



Free Iraq

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Interfaith Cooperation Project (ICP)

Final Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of the Interfaith Cooperation Project was to expand religious freedom for all Iraqi faith communities and promote mutual respect and peaceful coexistence among Iraqis from different religious backgrounds. From June 2011-August 2012, 15 teams of young Iraqi men and women from different religious backgrounds and provinces came together to produce 15 documentaries on significant historic religious sites in 15 Iraqi provinces. The documentaries seek to highlight the rich heritage of religious diversity that lives on in modern Iraq and to build understanding among Iraq's religious and ethnic communities. The documentaries cover historic shrines of all religions but place special emphasis on religious sites that are 'shared' by many different faiths, and religious sites in close proximity that demonstrate how different faiths can live and worship side by side harmoniously. Project participants held 62 screenings of the documentaries in 15 provinces, reaching an audience of over 8,000 persons. Documentaries were broadcast on five national Iraqi TV stations including, Al-Iraqiya, Alsumaria, Al-Fayhaa, Biladi, and Al-Baghdadiya. Two documentaries were also screened at local and international film festivals. It is estimated that one in four Iraqis has seen at least one of the documentaries. On October 9 2012, IF held a screening of a film which is condensation of the 15 documentaries produced by the project participants at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in Washington DC. The screening aimed to capture Iraq's thriving belief cultures and foster understanding to a U.S.-based audience of Iraq's long history as a country where religious diversity has flourished. According to the independent evaluation report *"the documentaries have undoubtedly contributed to the promotion of religious freedom and religious tolerance [in Iraq... through] adding information and knowledge regarding religious freedom and religious tolerance... and affecting attitudes and changing practices."*

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

OBJECTIVE 1: ENHANCE INTERFAITH COOPERATION ON A NATIONAL LEVEL AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS.

Short Term Goal #1: Launch a nationwide documentary film competition.

In an effort to improve the project's outputs and enhance sustainability, as soon as IF received the grant, IF's Executive Director, Ms. Rend Al-Rahim reached out to Alsumaria TV station to ask for their support in producing good quality documentaries and broadcasting them on their satellite TV channel. IF successfully negotiated the terms of the partnership and was able to get Alsumaria's support in all the above-mentioned activities. Both parties signed a contract on April 9, 2011. It was agreed that Alsumaria would train Iraqi students in the art of video-making, and that it would produce, and broadcast five series documentaries on religious sites in Iraq. Alsumaria also agreed to provide, free of charge, two training sessions in Erbil: the first on filming and the second, editing. Alsumaria committed to edit the films produced by the students to create a five-series documentary on religious sites in Iraq. IF and Alsumaria agreed that the latter would enjoy exclusivity of broadcasting for six months, starting the date of the first broadcast. On March 24 2011, IF began advertisement for the ICP Project. Announcements were dispatched on various websites, Google groups, and Facebook accounts as well as promoted on television (as subtitles), radio, and websites.

By May 25 2011, IF had received 40 new applications. In June, IF selected 15 teams to participate. Teams were composed of 4-5 students, with a total number of 62 participants including youth from various religious upbringings (Muslim, Christian, Mandaens, Yazidis, Baha'i).

Short Term Goal #2: Produce 45 minute short documentaries about renowned religious sites in Iraq with two trainings on the art of film making; one in Baghdad and the other in Erbil.

1. First Training on the Art of Film-Making: Erbil (June 25, 2011- July 9, 2011)

On June 25, 2011, in partnership with Alsumaria TV Station, IF began the first ICP training aimed to introduce the 15 participating teams to the art of film-making and Iraq's extensive history as a religiously diverse community. IF held three back-to-back trainings for five teams each. The classes were instructed by:

- Dr. Ricardios Yousif: Film Director/ Head of the Cinema and Theater Department in College of Fine Arts: Salaheddin University/ Erbil
- Dr. Ali Nashmi: Expert in Iraq's theological history.
- Salah Abu-Saif: Scenario writer and Documentary Films Director/ Al-Sumaria TV.

IF held a short opening ceremony with key-note speakers including: IF's Executive Director Ms. Rend Al-Rahim; Sumaria TV Director, Erbil Office: Mr. Ali Akram; Education Minister in Kurdistan Region, Dr. Kawa Mahmoud on behalf of the Kurdish Prime Minister; Head of the Muslim Experts Union in Kurdistan-Erbil Chapter, Cheikh Nayazi Ragheb, on behalf of the Head of the Muslim Experts Union in Kurdistan; Yazidi religion Higher Spiritual Council member, Cheikh Eido Baba.

Minister Mahmoud, who was adamantly supportive of the project, offered to have the training held at the Ministry of Education. IF accepted his invitation and relocated the 1st training to the Ministry's premises. Although the room were agreeable, IF decided that it would better to hold the rest of the trainings at Alsumaria because of the long wait that the students had to go through for security checks every time they entered the building. As the training went smoothly, the young participants were driven and eager to learn and deliver. At this point, the trainers were competent, energetic, and were able to engage the students as well as spurring interest through field visits and hands-on training with the professional cameras. The sites visited were the Church of St. Joseph, the Church of St. George, and the Main Mosque of Erbil. During the practical demonstration, students were instructed on proper film technique. Dr. Ali and Dr. Riccardo instructed the students thematically about important details to focus on as well as how to integrate their camera work into the script. Dr. Ali Nashmi, an expert in Iraq's religious history, provided an overview of Iraq's diverse religious heritage. The trainers were very committed and it was reported that Mr. Salah Abu Seif and Mr. Ricardos Youssef stayed late at night with the participants to help them write their scenarios and assist them in every way needed. By the end of the first training, all scenarios were written. By the end of June, the teams who had already completed their trainings had already started filing their documentaries. On the last day of the training, Minister Mahmoud was invited to hand out the training certificate to the participants and agreed to IF's request.

It was very moving to observe that even during the first interaction, participating students from different religious faiths started mingling and building friendly relations. Youths from different religious backgrounds ate together, went for walks, and engaged in deep discussions about their differences and similarities in an amicable and peaceful way. On the first day of training, a participant from Baghdad raised his hand and said, "I wish to meet a Yazidi and befriend him." A Yazidi participant introduced himself and both met and conversed after training concluded. On the last day of training, a Manda'e female participant from the Diwaniyya province, who was very quiet and apprehensive, told ICP Project Manager, "For the first time in my life, I feel I am in my country, Iraq, and among my Iraqi brothers."

After the first training, IF bestowed \$500 to each of the teams to rent cameras for filming the documentaries. Soon after the first training, the students started filming religious sites in their provinces and posting updates on Facebook. Updates included information such as lists of religious holidays for Jews, Christians, Muslims, Saba'es, Mada'es, and Baha'es. Also included were reflections, for example from Rami Jakob/Kirkuk, "I would like to write a

summary about our experience, and wish to learn about the experiences of my brothers in other teams. Peaceful coexistence is a dream that every Iraqi dreams to achieve and live. When we were first invited to participate in the project, we, in the Kirkuk team had no idea what the outcome of such a project would be other than producing a film that shows out technical skills and abilities, but gradually, as time passed by, our work progressed from simple documentary making to embracing our country's message that Iraq is in need of today. It is very difficult to build and spread the idea of peaceful coexistence without believing in it...Our deep belief that we are all one, gives us the incentive to move forward while accepting each other: Muslims, Christians, Sabe'es, Yazidis, and Baha'es; whatever your religion is, you are my brother in creation."

2. *2nd Training on the Art of Film-Editing: Baghdad (July 25, 2011- July 27, 2011)*

On July 25, 2011, in partnership with Alsumaria TV Station, IF started the second ICP training aimed at introducing the 15 participating teams to the art of film editing. The training's objective was to provide the teams with necessary skills to edit their raw documentaries, including adding music, cutting segments, and adding voiceover. 19 members representing the 15 participating teams attended the 2nd training. The training took place in the IF building, and lasted three days. The training was planned to take place in Alsumaria TV Station in Erbil, but Alsumaria decided to hold it in Baghdad, because they didn't have the appropriate equipment in the Erbil office. Alsumaria used its Baghdad-based equipment during the training. The classes were provided by Mr. Ahmed Waheed, Film Director for Alsumaria TV.

The film editing training ran smoothly and successfully during the three days. Participants acquired knowledge on how to edit their documentaries. All participants received copies of the film editing software (Adobe Premiere). Mr. Ahmed Waheed provided a thorough presentation, explaining how to install the film editing software on personal computers, how to use its tools, download the films from the cameras to the computers, how to add multiple video and audio layers, add transitions and fades between clips, and placing effects. IF provided a copy of Adobe Premiere software to each of the teams. At the end of the training, Majeed Shaker (ICP Project Manager, IF Baghdad Office) reviewed with the trainees a few elements of the first training including the importance of building an Iraqi identity regardless of religious affiliation and embracing all Iraqi religions as part of a common Iraqi identity. 18 of the 19 training participants attended physically while Dahouk team member joined through Skype security reasons. .

3. *Editing the Documentaries*

Soon after the 2nd training, all 15 teams started editing their documentaries and submitting their edited versions to IF. All documentaries were submitted during the month of August. IF started reviewing the documentaries and was delighted with the quality of work that had been done both on the technical and research level. IF uploaded all 15 documentaries on an IF Youtube account.

4. *Reviewing the Documentaries*

IF outreached to Iraqi media experts and historians to form a committee for the selection of the winning documentaries. IF selected the following committee members:

- Mr. Salah Abu Saif: Scenario writer and Documentary Films Director in Alsumaria TV
- Dr. Ali Nashmi: Expert in Iraq's religious history
- Mr. Assad Al-Hilali: Film director
- Dr. Hassan Al-Hakim: Historian and Academic in Kufa University

IF signed contracts with all four experts and asked them to rank the documentaries according to the following criteria (4):

- 1) The extent to which the documentary responds to the goal of the project
- 2) The quantity and quality of research
- 3) Technical quality
- 4) The effectiveness in conveying the message of interfaith and diversity

The selection committee was given fifteen days to send their selection of the best five documentaries. The results received were dissimilar from one expert to another. It was obvious that experts had ranked the movies according to their own knowledge and proficiency. What made it most difficult for ranking was that all documentaries were compelling, each in its own way. IF asked the experts to review their rankings according to the following criteria:

- The documentary film should provide a visual and narrative documentation of religious diversity in a province
- The documentary film should be based on historical and cultural research
- The documentary film should highlight on the importance of the religious location for the entire religious group

There was a small overlap in the second round of results. In order to make the final selection, IF viewed all the documentaries and ranked them according to the same criteria.

5. *Selecting the Documentaries*

On September 27, 2011, the selection committee agreed on the five winning documentaries:

- 1) Akik Dijla (The Tigris River's Agate) – Baghdad

- 2) Multka Al-Adyan (Where Religions Meet) – Babil
- 3) Hadara Tarweeha Judran Samita (A Civilization Narrated by Silent Walls) – Kirkuk
- 4) Lan'aeesh Ma'an (Let's Live Together) – Diyala
- 5) Khodr Elias (The Khodr Elias Shrine) – Baghdad

6. *Alsumaria Editing*

During the month of November, Alsumaria began editing the documentaries. In order to preserve the documentaries' messages, Alsumaria suggested that each documentary's editing be performed with one of the team members who produced it. IF arranged for team members to travel to Baghdad and spend three days at the Alsumaria offices to help in the final editing process. On November 30, all 15 movies were edited by Alsumaria, in collaboration with the young project participants.

7. *Q&A Sessions Filming*

From December 17-19, 2011, IF organized screenings with university students to conduct Q&A sessions that would be broadcast by Alsumaria along with the documentaries. Participating universities included universities from the Babil, Kirkuk, Diyala, and Baghdad governorates. After watching the documentaries, IF staff facilitated a Q&A session with the participation of members of the participating teams.. These Q&A sessions were integrated in the hour-long TV program that was broadcast on Alsumaria TV station.

Short Term Goal #3: Establish a Facebook page to provide updates on each team's activities, share information, and ask questions.

During the first meeting, Mr. Joseph Sandor, from IF-DC office, technically assisted the participants in creating a Facebook page to create a public forum to show progress of their work, exchange information, update on activities, and ask questions. All 15 teams, along with IF staff, partook in the page and posted photos and segments of their documentaries. IF Staff continuously notified members of several film festivals and activities in Iraq via Facebook. The link to the ICP Facebook page is as follows: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/218861241492169>

The impact of this activity include increased participants exposure to Iraq's religious diversity through their documentaries, learning the use of social networking tools such as Facebook and Youtube, and strengthening their relationships through the act of online communication. Project participant Rami Jakob from Kirkuk posted on Facebook, "I would like to write a summary about our experience, and wish to learn about the experiences of my brothers in other teams. Peaceful coexistence is a dream that every Iraq desires to achieve. None of us had any idea of the powerful outcome of the project when we agreed to join; our work progressed from creating a simple documentary to embracing our country's message that Iraq is in need of today. It is very difficult to build and spread the idea of

peaceful coexistence without believing in it...Our deep belief that we are all one, gives us the incentive to move forward while accepting one another: Muslims, Christians, Sabe'es, Yazidis, and Baha'es; whatever your religion is, you are my brother in creation."

OBJECTIVE 2: FOSTER PUBLIC RESPECT FOR IRAQ'S RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY AND PROMOTE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AS A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT.

Short Term Goal #1: Hold 3 screenings of the documentaries in the various provinces.

Screenings in the provinces:

On October 4 2011, ICP teams began publicly screening their documentaries in the provinces of Baghdad, Diyala, Salah-Al Deen, Babil, Kirkuk, Erbil, Dahouk, Ninawa, Thi-Qar, Basra, Maysan, Diwaniya, and Al-Muthana. Their goal was to show Iraq's indigenous minorities, with many of them descendants of those in ancient Assyria and had a continuous presence in the country ever since. After each screening, the participants talked about their filmmaking experience with the audience which included a mix of the local community, Parliament members, former ministers, civic leaders, media representatives, movie experts, academia, and students. Mixed panels of religious leaders and educators lead a discussion on the implications of the films for the community and the value of public understanding of interfaith heritage. Teams implement a total of 62 screenings reaching an audience of 8,130 persons. Please find below small excerpts from the Q&A sessions:

1. Dr. Bashir Haddad, Kurdish Parliament MP (Erbil screening): "This is a very important topic and we strongly encourage this type of initiatives...all educated people should spread the good values that are common to all religions."
2. Hana Edward, Women's Rights Activist (Baghdad 2 screening): "Interfaith cooperation doesn't only take place in places of worship, but in social centers, clubs, schools, and health institutions."
3. Young viewer from the audience (Diyala screening): "I learning a lot from this documentary, especially about the fact that our province is home to so many religions and that it's being visited by so many people from different religious backgrounds."
4. Mayor of Shaikan area/Dahouk Province (Dahouk screening): "I praise the role of the CSOs in spreading all formed of coexistence, especially religious, the role of the IF and human rights organizations in spreading awareness."
5. Sheikh Muhanad Hamid Ali, Sheikh of Al-Kaza'el tribe (Diwaniya team screening): "On behalf of Al-Kaza'el tribe in Diwaniya, we extend out helping hand to your and to the Iraq Foundation in order to succeed such important and effective projects that play a role in building a new Iraq."

6. Dr. Saad Salman, University Professor (Salah-al Deen screening): In reply to a question asked by a student in the audience, "Why should we coexist?"; "Coexistence is the natural aspect in life and represents the only path for development in the country...Coexistence means that people accept to coexist with others. This represents the milestone for a civic state."

A total of 8,000 persons attended the screenings. In order to measure the success of these screenings, IF conducted a midterm evaluation based on a questionnaire distributed to the audiences. The goal of this evaluation was to measure the outcomes of the screenings. More than half of those who attended participated in the survey which yielded the following results.

Question 1: Do you think the documentaries were thoroughly developed and executed effectively on a scale of good, moderate, and non-satisfactory?

- 33% answered "good"
- 12% answered "moderate"
- 1% answered "non-satisfactory"

Question 2: Do you think the documentaries proved a difference in your thinking?

- 83% answered "yes"
- 17% answered "no"

Question 3: Did the documentaries provide you with new information?

- 87% answered "yes"
- 13% answered "no"

Question 4: After watching the documentaries, are you more accepting of religious diversity on a scale of yes, no, or somehow?

- 78% answered "yes"
- 16% answered "somehow"
- 6% answered "no"

Question 5: Do you think the film achieved the goal of strengthening acceptance of religious minorities as an indigenous people and part of Iraq and its heritage?

- 71% answered "yes"
- 21% answered "somehow"
- 8% answered "no"

Question 6: After watching the films, do you express a desire to spread the concept of tolerance and accepting others?

- 90% answered “yes”
- 10% answered “no”

Question 7: Do you think the films and post-screening discussions achieved the goal of strengthening freedom of religion?

- 70% answered “yes”
- 23% answered “somehow”
- 7% answered “no”

Question 8: Do you think the documentary increased your knowledge about religious diversity in Iraq?

- 60% answered “yes”
- 31% answered “somehow”
- 9% answered “no”

Question 9: Do you wish to join the ICP-Peaceful Coexistence Group?

- 83% answered “yes”
- 17% answered “no”

The results of the survey were also handed out to the independent evaluator who evaluated the project.

Screenings at youth civics camps:

During summer 2012, four ICP participants participated in IF sponsored youth civics camps at the University of Iraq in Suleimaniyya (AUI/S) and were invited to screen their documentaries and hold Q&A sessions afterwards. The documentaries screened are:

1. *Al-Iraq Ard Al-Had'arat Wa Mnuba'a Al-Dyan* (Iraq, cradle of civilizations and source of religions) produced by the Al-Samawya team
2. *Ma'an* (Together) produced by the Diwaniya team
3. *Afya'a Wtan* (In the Country's Shadow) produced by the Salah Al-Deen team
4. *Multka Anhar Alsma'a* (Where the Sky Rivers Meet) produced by Maysan team

Short Term Goal #2: Hold a network gathering for all participant teams in the project.

On November 24, 2011 IF hosted a networking meeting in Baghdad for all the participants in the project. The Iraq Foundation's Executive Director Ms. Rend Al-Rahim attended the meeting. Opening with a screening of one of the documentaries, the gathering enabled team members to congregate together and discuss the challenges faced by Iraqis from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Each participant was invited to the podium and answered questions about their experiences during the project such as relationships they had built, the extent to which they were able to communicate with each other across team and within the community, the challenges they faced, and the unexpected outcomes of the task. Some excerpts you will find below:

Babil team producer: "This experience inspired me to name my newly born son "Daniel" despite the fact that I'm Muslim, after the Prophet whose relics lie in Thu-Al Kefl—the main sanctuary of our documentary."

Ninawa team: "We received a thank-you letter from the Ninawa governor, Mr. Atheel Al-Nujafy, congratulating all of the participants for their courage and efforts to show a 'shining picture of Iraq.'"

Ahmed Muslim, member of Muthanna team: "This project helped my team build a special relationship with the community, who of many gave gifts to show their appreciation of our efforts to bring home to them. "

Rafif Khaled Nagi, Diwaniyya team member: "The project taught me that Sabe'a and Christians share the same rituals. I was moved to tears the first time I entered a Church because for my entire life I was very wary of other religions, but this project finally opened my eyes to the unknown and made me appreciate and embrace Iraq's, my country's, religious diversity."

To conclude the meeting, participants considered ways to leverage and sustain what they learned from the project. These included producing one, unified, movie composed of all 15 documentaries; screening the documentaries in high schools and across provinces; creating a blog about interfaith and posting their thoughts, opinions, and experiences; and creating a formal interfaith network. Lastly, the Babil team documentary was shown to an audience, 170 people, including the Ministry of Culture representative, Mr. Sami Al-Atrushi; former Culture Minister, Mr. Mufeed Al-Jaza'eree; Ministry of Interior Representative, Mr. Saad Maan; the Minority Department at MOHR Representatives, Mr. Isaam Ibrahim and Ms. Waylett Gorgis; in addition to students, media, and movie experts.

Short Term Goal #3: Air the best five documentaries produced on national television.

Alsumaria Satellite Channel broadcasted the best 5 selected documentaries as follows:

- 1) Saturday, March 3: Akik Dijla (The Tigris River's Agate): Baghdad 2
- 2) Saturday, March 10: Multka-Al Adyan (Where Religions Meet): Babil
- 3) Saturday, March 17: Hadara Tarqeeha Judran Samita (A Civilization Narrated by Silent Walls): Kirkuk
- 4) Saturday, March 24: Hammonton Hatat Huna (A Pigeon Landed Here): Baghdad Team 1
- 5) Saturday, March 31: Lan'aeesh Ma'an (Let's Live Together): Diyala

In addition to that IF was able to broadcast the ICP documentaries on the following TV channels:

- 1) Ishtar Satellite Channel: ICP documentaries were broadcast twice
- 2) Al-Baghdadiya Satellite Channel: ICP documentaries were broadcast twice
- 3) Al-Fayhaa Satellite Channel: ICP documentaries were broadcast four times
- 4) Biladi Satellite Channel: ICP documentaries were broadcast twice
- 5) Sumaria Satellite Channel: ICP documentaries were broadcast once

IF was also able to negotiate with Alsumaria TV station the editing of all 15 documentaries into a 86-minute documentary titled "Interfaith Dialogue in Mesopotamia" that IF was able to broadcast on the following TV channels:

- 1) Alsumaria Satellite Channel broadcast once
- 2) Ishtar TV: broadcast twice
- 3) Al Iraqiya TV: broadcast four times

OBJECTIVE 3: USE YOUTH-ORIENTED MEDIA TO GAIN GLOBAL EXPOSURE ABOUT RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN IRAQ.

Short Term Goal #1: Learn and implement virtual screenings and e-dialogues.

March 21 2011: IF created an ICP Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/ICPDocumentaryFilms>. ICP participants educated Iraq's diverse faith communities about their surrounding religious heritage through organizing virtual screenings and e-dialogues on Facebook and Youtube. IF recorded a total of 1,161 people have watched 15 documentaries online and 46 people became "fans" by "liking" them on the respectable social sites.

Short Term Goal #2: Help finalist documentary producers enter international film festivals.

As soon as ICP teams completed their documentaries, IF encouraged them to apply to local, regional, and international film festivals and provided them with the necessary support. It is worth noting that the Thi-Qar team participated in the 3rd Baghdad Film Festival and The Baghdad International Festival for Short Movies with their movie "Unity Moment." Furthermore, on April 25, the Ninava team was notified by the Malmo Film Festival that they have been registered and approved for a screening. On the same day, IF Staff in Baghdad met with Ms. Layla Mehdi, Representative of the Ministry of Education. IF obtained official authorization to screen ICP documentaries in the Institute of Fine Arts.

CHALLENGES

While implementing the project, IF faced many challenges including:

- While recruiting participants, IF was surprised to see that the number of applications was very small. After investigating the issue, IF staff realized that the RFP announcement period coincided with the end of semester and final exams for the students and that youth had found the project daunting and were afraid of applying, thinking they should have previous experience in filmmaking. To remedy this, IF ICP-staff in Baghdad extended the application deadline till May 25th and went to various colleges, universities, institutes, mosques, churches and other institutions to talk about the project, explain the purpose of it, and encourage students to apply. The efforts bared fruits and by May 25th, IF received 40 applications.
- Two female candidates from Erbil team apologized from participating in the workshops just in one day before the start of the training due to their fathers' un-approval of them participating, fearing the difficulties that may arise as a result of the process of filming the documentaries, and because they don't speak Arabic. Both of them were replaced by two other young male participants.
- Two teams withdrew last minute from participating in the first training and were replaced by two other teams.

- 2nd Training: For security reasons, Dahouk team member wasn't able to physically attend the film-editing training in Baghdad but joined the training through Skype.
- Communication with the team members happened mainly through cell-phone, as teams were not extensive e-mail users despite the fact that most members have knowledge in using the Internet and e-mails. This caused some delay in activity implementation.
- The security situation affected the project implementation. In particular, Mosul team indicated that they were unable to cover more than one religious site for fear of attacks. Salaheddine and Kirkuk team also reported some difficulties due to security.
- Some documentaries didn't fully abide by IF's guidelines. IF requested that these teams re-work their movies to better comply with the instructions given to them.
- The security situation and some examinations' dates conflict prevented some team members from attending the networking gathering
- IF faced a technical problem during the Baghdad screening. The sound of the documentary chosen to be screened wasn't working. IF replaced it with another documentary.
- One of the Ninawa team members received a threat that prompted him to withdraw from the project.
- Some Kurdish team members complained that they lacked the financial means to translate their movies into Kurdish.
- Baghdad team 3 has been uncooperative in implementing their 2nd and 3rd screenings. IF's ICP Staff engaged with them continuously, urging the team to implement these 2 screenings.
- In the ICP no-cost extension, IF planned to screen the documentaries in the colleges of fine arts and the directories of the Ministry of Youth and Sports' in the provinces:
 - A- IF was only able to screen three documentaries at the Institute of Fine Arts because of time conflict with the final examination and the start of the summer vacations.
 - B- While IF had started successful discussions with the Ministry of Youth and Sports about screening the documentaries in the ministry's directorate, IF learned with great surprise that the Deputy Minister had opposed the initiative claiming that these films are encouraging the return of Jews to Iraq.
- IF noticed the dearth of comments about the documentaries in the ICP-Virtual screening. IF urged the teams to encourage people to write their comments after watching the documentaries on the ICP-Video page on Facebook.

OTHER

On April 9 2012, IF is requested a no-cost extension and a budget revision for the ICP project. The no-cost extension aimed at:

1. Broadcasting the five-part TV series on national TV stations:
2. Producing a one-hour documentary about Iraq's religious heritage to broadcast on Alsumaria

3. Screening the documentaries in the colleges of fine arts and other venues in the provinces
4. Screening the documentaries at the IF sponsored Youth Summer Camps

IMPACT

To evaluate the project impact the Iraq Foundation conducted both internal and external evaluations of the ICP project.

1. IF surveyed 3,096 persons who attended screenings in the provinces. The evaluation yielded very encouraging results as the majority of the population surveyed indicated that the documentaries are between good (33%) and very good (54%) and thought that the documentaries could make a radical change in their provinces (83%). This shows that religious diversity in Iraq gained greater acceptance in local communities. 87% of the audience also indicated that the documentaries have provided them with new information about other religions in their provinces. After watching the documentary film, 78% of the audience indicated that they became more accepting to religious diversity and 71% of the audience thought that the film or the dialogue has achieved their goals in strengthening the acceptance of religious minorities as an indigenous people and as part of Iraq and Iraq's heritage. 90% of those surveyed expressed a desire to spread the concepts of tolerance and accepting others.

2. In his report, the independent evaluator indicated that the documentaries constituted a necessary documentation of Iraq's diverse religious history and interreligious behavior and contributed to a change of attitudes towards religious diversity. The report states: "What was documented in terms of peaceful coexistence between various religious groups could serve as a model nowadays. Many in Iraq think that there are only two races, namely Arab and Kurds, and only two religions, namely Islam and Christianity. In this context, the documentaries proved to be very important in showing the other races and religions existing in Iraq. This is a very positive impact of the documentaries, which was clearly expressed in the evaluation tools used by this Evaluation study. Moreover, the documentaries showed cities of which half of the population are religious minorities; it is impressive how the Iraqi society has been able to preserve and to protect the existence of such religious minorities and we commend the documentaries and the efforts of the producers of the documentaries in disclosing this positive and bright reality of Iraq. The ICP experience shows also that some Iraqis know very little of other religions and some know very little even of other rites of their own religion. We find these documentaries in line with the current era of Iraq where minorities have the right to claim their rights, from whatsoever ethnic or social group they belong to. The Evaluation study of the ICP concludes that after the project implementation, a considerable percentage of Iraqis would have seen the documentaries and through them would have enriched their knowledge of Iraq's

religious diversity and heritage. The Project, through its different activities made beneficiaries aware of the interfaith cooperation elements and components such as religious diversity, religious dialogue and religious tolerance. As for change of attitudes which would lead to change of behavior, the Project covered the members of ICP Working Groups, who have shown a clear change in their attitudes and behavior through their commitment and the various activities they have launched, and through their comments on the Facebook page and the case studies that were collected from them (independent evaluation attached).

Quotes from ICP project participants:

“Thanks to the Interfaith Cooperation Project, I dedicated most of my social and artistic activities to the restoration of the cracks and fracture which affected the social and ethnographic structure of the Iraqi society and I will try as much as I can to get support from any donor who seeks good for Iraq in order for me to contribute in the investment of Iraqi Cultural Heritage to restore the present.

What made me very sad is that I heard that the project has finished!!! Could such a project finish?!! We should think of other activities which lead to the objectives of the project I highly recommend revisiting the decision of ending the project. We should stay with this project and we will remain faithful to it as much as we can.

Ahmad Shams – Maysan Governorate

The experience of the documentary films has left in us a positive and effective impact of peaceful coexistence. We used to believe that coexistence is the only way, but now we believe by experience that there is no other way than peaceful coexistence for our country... What affected me the most is when we met with Muslim and Christian families and they all expressed their belief in peaceful coexistence and in the acceptance of others. The most beautiful memories they have are the common memories of traditions, school and childhood memories and religion was never a reason for disputes... I deeply wish that this experience gets repeated and that attention continues to be granted to the ICP Working Groups, especially through building their capacities...

Mohammad Hammoud Sultan – Salah el Din Governorate