from *CHF* and other USAID partners are difficult for the widows to meet. Despite the recent changes in *CHF's* requirements to ease loan requirements, many issues remain that discourage widows from applying for these loans. Provisions that are particularly difficult for widows to meet include: the 15% interest rate, which will be deducted out of the loan upon approval, the lack of grace period on the loan, the monthly payments that start immediately after the loan is approved, completing loan repayments in 12 months, age limitation (18 -35) and the unfamiliarity of the widows with loans.

Staffing:

- Ms. Sahira Al Janabi, a lawyer and an experienced civil society activist replaced Ms. Zainab Al Etabi who left her position for personal reasons.