



Annual Report 2018

ADVISORY PRACTICE FOR INNOVATION IN GOVERNANCE

elbarlament – cultures of democracy is an independent, nonpartisan and impartial organisation founded on the premise that civil society, parliaments, governments, administrations and culture in transition require a specific and innovative quality of technical assistance and advisory service, taking into consideration political analysis, research and evaluation of assistance practices. The specific approach of elbarlament is to create sustainable links between politics and civil society by developing the potential of actors in all sectors concerned. elbarlament creates innovative pathways between societal and cultural activities to foster democracy and participatory governance. It supports partners and beneficiaries in developing their potential to contribute to good governance, the rule of law and the prosperity of the people they serve and represent through strong, open and effective administrative, operational and decision-making processes and structures.

elbarlament – cultures of democracy draws expertise from a wide range of partnerships and a multi-national pool of experts covering areas from democratisation, rule of law, public administration reform issues to sectoral policies such as budgets and planning, security sector oversight, human rights, youth and women participation.

elbarlament is a member of the “Facharbeitskreis Governance” of the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) and of the Community of Practice of the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD) based in Brussels.

ADVICE & CAPACITY BUILDING

Institutional dimension

Women think Iraq anew

In 2018, in cooperation with the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen e.V. (ifa) and financed by the German Federal Foreign Office, elbarlament – cultures of democracy carried out a series of capacity building and policy workshops for women leaders in Iraq. The project “Women think Iraq anew” strives to empower female members of the Iraqi National Council of Representatives as well as women from civil society, politics, academia and the legal

professions to develop a joint vision for the future of their country. The project promotes new approaches ensuring the participation of women in democratic, societal and peace processes, as well as in state-building on a local, regional and national scale.

Since the start of the project in 2017, elbarlament has brought together women from many different regions of Iraq - including those formerly occupied by militant groups and terrorist organisations - and assisted them in building a strong and durable network. Project participants come from Baghdad, Dohuk, Kirkuk, Mosul, Basra, Nasiriya, Erbil, Maisan, Al-Amara, Babel, Al Anbar and Sulaimaniyyah, and belong to different political parties, civil society organisations and ethnic and religious groups.

In 2018, at the request of women from the project's core group, elbarlament designed and implemented a workshop with the organisers of civil movements from the southern regions of Iraq where protests had erupted in the summer - against high unemployment rates, corruption and lack of access to drinking water. The main aim of the workshop was to do a stakeholder mapping, to work out joint ideas among the different groups and to foster the role of women in the civil movements.

Furthermore, the participants made their jointly developed Memorandum for the future of Iraq available to the public on a dedicated website and disseminated the text widely among Iraqi stakeholders. The text had been developed in 2017 and puts forth recommendations for enhancing the participation of women in domestic peace- and state-building processes. The highlight was a conference on December 13th in Baghdad, where the women presented the main demands included in the Memorandum in front of Iraqi media. The Memorandum can be accessed on the project website at www.womenthinkiraqanew.org.

The project will continue in 2019, with elbarlament assisting the participants in formulating public policies and laws that are required to put their recommendations into practice.

Societal and cultural dimension

elbarlament for Syria 2018 - Women taking the lead for a new Syria

In 2018, elbarlament – cultures of democracy together with the Syrian civil society organisation Women Now For Development launched and developed the project „elbarlament for Syria 2018 - Syrian women take the lead“. The project targeted up to 50 women from Syria who were based in Lebanon as refugees and who sought to develop and enhance their political and social leadership qualifications, thereby promoting the active participation of women in rebuilding Syria following the end of the war. We supported the integration of the participants into their host communities in Lebanon, while equally preparing them for their eventual reintegration into the Syrian society or their integration into other contexts in case

of resettlement. The project was carried out in cooperation with the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen e.V. (ifa) and was financed by the German Federal Foreign Office. During the pilot phase, from September to December 2018, around 25 women participated in each of the four trainings. This pilot phase provided elbarlament and partner organisations with valuable insight into the local conditions and women refugees' needs, which were taken into account for the continuation of the project in 2019.

Open Doors - Open Minds

elbarlament – cultures of democracy implemented a programme for young women, predominantly Syrians, from the Arab world in cooperation with the Europäische Akademie für Frauen in Politik und Wirtschaft e.V. (EAF) Berlin. The project "Open Doors - Open Minds" is part of the "Demokratie Leben" (living democracy) programme of the German Federal Ministry for Women, Senior Citizens, Family and Youth (BMFSFJ). It consists of a series of political education seminars and internships at companies and organisations accompanied by a mentoring programme. The aim of the project is for the participants to get to know democratic life in Germany and to promote their societal engagement. Thanks to a varied programme and many encounters, including with members of parliament and numerous civil society organisations, the highly motivated young women from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq gained many new experiences, which they used in their internships, for example at the Bundestag, the State Ministry in Baden-Württemberg or at UNICEF.

Writing for life – empowering and linking up female Iraqi authors

Since 2015, female writers from Iraq and literature experts from other Arab-speaking countries as well as Germany have been cooperating in promoting the voice and participation of women in public life, arts and literature in Iraq. Commissioned by the German Federal Foreign Office, elbarlament - cultures of democracy has been organising a series of workshops for women under the heading "Writing for Life" in this framework. In 2018, despite the difficult situation in Iraq, we succeeded in spreading the writing workshops regionally and in involving new participants. Workshops took place in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Dohuk and Baghdad, focusing on literature for children and young people, dialogues and drama for theatre, drama and prose and storytelling (for female refugees). A short video about the project is available on the elbarlament website at www.elbarlament.org.

Based on the results of a writing workshop for children's literature that took place in March 2018, we developed a book with stories and poems for children, which was edited by the writer and translator Fatima Sharafeddine. "Von Orient und Okzident - Geschichten und Gedichte für Kinder und Jugendliche" is available in Arabic and German language on the elbarlament website.

We began collaborating with the actresses from the Sabunkaran theatre group and the monastery Deir Mariyam al-Adhra, where our final theatre performance attracted members from the local community. Furthermore, thanks to a workshop on creative writing and public speaking we organised in December 2018, we established valuable contacts with members of the National Theatre in Baghdad, on which we can build in the future.

In 2019, elbarlament will organise a literature festival in Baghdad and invest in the sustainability of the project by organising a train-the-trainer programme enabling selected participants from the writing workshops in 2016-2018 to plan and facilitate similar workshops for other women.

ADVICE, RESEARCH & EVALUATION

Evaluating GIZ support to EU approximation through regional cooperation

Between 2017 and 2018, elbarlament – cultures of democracy conducted a mid-term evaluation of the GIZ “Open regional funds for South-East Europe – promotion of EU integration through regional cooperation” which included field visits to the Western Balkans countries. The objective of the project is to improve regional learning among responsible authorities with regard to national steering of the EU accession process in South East Europe. All six Western Balkans countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia – face common challenges in reforming and preparing their economies, political systems and public administrations for EU accession.

Study Visit to Estonia with a focus on absorption capacities of EU funds

Commissioned by the GIZ “Open regional funds for South-East Europe – promotion of EU integration through regional cooperation” elbarlament - cultures of democracy developed, prepared and accompanied a study visit to Estonia supporting EU approximation through regional cooperation. The study visit aimed at strengthening the capacities of the accession and neighbourhood countries to use EU funds effectively, sharing best practice on procedural and institutional reform and coordination mechanisms in the context of the stabilisation and association process. A focus was on monitoring and evaluation and the use of IT tools to increase the efficiency of institutions in the absorption of EU funds. The participants included representatives of the National Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance Offices (NIPAC), the Central Finance and Contract Units (CFCU) for EU assistance and the future structure of the ministry assuming the coordination role for EU structural funds.

Study “Kulturarbeit gegen Kriegsfolgen - eine Momentaufnahme aus dem Irak“

Commissioned by the German Federal Foreign Office, elbarlament – cultures of democracy conducted a study on foreign-funded cultural programmes and projects in Iraq (“*Kulturarbeit gegen Kriegsfolgen - eine Momentaufnahme aus dem Irak*“), with a focus on initiatives using

the arts for peacebuilding purposes. The report builds on desk research as well as field interviews with artists and civil society activists from Baghdad, Basra, Mossul, Sulaimaniyya, Nasriah, Dohuk and Erbil. It provides a snapshot of the situation in Iraq at the end of 2018, concentrating on initiatives supported by Germany, France, Denmark, Austria, Great Britain, Switzerland, the USA, the European Union and UNESCO.

Art Fair International: ART Düsseldorf 2018

In 2018, elbarlament – cultures of democracy was commissioned by Art Fair International GmbH in Cologne, the organiser of ART Düsseldorf, a contemporary art fair, to provide advice on organisational development in a multi-stakeholder environment in February and organised the second round of “Kulturpolitische Gespräche” (public discussion on cultural policy) during the fair in Düsseldorf in November. The discussion about cultural initiatives for the Rhineland and the role of arts brought together cultural and political practitioners and was moderated by elbarlament’s Tobias Flessenkemper on 18 November 2018.

DEBATE

Panel discussion about the future of Iraq

On May 30, 2018 elbarlament – cultures of democracy hosted a panel discussion about the future of Iraq after the parliamentary elections at the Heinrich Böll Stiftung in Berlin. Spiegel journalist and Iraq expert Christoph Reuter, the Bagdad born Austrian journalist Tyma Kraitt and Dr. Birgit Laubach, Partner and Managing Director of elbarlament discussed about opportunities for state building and perspectives for women. The event was a part of the project "Women think Iraq anew".

The shareholders and management of elbarlament - cultures of democracy would like to thank staff, experts and advisors from partner organisations for their commitment to the work of the organisation.

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