ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2014
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To Our Stakeholders</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to EPIC</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update – 2014 Programming</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Directors</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Summary</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Thanks</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Information</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To Our Stakeholders

I wrote about the rise of ISIL (the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIS or DAESH) in EPIC’s annual report last year. In 2014, this terrorist organization recorded high-profile gains in Tikrit, Mosul, and more recently in Ramadi and Palmyra. EPIC had already warned of the disintegration of the Iraqi state in 2013; this past year, that threat became all too apparent to Western governments and the global public as well.

This turmoil prompted welcome political change in Baghdad, as the sectarian and divisive Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki was replaced by Dr. Haider al-Abadi. But it is still unclear whether that will be enough to preserve the unity of the country. The ineffectiveness of the Iraqi security forces, the conquests made by the Kurdish Peshmerga, and the continued jockeying for power between Iran and Sunni powers have called into question the very idea of a unified Iraq – or at least, what form federalization should take there.

As horrifying as the first-order effects of this conflict have been (over 12,000 Iraqi civilians have been killed through violence, representing the highest civilian death toll since the sectarian bloodshed of 2006-07), the long-term effects could be even graver. The violent conflicts in Iraq and neighboring Syria have forced as many as 12 million Syrians and 3 million Iraqis to flee their homes, contributing to the greatest humanitarian crisis of our times. In many other areas, the collapse of many basic services and constant backdrop of conflict have created an environment in which the youth of Iraq are not able to develop the skills they will need in a 21st-century economy – or, for that matter, simply to become responsible citizens in a modern state.

The risks incumbent in such an environment are immense. The cycle of economic depression, political repression, and radicalization continues, and although innocent Iraqis will always be the ones that suffer most for it, we in the West will also feel the effects. With your support, we at EPIC are doing all that we can to work against these forces, and ensure that the youth in Iraq do have a future.

More concretely, the dimensions of this crisis have impacted our programming. On the ground in Iraq, we’ve focused on humanitarian programs like TentEd and Soccer Salaam instead of our previous longer-term civil-society-building initiatives. We believe that the greatest contribution we can make to the longer-term stability of the country is to address the immediate shortfall in services and supplies to vulnerable populations. Children need schoolbooks and soccer balls now. Of course, by that I mean all children, not just Iraqis. Although we remain focused on Iraq, the sheer number of Syrian refugees who have fled to Iraq means that EPIC is touching people from across the Middle East.

In another reaction to the reversals in the Iraqi security situation, we have increasingly tried to involve the US veterans’ communities into our work. Three of our Board members are veterans, as are the leaders of our TentEd and Soccer Salam initiatives. Our advocacy and research and communications efforts have also felt the effects of the changing landscape in the Middle East. We continue to believe that too much of the discourse in the West revolves around military concerns, which may be one important lever in the short-term but are not sufficient for the long-term stabilization of the country.

You can read more about our achievements over this past year in the next sections of this report. Needless to say, we’ve only managed to get all of this work done by working with great partners – including the Iraqi Health Aid Organization (IHAO) based in Baghdad, the Erbil field office of the International Volunteers of Yamagata (IVY), and U.S.-based organizations like the Iraqi Children Foundation, the Karadah Project International, and the Goals and Dreams Outreach Foundation. As we work with these dedicated men and
women, we continue to try to develop EPIC as an effective platform from which to facilitate positive change. Whenever an individual or an organization wants to build civil society in Iraq, we hope they think of us as a host and partner.

Sometimes, playing such a role can lead to difficult choices. A key part of EPIC’s identity is that the organization is absolutely politically non-aligned, both in the United States and in Iraq. We are often approached by potential partners with attractive initiatives. With each proposal, we carefully review its merits and the affiliation to ensure that our impartiality and independence are not compromised. We consider this short-term dampener on our ability to scale our impact to be a necessary one if we are to maintain a long-term presence in Iraq.

Our organization has grown substantially over the last year. To support our growth, we have formed a diverse and talented Board of Directors, hired an additional program associate, and begun an extensive effort to bolster our internal systems. By the end of 2015, we hope to have become even more effective at serving our U.S. and Iraqi stakeholders.

EPIC remains an extremely ambitious organization. Although it’s hard to believe that we can top 2014, I can assure you that we will work hard to do just that, and to continue to earn your support.

With hope,

Sören Südhof
President, Board of Directors
April 30, 2015
Introduction to EPIC

The Education for Peace in Iraq Center (EPIC) is an independent, politically nonaligned 501(c)3 charitable organization founded by concerned Americans in 1998. Based in Washington DC, we work to advance peace and democracy in Iraq through public advocacy, field work, and genuine partnerships with Iraqi civil society and the country’s youth. EPIC is funded by the contributions of private foundations and individuals like you who share our commitment to building a brighter future for all Iraqis.

More than 57 percent of Iraq’s population is under the age of 25, according to recent data from the CIA and United Nations. In war-torn cities like Baghdad, Mosul, and Kirkuk, nearly every resident has experienced traumatic life events such as the violent death of a loved one. A large number of young Iraqis have no immediate prospects and are disenfranchised from the country’s political, economic, and social development. Only 4 in 10 continue their education beyond primary school, and of those who enter the workforce, half are unemployed. Iraq’s stability (and, in turn, the stability of the Middle East) depends on reversing these trends and creating opportunities for the country’s youth to become a force for positive change. In short, preparing them for the future is the most effective way to support Iraq’s peace and development.

Following the withdrawal of most Western governmental and institutional resources from the country, EPIC plays a more important role than ever before in its 15-year history. EPIC is dedicated to helping people build a more peaceful, sustainable, democratic society in Iraq. We seek to accomplish this by advocating policies that further Iraq’s prospects for peace and democracy, by striving to keep citizens internationally well-informed on the developments in the country, and by running and supporting youth programs and partnerships in Iraq that engage young people in creating a brighter future. In short, we seek to help build civil society in Iraq by forming the citizens of tomorrow.

As part of a diverse community of stakeholders who are invested in seeing a brighter future for all Iraqis, EPIC creates and promotes opportunities for young Iraqis to contribute to their country’s peace and development. We do this in three ways:
(1) Empower Iraqis: fund, structure, and execute on-the-ground programs that empower Iraqi youth from diverse backgrounds to make a positive difference together.

★ TentEd
★ Soccer Salam
★ PhotoVoice Iraq: Picturing Change
★ Iraqi Youth Hike

(2) Educate Americans: facilitate research and information sharing on developments inside Iraq and on lessons learned and best practices in the fields of peace building, education, and youth development.

★ The IRAQ MATTERS Podcast
★ The Ground Truth Project
★ Various Reports and Analyses, commissioned research, and journalism
★ EPIC’s blog

(3) Enact Policy: advocate for U.S. and international diplomacy and assistance for securing peace and building democratic institutions and processes, including efforts to increase government accountability, strengthen civil society, and improve educational opportunities for current and future generations of Iraqis.

★ Correspondence with policymakers (2014)
★ The Future of Iraqi Civil Society Forum (2010)
★ Iraq Action Days (2008)
★ FACES of Iraq Photo Exhibition (2002 to 2005)
★ National Rally to End the Humanitarian Crisis in Iraq (2000)

EPIC is building a community of young people who have been impacted by these programs. Maintaining this network will help EPIC better understand the needs and aspirations of Iraq’s youth by supporting the development of programs that best serve them. We will also gain valuable knowledge and experience about how to advance innovative ideas in the field of education. With this knowledge, we will be able to empower not only Iraqi youth, but the teachers who work to educate and empower these young people every day.
Last year was an even more active one for EPIC than 2013 had been. Due to the rapidly growing humanitarian crisis in the country, we were forced to switch our focus more towards on-the-ground impact relative to the other two prongs of our strategy. We also responded to the perspectives we gathered directly from our stakeholders as part of our first-ever organized survey. But as the highlights below show, we still have achievements to celebrate across the board.

**ADVOCACY**

- **“Put Iraq Back on the Agenda” Petition**
  Launched in late 2013, this petition urged the White House to support a long-term strategy that will strengthen civil society and provide opportunities for youth. In 2014, EPIC closed out this effort having exceeded its goal with a total of 11,600 signatures recorded, and delivered the petition to the White House and Capitol Hill.

- **Iraq Crisis Working Group**
  EPIC initiated and chaired an Iraq Crisis working group of Washington DC-based NGOs to share information on humanitarian and protection needs and coordinate policy recommendations and advocacy.
  
  The Working Group accomplished the following, before ultimately merging with InterAction’s ad hoc Iraq group.
  - Initiated and sent a public letter to US Secretary of State John Kerry signed by EPIC and 35 NGOs and faith institutions including Mercy Corps, International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, Amnesty International USA, Human Rights Watch, National Council of Churches USA, the Presbyterian Church USA, and Catholic Relief Services.
- Received official response letter from Secretary of State Kerry inviting further dialogue
- Submitted Questions for the Record (QRFs) for two congressional hearings.
- Successfully pushed for a House hearing on humanitarian and protection concerns regarding the crisis
- Successfully pressed USAID’s OFDA (Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance) to send DART team and make immediate funds available to address urgent needs that are not yet being met
- Met and consulted with USAID/OFDA’s RMT and with the State Dept./PRM (Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration)

• Boston Marathon Campaign
  This year, Iraq’s Ambassador to the U.S. Lukman Faily raised nearly five thousand dollars for EPIC through a personal crowdfunding campaign connected with his running the Boston Marathon. In a separate fundraising effort, the ambassador raised another five thousand dollars for EPIC from the Chaldean Community Foundation. The efforts not only brought in funds, but also attracted the attention of many important players in the field of Iraq policy and brought further attention to the current plight of Iraqi citizens.

RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATIONS

• Iraq Matters Podcast
  The Iraq Matters podcast was launched in August 2013, with the intent to supplement the organization’s blog in educating our stakeholders and the public about impactful individuals and organizations, important current events and developments in Iraq, and cultural themes. Over the past year, nine podcasts were created and posted, and the podcast has gotten over five thousand downloads, covering topics ranging from the humanitarian crisis facing displaced Iraqis and Syrians to the history and story of Iraq’s Christian communities.

• Blog
  EPIC’s blog has been a reliable voice on development issues in Iraq since 2006. It is a source of information both about developments in Iraq and about activity in the development/NGO sector, as well as acting as a medium of communication for EPIC to communicate its view on current events, supply new analysis, explain current programming, and profile its partners.
2014, EPIC posted over sixty times across the year, including several white papers (such as the Humanitarian Crisis Overview series authored by Mark Abman).

- Other

EPIC, its initiatives, and its policy perspectives were featured in a half dozen articles across major news outlets, including ABC News, CNN, and the Huffington Post.

EPIC also participated in two roundtable policy discussions organized by Partners for Democratic Change, the Alliance for Peacebuilding, and the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) with significant participation by Iraqi American public policy professionals, analysts, and Foreign Service Officers.

ON-THE-GROUND

- PhotoVoice Iraq: Picturing Change

PhotoVoice was designed in partnership with the American University of Iraq – Sulaimani (AUIS) and the Center for International Education (CIE) and the Center for Global Studies (CGS) at George Mason University to teach young people how to use the power of photography and their own voices to address issues important to them and their country. Like our past field programs, PhotoVoice brings together cohorts of young Iraqi students from a wide range of sectarian and geographic backgrounds to inspire confidence, communicative ability, and creative problem-solving. It also provides the outside world with a unique view into current realities in the country.

EPIC’s Executive Director, Erik Gustafson visited Iraq twice this past year, where he completed dozens of one-on-one mentoring sessions with 15 students involved in the PhotoVoice field program. The program is currently being finalized and the first exhibit of the photos is tentatively planned for early next year at the Sulaimani Forum of the American University of Iraq-Sulaimani.
UPDATE – 2014 PROGRAMMING

• TentEd

Spearheaded by EPIC Director Zack Bazzi, TentEd responds to the educational needs of displaced children in Iraq’s Kurdistan Region, including Syrian refugees and displaced Iraqis based in camps and urban areas. TentEd is a rapid-impact, agile, low-cost direct relief program.

In 2014, Zack ran two programs, delivering over $32,000 of assistance to those populations most in need of support. The funds helped provide bus transportation for schoolchildren, school uniforms, Arabic books (science, history, geography, and literature), stationary kits, teachers’ salaries, a computer and printer, and helped furnish a library. Thus far, the program has directly touched more than 500 children in Iraq, and delivered materials that will impact hundreds more in the years to come.

• Soccer Salaam

Together with the Iraqi Children Foundation, the Goals and Dreams Outreach Foundation, and the Karadah Project International, in late 2014 EPIC launched Soccer Salam (SoccerSalam.org), a grassroots emergency campaign to deliver humanitarian relief and soccer balls to some of Iraq’s most vulnerable children and families while raising public awareness about the crisis in Iraq. The effort is being augmented by a social media campaign to engage college students, soccer enthusiasts, veterans, and other concerned Americans across the nation (#SoccerSalam).

In 2014, Soccer Salam secured in-kind contributions – including free air transport courtesy of Boeing and Emirates – and more than $20,000 in sponsorships and donations. The first Soccer Salam shipment arrived in Baghdad in late December with a cargo that included 1,000 winter blankets generously donated by Northwest Woolen Mills, 1,000 sleeping bags purchased in bulk with donations, and 1,000 Franklin soccer balls provided at a generously discounted rate. In early 2015, the materials will be distributed to displaced children and families at multiple camps and locations across the city of Baghdad.
This campaign was built around soccer because this sport is not just entertainment. The needs of children and youth fleeing violence go beyond food, water, and shelter – they also need opportunities to play. In a country where 65% of the population is under the age of 25, soccer is the #1 pastime. It’s also an international sport that unites all Iraqis, and it’s a healthy activity that promotes positive youth development. Moreover, the story of soccer in Iraq is a story of "strength through diversity." Iraq’s National Team includes Arab and Kurdish players, Sunni and Shi’a Muslims, and religious minorities.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Structurally, EPIC made large strides in 2014. The organization added a full-time staff member to its team, hiring its first program associate. Taif Jany was born and raised in Baghdad before fleeing and eventually coming to the United States. Taif brings to EPIC an exceptional understanding of Iraq and the issues facing the country and its youth today, and as a former EPIC intern, he was able to quickly plug into the organization’s operations.

EPIC also continued its internship program, giving ten interns (several of whom were Iraq war veterans or of Iraqi origin) a chance to contribute to and learn about development programming and advocacy. And our Board of Directors continues to grow and flourish.

After two years of frenetic programming, EPIC launched an initiative in late 2014 to completely rebuild its online and financial systems, which should bear fruit near the end of 2015. The organization is also still in the process of registering formally as a not-for-profit corporation in Iraq itself. Although a long-duration process, once completed this will enable the organization to engage in new ways within the country.
2014 Board of Directors

SÖREN SÜDHOF
Soren Sudhof graduated from Yale University, where he studied Ethics, Politics, and Economics. As a Richard U. Light Fellow, Georg Walter Leitner Fellow, and Fox International Fellow, he explored religious political conflict across Asia and the Middle East, focusing in particular on India and on Iraq. Currently, Soren is a graduate student at the Stanford University Graduate School of Business, where he is an Arbuckle Leadership Fellow. He also remains active within the Association of Yale Alumni and affiliated organizations. Previously, he was an investment professional at Parthenon Capital Partners, a director for Vianar Affordable Housing, and a strategy consultant for Oliver Wyman, the global management consultancy. He was also a part of the founding team of the Unreasonable Institute in Boulder, CO.

MOHAMMAD ZAKIR
Mohammed Zakir is the President of Acustrategy, a business and data analytics firm he started in Houston in 2008. In the past he has worked for Charles River Associates and Simon-Kucher & Partners and he
founded Silk Route Crafts, a venture to promote fair trade and opportunities for women artisans in Pakistan. Mohammed also started and runs an education scholarship program for inner-city youth in Karachi that raises funds from the Pakistani diaspora in the United States. Mohammed belongs to the Dawoodi Bohra group, a small and culturally distinct sect of Shia Muslims based primarily in Western India. He handles public relations for the group’s Houston Chapter. Mohammed received his undergraduate degree in Mathematics and Economics from Middlebury College and an MBA from the MIT Sloan School of Management.

**BILAL WAHAB**

Bilal Wahab, PhD, is from Iraqi Kurdistan where he is a faculty member at the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani (AUIS). At AUIS, he teaches classes on petroleum policy and international politics. He was AUIS’s first research fellow at the Institute of Regional and International Studies. He completed his PhD at George Mason University’s (GMU) School of Public Policy, where he studied patronage networks, economic and political transition, and Iraq’s petroleum policy. While at GMU, he was the managing editor of Foreign Policy Bulletin for two years. He received a Master’s Degree from the American University in Washington, DC on a Fulbright Scholarship. He also taught at Salahaddin University’s College of Law and Political Science and College of Education in Iraq, and has spoken at numerous campuses and think tanks across the United States, Europe and Iraq. He has made frequent media appearances, including on Aljazeera, National Public Radio, NewsHour with Jim Lehrer. He worked at the World Bank, the United Nations, and in numerous USAID programs. His latest publication is on Iraq-Kurdish dispute over the management of the country’s petroleum resources.

**MELINDA WITTER**

Melinda Witter is an academic, and practitioner of conflict mitigation, stabilization, and international development. She has over 29 years of professional experience with program design and management of programs for USAID, World Bank and an array of professional associations and nonprofits. Her specialty focuses on resolving conflict through community based initiatives which also incorporate youth, women, and disability participation. She holds an Executive Master’s degree of International Service from American University in Washington, D.C. with a concentration in Iraqi studies and conflict mitigation, and has worked in Iraq and Afghanistan.

**YASMEEN ALAMIRI**

Yasmeen Alamiri is an Iraqi-American journalist covering foreign politics and policy in Washington, DC. She covered the White House for several years and has written extensively on the war in Iraq and American foreign policy. She received her undergraduate from James Madison University and her Master’s Degree from American University in journalism. She has long been interested in the cultural and economic implications of war. She travels often to southern Iraq to visit her family, as well as the across the greater Middle East and Europe. Her work has been published in both domestic US media outlets, as well as publications across the globe.
DAVID SLATER

David Slater has been interested in the Middle East since 2005, when he joined the U.S. Army. During his time of service, David studied Arabic at the Defense Language Institute (DLI) and deployed to Iraq twice, in 2008 and in 2011. While deployed, he worked closely with Iraqi civilians, personally witnessing the utter devastation which surrounded them, and therefore decided that he was going to do something to help improve their situation. To that end, after returning to the U.S., he finished junior college then studied International Relations at U.C. Davis. In the summer of 2013, David participated in the University of California Washington D.C program, during which he interned at EPIC and was instrumental in creating the “Iraq Matters” podcast. Currently, David is working as a Caseworker for the International Rescue Committee in Sacramento, where he helps resettle many Iraqi refugees and SIVs.

ZACK BAZZI

Zack Bazzi is an international development professional with extensive on-the-ground operational experience in military, civil society, and private sectors, both in the USA and abroad. In 2014, Zack co-founded TentEd, an EPIC initiative supporting the education of refugee and displaced populations in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). Between 2011 to 2013 Zack worked overseas, first in Afghanistan assisting logistics and operations for an airlift company supporting military operations in Afghanistan then as a consultant for development firm implementing Department of State and USAID projects in the KRI. Prior to that, he held several leadership positions with organizations working on behalf of military veterans. Between 1997 and 2008, Zack served in the U.S. Army and Army National Guard completing four overseas deployments to Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Zack earned a degree in Psychology from the University of New Hampshire and is currently pursuing an Executive Master’s Degree through Georgetown University in Emergency and Disaster Management.

PETER KJELDGAARD

Peter Kjeldgaard is a business development manager at Opower, a tech startup that combines data analytics and behavioral science to help energy utilities save energy and become trusted advisors to their customers. At Opower he is focused on building strategic alliances with energy and technology partners. In the past, Peter worked for Booz Allen Hamilton, consulting for US government agencies, and as a high school teacher. After moving on from teaching, he also spent time as a tutor and mentor for high school students in Washington, DC. Peter holds a M.A. in International Trade & Investment Policy from the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, and a B.A. in history from Yale University.

TOM HOUGH

Tom Hough graduated summa cum laude with a Master’s and Bachelor’s in Accountancy from Wake Forest University, where he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. While at Wake Forest, Tom served with Teach For America, promoting TFA’s mission and recruiting students to teach in underprivileged communities throughout the United States. He also co-founded the Wake Forest chapter of Habitat for Humanity, where he helped grow the volunteer base to more than 100 students in under a year and organized service-
oriented trips abroad. Tom currently works as an investment professional with Parthenon Capital Partners, a private equity firm investing in growth companies within the financial services, healthcare services and business services sectors. Prior to Parthenon, Tom worked with BlackArch Partners, an investment bank focused on sell-side mergers and acquisitions advisory services.

ERIK GUSTAFSON

Erik K. Gustafson is Executive Director of the Education for Peace in Iraq Center (EPIC), an organization he founded in 1998. Erik is a U.S. Army veteran of the 1991 Gulf War. Witnessing the consequences of war has fueled a life-long passion for peacebuilding, human rights work and humanitarian advocacy. Following his military service, he attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison to pursue a degree in education. While there, he led the Madison chapter of the East Timor Action Network, supporting East Timor’s right to self-determination. In 1997 and 1999, Erik traveled to Iraq to investigate the deterioration of humanitarian conditions under Saddam Hussein’s regime and the most comprehensive economic sanctions ever imposed in the history of the United Nations. In 1998, he moved to Washington DC and established EPIC to improve humanitarian conditions and promote human rights in Iraq. Under his leadership, Erik has hosted dozens of policy forums and led humanitarian advocacy on Iraq in Washington DC. In 2008, he organized Iraq Action Days, which helped generate $1.8 billion in funding for war-affected Iraqis and other vulnerable persons worldwide. From early 2009 to late 2010, Erik took a sabbatical from EPIC to spend time in Iraq. Based in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, he worked with DePaul University’s International Human Rights Law Institute (IHRLI), directing a countrywide professional development program for Iraqi human rights defenders. Participants included organizations from 9 of Iraq’s 18 provinces including Baghdad, Basra, Najaf, Anbar, Kirkuk, and Erbil. Since his return from Iraq, Erik has focused on implementing EPIC’s new strategic plan of research, advocacy, and field work to serve young people and educators in Iraq and the region.
1.1 Total Expenses

$182,077

General
$7,557  4%
Fundraising
$7,278  4%
Fieldwork: TentEd
$43,913  24%
Fieldwork: PhotoVoice
$25,884  14%
Fieldwork: SoccerSalam
$19,261  11%
Research & Communication
$48,850  27%
Advocacy
$29,335  16%
1.2 Total Revenue

$185,217

- Handleman Family Foundation 44%
- Edna Wardlaw Charitable Trust 14%
- Chaldean Community Foundation 3%
- Private donations 34%
- George Mason University 1%
- Other income 6%
Special Thanks

We would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to the following donors, our “Gold Circle” of supporters, who deserve an outsized share of credit for making this year of growth and impact possible.

Scott Handleman
B Wardlaw
Chaldean Community Foundation
Ruth Wilson
Eleni Gousios
Cindy Fogleman
Amanda Wysocki
The Harnisch Family Foundation
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth

To support EPIC and join the “Gold Circle”, please contact our Board President, Soren Sudhof, at Soren.Sudhof@epic-usa.org or our Executive Director, Erik Gustafson, at ekg@epic-usa.org.
Contact Information

Education for Peace in Iraq Center
900 2nd St NE, Suite 216, Washington DC 20002
Office: +1.202.682.0208
www.epic-usa.org

Social Media:
Facebook: www.facebook.com/epicusa
Twitter: @enablingpeace