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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA (ESCWA)

**INFORMATION KIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT UNDER
CONDITIONS OF CONFLICT OR POLITICAL INSTABILITY**

**CONFLICT MITIGATION AND DEVELOPMENT
VISION, APPROACHES AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

10-0005

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I. CONFLICT MITIGATION AND DEVELOPMENT: APPROACHES AND FOCUS AREAS

A. BACKGROUND

Since the inception of modern States, Western Asia has been characterized by its recurrent periods of instability and turbulence, which were primarily due to political, social and economic factors undermining its stability and henceforth long-term development. Indeed, a minimum of one major conflict per decade has spurred across the region and resulted in severe repercussions at the national and regional levels, affecting the stability of States and well-being of populations.

In addition to the “traditional” conflict situations, where the causes and repercussions of conflict are apparent, it is worth noting that some forms of tension and instability in the region are latent and are inclined to erupt into conflict if not monitored and pre-empted in a timely manner. For instance, communal tensions arising from the diverse sociocultural compositions of current nation-States could in some cases lead to instability, conflicting interests and fragmentation and, at a later stage, even full-fledged conflict and should be addressed in a sensitive manner with regard to the social, economic and cultural dimensions prevalent in the specific country. What needs to be highlighted furthermore is the general trend of weak State institutions in conflict-affected countries and least developed countries (LDCs), which are suffering from an increasing good governance deficit, inadequate technical expertise and infrastructure. This, in turn, renders State institutions unable to resolve political, social and economic grievances of their local populations or provide them with the basic services vital for human security and development.

As regards member States of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA),* five countries are primarily affected by conflict and/or instability: Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, the Sudan and Yemen. It is noteworthy that the type and level of conflict and/or instability witnessed by each of the above-mentioned countries is singular due to its specific historical and socio-economic givens.

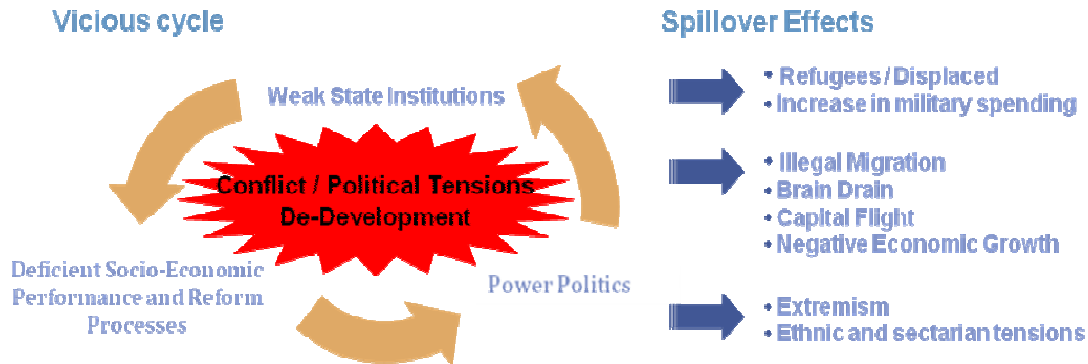
In Palestine, the protracted conflict has been ongoing since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and has resulted in severe repercussions on the region as a whole. In Iraq, the destitution of Saddam Hussein’s regime in 2004 plunged the country in spiraling hostilities that are still continuing despite relative security improvements. In Lebanon, despite the institutionalization of the political dissention, there are still latent tensions within the different factions forging the multiplicity of the Lebanese society, which have the potential to emerge and, in some cases, result in military hostilities. In Yemen, the tribal and communal composition of the society, coupled with a high level of militarization, lead the country to witness heightened tensions, especially in the North. In the Sudan, ethnic and sectarian tensions and the dissention between the central Government and ethnic and sectarian factions have led to latent conflict and periods of intermittent instability.

Independently of the type and amplitude of the conflict, it is commonly accepted that countries suffering from instability or conflict situations enter into a spiraling phase of de-development, which directly undermines development processes and peacebuilding initiatives. Indeed, the governance deficit affecting countries suffering from instability and/or conflict can only be addressed through the induction of development initiatives promoting the rule of law and establishing an overall environment conducive of socio-economic revival. Peace and stability have become an increasingly necessary condition for the achievement of sustainable human development and the full realization of human opportunities and potential, including the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

* The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) currently encompasses fourteen member States: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

B. ESCWA'S SECTION FOR EMERGING AND CONFLICT-RELATED ISSUES (ECRI)

ESCWA member States endorsed the establishment of the Section for Emerging and Conflict-Related Issues (ECRI) in January 2006 with the aim of enhancing its efforts in the areas of conflict mitigation and the promotion and institutionalization of good governance practices in order to strengthen institution-building and peacebuilding initiatives across the region. The strategy of ECRI is a response to the relentless struggle of the ESCWA region with the ramifications of continuous instability and resulting development deficits and aims at addressing spillover effects as indicated in the graph below.



The strategy of ECRI is based on the premise that conflict prevention, peacebuilding and development are inseparable and mutually reinforcing, and must be led by a strong public sector in which good governance practices are applied. Significantly, conflict-mitigation measures targeting crisis-afflicted countries will inevitably reduce conflict and its repercussions across the region.

The scope of work and mandate of ECRI consist of the identification and implementation of socio-economic development schemes in spite of conflict and sociopolitical turmoil, through the following interventions undertaken by the Section:

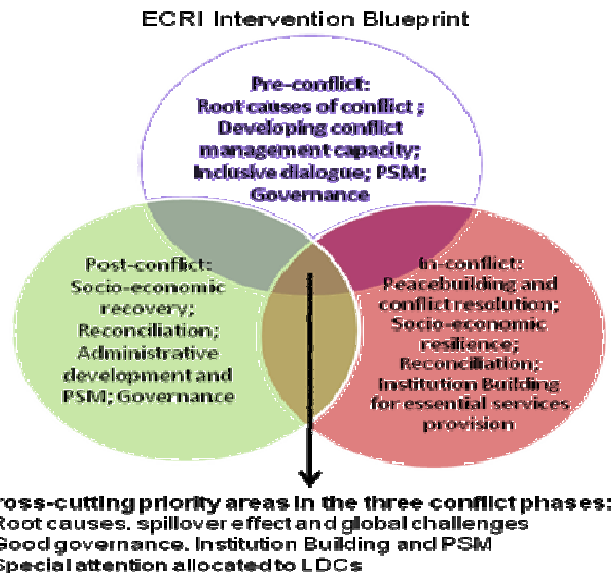
- (a) Assisting member countries in formulating conflict-prevention, reconciliation and revitalization policies by analysing the socio-economic dynamics, in particular the sources and root causes of conflict that undermine stability, peacebuilding and sustainable development;
- (b) Assisting member countries in developing the capacity of the public sector by mainstreaming good governance practices to enhance the delivery of core Government functions, thus strengthening the public sector to lead peacebuilding efforts or better manage conflict, and mitigate its impact on attaining national development goals, including the MDGs;
- (c) Assisting member countries in formulating and implementing policies and programmes to address and reduce the ramifications of spillover effects generated by conflict or occupation as well as the impact of emerging global challenges on the most vulnerable ESCWA member States, in particular the LDCs;
- (d) Promoting viable and sustainable peacebuilding policies and mechanisms, including good governance best practices, through forging regional and international partnerships, in particular south-south cooperation initiatives, among civic entities and public institutions;
- (e) Formulating and implementing development programmes in conflict-affected countries that promote reconciliation, social cohesion and revitalization and mitigate the impact of conflict on sustainable development;
- (f) Assisting member countries in developing the capacity of local Governments to formulate and implement development strategies and programmes in support of peacebuilding and national integration.

It should be noted that ECRI's peacebuilding approach is primarily focused on strengthening the capacities of State institutions and civil society at the central and local levels. Parallel to policy recommendations and capacity building targeting the central level of Government, ECRI's interventions include a major component related to promoting local governance initiatives in post-conflict and instable settings, where local authorities and civil society organizations are seen as counterparts in the restoration of State authority and the establishment of a functional and transparent administration based on governance practices and processes, which would improve humanitarian conditions and rebuild livelihoods. ECRI addresses the above-mentioned issues in cooperation with prominent United Nations, international and regional entities through partnerships and sharing of experiences and lessons learned in the field.

C. DEVELOPMENT IN SPITE OF CONFLICT AND INSTABILITY: THE CORNERSTONE OF ECRI

ESCWA, and ECRI in particular, have identified and adopted development as one of the most suitable and sustainable strategies to induce peacebuilding and conflict mitigation in the region since it provides a solid basis for socio-economic empowerment and contributes to the reduction of the sources of conflict by instigating socio-economic and institutional stabilization, which, in turn, facilitates the achievement of the MDGs. ECRI promulgates the promotion of good governance in conflict-afflicted countries as a predominant approach to development in spite of conflict and a prerequisite for State building and ultimately peacebuilding in post-conflict settings.

ECRI's vision of mitigating conflict and reducing its negative impact on the social and economic conditions of people is based on the fact that development initiatives should no longer be conditioned by the consecration of peace and stability in a post-conflict setting. Early recovery efforts are seen as a cornerstone of the transition from a conflict towards a stable and peaceful setting, in which long-term sustainable development can be achieved. Indeed, development is to be considered as one of the major tools to instigate peace and stability and a way to mainstream good governance principles and practices within the public sector and civil society. ECRI's vision relies heavily on the direct correlation and complementarity between peace and State/institution building and their positive outcome on instigating development and stability in post-conflict settings.



Note: PSM: Public Sector Mordernization.

ECRI's intervention blueprint could be segmented into three phases:

1. The pre-conflict phase, during which early-warning strategies are adopted to identify and address root causes of conflict through strengthening public institutions as well as encouraging inclusive dialogue to reduce dissension and exclusion of communal factions.
2. The in-conflict stage, mainly characterized by peacebuilding and conflict-resolution strategies that focus on reconciliation. In-conflict situations also require a heavy intervention at the institutional level in order to improve delivery of essential services in spite of conflict, and subsequently enhance socio-economic resilience;
3. The post-conflict phase, relying on recovery interventions and reconciliation as well as on public-sector modernization through the instigation of good governance practices. The early recovery phases following a conflict – or even, to a certain extent, peaceful intervals during a protracted conflict – are seen as appropriate conjunctures to instigate development interventions, which can encourage participation of national stakeholders and empower them to overcome the negative effects of conflict. This would also ensure the reintegration of countries and communities into productive socio-economic cycles and provide them with the tools required to avoid future dissension.

It is also important to note in this regard that there are cross-cutting priority areas that constitute the backbone of ECRI’s strategy and are the prerequisites of development in spite of conflict. The cross-cutting priority areas applicable to the three conflict phases are as follows:

1. Root causes, spillover effect and global challenges.
2. Good governance, institution building and public sector modernization.
3. Special attention allocated to LDCs.

D. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

The approach adopted by ECRI is based on the relationship and interdependence between conflict mitigation and socio-economic development. By identifying the root causes of conflict and contributing, through analytical activities, to identifying potential strategies and operational activities to alleviate its immediate and long-term impacts, ECRI is providing the required elements for socio-economic development and contributing to the enhancement of national and regional capacities to circumvent potential future conflicts.



The findings and recommendations of analytical activities are translated into operational projects with the aim of enhancing national and local capacities to build resilience against the negative effects of conflict and instability. These endeavours fall within the overall framework of inducing good governance policies and practices in the public sector to improve service delivery, thus improving socio-economic development at the national level.

In this regard, the methodological approach is based on three mutually reinforcing pillars, which constitute ECRI’s main areas of intervention:

1. Identifying emerging trends and impact of conflict on instability settings:
 - (a) Monitoring of social, economic and political trends to identify potential sources of conflict;

(b) Analysing the internal dynamics of social, economic and political trends and their impact on development;

(c) Providing early warning on emerging trends and their potential impact;

(d) Developing expert research and insights on best practices in ensuring socio-economic development in spite of conflict and instability.

2. Conflict mitigation: the preemptive approach:

(a) Addressing socio-economic sources of instability;

(b) Enhancing local capacities to increase local preparedness and alleviate the impact of future crises;

(c) Developing local capacities to identify potential sources of conflict;

(d) Fostering cross-cutting partnerships cementing peace and stability and reducing the potential of conflict.

3. Development under crisis: the reactive approach:

(a) Mitigating the impact of conflict on living conditions through specific operational activities;

(b) Addressing the long-term development needs and enhancing peacebuilding approaches in conflict-afflicted countries;

(c) Building local capacities to alleviate the impact of conflict and building the inner resilience of populations;

(d) Initiating homegrown responses to local needs and priorities.

E. FOCUS AREAS

1. *Addressing root causes and impact of conflict and instability*

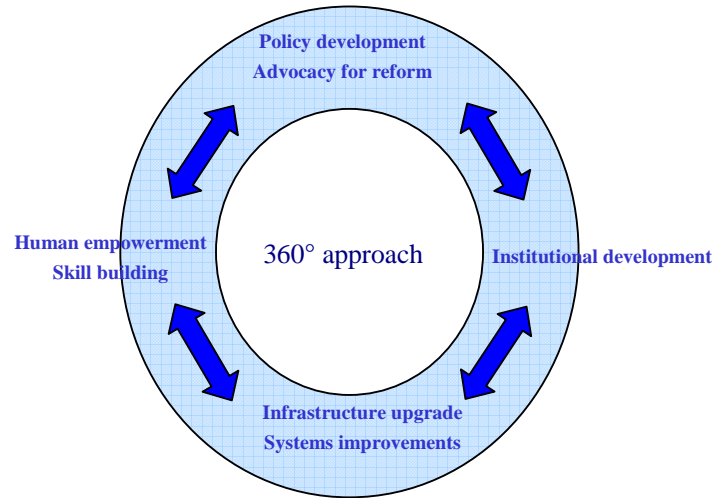
In light of the divergent characteristics and types of conflict and sources of instability in Western Asia, ECRI strives to customize development approaches to suit the context, particularities and requirements of targeted countries. This endeavour translates into substantial analytical work which aims at pinpointing shortcomings related to potential conflicts and instability and projects most viable scenarios to circumvent their immediate and long-term impacts.

The analytical activities serve as the basis for the formulation of new conceptual and operational frameworks, which lead to the development of focused and adapted operational responses aiming at mitigating the impact of conflict and instability and promoting peacebuilding initiatives. Moreover, monitoring and analysing political and socio-economic dynamics and trends constitutes the basis for conflict-mitigation strategies that are developed and mainstreamed within national policies through policy recommendations for concerned member States. It is also to be noted that these reports provide technical advice and recommendations to member States and non-governmental organizations in the formulation of policies that serve to address the socio-economic needs of the people.

2. *Promoting good governance practices through human and institutional capacity building*

Comprehensive capacity-building approaches and interventions have proven to be among the most appropriate tools to ensure the promotion and establishment of good governance practices and principles within public-sector institutions both at the central and local levels.

Acknowledging the importance and relevance of good governance practices in institution-building and peacebuilding efforts, ECRI has been active in developing and implementing capacity-building projects that are conducive of good governance principles within the public sector. This approach is based on the rationale that advancing governance within the public sector – or public governance – helps ensure the adequate provision of essential services, thus directly improving the living standards and livelihoods of all citizens and reducing the potential of conflict and instability. Indeed, it is generally recognized that effective public governance arrangements ensure the efficient, transparent and accountable provision of services and management of public resources, which also allow the attainment of the MDGs as well as peace and stability.



ECRI has devised the “360 degrees approach” in developing capacity-building activities, which relies on four main interlinked pillars of institutional and human development as shown in the diagram above. This approach has proven to tackle all components of institutional development and is considered to be a comprehensive intervention that leads to sustained results. ECRI’s capacity-building projects are based on the interrelationship between policy development and advocacy for reform at the central level, and three areas of intervention that are more focused on the development of the institutions itself, namely institutional development, human development and infrastructure upgrade (IT infrastructure: hardware and software).

3. *Promoting local community development*

In the prospect of providing a comprehensive approach to development, ECRI complements its governance initiatives with local development activities which focus on empowering local communities to build their resilience to conflict and post-conflict repercussions. Local community development projects indeed have a positive effect on the enhancement of local and national economies and lead to the development of local governance practices. This approach is particularly beneficial in the LDCs of the region, where community-based interventions and development schemes have recorded a positive impact on the livelihood of communities.

Communal development projects are identified based on two major criteria: (i) the comparative advantage of the targeted area and its population; and (ii) the capacity of beneficiaries to ensure sustainability of the interventions. The theory of “comparative advantage” is the major element in the identification of any given intervention at the local level. A thorough analysis of existing local capacities and natural resources available constitute the guiding principles of selection. Moreover, the comparative advantage, in principle, would reduce competition and enhance the quality of the end result produced. As for the second conditioning element, namely the capacity and willingness of beneficiaries to ensure sustainability, ECRI ensures the attainment of this objective by involving the end beneficiaries in the design and implementation of operational activities. This approach ensures local and national ownership of the project and acts as an indicator of the willingness of local authorities to ensure sustainability.

II. MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS OF ECRI

Since its inception in 2006, ECRI has been active in formulating adapted, realizable and sustainable development strategies which have been translated into socio-economic development projects in conflict and instability settings with the aim of mitigating the sources of conflict and instability and instigating institution building and peacebuilding in post-conflict settings. The development of operational interventions is primarily based on the outcomes and recommendations of analytical studies performed by the Section, but also, and most importantly, on the needs and priorities identified in consultation with national stakeholders and end beneficiaries.

A. ANALYTICAL ACTIVITIES: ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF CONFLICT AND THEIR SPILLOVER EFFECTS

ECRI, through its analytical activities, strives to identify and propose regional strategies and approaches to mitigate the major trends and shortcomings that would hinder socio-economic development in conflict-affected countries. Indeed, conflicts and instability in Western Asia are two phenomena that are rarely confined to one particular country and usually have subsequent regional spillover effects. This has an important implication on the work of ECRI, in particular from the policymaking perspective. ECRI approaches the design of research models, policies or programmes from both the national and regional levels, since the socio-economic and political dynamics of conflict are closely interrelated. Moreover, given the varied and extensive spillover effects of conflict in the region, conflict is analysed and addressed in a multidimensional fashion and through a regional prism.

Through the development of recurrent and non-recurrent publications, expert group meetings and consultations, the Section is active in monitoring the development of latent and protracted conflicts in the region, in addition to identifying major trends and emerging issues that undermine development in conflict-affected countries and limit socio-economic development. Indeed, ECRI strives to assist member countries to formulate and implement policies and programmes that address the spillover effects generated by conflict and occupation as well as the impact of emerging global challenges on the most vulnerable ESCWA member States, in particular the LDCs.

Listed below are selected studies, reports, papers and assessments highlighting the issues and topics addressed by ECRI:

1. Monitoring trends and their spillover effects:
 - Annual monitoring of developments based on the report on the Economic and Social Repercussions of the Israeli Occupation on the Living Conditions of the Palestinian People in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab Population in the Occupied Syrian Golan, presented to the Secretary-General;
 - Biannual issuance of the report on Monitoring and Analysis of Political, Social and Economic Development in Countries Affected by Conflict, providing an analysis of current political and socio-economic trends that may be significant for policymaking, peacebuilding and humanitarian and development initiatives.
2. The impact of conflict-driven displacement on the ESCWA region:
 - The study on Trends and Impact in Conflict Settings: the Socio-economic Impact of Conflict-driven Displacement in the ESCWA Region was prepared around the theme of socio-economic impact of conflict-driven displacement in the ESCWA region and aimed to draw awareness to the fact that displacement is a regional issue, and that solutions require coordinated regional strategies.

3. The role of the private sector in post-conflict settings and building its resilience to conflict:
 - An expert group meeting entitled Approaches for Sustainable Development under Crisis Conditions focused on strengthening private sector resilience under conflict: lessons learned and the way forward. The meeting brought together 25 regional and international experts on private sector and conflict issues and representatives of the public and private sectors, and succeeded in identifying business development policies in countries in the region;
 - Discussion papers on emerging socio-economic issues under conditions of conflict or political instability: the private sector in crises-afflicted countries, potential and role in development and peacebuilding provided policies to strengthen the private sector, which is increasingly regarded as a potential driver for both peace and development, and its capacity to operate, thrive and survive in conflict-affected countries.
4. Ethno-sectarian tensions: root causes and challenges:
 - The study on Unpacking the Dynamics of Communal Tensions: A Focus Group Analysis of Perceptions among Youth in Lebanon examined the dynamics of communal tension, animosity and conflict utilizing Lebanon for a case study given that the communal dimension among the young Lebanese appears to carry a larger weight compared to other identities.
5. Development needs and priorities in conflict-affected countries:
 - Fact sheets on the socio-economic development needs and priorities in conflict-afflicted countries were developed, which focused on issues pertaining to conflict-driven displacement in the ESCWA region with particular policy focus on its socio-economic impact on both populations and member States;
 - A documentary on best practices in implementing socio-economic development programmes/projects in conflict-afflicted areas was developed with the aim of disseminating best practices in promoting development in spite of conflict. The documentary highlighted approaches and activities to build and develop human and institutional capacities as a precondition to foster long-lasting peace and development;
 - ECRI also produced information kits on sustainable development under conditions of crisis or political instability based on experiences and lessons learned.
6. Private-public partnership for good governance and economic recovery:

ECRI organized a workshop on private-public partnerships in governance and economic development, which targeted high-level officials of the Iraqi Government and parliament and senior-level businessmen. The workshop highlighted the role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) within the private sector, relating this to the goals of national recovery, improved governance and peacebuilding. One of the major highlights of the workshop was the consensus of participants to put in effect improved governance policies and practices in order to enhance the privatization and partnership processes. Specific recommendations to the Iraqi parliament were presented.

7. Good governance practices as a means to conflict mitigation and peacebuilding:
 - ECRI organized an expert group meeting on Good Governance and Management of Public Services, which examined policy options that induce development in spite of conflict and political tensions and that serve to mitigate the impact of conflict on national development efforts. In that regard, strengthening the public sector, in particular the provision of essential services, through

the promotion of good governance practices in conflict-affected countries was a key focus and received positive feedback from representatives of three member States and the League of Arab States as well as eight experts concerning the pertinence of topics raised and the policy recommendations provided;

- An expert group meeting on Policies for Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention in Western Asia was organized by ECRI, which gathered prominent experts from think tanks, academic institutions, United Nations agencies and other multilateral organizations as well as decision makers and civil society. The meeting succeeded in examining and recommending policies which are geared towards preventing conflict and building long-term sustainable peace in the region. The meeting examined social grievances as a root cause of conflict and tackled the importance of the public sector through good governance practices as a conduit for peacebuilding and conflict prevention;
- ECRI, in cooperation with the Basil Fuleihan Institute of the Ministry of Finance in Lebanon, developed a reference guide to best practices in public financial management. The guide introduces the current trends in public financial management, fiscal budget, tax laws and managing revenues and expenses in addition to planning and implementing public budget and the best practices in internal audit, and is expected to be a road map for improving the performance of public administrations.

In addition to deepening its analysis on the above-mentioned thematic, ECRI will also expand its activities to include the following topics:

- Food crisis and food security;
- Modernization of public administration as a vehicle to mainstreaming good governance practices;
- Civic education as a prerequisite of nation building and State building.

B. PROMOTING GOOD GOVERNANCE THROUGH HUMAN AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY-BUILDING

ECRI has adopted human and institutional capacity-building initiatives as a key intervention in building and strengthening State institutions with the aim of enhancing the skills and capacities of the human capital of member countries and transforming them into agents of change and development in their respective environments.

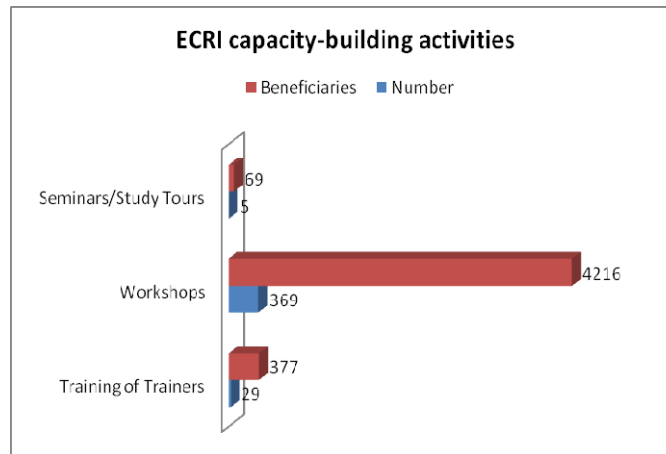
The following table presents an overview of projects undertaken by ECRI (ECRI's project portfolio):

Title of project	<i>Objective</i>	Donor	<i>Implementing partners</i>	<i>Budget (US\$)</i>
Iraqi Networking Academies Project (INA), Phase II	To support Iraqi universities to develop a robust ICT education sector	Iraq Trust Fund, United Nations Development Group (ITF/UNDG)	Ministry of Higher Education, CISCO, LAU and UNESCO	3,870,000
ICT in Education for Iraq Project (ICTEI)	To improve curricula on ICT	EC through ITF	Ministry of Higher Education and UNESCO	4,000,606
Capacity Building of the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works (MMPW)	To build the capacities of decision makers and employees in improving service delivery processes and enhancing their performance	UNDP -Iraq	MMPW	1,375,167
Strengthening the Capacity of the Housing Sector, Phase II	To develop the capacity of the Ministry of Construction and Housing to enable the delivery and financing of housing	UN-Habitat	Ministry of Construction and Housing	228,000
Capacity Building of the Iraqi Public Sector Management (NCCMD)	To support locally led management reforms of the Iraqi public institutions that contribute to an effective, efficient, responsive and transparent public sector	UNDP Iraq	NCCMD	872,581
Private-public Partnership in Governance and Economic Reconstruction	To identify recommendations to enhance private-public partnerships in governance and economic reconstruction in Iraq	UNDP Iraq	Business Humanitarian Forum, UN-mandated University for Peace and United States Institute of Peace	96,210
Support to Decentralization and Local Governance for Service Delivery in Iraq	To support the realization of decentralized governance in Iraq	UNDP Iraq	NCCMD, COSIT and Bait el Hikma	646,354
Capacity Building on Strategic Planning in Palestine, the Sudan and Yemen	To build the skills of middle and senior public sector officials in strategic planning, thus improving the planning capacity of public-sector institutions	ESCWA Technical Cooperation	Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development (Palestine), Ministry of International Cooperation (the Sudan) and Ministry of Planning (Yemen)	180,000

Note: LAU (Lebanese American University), UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), EC (European Commission), UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), UN-Habitat (United Nations Human Settlements Programme), COSIT (Central Organization for Statistics and Information Technology).

Capacity-building activities targeting representatives of public sector and civil society have yielded the following overall results:

- Implementation of 32 training-of-trainers sessions, building the skills of 429 trainers in various capacity-building topics;
- Implementation of 370 workshops, benefiting 4,228 representatives of public sector and civil society;
- Implementation of five seminars and study tours, benefiting 69 public-sector officials, on strategies and methodologies for public-sector modernization.



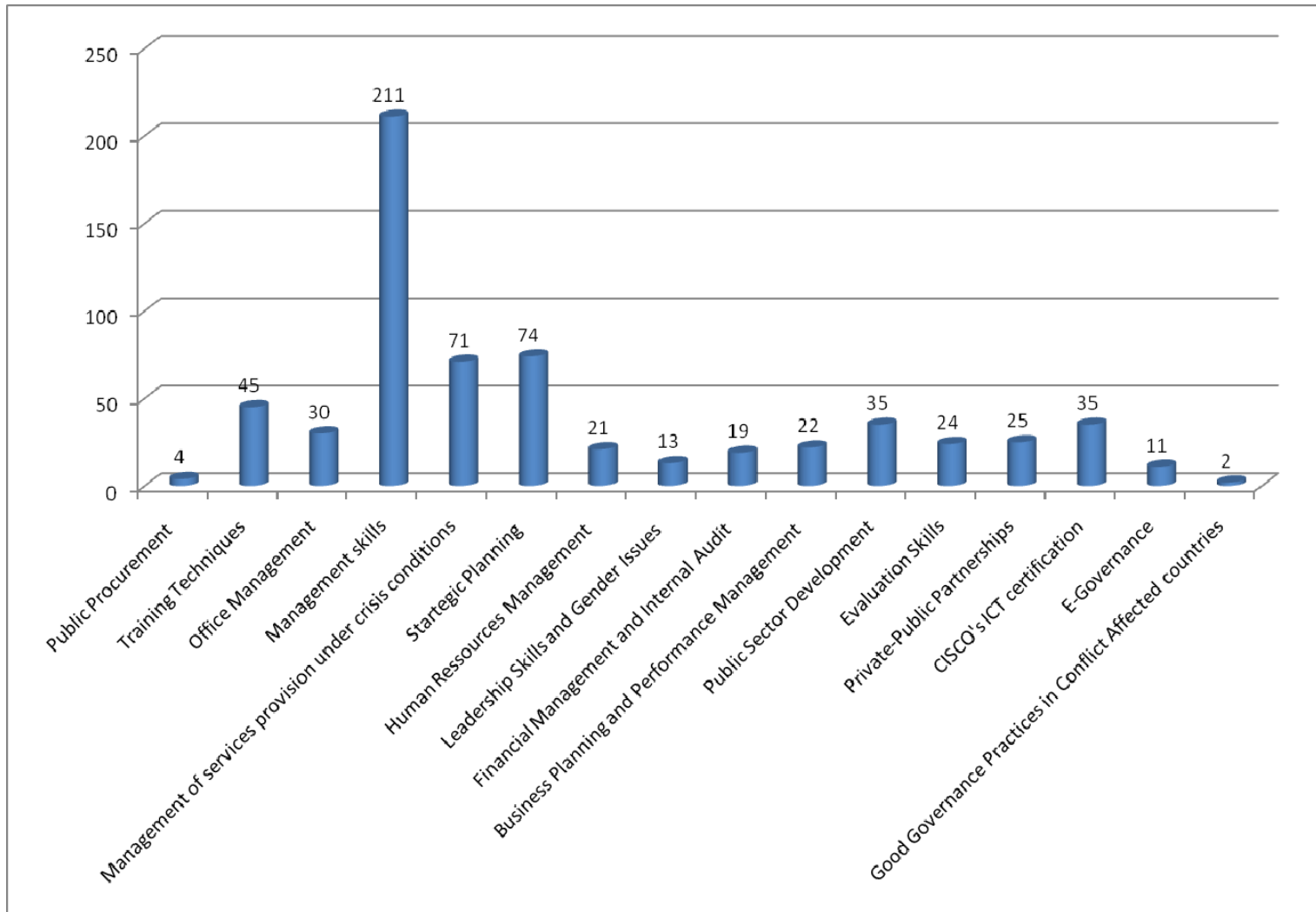
1. Human development

ECRI has adapted and implemented capacity-building workshops, seminars and training of trainers benefiting public-sector officials in crisis-affected countries on the topics mentioned below:

- Management skills;
- Strategic planning;
- Office management;
- Business planning and performance management;
- Management of services provision under crisis conditions;
- Human resources management;
- Training techniques;
- Leadership skills and gender issues;
- Financial management and internal audit;
- Evaluation skills;
- Private-public partnerships;
- E-governance;
- Public sector development;
- CISCO's ICT certification;
- Public procurement;
- Good governance practices in conflict-affected countries.

A total of 642 public-sector officials in different sectors from Iraq, Palestine, the Sudan and Yemen were trained on the above-listed topics. The chart featured below presents the distribution of beneficiaries per topic addressed:

Distribution of beneficiaries per topic addressed by ECRI's capacity-building (2007-2009)



2. Institutional strengthening

In addition to empowering public-sector officials in the prospect of enhancing the capacity of civil servants, ECRI has been involved in institutional capacity building through the identification and implementation of public-sector modernization strategies and activities. Major initiatives include:

- Building the knowledge and national capacities in strategic planning techniques and methodologies in Iraq, Palestine and Yemen, with the aim to disseminating strategic planning methodologies within public-sector institutions;
- Supporting the National Centre for Consultancy and Management Development (NCCMD) within the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation in Iraq to develop a framework for management development for the public sector in general, in the prospect of instigating reform and improvement;
- Mainstreaming e-governance practices in the consultancy services provided by the NCCMD to the Iraqi public-sector institutions;
- Developing an institutional development toolkit congregating human and institutional capacity-building modules for conflict mitigation and post-conflict State building;
- Promoting practices of public-private partnerships in enhancing the introduction of good governance practices and the effectiveness of economic reconstruction activities to Iraqi delegates.

3. Policy recommendations for public-sector modernization

Specific policy recommendations for the modernization of the public sector were presented to concerned stakeholders in the prospect of inducing policy reform. Major achievements can be summarized as follows:

- Development of a blueprint with specific policy recommendations for the housing subsector on building materials and construction industry in Iraq;
- During the high-level workshop on private-public partnership for governance and economic reconstruction in Iraq, specific policy recommendations were developed to enhance governance policies and practices in order to improve privatization and partnership processes, in addition to enhancing legal and anti-corruption measures. Specific recommendations were presented to the Iraqi parliament through members of parliament present at the workshop;
- Development of a guide on modern trends and practices in public finance management, promoting the adoption of governance principles in public finances;
- Recommendations to enhance the decentralization of the delivery of services in Iraq to be presented to the Council of Ministers and ministries concerned.

B. LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT

ECRI has been active in promoting local community development through the implementation of operational projects which aim at empowering local communities to deal with conflict and its repercussions on socio-economic structures. Local development projects consist of capacity-building and skill-building interventions in addition to economic development activities aiming at post-conflict economic revival.

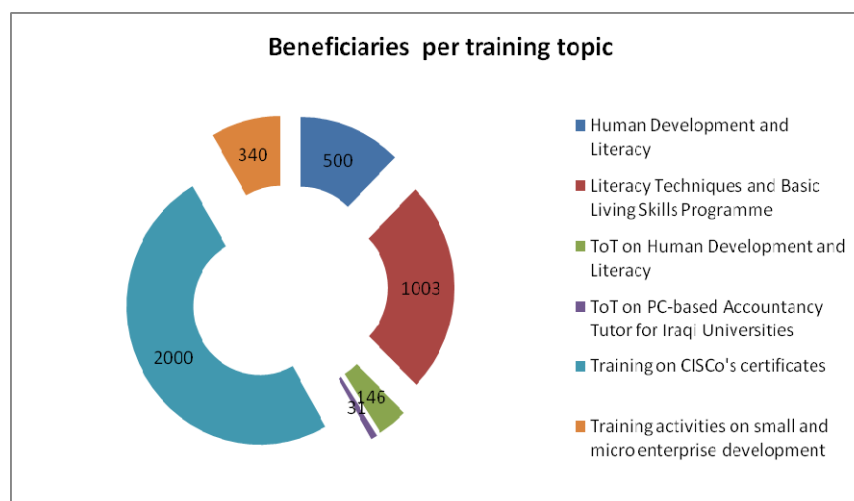
The following local community development projects have been implemented by ECRI:

Title of project	<i>Objective</i>	Donor	<i>Implementing partners</i>	<i>Budget (US\$)</i>
Revolving Micro-credit for Agriculture and Agro-businesses Project	To support micro and small enterprises (MSEs) in South Lebanon	Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development (AAAID)	Association de Developpement Rural (ADR)	250,000
E-caravan Phoenix Project	A mobile computer and internet school, aimed to empower local communities through computer and IT skills	International agencies	Fondation Saradar	275,000
Smart Community Project for Iraq	To build capacity for fighting unemployment and poverty through modern technology	ITF/UNDG	MMPW, municipalities and higher educational institutions	2,703,202
Governance in Support of Employment Creation (GEC)	To create employment through three business incubators established	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)		450,470

1. *Capacity-building and skill-building initiatives at the local level*

ECRI succeeded in reaching 4,020 beneficiaries through capacity-building and skill-building activities ranging from literacy courses to small and micro enterprises development. The table below lists the number of beneficiaries per type of training.

Area of focus	Number of beneficiaries
Human development and literacy	500
Literacy techniques and basic living skills programme	1 003
Training of trainers on human development and literacy	146
Training of trainers on PC-based accountancy tutor for Iraqi universities	31
Training on CISCO certificates	2 000
Training activities on small and micro enterprise development	340
Total	4 020



2. Economic development activities

ECRI implemented economic development projects in South Lebanon and Iraq, which were identified based on the comparative advantage of targeted areas. In both countries, the projects yielded positive results and were able to enhance the local economic cycle and increase the income of small and medium producers.

Major achievements of the economic development initiatives are as follows:

- Introduction of a high return crop, the zaatar, in South Lebanon as an alternative to the cultivation of tobacco;
- Disbursement of US\$200,000 in micro and small loans in South Lebanon (until January 2008) in support to small and medium entrepreneurs;
- Creation of 37 new job opportunities in South Lebanon, and 97 existing jobs could be sustained;
- Establishment of two multi-purpose technology community centres (MTCCs) in Altun Kopri and Sayid Dikhil in Iraq;
- Putting into operation of two dairy processing units in Dibbs and Sayid Dikhil in Iraq;
- Establishment of one multi-purpose agro-food processing unit at Mosul university in Iraq for educational purposes;
- Establishment of two agro-food testing laboratories at Thi Qar and Salahaddine universities in Iraq;
- Establishment of six community development units at Salahaddine, Thi Qar, Mosul, Wassit, Al Qadissiya and Baghdad universities;
- Establishment of three business development centres (BDCs) in the governorate of Basra in Iraq.