



IRAQ COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM

USAID's Iraq Community Action Program (CAP) works in rural and urban communities across Iraq to promote democracy and prevent and mitigate conflict. Working directly through partner NGOs and in consultation with local government counterparts, CAP is creating representative, participatory community groups to identify critical priorities and implement programs to address those needs.

The USAID/Iraq Community Action Program (CAP) fosters direct citizen involvement in the rehabilitation of Iraq, enabling Iraqis to address the local needs in their respective communities. CAP is a valuable tool for social mobilization and grassroots democratization. Citizens are forming local community groups to identify and prioritize the needs of their communities and develop projects that address those needs.

CAP is working to create a sense of ownership and rebuild mutual trust within Iraqi communities. The open and transparent process of CAP promotes improved communication within the communities and helps to mitigate the effects of long-standing conflict. The CAP communities are required to contribute between 15 to 25 percent of the value of each project. The contribution is usually in the form of labor or in-kind materials and support. For the first time, Iraqi communities have a direct stake in their civil and social infrastructure. This sense of ownership is further strengthened through the CAP process as communities are responsible for needs identification, prioritization and project development. The community action groups (CAGs) are also actively engaged in overseeing project implementation and must certify that all projects have been successfully completed before final payment is authorized.

The essential features on the CAP process consist of the following:

- Grassroots democratization;
- Critical needs being met while fostering active citizen involvement in community development;
- Process-driven and demand-based development: CAP project funding provides the incentive and the benefit to communities willing to actively engage in the CAP process;
- Formation of voluntary informal community action groups (CAGs), that represent the range of minority groups in communities, across gender, tribal, ethnic and religious groups;
- Facilitation of the CAGs openly and inclusively, to identify common interests, needs and priorities, as well as to foster development of projects that address high priority needs;
- Monitoring and evaluation by CAP implementers of each project to ensure accountability and gauge effectiveness;
- Assistance to CAGs through provision of appropriate training and technical assistance in areas including (but not limited to) project management, financial management, defining their role(s) and mission, constituency building and social partnership development; and
- Increasing levels of responsibility and authority delegation to local CAP partners and CAGs, so that the CAP becomes more Iraqi-driven and sustainable.



To date, USAID has committed over \$266 million to 5,071 projects while Iraqi communities have committed more than \$78 million. CAP has established over 1400 community associations in 18 governorates and created more than 2 million short term and 31,000 long term jobs. Five U.S. NGOs each concentrate on a region: north, Baghdad, southwest central, southeast central, and south.

Northern Region (ACDI/VOCA) The program focuses on the conflict-prone areas of the Sunni Triangle, Mosul, Kirkuk and the Iran-Iraq border. The partner NGO has completed 794 projects with \$49 million in total project commitments, including establishing a youth center in Hawija, improving the Tikrit water supply, and developing income generation projects in the north.

Southwest Central Region (CHF) The partner NGO has a strong presence in the Shi'i holy cities of Najaf and Karbala, as well as Hillah through active community associations. A strong emphasis on critical infrastructure needs has provided these communities with sewage and water services, improved schools, and repaired vital social infrastructure. They have completed 433 projects and have \$49 million in project commitments.

Baghdad Region (IRD) Income generation is an important emphasis in the Baghdad program, where 1,464 projects have been completed. A marketplace for over 740 vendors is being constructed, and crews are cleaning up medical waste dumps and educating medical personnel on proper disposal methods. Total project commitments are \$64 million.

Southeast Central Region (Mercy Corps) 308 projects are complete with a total of \$49 million in commitments. In the Shi'i heartland, these projects address needs resulting from decades of government neglect. Activities focus on water, sewerage, community clean-up, and school rehabilitation.

Southern Region (Save the Children) With a total commitment of \$55,76 million, 1,064 projects have been completed through more than 200 community action groups which average 40 percent women's participation. Projects have focused on immediate community needs such as sewage clean-up, water treatment and distribution, public health, and girls' access to education. *(Save the Children closed its program on April 1, 2006 due to security situation)*

Civilian Victims Assistance CAP partners received an additional fund to assist civilian victims of the armed conflict. Levels of funding for the MRIWVF vary across partners as civilians in some areas of Iraq have been more affected by Coalition Forces operations than populations in other parts of the country (ACDI/VOCA \$3,8 million; CHF, SC and MC \$3,3 million each and IRD \$5,3 million). Community members and the beneficiaries themselves are involved in all stages of the program, including project identification, design, prioritization, and implementation.

The projects have provided assistance to individuals, families, and entire communities harmed as a result of coalition military operations. The types of projects vary greatly, and include medical assistance, income generation, home repair and refurbishment, public building repair, and assistance to local organizations supporting war victims. To date 821 projects have been implemented directly assisting 764,388 war victims and more than 1,3 million their family members.