

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Foreword

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 was an especially challenging year for our team and project partners in Iraq and Lebanon. Activities such as training workshops, coaching sessions and public events could not take place as planned or had to be adapted in line with new hygienic frameworks and safety regulations. Many activities had to be converted into online formats, which proved particularly difficult due to limitations with regard to internet connectivity in both Lebanon and Iraq. Besides such technical challenges, creating a safe space for our participants in online settings proved to be the main hurdle towards building the trust that is required to engage them in open and fruitful exchanges and learning exercises.

Despite these challenges, we managed to make good progress in all of our projects thanks to the commitment and creativity of our staff and implementing partners on the ground. We ventured into new terrain, as we explored new tools for online workshops and we even organised a virtual study tour which brought our Iraqi participants from the “Women make film” project to the International Leipzig Festival for Documentary and Animated Film.

We wholeheartedly thank the elbarlament team in Berlin and Cologne for their dedication to our mission to promote human rights, democracy and peace, and our partners, experts and trainers for their professionalism and flexibility.

Birgit Laubach and Sebastian Bloching
Managing Directors

About Elbarlament

elbarlament is an independent, nonpartisan and impartial organisation founded on the premise that civil society, parliaments, governments and administrations in transition require a specific and innovative quality of technical assistance and advisory services, based on political analysis, research and evaluation of assistance practices. The specific approach of elbarlament consists in creating sustainable links and cooperation between political actors and civil society by developing the capacity of key stakeholders in all sectors concerned.

We create innovative pathways between societal and cultural activities to foster democracy and participatory governance. We support our 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.

We draw expertise from a wide range of partnerships and a multi-national pool of experts covering topics such as democratisation, rule of law, public administration reform, sectoral policies including budgeting and planning, security sector oversight, human rights, cultural promotion and women and youth participation.

The limited company elbarlament GmbH is a member of the Facharbeitskreis Governance of the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ). Our nonprofit association branch elbarlament e.V. is a member of the Community of Practice of the Brussels-based European Partnership for Democracy (EPD).

About this report

This annual report provides a short overview of our projects and consultancies in 2020, highlighting key milestones and results. The legal entity that implemented the respective projects and assignments - our limited company elbarlament GmbH or our nonprofit association elbarlament e.V. - is indicated in text.

PROJECTS OF ELBARLAMENT GMBH

Clean Tigris (Iraq)

In January 2020, we started the two-year project “Clean Tigris”, which aims to foster dialogue between politicians, decision makers, academics, active members of civil society and artists living along Iraq’s two main rivers Euphrates and Tigris and the country’s marshlands. In a series of seminars and dialogue sessions, the participants exchanged ideas and experiences and learned about the water situation in their country - from experts and from one another. In the second year of the project, they will jointly develop sustainable solutions for challenges such as water pollution and proposals on how to improve the water management in the country. The project is funded by the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa), funding programme zivik, with funds from the Federal Foreign Office.

In 2020, “Clean Tigris” focused on three main components: capacity building and dialogue, research and awareness raising. In a capacity building and dialogue workshop, stakeholders from civil society and academia took a deep dive into the water situation in Iraq, including issues such as water scarcity, water pollution, the legal framework for water management and the competences of different ministries and the governorates, transboundary conflict resolution and negotiation strategies, and the impact of climate change on Iraq. They also discussed the gender dynamics of water conflicts. Two workshops with mayors from Iraqi towns and cities helped identify the challenges faced by local decision makers with regard to water management and to gather ideas for addressing these challenges.

In the research component, five research articles were written by local and international experts dealing with water-related topics: from the first laws to manage water in ancient Mesopotamia

to resolving international water conflicts. The articles will be made available in a book soon, which will be published in Arabic and English.

In the awareness raising component, an online dialogue platform and Facebook and Instagram channels were developed for the project to distribute a campaign consisting of 14 short videos and animations and 25 animated infographics (#cleantigris). In short videos filmed with mobile phones, the project participants present very personal stories that link them with the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

For the project's online dialogue platform, we cooperated with the Institute for Technology and Resources Management in the Tropics and Subtropics (ITT) at the TH Köln (University of Applied Sciences). A group of students from the study programme Integrated Water Resource Management between TH Köln and the University of Amman developed a series of maps and infographics on the Tigris and Euphrates water basins, which will be integrated into the online platform in 2021.

Last but not least, we created a comic book with illustrations by the Iraqi illustrators Luna Mahmud Darwesh, Halgurd Muhammad Tahir and Bawer Abdulmadjid Muhamed, which will be published in Arabic and English and made available for distribution in early 2021. The book aims to raise awareness among a wider public in Iraq and abroad about the history and importance of the two streams of Mesopotamia, taking the reader from the beginnings of mankind to a dystopian vision of a world without water.

Women take the lead 2020-2021 (Lebanon)

The two-year project aims to foster sustainable and autonomous social and political leadership of female Syrian refugees and Lebanese women in the Bekaa region of Lebanon. To achieve this goal, since February 2020 we have been supporting 46 women from Syria and Lebanon in developing their political and social leadership skills, thereby promoting the active participation of women in rebuilding Syria and in taking part in the political movement in Lebanon.

The leadership programme consists of two modules. Module one serves to enhance the participants' cognitive and linguistic capacities and basic leadership skills, including *inter alia*

exercises for self-confidence, communication skills, self-organisation and management, public speaking and debate and project management. Module two focuses on conveying knowledge and skills that the women require to become strong leaders in their communities and in politics.

Towards the end of the year, we gave the women the opportunity to apply what they had learned in the leadership programme through providing funding and support for initiatives elaborated and implemented by them. All six funded initiatives had a focus on empowering women and increasing women's participation in the political, social and economic sphere, as well as on providing education to children, thereby contributing to the women's integration into their host communities in Lebanon.

Self-determined. Women make Film (Iraq)

In Iraq, the COVID-19 pandemic brought on new challenges to an already difficult social and political situation. Despite these challenges, sixteen Iraqi women artists and students from various religious, ethnic and professional backgrounds came together under the roof of the Women make film project, which was funded by the Federal Foreign Office, to participate in a series of virtual workshops and masterclasses on filmmaking led by Egyptian filmmaker Salma El Tarzi and supported by other mentors. They learned the basics of editing, cinematic treatment, scenario writing and sound design, participated in a gender training and learned about UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. During a virtual study tour, they engaged with influential members of the film industry in the MENA region and Europe and participated in different panel discussions on topics such as screening spaces and the power of collectives.

In addition to the workshops, the trainer Salma Tarzi wrote a handbook on how to implement an online filmmaking training programme. The handbook is intended to support all those who want to organise and conduct filmmaking training sessions. It contains a curriculum with exercises on the subject of editing, scenarios, and production and presents different training methods. The handbook further includes the challenges involved in organising filmmaking training workshops and puts forth practical advice for trainers in this regard.

The project culminated in an online symposium with different panel discussions, workshops and screenings followed by a one-day online event where the films produced during the project

were screened. The four short movies “Identity Limits”, “Layla”, “Picnic” and “Waiting”, discuss topics of war, occupation, family, identity and gender. Their overarching subject is the role of women in the Iraqi society. The film “Waiting” was shown during the digital networking event “International Women’s Night”, which was organised by the Federal Foreign Office and hosted by Elke Bündenbender, First Lady of Germany, and Michelle Müntefering, Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office.

Cultural Initiatives for Civil Society in Iraq

In January 2020, we held the international “Arab Women Literature Festival” in Tunis in cooperation with World Art Connection and the city of Tunis under the slogan “My pen. My voice”. Originally, the plan was to hold the festival in Baghdad, but due to the tense security situation in Iraq at the end of the year 2019, it was decided to organise the event in the Tunisian capital instead. The festival brought together female authors from Iraq, Morocco, Syria, Yemen, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Libya and Tunisia. They introduced the audience to the different worlds of writing genres and allowed them to explore the unique talents and styles of female writing. Next to public readings, the authors discussed the situation of female writers in the Arab world. It was the first time for most of the invited authors to share their challenges and ideas with fellow female writers from the Arabic speaking world.

PROJECTS OF ELBARLAMENT E.V.

A Strategy for Women’s Participation in Peace Processes in Nineveh (Iraq)

The project aimed at contributing to the improvement of the social and economic situation of women in the Nineveh governorate of Iraq through enhancing women’s involvement in peacebuilding processes. The project lasted from May until October 2020 and was funded by GIZ. It involved a diverse group of Iraqis from the Nineveh governorate who, under the guidance of our project team and experts, developed the content for a draft strategy paper for improving the participation of women in peace, reconciliation, transitional justice and conflict resolution processes in Nineveh. The participants had different religious and ethnic

backgrounds and included representatives from civil society, women's organisations, public officials and tribal and religious figures.

From June to July 2020, we conducted in-depth interviews with more than 60 stakeholders across the governorate and organised four focus groups in order to discuss topical issues regarding the peacebuilding process in Nineveh. Based on the interviews, focus groups and a study on peacebuilding in Nineveh, we elaborated a draft strategy paper and submitted it to the Office of the President of Iraq in October 2020. The paper contains recommendations to policy makers and other key stakeholders in Nineveh on how to include women in reconciliation and peace processes, with a focus on the Governorate of Nineveh. Furthermore, it puts forth concrete measures that decision makers can take to implement the recommendations through a National Action Plan. We also conducted a workshop on peacebuilding and conflict resolution with the focus group members, as well as an online training course on the principles of UNSCR 1325, together with local and international experts.

Women Talking Peace

In August 2020, we launched a new project in Iraq titled "Women Talking Peace – Women Leading Peace Talks". The project is funded by GIZ for a duration of 18 months and aims to involve Iraqi women in building an effective peace order, functioning political institutions and consolidating democratic social structures in Iraq. To achieve this goal, we have been implementing activities in three fields of work: capacity building, research and cross-cutting issues regarding women and peacebuilding in Iraq. In 2020, we conducted the first two modules of a leadership programme in a virtual setting for a diverse group of Iraqi women in order to empower them to effectively participate in conflict resolution, reconciliation and decision making processes. Additionally, we conducted an online creative writing programme under the motto "Women Write for Peace" for women interested in conducting their own online creative writing courses.

From September till December 2020, numerous activities were implemented within the research component of the project, including a study in which a local expert mapped 250 stakeholders in the field of female empowerment and peacebuilding in Iraq. Subsequently, a study on the inclusion of women in peacebuilding processes was conducted and in late 2020,

we began working on a series of research papers on various issues related to peacebuilding in Iraq.

In the context of the celebrations linked of the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, which is a key reference document for this project, we brought together government officials, policy experts and researchers, women's organisations, civic activists, religious and tribal leaders and other civil society representatives from Iraq and the region in an online conference. The conference took place in December and provided an opportunity for the participants to reflect on the international Women, Peace and Security agenda and discuss their visions for the future of the UNSCR 1325 in the MENA region. Furthermore, we began creating a website for the project on which all of the research papers, videos and other relevant materials will be made available to the general public, while also offering regular blog posts concerning the project.

Women campaign against domestic violence (Iraq)

In August 2020, together with our Iraqi partner organisation Baghdad Women Association, we launched a new project in Iraq titled "Women campaign against domestic violence". The project was funded by ifa, with funds from the German Federal Foreign Office, for a duration of 4 months and aimed to raise awareness about the physical and psychological effects of violence against women, and to outlaw all forms of gender-based violence, including by promoting the adoption of a law against domestic violence and the abolition of Article 41 of the Penal Code of Iraq, which allows husbands to beat their wives and children.

In an online workshop involving Iraqi women's organisations and members of the Women's Committee of the Parliament of Iraq the participants jointly developed the contents of a video raising awareness about the need to act in terms of protecting women and girls from domestic violence and coordinated a campaign for its distribution. Following the development of the script and the production of the video, the Iraqi television channels Al-Iraqia and Rudaw began broadcasting the 40-seconds video clip in Arabic and Kurdish throughout the whole month of November. The campaign was highly appreciated and evaluated as a success story by the female parliamentarians and women's organisations that had been involved in the creation of the video and who expressed their eagerness to continue to campaign for the adoption of the domestic violence law.

CONSULTANCIES OF ELBARLAMENT GMBH AND OUR EXPERTS

UN Women Nigeria/NILDS

As part of a consultancy for the UN Women Office in Nigeria and the National Institute for Legislative and Democracy Studies (NILDS), elbarlament managing director Dr Birgit Laubach, together with the local expert Dr. Amina Salihu compiled a training manual for prospective trainers on conducting workshops on gender-responsive legislation. The manual provides handouts, case studies, and other training materials and covers topics such as basic gender concepts, understanding the work of national and state assemblies, gender-responsive legislation, as well as networking and cooperation. Furthermore, given the restrictions with regard to conducting physical training workshops caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the manual includes guidance for conducting online workshops.

The training manual was subsequently put into use by Dr. Salihu and Dr. Laubach who in October 2020 conducted training workshops for Nigerian resource persons, who are expected to transfer their newly acquired knowledge and skills on gender-responsive legislation to female and selected male parliamentarians at the national and state levels in Nigeria. The goal was for these MPs to be able to analyse, draft and adopt gender-responsive legislation on their own. Following the initial Training of Trainers workshops in October, the consultancy culminated in semi-virtual workshops that Dr. Laubach and Dr. Salihu conducted with Nigerian legislators from the national and state assemblies in mid November 2020.

With the consequences of ignoring gender issues in development being widely acknowledged, gender leadership training and gender-responsive legislation are becoming increasingly popular with many institutions as a way to improve the quality of relief, development and democracy work. Furthermore, Nigerian legislation still lacks a gender-responsive lens and women are still extremely underrepresented in the legislature and other leadership positions. The consultancy catered to both of these needs by producing a practical tool for facilitating gender-responsive legislation and applying it in Nigeria.

UN Women West and Central Africa Regional Office

In the framework of a consultancy agreement with UN Women, elbarlament managing director Dr. Birgit Laubach was commissioned to write a legal guide for enhancing the political participation of women. Based on an analysis of existing parity and quota laws in Western and Central Africa (WCA), Ms Laubach developed technical advice on how to draft such laws. “From Quota to Parity” features case studies from West and Central African countries. The research was supported by interviews with parliamentarians, government officials, and civil society actors from Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Liberia, Nigeria, and Senegal, who were actively involved in drafting, implementing or advocating legislation aimed at enhancing the political participation of women. The insight from the interviews and the technical recommendations contained in the guide are meant to support lawmakers from across the WCA region in drafting, implementing, or campaigning for gender parity and quota laws in their respective countries.

A special focus was devoted to analysing the processes by which laws supporting political participation of women are developed, negotiated, drafted, passed and implemented. The aim is to strengthen law-making processes that build and secure the legal rights of women who want to run for elections and who are ready to take up leadership positions in their parliaments and governments. To this effect, the guide provides an overview of the various types of legal instruments that can contribute to increasing women’s political participation. Furthermore, it analyses the relationship between different electoral systems in WCA countries and the chances for female politicians to lead a successful election campaign.

While all countries within the WCA region have ratified various international and regional instruments that are meant to promote women’s political participation and representation, exclusion of women from political decision-making and leadership is still widespread. Many existing laws remain weak or are not properly implemented. Therefore, the guide focuses on strengthening efforts to improve the legal framework in the WCA region to ensure that laws are drafted in a clear and precise way, are implementable and effective.

GIZ - Project to Support the Parliament and Electoral Processes (Chad)

In November 2020, elbarlament managing director Sebastian Bloching conducted a field mission to N’Djamena, Chad, in the framework of a consultancy agreement with GIZ. The

mission served to assess the needs and expectations vis-à-vis an upcoming EU-Federal Foreign Office co-funded project titled *Projet d'appui au parlement et aux processus électoraux (PAPPE)* and inform the formulation of the project. Together with another external consultant, Mr Bloching developed the project based on extensive desk research and interviews in N'Djamena with high-ranking representatives of Chad's National Assembly, media regulator HAMA, Supreme Court, civil society organisations, media outlets and traditional authorities, as well as the donor community and potential project partners Ecole d'Administration (ENA) du Chad and Interparliamentary Union (IPU). By the end of the year, the draft project documents were submitted for feedback to the EU Delegation to Chad, the German Embassy and the Federal Foreign Office. The assignment is expected to be finalised in the first half of 2021.