

Iraq: Aug/Sept '11

Author: [IWPR](#)

Scheme aimed at improving women's prospects in advertising and design begins with Baghdad photography workshop.

IWPR held a week-long lighting and photography course for 25 women in its Baghdad office on October 9-13, as part of efforts to improve women's prospects in the male-dominated fields of advertising and design.

The course marked the start of the Women Advertising and Design Agency, WADA, project – an 18-month-long initiative intended to increase the graphic design, advertising, photography and managerial skills of Iraqi women looking to enter these fields.

One of the main goals of the project – part of IWPR's Human Rights Media Links, HRML, programme – is to enable a group of women to set up Iraq's first independent female-owned and run advertising/media agency.

Training will cover design, advertising, copywriting and photography for 100 participants selected from over 200 applicants across Iraq.

After the course, they in turn will be able to provide high-end training to other women looking to break into the advertising sector.

Ria'am Hamoodi, a 20-year old student from the college of media in Baghdad, said she felt the project would supplement and strengthen the skills she acquired in her studies.

"I have a strong desire to get into the world of design, production and photography," she said. "This is what my career is about. I believe the course will help me fulfil my ambition."

The majority of the participants come from backgrounds unrelated to advertising and the media, but hope the course will help in their current jobs and enable them to switch careers in future, should they decide to do so.

"A lawyer needs to know media basics to progress in his or her career. If I want to become a professional designer or photographer, then I will need more courses, yet everything has a beginning and I believe it is the best beginning for me," said Shahad Amjad, a 21-year-old law student from Baghdad university,

The course was delivered by Muhannad Hasan, one of Iraq's most talented graphic designers. He works for several Iraqi satellite channels as a consultant with over 20 years' experience in the field.

"I felt pleased with the effort the participants put into the workshop," he said. "They listened to lectures attentively, and generally asked good questions."

He noted that at the start of the course, many of the participants didn't know how to operate a camera or a computer.

The next scheduled WADA project activity is a workshop in which the trainees will be required to develop a public service advertising campaign.

Media professionals from leading agencies, together with IWPR staff, will help them brainstorm, conceptualise and deliver posters that raises awareness of public services.

Location: [Iraq](#)

Topic: [Women](#)

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