



International Workshop

on

Curriculum Evaluation in the Gulf States

Dubai/Sharjah, U. A. E.
26-28 September, 2011

Concept Note and Agenda

Concept Note

Workshop Background and Rationale

As UNESCO's Cluster Office for Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen, the UNESCO Office in Doha is providing assistance to the countries in the Gulf Region in various fields, including education. Given that many Gulf States had embarked or will embark on comprehensive education and curriculum reforms, it is essential that such reforms be based on sound curriculum evaluation.

The planned upcoming workshop will tackle conceptual issues with regard to curriculum evaluation (i.e. clarifying the concept of curriculum evaluation, its rationale and purposes), while also looking into effective curriculum evaluation strategies relevant for the Gulf States. It is important that Gulf States develop a common approach to curriculum evaluation based on commonly-agreed quality criteria and evaluation strategies/good practices. To this purpose, the workshop will facilitate taking stock of experiences of curriculum evaluation in the Gulf Region, while also exploring international trends and cases related to the matter.

In carrying out this project, UNESCO Doha Office is closely working with the International Bureau of Education (IBE) that is UNESCO's Institute specialized in curriculum development and implementation. Over the last decade, IBE has provided technical assistance to the Gulf countries in the context of several projects with ABEGS¹ and GASERC² devoted to curriculum time allocation, curriculum analysis and curriculum integration. At the same time, it was involved in several UNESCO projects in the Region, such as on secondary education and on peace building through quality textbook development.

Organizers

The workshop is organized by UNESCO Doha Office, in cooperation with the ministries of Education of the Gulf States and UNESCO IBE.

Participants

The workshop will be attended by teams of curriculum specialists from each Gulf country. The list of participants includes (see Annex):

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¹ Arab Bureau of Education of the Gulf States.

² Gulf Arab States Education Research Centre.

- Approximately 30 education and curriculum specialists from the Gulf States (i.e. Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen);
- UNESCO IBE technical assistance team (Mrs. Dakmara Georgescu, programme specialist and IBE consultant, Dr. Ali Bubshait);
- UNESCO Doha Office team (Mr. Hamed al Hammami, Director; Mrs. Muna Abdel Sattar, programme assistant)

Working languages

Arabic and English (simultaneous translation)

Workshop Objectives and Expected Outcomes

Main objectives

Curriculum evaluation is an important component of any curriculum cycle that concerns all and each of the different parts/sequences of such cycles. Before setting a new vision and planning curriculum changes, it is outmost important to identify the strengths of the existing curriculum to build upon, as well as its shortcomings and challenges that ought to be considered and overcome. It is equally important to carry out curriculum evaluation during processes of curriculum design and implementation to be sure, on the one hand, that the new/revised written/intended curriculum truly embeds the vision, and that, on the other hand, it is effectively implemented. During the upcoming workshop, the many facets of curriculum evaluation will be tackled, with a view to:

1. Clarify the concept of curriculum evaluation, its rationale(s) and purpose(s) (i.e. why to evaluate; which curriculum to evaluate – the written/intended curriculum? the implemented one? the learned curriculum? What kind of evaluation, i.e. diagnostic, prognostic, formative?);
2. Take stock of existing initiatives/experiences in the Gulf area of curriculum evaluation in basic education;
3. Develop a *Framework for curriculum evaluation*³ in basic education based on commonly-agreed quality criteria and curriculum evaluation strategies relevant to the Gulf countries (i.e. how to evaluate?; how to use the evaluation results?);
4. Explore follow-up steps with regard to finalizing the above-mentioned curriculum evaluation framework and implementing it at country level.

³ Henceforth called “Framework”.

Expected outcomes

Before the workshop, and based on exchanges with the ministries of education of the Gulf countries, UNESCO IBE will develop a draft *Outline* of a *Framework for curriculum evaluation in the Gulf countries*. The participating country teams will complete a questionnaire prepared by UNESCO IBE that will help provide an inventory of issues in the Gulf States with regard to curriculum evaluation as a basis for developing the common Framework.

The draft *Framework* will constitute the main reference document that the participants will work on during the workshop to enrich it based on relevant issues and experiences in their home countries, as well as in the Region. Following the work in plenary and group sessions, several important results are expected to be achieved, among which are:

1. Enhanced capacity of curriculum specialists in the Gulf countries to deal with conceptual and methodological issues of curriculum evaluation;
2. An inventory of existing initiatives/experiences on curriculum evaluation in the Gulf States;
3. A draft common Framework for curriculum evaluation in basic education that is relevant for the Gulf countries;
4. Tentative planning of follow-up steps leading to the finalisation of the common Framework for curriculum evaluation.

Follow up

The workshop is the first one within a series of planned upcoming activities that will be devoted to finalizing and implementing a commonly-agreed *Framework for curriculum evaluation in the Gulf States*. As a main result of the project, the Framework will constitute an important tool for both capacity development of curriculum specialists, as well as for carrying out concrete processes of curriculum evaluation in the Gulf states. Other countries may also benefit from this tool, as well as from the processes that led to its development and implementation.

“...the evaluation of educational curricula refers to determining the merit or worth of a part or the whole of a curriculum. There are a number of reasons why evaluation is important, firsts...it informs and serves the needs of policy makers, administrators, and other members of the society. It also informs and helps in decision-making as it gives policy makers information. Secondly, it serves as a reference to teachers, curriculum specialists, school administrators and others involved in curriculum development.”
Cf. UNESCO Bangkok, 2003



Participants in a workshop on curricular time allocation, Manama/Bahrain, May 2003

Workshop AGENDA

Day 1

Timing	Activities
08:30-10:00	Opening session
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome speeches (t.b.d.) 2. Introduction of the participants 3. Agenda overview: workshop contexts; objectives; expected outcomes, and methodology (IBE)
10:00-10:30	Tea and coffee break
10:30-12:00	<p style="text-align: center;">Curriculum evaluation: conceptual issues</p> <p>(plenary session – panel of IBE team and country representatives; the draft <i>Framework</i> will be introduced to support/illustrate issues)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is curriculum evaluation? 2. How to evaluate different aspects & components of the curriculum (i.e. written/intended/official curriculum; implemented curriculum; effective/learned curriculum) 3. Examples of curriculum evaluation from the Gulf area and other countries/regions of the world <p>Discussions</p>
12:00-12:30	Tea and coffee break
12:30-14:45	<p style="text-align: center;">Clarifying issues</p> <p>(group work following the plenary discussion)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In-depth sharing by participants of their experiences with regard to curriculum evaluation; 2. Identifying issues to be still clarified/discussed <p style="color: #008080;"><i>Wrap-up session: what was good about the day's activities; what should be improved/changed in the workshop agenda</i></p>
15:00	Lunch

End of the day – time off

Day 2

Timing	Activities
08:30-10:00	Plenary session A. Groups' sharing of results of the group work (clarification and discussion) B. In-depth presentation of a draft Outline of a common Framework for curriculum evaluation in the Gulf countries (IBE team) Discussions
10:00-10:30	Tea and coffee break
10:30-12:00	Comments on the draft Outline of the Framework (group work)
12:00-12:30	Tea and coffee break
12:30-14:45	Comments on the draft Outline of the Framework (group work continued) <i>Wrap-up session: what was good about the day's activities; what should be improved/changed in the workshop agenda</i>
15:00	Lunch

End of the day – time off

Day 3

Timing	Activities
08:30-10:00	Suggestions for improving the outline of the Framework for curriculum evaluation (plenary sharing) <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Reporting from the groups2. Discussions and clarifications
10:00-10:30	Tea and coffee break
10:30-12:00	Next steps (plenary sharing) <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Conclusions of the groups' sharing: summary of recommendations for improving the Framework for curriculum evaluation in the Gulf States2. Next steps to finalize the common Framework for curriculum evaluation
12:00-12:30	Tea and coffee break
12:30:14:45	Closing session <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Summary of the workshop (IBE team)2. Closing remarks (t.b.d)3. Workshop evaluation
15:00	Lunch

End of the workshop – Departure of participants