



SUPPORT TO LAONF - IRAQ

Iraqi non-violent network to promote human rights and internal reconciliation

This project was started in 2009 as a Project of Regional Address of the Table of the Mediterranean and Middle East of the Region of Tuscany. The aim was to support the involvement of Iraqi civil society actors into the process of internal reconciliation and prevention of a new Iraqi conflict, reinforcing the role in the promotion of human rights and influence in relation to the formulation of policies in favor of human rights and civil liberties.

The NGO *Un ponte per...*, which has been working in Iraq for several years, is the leader of the project Table of Peace and Cooperation of Valdera. There are many partners of this project: Al Mesalla Organization for Human Resources Development, which is the Iraqi partner, ARCI Tuscan Regional Committee, Gandhi Center, University of Pisa Interdepartmental Center, City of Florence, City of Pisa, City of Pontedera, Center North South Institution, Tuscan Development Project CGIL, Province of Florence, Table for Peace of Cecina Valley di Cecina, Union of Valdera Municipalities, which are Tuscan partners.

Some links between Iraqi and Tuscan NGOs, trade unions, universities and local authorities have been created in order to reflect together on civil society's approaches in several fields. Moreover, the reflection is on the challenges that the local authorities have to face, which are challenges about participation policies, peace and rights.

The Iraqi civil non-violent network has been enhanced thanks to the opening of new local offices: "Non-violent meeting places" among Erbil, Baghdad, Kirkuk, Tikrit, Myssan. In addition to this, a training manual for the courses held in these venues, was created.

The process of participation planning of Iraqi Campaign for the Public Freedom includes lobby processes and dialogue with Iraqi local authorities performed thanks to the support of Tuscan partners.

Freedom of expression campaign is one of these activities: a conference among different religious leaders and a laboratory for children focused on freedom of expression and gender differences were realized.

In 2011, Al Mesalla received the recognition *Sergio Vieira de Mello* for the Laonf network's activities, when Kofi Annan, José Manuel Barroso and more than 1000 United Nations representatives and Human Rights organizations representatives were present.

<http://www.almesalla.net/Default1.aspx>