

Peaceful Empowerment, Advocacy *and* Cooperation to End violence

PEACE Project – Implemented by Iraq Foundation

Independent End-term Evaluation

Conducted by Dr. Ghassan Khalil

Table of Contents

Part I: Background

- A. Context
- B. Aim of the End-term Evaluation
- C. Research Techniques and Methods

Part II: Findings

- A. Concurrence extent with the PEACE Proposal
- B. Alignment with the PEACE Monitoring and Evaluation plan
- C. Strategies executed by the PEACE Project
- D. Cooperation with women-led NGOs in five provinces
- E. Lawyers' training leverage
- F. Networking Mechanisms
- G. Success of advocacy interventions with CSO's

- H. corroboration with national and local government officials
- I. National Charter and public statements characteristics
- J. Case studies: Results and Achievements
- K. Second National Conference and Publication of score card
- L. Managing staff's points of view in the PEACE Project
- M. Beneficiaries' (women experiencing violence) points of view regarding the support provided by the PEACE Project
- N. Stakeholders and Partners' opinions regarding the PEACE Project

Part III: Conclusion and Recommendations

Part I: Background

A. Context

The PEACE project is organized by the Iraq Foundation. It aimed at promoting peace and ending violence against women. The project started in September 2012 and most of its activities were implemented before August 2014, in line with the project's proposal; except for the activity of the Second National Conference that was postponed to December 2014

The PEACE project is considered an important initiative towards promoting women's rights in Iraq. This is mainly through providing legal assistance, and raising awareness of society actors. According to partners, the project was able to improve women's socio-economic conditions. A victimized woman said that the PEACE project was able to provide women with some rights. Another one said that the project contributed to reducing honor killing and multi marriage in Kurdistan but resulted, on the other hand, in an increase of divorce rate. Some partners said that the political situation did not allow the project to come up with solid and permanent solutions towards ending violence against women. According to them, having effective solutions is still slow and weak. A political will was needed to accelerate efforts and reach the change that Iraqi women desire. In this way it could have met the core goals of the PEACE project in Iraq.

According to victimized women, the PEACE project contributed to changing their personal lives. Women learned to have stronger wills in defending their rights inside and outside their domestic lives. These women have become able to depend on themselves and not to give up to misery. According to some victimized women, Islam is obstructing them from reaching positions in the decision making process.

B. Aim of the End-term Evaluation

This End-term Evaluation is an assessment of outcomes and impacts achieved through the implementation of the PEACE Project's activities that started in September 2012 and implemented most of its activities by August 2014; except for one activity that got delayed till December 2014 for security reasons. The End-term evaluation aims specifically at assessing:

- The level of achievements in the activities and outputs of the project, as outlined in the M&E plan;
- The pace and quality of implementation, variances, and unachieved activities occurred, based on the outputs and the outcomes achieved;
- The level of coordination amongst the various constituencies of the Project;
- A projection of the extent to which the project was fully prepared to achieve its objectives; and
- The recommendations made to be followed up in the future, and to further enhance the outcomes and impacts achieved by the PEACE project in the Iraqi society.

C. Research Techniques and Methods

The end- term evaluation was based upon the following techniques:

- Desk review analysis;
- Interviews with the implementing staff;
- Interviews with the Stakeholders;
- Interviews with the beneficiaries; and
- Analysis of the questionnaires given to the beneficiaries of the project.

Part II: Findings

A. Concurrence extent with PEACE Proposal

Most activities required by the second half of the project were successfully achieved, except for the second National conference that was postponed till the end of December 2014. The first half of the project focused on conducting interviews with victims of Gender Based Violence, forming coalitions in provinces, organizing trainings to lawyers, in addition to printing and distributing case studies on women experiencing violence.

In the second half of the project, more attention was given to the provision of services by lawyers to women facing violence. This is in addition to publishing and disseminating the National Charter with its respective public statements supporting it as required by the project's proposal. Special attention was given to holding hearing sessions by the task force and partner NGOs. The required media awareness campaigns were achieved in line with the project's proposal. Interviewing victimized women showed that implementation was very much in line with the PEACE proposal and main objectives.

Awareness campaigns organized by the media and the further knowledge acquired by women about the personal status laws were also strong points aligned with the project's proposal.

There has been however differences according to the regions of Iraq; A victimized woman for instance said that the main problem lies in having different laws among provinces. For example, laws in Kurdistan are different from laws in other regions of Iraq, and the changes therefore made in certain laws cannot be applied equally among provinces. The overall alignment of the project's activities with the proposal has been evaluated as very good.

“The project was able to improve women’s socio-economic conditions and provide them with stability”

Mr Imad Zeinel (PEACE Project Manager in Basrah)

B. Alignment with the PEACE Monitoring and Evaluation plan

Most of the project’s activities were successfully achieved in line with the M&E plan. The only delayed activity was activity five of objective three which entails arranging the second National Conference. The overall evaluation of the project’s alignment with the M&E plan was excellent. Analysis of the information received showed that the activities related to the objectives covered by the M&E plan have been achieved as follows:

The final outcome regarding activity one of objective one exceeded the expected outcome of 100 interviewees presented in the M&E plan where victimized women who were interviewed reached a number of 102 in the end-term period. This was achieved with the assistance of a specialized lawyer who interviewed victimized women. According to PEACE managing staff, a mapping and an analytical study on the cases of violence experienced by women in Iraq was prepared during the period appointed to support the National Charter in the different provinces in Iraq. A sample case study was received and evaluated in the entire end-term evaluation report.

Conducting case studies is considered an important achievement reached by the Iraq Foundation. It contributed to our recommendation in the Mid-term Evaluation report towards increasing the documentation of the findings and the conclusions coming out from the interviews with women who were facing violence. Results of activity two of objective one were reached in the mid-term period where five meetings of men and women were held in each province of Iraq, and a total number of fifty meetings were organized in line with the M&E Plan. In this way, women have increased their visibility as peace promoters at the local level by 50% as required by the M&E plan.

Activity three of this objective was also reached in the mid-term period where five local coalitions of men and women in the five provinces were organized, and five public statements were released in line with the M&E plan. Activity four of this objective was reached in the mid-term period where the first National Conference was organized on September 7, 2013 and resulted in drafting a National Charter with a number of ten recommendations.

The second day of the first National Conference was held on the 3rd of October 2013. Gathering votes demonstrates consensus supporting the National Charter was also achieved according to the expected outcomes of the M&E plan. Samples of questionnaires were received and evaluated by the end-term evaluation report in this regard. The general evaluation of objective one has been evaluated as excellent.

As for objective two, all of the required outcomes of the activities were reached in the mid-term period. Activity one has been successfully achieved where a training course was conducted for 25 lawyers representing the five provinces in the mid-term period. This came in line with the expected outcomes of the M&E plan. As for activity two of objective two, the final number of women who benefited from the services provided by lawyers, according to the information

revealed by the received reports reached a number of 1583 by September 30, 2014; where 1033 women received legal consultation and 550 were provided with legal representation at courts

This result exceeded the expected output of 1500 beneficiaries presented in the M&E plan. Services given by lawyers were provided to women among the five provinces of Basrah, Babil, Baghdad, Diyala and Erbil. The security situation affected the provision of services provided by the legal clinic in Diyala province.

Partners said that legal consultations given to women in prisons contributed to reducing the impact of violence experienced by women, but did not contribute to reducing violence in prisons. This needs more time and greater efforts. According to them, the project dealt with limited categories of women, but with time, this will lead to substantial solutions for all women experiencing violence. Other partners said that violence is still occurring in prisons as a result of bad security conditions which are obstructing the success of efforts made by social actors to stop violence against women from taking place.

Pre and post questionnaires were given to women who were provided with legal representations. The number of women who were provided with legal representation at courts reached 1033 and 550 women received legal consultations. Surveys show the benefits received by women and the level of progress and change which the women reached in this area. This was through acquiring further knowledge about the personal status laws. On the other hand, victimized women were contacted and asked about the means they have used in facing the violence that they had experienced. They said that they faced these situations in different ways like: asking the help of some family members, raising a claim to the ministry of women's affairs, seeking the help of lawyers. Some women had received no solutions by lawyers so far. The results of this objective can be evaluated as excellent.

All the outcomes of the activities required by objective three were achieved. Regarding activity one, a National Charter was published and disseminated in the end-term period of the project.

Three public statements supporting the Charter were released on October 3, 2013 and thirteen statements were received by 31 August 2014. This was followed by printing 5000 posters and 6000 brochures which presented the national coalition. The task force prepared a work plan to engage citizens in peace building. The work plan stresses the importance of women's engagement and participation in all levels of peace building. Further interactions were made by the task force with religious leaders to end violence against women.

As a result of these interactions, four statements were issued in support of the National Charter. Seven additional supporting statements were endorsed by the media in the provinces of Basra and Diyala. The total number of conducted statements reached fourteen statements. This in turn

exceeded the expected outcome of the three statements presented by the M&E plan. The last achievement regarding the support provided to the National Charter was the decisions released by ministers and deputies who called for adopting the items of the Charter. This shall contribute to increasing women's participation in peace making. Statements released by mayors in provinces were also considered important contributions in the support to the National Charter.

Another achievement includes the release of official statements by ministers that adopt and support the participation of women in peace making. This was considered a great response by the Iraq Foundation, following the recommendation related to speeding up the implementation of awareness raising campaigns among local and national government decision-makers. The number of released statements was not however specified.

As for activity two, the required outcomes were achieved in the mid-term period in line with the M&E plan. A number of 500 copies of case studies report were printed and distributed to partner NGOs and related stakeholders. The hearing sessions which serve as advocacy meetings to increase support for policies of the charter and to inform policy makers on UNSC 1325 Resolution, as required by activity three were held by the Task Force along with partner NGOs for women experiencing violence. They included 53 total sessions: 8 in Basra, 14 in Erbil, 12 in Baghdad, 9 in Babil, 10 in Diayala.

Through this step, the Iraq Foundation successfully responded to our recommendation in the mid-term evaluation on holding advocacy meetings to increase the support for policies recommended in the Charter. The staff said that among the most important achievements made by the project was urging the head of ministers to implement the strategy of the Security Council number 1325. Iraq is one of the Arab countries that adopted the Security Council decision and set a timeline for its implementation.

The staff added that the partner NGOs in provinces conducted hearing sessions with officials on the local and national levels. Women experiencing violence participated in these sessions.

Questionnaires were distributed among them on supporting the National Charter. Hence, women's participation in the hearing sessions contributed to supporting the items of the National Charter. The staff said that questionnaires were also distributed among the task force in the five provinces in support of the National Charter. This helped in strengthening communication between local and national officials. According to activity four, awareness raising campaigns were organized by the media through an electronic competition on the IF official website in support to the National Charter.

Television production companies were reached to design a spot for the campaign. A Facebook page was created also. This page continued to be updated on a daily basis by the IF staff where

activities and achievements of the partners in the five provinces were being presented. The page has 508 likes, and the partners are working on sharing the link of the page among beneficiaries and task force members. This is considered an important attempt towards encouraging interactive discussions regarding GBV related topics. Two television and radio spots were produced. The broadcasting of the spots faced some delays due to the concentration of media on the current security deterioration in Iraq. The TV spots were broadcasted for five days on two channels; Al-Forat and Al-Rasheed Channels.

The broadcast on Al Forat channel; was from 13 till 17 September 2014 and on Al-Rasheed channel; from 17 till 21 September 2014. And a Radio spot was broadcasted for 40 times on Khanikin radio station in Diyala

The task force team members engaged government officials at the national and the provincial levels to seek endorsement of the Charter. This was done through meetings, letters and statements in the media. The organized meetings included 8 in Basra, 14 in Erbil, 12 in Baghdad, 9 in Babil, 10 in Diayala. This came up with the release of seven support statements as mentioned previously. This is considered a great response by the Iraq Foundation to our recommendation in the Mid-term Evaluation on organizing media campaigns to strengthen the support for the Charter.

Concerning activity five of this objective, the the Second National Conference was postponed for security reasons from August to September and finally took place on the 22nd of December 2014; where 136 persons attended including NGOs, stakeholders as well as officials, government representatives and media. The number of attendees exceeded 90 persons; like it was mentioned in the initial M&E plan. This conference came up with a briefing about the tangible outputs achieved throughout the project; like the results of the database collected from 1583 victimized women, the progress achieved on the National Charter and with a set of ten recommendations presented in the Score Card. The overall evaluation of this objective can be evaluated as very good.

C. Strategies executed by the PEACE Project

The PEACE project followed many strategies in the implementation of activities in the mid-term period. These strategies included building strong partnerships and consultations with national and local organizations, coordinating with several social actors like ministries and police offices, in addition to forming coalitions and documenting case studies. Case studies were also conducted and documented in the end-term period.

Strategies followed in the end-term period focused on the following:

- Conducting further interviews with women experiencing violence ;
- Provision of legal services to GBV cases by lawyers;

- Publishing and disseminating public statements that support the National Charter;
- Publishing posters and brochures presenting the national coalition;
- Holding hearing sessions by the task force and partner NGOs
- Organizing media awareness campaigns; and
- Second National Conference and Publication of score card

Strategies adopted by Iraq Foundation have been effective and efficient.

D. cooperation with women-led NGOs in five provinces

The mid-term period witnessed a huge cooperation of women-led NGOs in ending violence against women. This was through the provision of services to large groups of women experiencing violence. Women-led NGOs played a very important role in forming coalitions between men and women and in supporting the legal centers in the provinces. In the end term period, hearing sessions were held by the task force and partner NGOs in five provinces of Basra, Baghdad, Erbil, Diyala and Babil.

Women-led NGOs participated in the organized awareness campaigns on violence against woman. Partner NGOs in provinces conducted hearing sessions with actors on the local and national levels.

On the other hand, IF helped the five NGOs to build their capacities on the legal assistance provision component; where three NGOs in Baghdad, Babil and Basrah were able to develop a great knowledge and allocate fund from their own resources to continue their work in the legal clinics. The cooperation with some women-led NGOs in some provinces moved from the cooperation to the partnership level; where NGOs have developed the sense of ownership towards the project and showed seriousness in sustaining it within their organizations.

Hence, the evaluation of this part is very good.

E. Lawyers' training leverage

Trainings were already provided to 25 lawyers representing the five provinces. It has been appreciated that the selected lawyers have high experience especially in the personal status law and in dealing with women experiencing violence. But no follow-up training was provided as recommended in the mid-term evaluation report, with the knowledge that this is not required by the M&E Plan.

Lawyers provided services to victimized women and have established procedures to provide them with support. This enabled them to officially register with the social affairs directorates and made them eligible for financial assistance. Lawyers helped women obtain their documents and process their paperwork of displacement. Hence, the general evaluation of this part is very good.

F. Networking Mechanisms

During the end-term period, networking activities were arranged. This was through a competition conducted on IF website to support the National Charter. Furthermore, television production companies were reached to design a television spot for the campaign, and a Facebook page was created.

According to the managing staff, the project was able to use websites, Facebook, printings, newspapers, as an attempt to promote items of the Charter. Last report stated that two television spots and a Radio spot were produced. Two TV spots were broadcasted on Al Forat (for 40 times) and Al-Rasheed (for 30 times) Channels; consecutively from the 13th till the 17th of September 2014 and from the 17th till the 21st of September 2014. And a Radio spot was broadcasted for 40 times on Khanikin radio station in Diyala

The networking part has been evaluated as good and further interventions should be undertaken by the media because it was able to play the most important role in the promotion of the project and in preventing and decreasing violence against women.

G. Success of advocacy interventions with CSOs

Partner NGOs and CSOs played important roles in the implementation of the project activities. They contributed to the formation of coalitions in the provinces, and participated in the formation and dissemination of the National Charter. They have also participated in the hearing sessions held by the task force with officials on the local and national levels. This included hearing sessions organized in Basra, 14 in Erbil, 12 in Baghdad, 9 in Babil, 10 in Diayala. NGOs were the main agents in interviewing victimized women, where they made their own observations about the problems and difficulties faced by women. They also contributed in the media awareness raising campaigns and provided trainings to lawyers.

According to partners, NGOs could have played a stronger role. Some partners said that NGOs greatly influenced the opinions of officials and the decision makers at the government. Other partners said that NGOs played an important role in inducing change in all women's issues after 2003, and that NGOs are aiming towards strengthening women's participation in the political life. According to partners, NGOs need a strong political will in order to work properly. Some partners said that women activists like women union played an important role in influencing decision makers regarding women's rights and in urging the society to accept these rights. The general effectiveness of CSOs and NGOs' participation in the project implementation is evaluated as excellent.

“Women union played an important role in influencing decision makers regarding women’s rights and in urging the society to accept these rights.”

Mrs Chahrazad Al Ali

H. Corroboration with national and local government officials

The second part of the project was characterized by the involvement of officials at the local and national levels. Participation of government officials was mainly in the endorsement of the National Charter by releasing letters and support statements especially through the media.

IF and partner NGOs used the media in broadcasting for the PEACE Project where several television and radio interviews with local and regional channels were conducted.

Channels addressed the topic of the National Charter, legal clinics and other subjects related to violence against women. Government officials also participated in the hearing sessions as part of the advocacy meeting with the task force. The organized hearing sessions included 8 in Basra, 14 in Erbil, 12 in Baghdad, 9 in Babil, 10 in Diayala. Hearing sessions were organized in the provinces of Basra, Baghdad, Erbil, Diayala and Babil. Partners considered that meetings with officials contributed to some extent in raising awareness. Other partners said that the political orientation doesn’t deal with women’s issues as a priority, and that’s exactly why such issues get postponed and are negatively dealt with.

“The political orientation doesn’t deal with women’s issues as a priority, and that’s exactly why such issues get postponed and are negatively dealt with.”

Mrs Amal kabashi

I. National Charter and public statements characteristics

The National Charter and its respective public statements were published on the second day of the national conference. The Charter came up with a set of recommendations; they include:

- Promoting women’s participation in politics, decision making positions and state institutions.
- Enforcing the government to protect ethnic groups as well as displaced women by setting a strong working mechanism for this purpose;
- Strengthening the role of religious people in combating gender based violence;
- Assigning financial allocations for social security at the Women's Care Department;
- Releasing equitable legislation for women in line with international conventions and UNSCR 1325 Resolution;
- Integrating the principles of human rights in the school curriculum;
- Protecting family issues including the domestic law and the personal status courts;

- Organizing awareness campaigns with the media and civil society organizations in addition to creating a special database for all GBV victims to be used by official agencies in coordination with civil society;
- Ensuring the coordination of the task force with the government in the development of a national strategy for combating violence against women; and
- Promoting women parliamentarians and women's rights by forming coalitions defending them.

On the other hand, partners recommended the following:

- Finding unified solutions in facing the problem of violence experienced by women;
- Providing women experiencing violence with legal representation in courts and not only legal consultations;
- Allocating the needed funds for ratifying the law on combating violence against women and the domestic violence law;
- Increasing the number of women participating in the process of decision making;
- Strengthening the women's will in defending themselves against the violence they experience; and
- Reducing the tribal and the primitive traditional impact on women.

Votes demonstrating consensus supporting the National Charter was conducted. Analysis of the questionnaires presented to experts showed support to the National Charter by all participants (67 participants). The participants constituted of representatives of associations, social experts, employees, teachers, consultants, trainers, journalists, administrators, lawyers, activists, engineers, and women experiencing violence. All participants expressed their wish to take part in the taskforce in supporting the National Charter. Extensive efforts were made by the IF to publish and disseminate the National Charter through social media. This has contributed to raising awareness of the national government decision-makers.

Recommendations presented by the National Charter were also discussed in conferences, seminars, radio and television programs during the end-term period.

The National Charter is considered a very important tool in the process of combating gender based violence and in achieving the project's goals. It provides a solid mechanism that compiles all the social parts and actors in ensuring the good implementation of the project's activities, and contributes to the elimination of gender based violence in Iraq. The general evaluation of the National Charter is excellent.

J. Case studies: Results and Achievements

A sample case study on the conditions of 100 women experiencing violence was received. It was conducted in 2013. The main outcomes of this case study can be summarized as follows:

- The women experiencing violence who were part of the study were categorized as: widowed women (28%), divorced women (25.5%), married women (19.4%), women who were married for the first time (51%), and women who were married for the second time (6.1%).
- The majority of women who were part of the study belong to the age group 31-34 years old (17%).
- The main reasons behind violence as described by women were: traditions, the feeling of gender inferiority, the dominance of masculine identity, religion, terrorism and the presence of women within armed conflict situations. Partners said that ending violence comes in conflict with traditions and values of Iraqi society. Some interviewed women experiencing violence considered bad economic conditions were the main reasons behind the violence they're going through. Some women do not own houses and are also unemployed. And some others said that norms and traditions were the reasons behind the violence they experience.
- Types of violence included domestic violence, social violence, and institutional violence.
- Most of the women experiencing violence were domestic workers with 72.4%.
- The number of women who did not freely choose to get married constitutes 45.9%.
- 74% of women described their relationships with their husbands as tense and full of problems.
- The majority of women who have experienced violence got five children or more (53%).
- 75% of the targeted women said that they experienced feeling of inferiority based on their gender.

According to the managing staff, case studies showed different types of violence experienced by women and identified some specific problems and reasons behind it. They described the attitudes and behaviors of women and their families as well as their reactions towards violence. Case studies helped in identifying the relation between social and economic conditions in facing violence.

Staff said that some women raised claims to the concerned authorities as follows:

- 31% of the women experiencing violence raised claims to the concerned courts.
- 26% of the women experiencing violence reported their violence cases to police centers, and 7% went to centers that followed their cases.
- 60% of the violence cases were caused by men.
- Staff mentioned that 28% of people witnessed against GBV cases. Death as a result of violence reached 27% and in both cases the burden of proving the claim of violence falls

on the victimized women. A witness is considered one of the evidences and when not available, the claim might be rejected.

Interviewed women described their situations as miserable; they are living tiring lives and they are asking for help. Some women are subject to physical violence and some others to verbal violence. Some women said that they often think of committing suicide.

Although partners consider that more time should be dedicated to the case studies, we however evaluate the case studies as excellent, since they helped in providing a clearer image about the characteristics of women experiencing violence. The case studies have contributed to activating local partnerships, and sharing success stories of some victimized women, where 500 copies of case studies report were printed and distributed to partner NGOs and related stakeholders, and this is totally in line with what we recommended in the Mid-term Evaluation.

K. Second National Conference and Publication of Score card

Due to security circumstances deterioration; the Second National Conference was postponed from August to September and finally took place at the end of December 2014. 136 individuals representing a wide range of stakeholders, officials, NGOs and media; attended the conference which surpassed the number of 90 attendees mentioned in the initial M&E plan. A presentation of the PEACE project's achievements was made; including the results of the database conducted on 1583 victimized women in the Legal clinics, in addition to the progress achieved on the National Charter and the publication of the Score card.

The Score card measured the indicators established by the National Charter and detailed the reforms that should be done on the legal, social and economic levels. It evaluated the progress of implementing the 10 recommendations provided by the National Charter and delivered a kind of roadmap for possible future activities that -if adopted- will improve the government's interventions and action plans to combat GBV.

The ten recommendations of the score card are the following :

Recommendation# 1: Emphasize women's political participation and increasing their representation in decision-making at all levels of state institutions and Urge the Iraqi government to adopt a national plan which specifies the government priorities towards the implementation of UNSCR 1325 at the local level.

Recommendation#2: Develop effective mechanisms to protect internally displaced women with focusing on the special needs of women and girls during resettlement, rehabilitation, re-integration and in post conflict settings; Put pressure on the government to secure the rights of migrants, ethnic and religious minorities

Recommendation#3:Engage clerics and tribal leaders as partners in reducing violence against women to increase moderate religious awareness and reject harmful behaviors and misperceptions in the name of religion

Recommendation# 4: Re-evaluate the social security allocations by the state for women in particular; Urge the government to support the social security Department of Women's Care by raising the department's current allocations from the annual government budget; Increase the salaries of allowance for widows and heads of families; Motivate state ministries to develop financial allocations for projects related to women's economic empowerment.

Recommendation# 5: Work on issuing fair legislation for women and activating the constitutional laws regarding women's rights, economic and political equality in line with international conventions and UNSCR 1325

Recommendation# 6:Include the principles of human rights in general and the principles of women's rights in particular in school curriculums as a mean of promoting peace in the community

Recommendation# 7: Activating the role of the family protection units and encourage the government to accelerate the implementation of family protection law from all forms of violence; Conduct awareness campaign with civil society organizations and the media; Enhance the role of the personal status courts covering family affairs;

Recommendation #8:Create an accurate and comprehensive database for all widows and divorcees to support policy making and program plans; Create a special database for all GBV victims for use by official agencies in coordination with civil society organizations

Recommendation# 9: Encourage the government to expedite launching a national strategy for the women advancement and the National Strategy of Combating Violence against Women which was ratified in March 2013.

Recommendation#10 : Follow up and monitor the performance of women in the Parliament and Provincial and Districts Councils. The coalition will evaluate how supportive women leaders are of women's rights in order to promote positive efforts and provide support

Copies of this Score card were disseminated to all attendees including media.

Based on a survey conducted with 46 taskforce members from Baghdad, Babil, Bara, Erbil and on a bottom-up approach; this Score card is considered one of the most tangible and efficient outputs of the project.

Some of the Taskforce members described the Score Card and the National Charter as the cornerstone of a new Iraq where women have the right to participate in public life and have the right to be protected from all shapes of violence.

The overall evaluation of this activity can be evaluated as very good; as the recommendations are relevant and the problematic has been approached in a cross-sectoral way. The presence of a high number of attendees; stakeholders, partner NGOs, governmental and non-governmental organizations and media, gave credibility to the project and support to the recommendations.

L. Managing staff's points of view on the PEACE Project

In the analysis of the questionnaires, the staff considered that the project was able to provide legal assistance to a number of 1822 victimized women. The number of women who were provided with legal consultation reached 1583; 1033 women received legal consultation and 550 were provided with legal representation at courts. They also stated that the promotion of the National Charter was made through; websites, Facebook pages, printings, and newspapers. The staff said that the questionnaires were distributed among the task force in the five provinces. This helped in enhancing communication among local and national officials. According to staff, the case studies showed different types of violence faced by women and identified the problems and reasons behind it.

This is in addition to the attitudes and behaviors of women and their families as well as their reactions towards violence. The case studies helped in identifying the relation between social and economic conditions in dealing with violence. They also consider that the hearing sessions and the legal clinics were very important because they were getting in contact directly with victimized women and were providing a realistic and efficient legal intervention; through lawyers and legal representations and consultations. At the end, the staff said that this project came up with many important achievements; such as; the approval of the Head of Ministers to apply the strategy of the Security Council number 1325, the database conducted on 1583 victimized women and publishing the National Charter and the Score Card's set of recommendations.

The staff considered that the roadmap to protect women from violence is already made throughout the tangible outputs of this project and future efforts should be more oriented towards Lobbying on both International and National political levels in order to be put into effect.

Efforts and Lobbying should be done on International and National political levels- Mrs. Bassima Feily -PEACE project Coordinator

M. Beneficiaries' (women experiencing violence) points of view regarding the support provided by the PEACE Project

Interviewed women were asked whether they have ever experienced violence. Most of the women described their situations as miserable. Some of them said that they were subjected to physical violence and some others to verbal violence. Women said that the likely reasons behind violence are bad economic conditions as well as primitive norms and traditions. The collected database categorized violence in three categories: domestic violence, institutional violence and community violence. According to the victimized women, the project contributed in changing their personal lives but did not provide them with any opportunities in the decision making positions; as they are still excluded from the peace dialogue and have no place among the negotiators as a part of groups, institutions or even within their parties' organization.

Women talked about the strengths and weaknesses of the PEACE project. Strengths lied in the awareness campaigns organized by the media, and the further knowledge acquired by women about the personal status laws. The weakest point was in the law itself, which differed between regions of Iraq.

Women experiencing violence recommended making efforts to lessen the divorce rate that has recently increased due to the abolishment of multi marriages and honor killing. The suggested steps that should be taken in reducing divorce rates are: improving job opportunities, educational rights, and equal distribution of lands and financial proportions to the victimized women.

“ laws change but people’s minds don’t”

“Mrs Hind Jawad”- A victimized woman

N. Stakeholders and Partners' opinions regarding the PEACE Project

According to partners, violence in prisons needs more time and a greater effort. Some partners said that legal consultations given to women in prisons during visits contributed to reducing the impact of violence they used to experience. The political orientation does not give women's issues a priority. According to partners, the project was able to improve women's socio-economic conditions and to provide them with some stability.

Some partners found that the PEACE project's strengths lay in the networking with local and international organizations and they have found that the most important outputs of this project the establishment of legal clinics and providing legal assistance and representations in addition to the publication of the database and the National charter's recommendations and the approval of

the Head of Ministers to apply the strategy of the Security Council number 1325. And one partner said that the advocacy and developmental projects designed for Iraq should be written by local Iraqi experts in order to suit the real needs and to be relevant to the societies' norms and traditions. But all partners agreed on the importance of launching the Score card recommendations and that further cooperation is needed with local NGOs and a collective lobbying is needed on the national level; like demonstrations and other peaceful movements to urge the government put the recommendations in effect and not only protect women but to engage them in the peacebuilding process and be politically represented and active.

This is in addition to strengthening women's wills towards defending themselves and reducing the tribal impact on them by making continuous awareness sessions.

Part III: Conclusion and Recommendations

The implementation of the PEACE Project is evaluated as very good ,in spite of the many challenges that the project faced, mainly related to security. The project was characterized by a high level of enthusiasm amongst the managing staff as well as the Taskforce members during the implementation of the activities and a strong collaboration by stakeholders and local NGOs who showed dedication to the cause of this project and believe in the women's importance in society and in fighting against VAW. Even media was interested in the PEACE project's cause.

For a greater impact and more successful outcomes of activities in any future projects targeting gender based violence, the following points are recommended:

- More time should be dedicated for the preparation of the case studies on women experiencing violence;
- Giving specific attention to providing women in prisons with legal consultations;
- Opening centers inside women's organizations that welcome women for legal counseling;
- Opening more Legal clinics in all regions in Iraq to provide support and legal counseling and representations at the courts;
- Making more trainings for lawyers
- Making National Lobbying Coalitions in all provinces to put the national plan that supports UNSCR 1325 into effect and adding dedicating fund from the Iraqi government budget
- Making a wider network from local and international stakeholders and organizations that can support the cause and fight against VAW
- Giving continuous awareness raising sessions to women about VAW and how to protect themselves as well as leadership skills, mediation and peacebuilding education for a social and political participation
- Giving more attention to the Southern provinces and the areas of conflict where progress is being slower and more intervention is needed

- Introducing educational programs for victimized women through social media and widening the space of virtual interaction communication programs where women can share their stories and exchange experiences;
- Involving media in all advocacy campaigns and future movements
Assuring sustainability of the project by increasing the ownership of government institutions and media to the Score card's recommendations and making follow-up visits to government officials and continuing the lobbying and advocacy efforts and the networking with other local and international stakeholders in order to combat different aspects of violence against women and empowering their participation in the political life and the peacebuilding process.

All women were thankful to Iraq Foundation and to the PEACE project. Some women said that the Iraq Foundation stood by their sides and assigned lawyers to help them. They saved them from very bad conditions of violence after they presented evidences for their cases.

Some women said that the project helped them out through the provided trainings and the given advices. According to some victimized women, the project contributed to changing their personal lives. The project did not help much in providing women with opportunities in politics and decision making positions. It helped however by giving orientation on women's rights laws on the website. Women experiencing violence recommended the following:

- Issuing laws to limit the increase in divorce rate.
- Provision of some job opportunities for the victimized women.
- Assisting and saving the children of victimized women.
- Provision of equal distribution of lands and financial proportions by the Ministry of Women's Affairs.
- Provision of monthly salaries to the victimized women.
- Provision of educational rights and programs for the victimized women.

In overall; the PEACE project is considered the cornerstone for upcoming advocacy and lobbying projects. Working on this Women Empowerment project is somehow self- sustained due to its long term impact; as women are considered the nucleus basis for societies and upcoming generations. This Project has presented a solid database and has provided a very good platform and realistic recommendations that other NGOs and stakeholders can build on.



Dr. Ghassan Khalil
Independent Evaluator