Training Of Trainers In Teacher Education For a Sustained Quality Education

External Evaluation Report
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This Evaluation was Evaluated by Matthew Hiebert
Dear Reader,

On behalf of the UNESCO Iraq Office, I am pleased to present the External Evaluation of Training of Trainers in Teacher Education for a Sustained Quality Education, 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 achieved good results and has made an important contribution to teacher education in Iraq, however the project proceeded rather slowly in its initial stages, for valid but nonetheless detrimental reasons. The project aim was to enhance pre-service teacher education in Iraq through the development of a teacher training network for Iraq; the creation of a critical mass of highly qualified teacher trainers; the establishment of modern and updated curricula for colleges of science and education; and the formulation of a national strategy for teacher education.

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 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 and counterpart organizations, especially Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR) Baghdad-Erbil; Ministry of Education (MoE) Baghdad-Erbil who worked closely with UNESCO during the implementation of activities, Colleges of Education and Science in 4 targeted Universities: University of Salah AL Din, University of Baghdad, University of Anbar, and University of Basra; and Six International Universities: University of Alberta (Canada), University College Dublin (Ireland), University of Foggia (Italy), University of Buckingham (England), Bangor University (Wales) and Cairo University (Egypt).

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.
A Group Discussion during a Training Workshop - ©UNESCO Iraq
Introduction

This report presents a Summative Addendum to an in-depth formative evaluation of the Training of Trainers in Teacher Education for Sustained Quality Education in Iraq; teacher training network for Iraq (TTNI) was conducted in May 2010. Since it builds on and references the Formative Evaluation Report, the latter is included along with the present report as Appendix B (to be viewed on the CD). It presents a summative analysis of the project implementation, and the cumulative status of results achievement at the end of the project. It addresses five key criteria: efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, impact, and sustainability, in addition to looking at the overall status of results achievement.

Project description

The project of Training of Trainers in Teacher Education for Sustained Quality Education in Iraq started in July 2006, and closed in December 2010. The project was implemented by the UNESCO Iraq Office, with a total approved and fully disbursed budget of USD $2,325,116. Funded by European Union (EU) through United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust Fund (UNDG ITF). The project aim was to enhance pre-service teacher education in Iraq through: the development of a teacher training network for Iraq; the creation of a critical mass of highly qualified teacher trainers; the establishment of modern and updated curricula for colleges of science and education; and the formulation of a national strategy for teacher education. Project partners and counterpart organizations included:

• Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR) Baghdad-Erbil / Ministry of Education (MoE) Baghdad-Erbil;
• Colleges of Education and Science in 4 targeted universities: University of Salah Al Din,
University of Baghdad, University of Anbar, and University of Basra;
- Six International Universities: University of Alberta (Canada), University College Dublin (Ireland), University of Foggia (Italy), University of Buckingham (England), Bangor University (Wales) and Cairo University (Egypt).

Project results

Overall Appraisal

The TTNI project has achieved good results and has made an important contribution to teacher education in Iraq. The project proceeded rather slowly in its initial stages, for valid but nonetheless detrimental reasons. With a number of caveats detailed in this Addendum, the project was generally well conceived and effectively implemented. The project has achieved or exceeded all of its numerical targets, and closed within budget; however, there are areas within the project where despite the numerical achievements, qualitative results are less evident and the ultimate impact and sustainability of results remains to be seen. Overall, the project activities have been carried out successfully; however, while there appeared to be a lot of opportunity for synergy between components in the project design, during implementation much of this complementarity appears to have been lost. Consequently, the aggregation of results towards an overall impact on pre-service teacher education have been somewhat muted, despite excellent achievements within project components.
Project Aim
To support the MoHE and the MoE in providing quality teacher education and therefore to improve the quality of secondary education in Iraq. To this end the project aims at creating a critical mass of highly qualified teacher trainers who will ensure quality of pre-service teacher education.

Achievement Status
Achieved –MoE and MoHESR capacity for teacher education improved and critical mass created, through establishment of TTNI, development of materials, and implementation of training.

Outcome 1: Create a teacher training network for Iraq.
Output 1: A network of eight Iraqi institutions, four Colleges of Education (CoEs) and four Colleges of Science (CoSs) and 5 international higher education institutions created.
Achievements: Achieved –TTNI was created formally through Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with four Iraqi universities and six international partners. Steering committee met three times, and MoU was extended once through 2012. The TTNI enabled the creation of strategic partnerships among universities inside and outside Iraq and eventually provided a platform for exchanging best practices and building joint initiatives beyond the scope of the project (fellowships, joint research programs, etc.).
Outcome 2: Create a critical mass of highly trained teacher trainers in four colleges of science and four colleges of education.
Output 2:

a. Training the trainers, 308 participants from the CoEs and CoSs will take part in:
- Training in new teaching methodologies and pedagogy.
- Crash courses in English language.
- Crash courses in Computer skills.
- Subject updating crash courses.

b. Training of core team of teacher trainers on Peace and Democracy: Fellowship for ten Iraqi candidates completed.

Achievements: Achieved- A critical mass of teacher trainers has been created with adequate qualifications. From a core team of 78, a total of 640 lecturers and trainers were trained on modern teaching methods for both science and education. Eleven (11) fellows graduated from the project supported programs on peace and democracy, and newly established human rights departments were supported with provision of qualified trainers and materials.

Outcome 3: Establish modern and updated curricula for CoSs and CoEs.

Output 3: Curriculum Reform

a. An updated and modern curricula of international standard level.

b. New topics introduced to the curriculum to enhance the principles of democracy and human rights as well as environmental issues.

Achievements: Achieved- Good quality training packages for targeted subjects have been developed. These fall short of full curriculum development but provide a very solid step in the right direction. The project has effectively introduced new subject matter into the curriculum around democracy, human rights and environmental issues, and has provided
initial curriculum materials to build from.

**Outcome 4**: National strategy plan for teacher education formulated and formalized.

**Output 4**: Medium term national strategy for teacher education formulated.

**Achievements**: Partially achieved- A strategic study on teacher education was completed. The national strategy was not completed due to lack of commitment from MoHESR and MoE, but the work has been carried forward under another UNESCO project, building on the work done under this one.

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**Challenges**

All projects implementing in present-day Iraq face a number of constraints due to the context. Among these, the difficult security situation that makes on-the-ground follow-up and monitoring of project activities very challenging, had the largest impact on both implementation and results. Of necessity, the project was managed remotely from Amman, and following up on activities was primarily the responsibility of MoHESR and the local partner institutions.

In addition to these types of challenges which are faced by all projects, the TTNI project also faced the following:

Repeated delays on Government of Iraq (GoI) side in the submission of information and especially the nomination of officials to attend capacity development programs and working committees.

Frequent changes in GoI focal point, meaning delays, lack of understanding, and wastages as new incumbents needed to be briefed and gain an understanding of project activities.
Delays in obtaining visas for participants to travel outside of Iraq to training courses which were held off site because of security concerns in-country.

**Summary of findings**

- The TTNI has been effectively established, and reflects a major achievement of this project. With this network, an infrastructure has been created to support future teacher education activities.
- A critical mass of teacher trainers has been created through project activities. While this cadre is large in numbers, the extent of their qualifications remains somewhat limited.
- The fellowship program on peace and democracy was highly effective at the individual level, but opportunities were missed in linking this program with other project activities.
- The project’s curriculum development work was scaled back somewhat, and resulted in a well-developed set of training packages which reflect shared ownership by Iraqi partners.
- Most project activities were completed as planned, and partners are satisfied with the results achieved. In many cases numerical targets have been exceeded; however, in some activities sacrifices were made which affected the quality of results.
- The project was well managed overall,
including coordination between two concerned ministries (MoE, MoHESR), but faced a number of challenges during implementation that resulted in delays.

- The project results have justified the level of investment in terms of time and money.
- Project monitoring and reporting have been effective in tracking numerical achievements, but have not put enough emphasis on the qualitative side of results.
- The original project design was sound and relevant, but the logical framework of the project was not well articulated.
- The sustainability of results was not realized within the TTNI project, but due to continued programming from UNESCO in the education sector, the momentum achieved under the TTNI project has been taken over by other projects, and the results are being carried forward.

**Final recommendations**

**Recommendations for Component 1: TTNI**

The foundation has been set for the TTNI and the concept has shown potential. The investment should continue to be supported through other channels, which essentially means leveraging this foundation and furthering the activities involving network members.
Proceed with a fourth meeting of TTNI partners, even if under the auspices of a different project. Revisit the MoU, revitalize the concept in light of the new projects underway, and extend it.

Define a clear role and expectations of international partner institutions. Operationalize the MoU to the extent possible.

Focus on fostering relationships between Iraqi partner institutions in the context of a community of practice/professional learning community.

If the decision is made to continue the activities of the TTNI, the website should be enhanced with the addition of interactive features such as discussion forums on educational topics, bulletin boards for posting and sharing teaching resources etc.

**Recommendations for Component 2: Teacher training**

**Extension of the network to local level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)**

The network concept should be extended to the school level under the auspices of the Teacher Training Project. This project includes in-service training, and the network concept (usually referred to as professional learning communities, PLCs) has been shown to be very powerful as a complement to or even replacement for more vertically oriented training models. PLCs can be organized at the school level, or in school clusters. They are most effective when
organized around specific topics, for instance, PLCs may be established for all math teachers in a given community to share practices, or an action research approach could be taken within a school to address particular issues.

**Development of the enabling environment**

In order to see benefit at the classroom level from teacher professional development, it is important to create an environment in which teachers will be safe and supported to begin applying what they have learned. In general, the goal should be to reduce barriers to implementation, much of which can be achieved through supportive leadership at the school (or department) level.

**In higher education (in general, and specific reference to pre-service teacher education):**

The formative evaluation noted the need for work in the CoSs and CoEs to develop institutional capacity, particularly in the training units. The impacts of new curricula will be diminished if there is not a push from the leadership to actually implement new teaching approaches in classrooms. This work should include skills for basic management and planning, with a particular focus on quality assurance in teacher training programs (establishment of standards, evaluation of instructors etc.). It is noted that two of the international partner universities (University of Alberta and University College Dublin) have already become involved with some activities in quality assurance in Iraqi higher education.
In in-service teacher education:
At the school and governorate level, there should also be some work to create an environment which facilitates the implementation of change. A component or work package should be considered in the teacher professional development to promote effective leadership and change management skills. This component could build on the idea of professional learning communities presented above. The establishment of demonstration sites and a change catalyst network in which additional support is provided for the modernization teaching, and the documentation of changes, should also be considered.

Recommendations for Component 3: Curriculum development
Additional curriculum materials to provide foundational training on pedagogy
The TTNI project had a heavy emphasis on scientific subject areas and updating of trainers’ content knowledge. more training is recommended on foundational education topics such as: student-centred pedagogy, instructional planning, instructional strategies, student assessment, inclusive education, child development and implications of modern research for instructional practices etc.
Curriculum materials for education for/in democratization
While one of the project themes related to peace and democracy, some concerted work is warranted on the special topic of education for/in democratization. Autocratic classrooms which are still the norm, cultivate a passive and complacent citizenry. Democratization places new demands on the education system because in order for it to work, it requires much more active citizenship. As a nascent democracy with a relatively weak education system, attention is required to support the development of a citizenry which is able to properly fulfil their civic responsibilities. Topics for curriculum development and teacher training in this
area would include: pedagogy to support engagement of learners; collaborative learning; media literacy; critical thinking etc. An added component for school leadership would also be sensible, which could include, establishment of student councils and democratic school governance structures.

In addition, if curriculum reform has not yet taken place to infuse democratic concepts into the K-12 curricula, this should be a priority, along with the development of related teaching resources.

**Leveraging online modalities and the AVICENNA platform**

At this point, the potential of the AVICENNA network to leverage project investments in training packages has not been tapped. The training packages which have been developed by the TTNI project exist only in print form, with some consideration to hyper linking of content. With relatively little work, the content in these packages could be developed into a user-friendly online format that would be suitable for both training contexts and self-study, including interactive features. While self-study should not replace training entirely,
this format could help to alleviate some of the resource strains associated with large scale training programs.

**Recommendations for Component 4: Strategic framework for teacher education**

Plans have already been outlined for the further development of this component under the Teacher Training Project. Care should be taken to build on the work already done, which included a draft framework from the second year of the project, as well as a more recent process mapping exercise. The strategic framework should be sufficiently comprehensive so that it will have some durability and impact, and should ideally consider:

- pre-service as well as in-service training;
- standards for teacher qualification (pre-service);
- requirements for ongoing professional development (in-service);
- consideration for facilitating the credentialing of unqualified teachers who are already working within the system (such as prior learning assessment (PLAR), grandfathering, subsidized correspondence programs etc.);
- evaluation mechanisms for teachers (ideally going beyond mere in-service training to include performance evaluations etc. through a portfolio mechanism);
• standards for accreditation of training courses;
• standards/requirements for accreditation of training providers;
• description of coordinated mechanism for nationwide rollout of training programs;
• mechanism for monitoring, evaluation, and reporting on training quality;
• performance standards for trainers and trainees;
• establishment of a teacher training cadre or another such formally recognized group of master teachers;
• description of teachers’ promotional path and relationship to professional development (should ensure there are opportunities for teachers to receive promotion without being promoted out of classrooms).