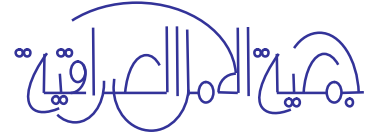




العراق  
WIT IRAQ



**Iraqi Al-Amal Association**  
**For the welfare of humanity**

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December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008

### WIT Iraq Overview

#### Phase I (December 2006 –2008)

Since December 2006, the Women in Technology (WIT) program, with funding from the US Department of State's Pledge for Iraq Initiative, has operated in Iraq through its lead implementing partner, Iraqi Al-Amal Association (IAA), providing IAA and its vast network of affiliate organizations with training opportunities for women in Business Planning, Professional Development and Information Technology. Within one year of program implementation WIT expanded from three partner organizations to eight. In July 2007, WIT training classes launched with 47 trainees. Twelve months later the total number of women trained through the program had reached 522—222 trainees above the original program benchmark of 300. Based on current enrollment projections, WIT will train 940 women by December 2008.

Despite ongoing security challenges, infrastructure deficiencies, and fuel shortages the local WIT Iraq team has made great strides in accomplishing WIT's training and program objectives. Key outcomes of Phase I include:

- **681 women trained to-date on Microsoft's Unlimited Potential (UP) Curriculum and WIT's Professional Development Workshops**
- **940 women to be trained by December 2008**
- **Six geographically diverse partner organizations located in Baghdad, Erbil, Kerbala and Najaf**
- **78 WIT trainers trained to deliver Microsoft UP, Professional Development and Business Planning for Sustainability Training**
- **Three WIT partners in Baghdad, Erbil and Kerbala that have increased their organizations' revenues through the implementation of a cost recovery model**
- **Thirty-four WIT graduates secured employment and internship opportunities at NGOs, universities, government ministries and media organizations as a result of their participation in WIT**

#### Other key achievements

In addition to achieving the key performance benchmarks listed above, the Women in Technology program in Iraq has also had successful outcomes in the following areas:

- **Rebuilding communities - participants have responded enthusiastically to WIT training which employs extensive group work,**

often integrated with existing IAA training programs on conflict resolution, women's empowerment and civil society development. This model has been very effective in addressing the specific needs and realities of participants. Most importantly it has helped women isolated from social and work environments to reconnect, build relationships, reestablish trust between divided communities and participate in social/group activities.

- **Mentorship** – after completing their WIT training, many graduates choose to volunteer their time promoting and facilitating youth workshops through IAA, which focus on civil dialogue, conflict resolution and peace building.
- **Advocacy** – other WIT graduates choose to participate in activities with the Iraqi Women's Network, a coalition of nearly 80 women's NGOs in Iraq that lobby for women's rights and equal representation in government
- **Empowering Youth** – faced with limited employment options, IAA sponsors training for WIT graduates, aged 18-25, to become IT and Professional Development trainers for the program. In July 2008, IAA secured funding for a Youth Training Center in Baghdad. The center is operated entirely by youth under the supervision of key IAA staff. WIT is one of the many programs that are run out of the Youth Center. Youth are currently being trained on WIT's Business Planning for Sustainability curriculum to learn how to run their center on a cost recovery model.

WIT participants also contributed to the development of Al Amal's online youth forum <http://www.shabab-alamal.com>. The site boasts 5,690 users and 189,256 posts! The forum is customized with chat and polling functions. Youth have created sub-forums on a variety of topics including election awareness, computer training, social issues, sports and travel.

- **Public, private and NGO sector cooperation** – by partnering with a wide range of organizations in Iraq, WIT has been able to bring diverse groups together for program activities and training, building trust and greater cooperation between them.
- **Community Service** - Most recently WIT participants spearheaded a project to distribute 110,000 prepared Ramadan Iftar meals and 30,000 school bags with stationary to orphaned students and to families in need in 11 governorates. The project, sponsored by the UNDP and the Sheikh Bin Zaid Al Nahyan Foundation, aimed to assess the economic and social status of the governorates targeted. WIT participants processed 12,000 surveys and analyzed the results putting in to practice their IT and professional development skills learned through WIT.

## **Phase II (January 2009 – April 2010)**

Demand for WIT training continues to grow with training centers in Kerbala, Erbil and Baghdad maintaining waiting lists of over 200 women. With an established network of committed partners and engaged participants already in place, WIT Iraq is **poised for further expansion** in a number of key areas: training menu offerings, capacity-building activities to increase and support sustainability, and geographic expansion in the North and South of Iraq. With proper funding to continue the project after December 2008, WIT will train 1,500 more women by April 2010 at present capacity.

### **List of current partners / WIT training sites:**

- ◆ Iraqi Al Amal Association (IAA), Baghdad
- ◆ Iraqi Women's Network, Baghdad
- ◆ IAA Youth Center, Baghdad
- ◆ IAA Erbil
- ◆ IAA Kerbala
- ◆ IAA Najaf
- ◆ IAA Tikreet (temporarily closed)
- ◆ IAA Sadr City (temporarily closed)