Executive summary:

From March to September 2009, the Iraq Foundation (IF) successfully implemented the Mdaina Education Project (MEP) aimed at creating an adult literacy training program for the community of Mdaina and enhancing the professional skills and income generating opportunities for teachers and small business owners of Mdaina. 356 adults –with an equal proportion of men and women- benefited from this training, including literate and illiterate citizens as well as teachers, small business owners and IT professionals. IF also refurbished and equipped an obsolete computer center in Mdaina and provided it with a satellite dish internet. With the help of IF, the computer center became fully operational and started generating revenue through providing various services including access to internet and printing services as well as renting wireless internet to homes and organizations in the surrounding neighborhood.

Recruiting for the project:

Two weeks after the start of the project, IF MEP staff in Basra designed a flyer to advertize for the computer and literacy classes. By the end of March, public service announcements about the project were posted on several news outlets websites such as the Nahrain and Al-Fayha'. IF also distributed the flyers to mosques, husayniyyat, schools, and various government institutions such as the Al-Qurna Education Department, the Al-Qurna Provincial Council and the Mdaina Municipal Center. By mid-April, IF was able to recruit the target number of beneficiaries including: 100 illiterate Adults, 150 Semiliterate Adults, 50 Small Business Owners, 50 Teachers from Secondary Schools and 6 Information Technology Professionals

IT Trainings:

In preparation for the IT computer classes, IF MEP staff contacted several qualified professors in search for instructors for the IT training and the computer classes for teachers and small business owners. IF-IT specialist in Basra along with qualified IT professors -and under the supervision of IF-IT specialist in DC Joseph Sandor – designed the computer classes' curricula. IF also asked qualified university professors to design baseline and follow-on survey for both the literacy and computer trainings.

The IT training curriculum included:

- Microsoft Excel: Spreadsheets, charts, pivot tables
- Microsoft Outlook: The email standard as well as personal information manager
- Microsoft PowerPoint: Create business or school presentations
- Microsoft Publisher: Publish brochures, newsletters, and much more
- Microsoft Word: The industry standard for word processing
- Troubleshoot desktop environments that run on the Windows

- Operating system: Network and routine maintenance of computers in computer center
- Troubleshoot popular programs: Learn Network Security Fundamentals

The MEP IT training started on May 1st 2009. Classes were held on Fridays, Saturdays and Tuesdays from 4 to 7 pm. The trainings took place in Basra. IF covered the transportation costs of 6 IT participants commuting from Mdaina. The trainees showed a strong interest and a desire to learn. They also participated in the discussions with great enthusiasm.

IF was able to complete the 54 hours of training on June 16 2009- in half the time previously agreed on as trainees received three hours of training per day instead of one hour and a half. The IT instructor offered to provide –free of charge- two additional weeks of training to revise the material taught. IF agreed to her request and covered the transportation expenses.

Computer trainings for teachers and small business owners:

On March 16 2009, IF field staff paid a field visit to the Mdaina Municipal Council and the Mdaina computer center for a needs assessment. The computer center was equipped with 19 computers (most of which were broken or outdated), 20 computer tables and one printer. To accommodate the -25 participant- trainings scheduled to take place in the center two month later, IF provides the center with 25 workstations and 13 printer/scanner/fax machines and generator and an AC to make the center fully operational. In order to get the best offers possible, IF MEP staff in Basra and Baghdad contacted several computer and internet companies and requested quotes to compare prices and quality.

After reviewing the offers, IF MEP staff provided the center with a generator and an AC and ordered 25 computers and 14 copy/printer/scanner machines. IF also ordered a satellite dish to be installed for the internet and signed up for internet subscription for the duration of the project.

With the help of local information technology (IT) experts, and in close collaboration with IF's DC IT expert, Joseph Sandor, field staff implimentated the computer literacy classes.

The curriculum includes:

• Concepts of Information Technology (IT): including understanding the design and function of personal computer, relating to hardware and software, and understanding fundamental concepts of IT such as data storage, memory, and processors.

• Basic Computer Use and Managing Files: including understanding common functions of operating system; managing and organizing files, directories, and folders, as well as how to copy, move and delete files and directories, and folders. File compression and extraction and using simple editing tools and print management facilities available within the operating system were also discussed.

• Word Processing: including creating, formatting and finishing small sized word processing documents ready for distribution, copy/paste functions and moving text within and between documents, and using associated features, such as creating tables, inserting pictures and images, and using email merging.

• Spreadsheets: including basic concept of spreadsheets and the ability to use a spreadsheet application on a computer; and generating and applying standard spreadsheet formulas and proper formatting and printing of spreadsheets.

• Presentation: including using presentation software, and creating, formatting, modifying and preparing presentations using different slide layouts for display options as well as how to print slides and run a presentation from the computer.

It was agreed that the small business owners will receive more "spreadsheets" training to help them in their accounting and the teachers will receive more "presentation" training to enhance their teaching methods.

The computer classes for teachers and small business owners were scheduled to start beginning of June however the classes were delayed until because of a delay in the computer delivery. On July 3, 2009 the MEP computer classes started in the Mdaina computer center. Trainees were divided into 4 groups, 2 groups of male and 2 groups of female trainees. Participants received 1.5 hours of training per day -45 minutes of concepts explanation and 45 minutes of practice. To make up for the delay in the starting date IF increased the training hours from 4.5 to 9 hours per week. Upon the participants' request, IF added 3 days of basic internet research training. IF covered the cost of the additional days. The training was completed on August 12 2009 after conducting an examination aimed at assessing the trainees' knowledge of the material taught.

The examination yielded very positive results and showed that training improved most of the trainee's knowledge of the computer and its different uses relevant to their work. After the training was completed, IF painted the center's walls, replaced the curtains and bought wall paintings to make the center more attractive and ready-to-use by the public at large.

Literacy training:

IF Staff contacted the Qurna Education Directorate (QED) to identify potential locations for the literacy classes. The QED suggested IF holds the literacy classes in the following four schools: The Mada'en Primary School, the Nusayree School for continuous learning, the Dhefaf Primary School, and the Alwane Primary School. The Qurna Education Directorate also provided IF with a list of four instructors to provide the literacy trainings and provided the literacy curriculum. During the month of April, staff visited the schools where the classes will take place and assess their needs. The school officials expressed the need to have generators and water coolers. On May 23 2009, IF provided the schools with the needed equipment

The literacy trainings started on May 8 2009. The classes were 2 hours and 15 minutes long and took place on Fridays and Saturdays. Classes included 25 participants each and were held as follows:

3 classes in the Alwane Primary School;

2 classes in the Mada'en Primary School;

3 classes in the Nusayree School for continuous learning; and

2 classes in the Dhefaf Primary School.

The literacy instructors used responsive ways to attract and keep the trainees' interest. Participants showed to be very eager to learn. Attendance was good and the level of energy was very high. IF' MEP assistant in Mdaina have attended all classes to monitor attendance and make sure the training goes as scheduled (training pictures attached). On July 5 2009, IF successfully completed the 54 hours of training.

Graduation Ceremony:

On August 19 2009, IF held a graduation ceremony for the 356 graduates of the MEP project. The ceremony was attended by all trainees, as well as the Mdaina Kada's kaemakam, the UNDP Basra office director, UNDP Basra office officer, the Mdaina Kada' Police Director, the Mdaina municipal council Deputy Director and several other municipal council members, the municipal council's Education Committee Director and several educational supervisors.

The day after the ceremony, UNDP Basra office director sent IF the following email:

"On behalf of BDS I would like to express our appreciation for the great efforts that you made to ensure the successful ceremonies for celebrating the completion of your activities in Mudaina. The impression of our colleagues who attended the ceremonies, were very positive and the pictures that they took showed how people in Mudaina were attracted to your activities and that they appreciated all what you have done."

Project Success:

In order to evaluate the training, IF conducted pre and post training evaluations and had them reviewed by university professors from Basra University. IF distributed evaluation forms to the trainees at the beginning of each training to evaluate their level of knowledge of the material to be taught. The trainers also conducted examinations to assess the trainees' knowledge after the completion of the training. The post-training evaluations were then handed out to three university professors from Basra University who evaluated each one of the three trainings (literacy, computer and IT) based on the findings of the evaluation forms as well as field visits to Mdaina to meet with the municipal council, interview trainees and inspect the computer center. The university professors' training evaluations

showed that, on average, the trainee's general knowledge of the material covered during the trainings ranged between good and very good.

Below is a testimony from one of the Basra university professors who evaluated the trainings:

" The Iraq Foundation has lighten up a candle in the dark sky of Iraq in general and Mdaina in particular. We would like to thank IF for its past present and future efforts in promoting development in Iraq, wishing you all the best in your future endeavors."

After the computer literacy training was completed, IF donated a computer to each of the schools where teacher trainees were recruited from. Back in their schools, the IF trained teachers will be able to use the skills learned to motivate their students to participate in the classroom thanks to visual medium, multi-media, and interactive programs.

Most IT trainees were able to find jobs after the training. Jobs varied between buying satellite dishes and renting wireless connections for a fee and jobs as IT experts in a hospital and other institutions.