

REPORT ON THE
FIRST MEETING OF THE
WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP ASSOCIATION

IRAQ WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP PROJECT

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW INSTITUTE
DEPAUL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW

OCTOBER 2008

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INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

The Iraq Women's Leadership Project (IWLP) is funded by the U.S. Department of State's International Women's Issues (G/IWI) Program. In this 24-month project, the International Human Rights Law Institute (IHRLI) of DePaul University strengthens the capacity of young women in Iraq to achieve substantive leadership roles in their country's transition to democracy. The project brings together a select group of law and professional students with talented and committed women leaders for sustained, participatory training and mentoring over a two-year period.

This project builds on IHRLI's previous work on human rights training, legal education reform, human rights documentation, and gender justice in Iraq. Through experiential learning, externships, participatory seminars and related activities, participants learn firsthand about women's rights advocacy and gain practical skills with a special focus on the special challenges of the current transitional period. The project begins with work in association with the University of Sulaimaniya, with the intention of later extending the program - security and logistics permitting - to other Iraqi universities.

FIRST ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF THE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP ASSOCIATION

On November 8, 2008, IHRLI/DePaul held the first organizational meeting of the Women's Leadership Association at Komalayatee Hall in Sulaimaniya. Opening the event, Ms. Kurdistan Daloye, IHRLI's Chief-of-Party, presented an overview of IHRLI/DePaul projects in Iraq over the past 4 years and reviewed the goals and activities of the Iraqi Women's Leadership Project. She concluded her remarks by extending a special welcome to Iraq's first lady in attendance, Ms. Talabani.

Following Ms. Daloye's introduction, Dr. Anwar Jaff, the Head of the Law Faculty at the University of Sulaimaniya confirmed his support for the project, highlighting the university's continuing partnership with IHRLI/DePaul University.

Ms. Dalia Salahadeen opened the mentorship component of the meeting. Emphasizing the project's central goals, she discussed the relationship between the mentors and the students and the objective of linking the program to the law faculty. Ms. Salahadeen highlighted the central role of current women leaders in providing capacity building to the future generations of Iraqi women professionals.

The meeting was attended by twenty-two mentors, professional women from diverse areas of Iraqi-Kurdish society including business, civil engineering, education, government, journalism, medicine, and women's athletics. These women were matched with the forty-five third and fourth-year female law students in attendance.

Each mentor introduced herself to the students, highlighting her education, work experiences, and the ways she could contribute to the project. Following this opening, each mentor engaged in one-on-one discussions with their designated mentees, discussing their interests, goals and life experiences.

The students thanked IHRLI/DePaul in a group discussion led by Ms. Jwan Osman, the designated student representative. Ms. Osman encouraged the students to work hard to become future women leaders of their country. The students also discussed the possibility of rotating among different mentors during the course of project.

Ms. Daloye noted that IHRLI/DePaul will arrange different workshops and seminars for the project and will hire international experts to work closely with both the mentors and the students. The diverse professions represented by the mentors will show the students both the challenges and opportunities that exist for women in these various fields. In closing, Ms. Daloye emphasized the central role that the Women's Student Leadership Association will play in support of the Women's Leadership Association.

Following the event, Dr. Anwar Jaff described the program as "a historic and important project for women in Iraq, particularly in Kurdish society." The project builds on over four years of human rights training, legal education reform, human rights documentation and gender justice programming in Iraq.

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS

The following include a few of the comments made by key participants at the meeting.

- Ms. Ameera, Project Manager of the National Museum “Amna Suraka,” which is located in the Security Directorate building used under the prior regime as a detention and torture facility, stated that she was excited to mentor students following her many years of experience and knowledge in history, human rights documentation and museum studies. In return, she expects to benefit from working closely with students who would strengthen her commitment to preserving and interpreting the past as a means of building the foundations for a democratic Iraq.
- Ms. Payman, Head of Media/Women Union Organization, emphasized the importance of being a female leader in contemporary Iraq. She affirmed that the mentor should be a good model to follow for the students in every aspect of life—both personal and professional.
- Ms. Raz Rasool, Consultant on Iraqi reconstruction and development, stated that the mentors should teach the students in a way that maximizes efficiency and serves to support the modernization of government and other elements of Iraqi society. She added that the process of teaching and mentoring will likely be especially useful with a focus on the sort of practical learning that is not common in Iraqi higher education.
- Ms. Ala Tahsin Talabani, Member of the Iraqi National Assembly, encouraged the students to participate in the project. She considers this project as a great opportunity to gain life and career experience and wisdom.

- Ms. Sozan Khala Shahab, Member of the Kurdistan National Assembly, stated that the mentors should focus on capacity building of the students, since academic training alone is not enough to produce true women leaders.
- Dr. Anwar Jaff, Head of the Department of Law, emphasized the commitment of the University of Sulaimaniya to the project and towards creating innovative educational programming that support gender justice and serves the needs of Iraqi women.

APPENDIX 1: MEETING SCHEDULE

Program	Meeting Topics	Time
I.	Registration	11:30-12:00 pm
II.	Welcome/Introductions and an Overview of IHRLI Projects, Ms. Kurdistan Daloye, Chief-of-Party International Human Rights Law Institute, DePaul University College of Law	12:00-12:15 pm
III.	Formal Endorsement by the University of Sulaimaniya, Dr. Anwar Jaff, Head of Department, University of Sulaimaniya, College of Law & Politics	12:15-12:20 pm
IV.	Presentations by the Mentors	12:20-01:15 pm
V.	Formal announcement of matching of Mentors and Students, Ms. Dalia Salahadeen, Training Manager, International Human Rights Law Institute, DePaul University, College of Law	01:15-01:30 pm
VI.	Lunch	01:30-02: 15 pm
VII.	The Statement of the Students, Ms. Jwan Osman/Fourth year/Law School	02:15-02-30 pm
VIII.	Approval of the Program and role of Women's Leadership Association	02:30-02:45 pm
IX.	Comments and suggestions of the participants	02:45-03:00 pm
X.	Closing the Meeting, Ms. Kurdistan Daloye	03:00-03:15 pm

APPENDIX 2: PHOTOS FROM MEETING



STUDENT MENTEES



PROFESSIONAL MENTORS



FIRST LADY & GUESTS

APPENDIX 3: MEETING ATTENDEES

Forty-two female law students participated, as well as twenty-two professional mentors, six distinguished guests, and eight members of IHRLI's staff. Media outlets, The Rewan Center, Nawroza TV, and Haftana Weekly, covered the meeting.

GUESTS

- Ms. Talabani, Iraq's First lady and the wife of Iraqi President Jalal Talabani
- Mr. Dildar Kittani, Office of Deputy Secretary General, Patriot Union of Kurdistan
- Ms. Khaje, University Lecturer
- Ms. Tolla, women's rights activist
- Ms. Shereen, Assistant to the Iraqi President
- Dr. Anwar Jaff, Head of Department/Law faculty.

MENTORS

- Ms. Rwnak Rauf, Honorary Member of Rewan Newspaper, Mother of Dr. Barham Salah (Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister)
- Ms. Parween Babaker, Wza Petroleum Manager & former Minister of Industry
- Ms. Ala Tahsin Talabani, Member of Iraq National Assembly
- Ms. Galawezh Jabary, Member of Kirkuk Provincial Council
- Ms. Wzira Jalal, Founder & Manager of New Life Organization for Anfal's Women
- Ms. Raz Rasool, Consultant of Iraqi reconstruction and development
- Ms. Fazilla Ibrahim Salih, Kurdistan Social Development Organization Manager
- Ms. Ameerah Muhamed, Project Manager, National Museum (Amna Suraka)
- Dr. Muhabat Salih Saeid, Snr. Lecturer, Medical School, Suleimaniya University
- Ms. Narmin Muhamed Wali Baram, Administrative Supervisor, Directorate of Education

- Ms. Chro Shahab, Journalist and Women's Advocate, College of Humanitarian Sciences
- Ms. Bayan Faick Mahmood, Civil Engineer, Directorate of Reconstruction
- Ms. Sozan Khala Shahab, Member of Kurdistan National Assembly
- Ms. Khanim Raheem, Program Manager, Asuda Organization
- Ms. Parwa Ali, Head of Media, Directorate General of Culture
- Ms. Kner Adbullah, Member of Suleimaniyha Provincial Council
- Ms. Payman Izzatdeen, Head of Media, Women Union Organization
- Ms. Rewaz Faek, Editor in Chief, Tawar Newspaper
- Ms. Dalia Qazaz, A.G.E. Office Manager
- Ms. Samira Abdullah Ahmad, Responsible of Women' Sport Activities, Kurdistan Olympic Committee
- Ms. Dashnye Daloye, Director of Student and Academic Services (SAS), American University
- Ms. Chimam Salih Kaka Bra, Contractor & Owner of Khawen Company
- Ms. Paiwast A.Maruf, Management Committee Member, WOLA organization

IHRLI STAFF

- Ms. Kurdistan Daloye, Chief-of-Party
- Ms. Dalia Salahadeen Isamadeen, Training Manager
- Mr. Samall Mustafa Husain, Externship Director
- Mr. Bamo Parwez Aziz, Faculty Advisor
- Mr. Dilshad Najim Othman, Finance Manager
- Mr. Yad Kamal Rasheed, Data Entry Manager
- Ms. Shno Wasim Sadiq, Office Manager
- Ms. Vian Farok Mohammed, Administrative Assistant