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Dear Reader,

On behalf of the UNESCO Iraq Office and the United Nations Economic and Social Council Western Asia (UN-ESCWA), I am pleased to present the External Evaluation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Education for Iraq, which has been funded by the generous support of the European Union (EU) under the auspices of the Iraq Trust (ITF) as administered by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG).

The project has met all of the main planned outputs and activities that helped Iraqi teachers and eventually students to play full roles in developing their society and to contribute to a knowledge nation; however the overall project objective was not fully achieved since some of the project’s components were not being used for its intended purpose such as E-Caravan and (ICT) facilities although; the project activities were properly completed, The project development goal was to build sustainable capacity in Iraqi Ministry of Education (MoE) for the continuing quality improvement of curriculum, instruction, learning and assessment, focusing on (ICT) as a transforming and integrating force.

It is our intent that the work of the organization builds on the lessons learned from the evaluation process in order to improve project management and the outputs of our interventions in Iraq.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of the external evaluators in carrying out this exercise, especially given the logistical constraints of data collection in Iraq. UNESCO Iraq and UN-ESCWA extends its thanks for the support and collaboration of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), sister agencies and programmes. A very special thanks goes to our Iraqi partners, especially to the Ministry of Education (MoE) Baghdad-Erbil, who worked closely with UNESCO during the implementation of activities.

Finally, I would like to pay special homage to our Iraqi colleagues working in the field who daily subject their very selves to the risk of injury or worse. It must be remembered that many of the activities carried out during the life of the project were done so under security conditions which often posed considerable difficulties, and it is a tribute to the dedication of all involved that the project was able to move forward to completion despite this.

The great people of Iraq, who have suffered so much, deserve no less.

I thank you for your consideration.

Mohamed Djeled
Director, UNESCO Iraq Office-Amman
Introduction

The Iraqi education system has faced a multitude of serious problems and shortcomings in the last two decades, not least the lack of access to modern, up-to-date Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities and training. In the 1980’s the Iraqi school system was recognized as one of the most developed in the region; however, now that system ranks close to the bottom. The lack of security and political instability have taken a considerable toll, particularly in the form of a ‘brain drain’ as trained and educated Iraqis continue to leave the country.

The education system in particular has suffered from a lack of integration of ICT into the organization and management of the Ministry of Education (MoE), in staff and teacher training, and in curriculum, as a means of enabling Iraqi students to prepare for places in a ‘high-tech’ world.

The “ICT in Education for Iraq” begun in April 2007 and it was Funded by European Union (EU) through United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust Fund (UNDG ITF) and implemented by UNESCO and United Nation economic and Social council Western Asia (UN-ESCWA). The Project was designed to support the MoE in
building sustainable capacity for the continuing quality improvement of curriculum, teaching and learning and student assessment by focusing on the effective use of ICT. In order to develop and improve the ICT literacy and skills of the MoE staff, its teachers and students, the institutional capacity of the MoE was enhanced to develop capacity to design, develop and distribute a variety of e-learning resources. It also included a human resources component in order to upgrade MoE staff and teacher professional development to use e-content resources through a program of professional development.

Achievements

The project met all of its planned outputs and planned activities stated in the original project documents, nevertheless; the overall project objective was not fully achieved since some of the project’s components are not being used for its intended purpose such as E- Caravan and ICT facilities in targeted schools. Although; the project activities were properly completed; the overall objective was not achieved. (As enumerated in the Output Indicators column in Table 10, view CD page 21).

Policy Component:

- The development and adoption by MoE of an “ICT in Education” policy and strategy to guide the rollout of ICT across the Ministry in order to maximize the effectiveness of integrating ICT.
- Awareness raising of the importance of ICT was achieved through workshop activities for 1500 MoE staff in order to develop an understanding of the main concepts of ICT and their relation to education.
Human Resources Component

- Training of a core team of 21 e-content developers who were responsible for designing and delivering two e-learning packages for five subjects to cover a part of the curriculum for grades 9 and 12.
- Training of a core team of 22 ICDL and Certified Training Professional trainers who were able to train 10 trainers for the ICT Development Centre who in turn trained an additional 100 trainers for the five ICT Training Centres.
- Training of 520 teachers from 82 schools on the e-learning packages developed for the five core subjects of the grades 9 and 12 curriculums

Physical Resources Component

- Establishment of International Computer Driving License (ICDL) testing centres with international certification that administered the ICDL exam to 600 MoE staff with 483 passing the exam on the first attempt.
- One ICT Development Centre in Baghdad and five ICT Training Centres in five governorates established and operational.
- Ten pilot schools in five governorates (one boys’ and one girls’ school in each governorate) as selected by MoE equipped with modern, up-to-date ICT facilities to lead the incorporation of “ICT in Education” into the Iraqi school curriculum.
- One E-Caravan built and 10 computers on wheels (COW) carts built and delivered for training teachers in remote areas (two for each of the ICT technical centres).
The ICT in Education for Iraq project successfully met the outputs enumerated in the original project reports and documents set initially by UNESCO, UNESCWA and MoE. These outputs focused on supporting the development of an ICT in Education strategy with MoE and raising the awareness of the importance of ICT with MoE staff; training MoE staff in specific ICT-based skills; and providing physical resources to support ICT learning. However, MoE experienced some issues and difficulties in integrating and using these resources and ensuring that staff trained in project activities remains in relevant positions to build on this investment in human resources capacity also the use of ICT facilities and equipments procured under this project for its intended purpose which is supporting ICT at schools level. These issues negatively impacted the broader project outcomes of maximizing the effectiveness of the use of ICT in education, building capacity to develop MoE human resources and supporting ICT effective learning in schools.

**Recommendations**

1. The evaluation noticed that many of the stakeholders interviewed requested more IT training for themselves or for members of their MoE staffs.
**Recommendation:** Build on the solid base of ICT training and increased capacity of MoE staff it is recommended to continue the support for ICDL and for other types of ICT courses that can be offered through the ICT Development Centre (ICTDC) and the ICT Training Centre (ICTTCs).

2. Modern, well-equipped facilities that can offer good ICT training are essential to the continued expansion of the MoE capacity building efforts to enhance ICT skills among staff.

**Recommendation:** More ICT centres should be established around Iraq and to continue the support to expand the pilot project’s successful establishment of six ICT Centres and the Ministry’s efforts to create ICT Centres in other governorates.

3. A gender breakdown of all data regarding project beneficiaries in all official reports for future projects needs to be analyzed by UNESCO and UN-ESCWA

**Recommendation:** A clear and comprehensive strategy for incorporating gender balance and gender equity into all project activities should be implemented by MoE.

4. None of the ICT facilities set up in the ten pilot schools is being used for the benefit of the students. One of the main objectives of the project was to support the quality improvement of teaching and
learning focusing on the use of integrating ICT into the classroom. This objective is not being met as the ten pilot schools are not “leading the incorporation of ICT in education.

-Recommendation: The selection criteria of schools and locations benefited under ICT project should be reviewed to decide if this is an effective allocation of project resources and MoE should insure that ICT facilities are being used for its planed objective.

5. Many of the teachers in the pilot schools who completed the Blended Learning workshop were moved to other schools at the governorates level, also many of MoE staff participated in the core training programs were often moved to other departments after completing one or two stages of the training. Their replacement by new and inexperienced staff caused problems and delay in establishing well-trained and effectively functioning core teams, particularly in e-content development.

-Recommendation: MoEs and Directorates of Education (DoEs) should create an effective mechanism for ensuring that staffs that benefit from project training remain in their positions in order to maximize human resources capacity development.

6. Comprehensive development of e-content activities and e-learning packages integrated into the curriculum in all subjects serves as the foundation for the continuing quality
improvement of classroom teaching and learning focused on the use of ICT. The project was only partially successful in supporting the MoE in the creation of skilled teams of e-content curriculum development and the delivery of subject-based e-content activities and learning packages.

**Recommendation:** A review and analysis of the e-content development process and management component should be undertaken to identify ways in which this type of intervention can be made more effective.

7. None of the ICT Centres is fully utilizing the mobile laptop carts that were purchased to support teacher training in remote areas. Only two Centres are using the carts for training at the Centres. Three Centres indicate that they have no space for these carts while others are unsure of how to integrate them effectively into training.

**Recommendation:** Mobile laptop carts should be provided only to Centres that have adequate space to utilize them for training.

**Recommendation:** Ensure that Centre staff and trainers are well prepared to use this resource to maximize the number of MoE staff that can be trained.

**Recommendation:** The original plan of utilizing the mobile laptop carts for teachers in remote areas should be reviewed as to whether this type of intervention is realistic, due to present security concerns in Iraq.
8. Kurdistan stakeholders reported that many staff and teachers nominated for core team training in the e-content development, for ICDL training and who attended the Blended Learning workshop were not able to benefit fully or successfully complete the training because of language difficulties with Arabic and English.

-Recommendation: This problem of the language used for training activities should be directly addressed in any future projects related to training and staff development in Kurdistan.

9. The concept of an E-Caravan was included in the project as a way to train teachers in remote areas. This has clearly not happened since the E-Caravan provided by the project has never become operational for a variety of reasons and is parked near the Baghdad ICTTC; the goal of including teachers in remote areas in ICT training and professional development is very important to the achievement of a higher level of capacity in MoE staff.

-Recommendation: MoE should start utilize this effective ICT training tool and develop a pre-scheduled and planed visits to remote area.

-Recommendation: Other more effective and more realistic ways of meeting the ICT training needs and professional development of teachers in remote areas should be
identified in any future projects.

10. Although the project achieved its original outputs regarding policy development, capacity building for MoE staff, and delivery of physical ICT facilities, stakeholders and beneficiaries identified many problems and issues regarding the ongoing use of these outputs, issues that negatively impact their effectiveness.

-Recommendation: UNESCO/ESCWA staff should meet regularly with MoE stakeholders in Baghdad and also with Directorates that are included in the project, as well as the staff of the pilot schools, during these meetings.

UNESCO/ESCWA and stakeholders should identify possible solutions to project challenges and develop alternative approaches, these meetings will create a solid partnership foundation, improve the communication procedures and enable the MoE and other stakeholders to share their experiences, suggestions and recommendations with UNESCO, and also it will help to solve any challenges during project implementation without delay. Please View (Conclusions / page 49 in the CD).