

DRAFT



Sector Midterm Review Report

Sector: *Education*

Reporting period: January 1, 2008 – March 31, 2009

A) OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS TOWARDS UNCT OUTCOME

UNCT OUTCOME			
Improved access to essential social services and assistance to vulnerable groups			
Suggested Indicators	Baseline	Target 2008	Status as of 3/2009
• Literacy > 10 years (Male-Female)	(89.5 %-75.6%) CFSVA ¹ 07		Pending updated report
• Primary net enrolment (Male-Female)	(87.2 %-82.1%) IHSES ² 07		Pending Annual School Survey Report 08/09
• Primary completion (gross)	80.9 % MICS ³ 3		83% (2008) 78%,90%

Contribution of UN Assistance Strategy towards ICI/MDGs

The Education Sector aims to support the Government of Iraq (GoI); Ministry of Education and (MoE) and Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR), to achieve the objectives defined in the International Compact with Iraq (ICI), National Development Strategy (NDS), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and relevant international human rights standards and principles.

Education projects were designed to be in line with ICI targets: "Reduce illiteracy by 50% (Baseline: according to the 2006 Unsatisfied Basic Needs (UBN) study, 31.8% of the Iraqi population has no access to education) and "Achieve basic universal education".

Also, the completed and on-going projects have contributed towards attaining MDGs 2 and 3:
 MDG 2: "Achieve Universal Primary Education;
 Target 2A – Ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary school."
 MDG 3: "Target 3A - Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015."

B) OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS TOWARDS SECTOR OUTCOMES

SECTOR OUTCOME 1			
Enhanced access to all levels of quality education with particular focus on girls			
Outcome Indicators (Revised and/ or suggested)	Baseline (2008)	Target	Status as of 3/2009
Total number of students enrolled in formal education (disaggregated by levels and gender)	7.22 million (Primary & Secondary: 6.9 m HE: 320,000)	8.17 million (Primary & Secondary: 7.8 m HE:369,000)	Pending 2007/08 EMIS statistical data
• Number of students attending the rehabilitated/constructed education facilities	66,750 (2009)	100,000	66,750 students
• Number of girls attending the rehabilitated /constructed education facilities	35,380	50,000	35,380 girls (53%)

Education Sector Outcome Team (SOT) activities to enhance results for attendance included a comprehensive effort to ensure the rehabilitation of schools in accordance with child-friendly school

¹ Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA)

² Iraq Household Socio-Economic Survey (IHSES)

³ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)

specifications/standards. More than 66,750 school children (53% girls) benefited from upgraded facilities and improved environments in 133 schools, which were rehabilitated to child-friendly specifications; including connection to mains water supply and the installation of water tanks, as well as establishment of separate toilets for girls.

Improvement of water and sanitation facilities was also completed in 251 schools. Enrolment capacity was expanded with the construction of 300 new classrooms (benefiting about 12,000 school children), 165 science laboratories and the rehabilitation of 58 libraries. These libraries will also be used for e-learning activities as part of an innovative learning initiative. Teaching and learning materials, sanitation kits and school furniture continued to be provided to all rehabilitated schools and are expected to contribute to improving the school environment and reducing the cost of schooling (which is recognized as a major impediment to school enrolment for financially vulnerable families). Additionally, 71,641 school children (Girls 30,830; Boys 40,811) received basic learning materials, and 2,400 teachers received teaching materials.

Non-formal learning opportunities were developed for out of school children and youth, these were provided through the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP). At least 300 students were enrolled in five Community Learning Centres (CLCs). The CLCs were established and fully equipped in Baghdad, Muthanna and Diyala. Another significant contribution of the Education sector was the expansion of the ALP in the 2008/09 scholastic year to an additional three governorates; thus reaching all 18 governorates of Iraq. More than 36,700 students were enrolled in 2008/09 (more than double the 2007/08 enrolment) and female participation increased from 30% in 2007/08 to 35% in 2008/09. Capacity building continued with an additional 1,050 ALP teachers trained during 2008.

Literacy and peace education classes were provided to about 1,800 adult illiterates and semi-literates in the southern Marshlands (Missan, Thiqr and Basra) in order to enable them to sit for final exams and obtain the official certificate for the completion of primary education from the Iraqi MoE.

Early Childhood Development (ECD) remains a challenge in Iraq. According to MICS3, only 2.5 per cent of Iraqi pre-school children had any access to organized activities in 2006. Nevertheless, the Education SOT's continued commitment to improve opportunities for ECD resulted in 270 child caregivers and ECD teachers being trained in the use of kits specifically designed for this age group. 2,450 ECD kits were distributed to ECD centres, kindergartens and early primary school grades in 2008.

Primary and secondary schools textbooks have been scanned and uploaded onto a newly created website for school textbooks (www.schooltextbooks.org). In addition, an educational TV channel was established in Baghdad, through which teaching and educational programmes are being broadcast; together with TV spots promoting human rights, democracy, gender equality, health and other life skills. The educational channel has been established in order to serve the widest possible range of enrolled and out-of-school children inside Iraq (including IDPs) and refugees outside Iraq.

Despite the limited availability of funding for this sector, the UN support to the Higher Education sub-sector, successfully conducted several training workshops for university professors on new teaching methodologies, subject updating, curriculum review and training package development. The workshops targeted professors in the Colleges of Education and Science whose students, once graduated, would teach school-level students. Nine subject matters were covered in 2007-2008, each targeting 8 core university lecturers who will in turn duplicate the training for their colleagues in their respective universities. Training on three subject areas; peace and democracy, fine arts and special education, was conducted at the University of Foggia in Italy in April 2008, while the training on Family Education was conducted at the Jordan University in Amman, Jordan in April 2009.

SECTOR OUTCOME 2

Strengthened institutional & human capacity of the Education Sector to deliver quality education

Outcome Indicators (Revised and/ or suggested)	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Status as of 3/2009</i>
remove Number of schools holding PTA meetings minimum twice a year			
● # of decentralized education plans in place	0	18	Started in 3 governorates

The sector has successful achievements in terms of capacity building of education staff in the MoHE, MoE and its Directorates. Several trainings for a total of 3,430 ministry staff were conducted in planning & management, school-based management, child-centred & active learning, Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) teachers training, using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) principles in the classrooms

and an experts training on writing and designing TV episodes, as well as asset management and maintenance training for technical and vocational staff. Moreover, 135 of higher education students and teachers were exposed to external training in new teaching methods, subject updating, curriculum review, training package development and field visits for a few members in the Foundation of Technical Education (FTE) . Inclusively, some university professors were offered fellowships to Italy and Germany in Peacekeeping management and in their field of expertise.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings at Health Promoting schools were further developed by increasing their number to more than three meetings a year in some schools, and through the involvement of parents and the community in improving the health and environmental situation in schools. About 1,475 teachers were trained in school health and hygiene education and the training of MoE education staff and teachers in the implementation of PTAs is ongoing in Basra and Erbil.

Previously, an Education Management Information System (EMIS) had been established in 2005-2006, in order to enhance educational planning at the level of the Ministry of Education, and the data entry into the system was decentralized to the level of the Directorates of Education (DoEs). The actual data entry at the DoEs started in 2006. Data entry for the school years 2004-2005 and 2007-2008 was completed and checked several times and the yearly statistical books for both are nearly ready for printing; while data entry for the years 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 was recently completed and is currently under review.

SECTOR OUTCOME 3

Enhanced policy formulation, curriculum revision and development

Outcome Indicators (Revised and/ or suggested)	Baseline	Target	Status as of 3/2009
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be incorporated into Outcome 2 			

A joint collaborative effort by World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF to support the MoE and the MoHE in the development of a National Education Strategy has achieved substantial progress and an agreement has been reached upon a common vision and mission for both education and higher education in Iraq. The next steps for the completion of a strategy paper by the end of 2010 have also been established and agreed. An agreement has been made with International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) for the training of MoE/DoE staff on strategic planning and the development of the National Education Strategy. A GoI High Level Committee has been formed, in addition to the technical working committees; which comprise officials from the various education ministries. Also, the MoE has formed technical committees for curriculum revision with the support of the Education SOT.

SECTOR OUTCOME 4

Strengthened preparedness and response to educational humanitarian needs

Outcome Indicators (Revised and/ or suggested)	Baseline	Target	Status as of 3/2009
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be integrated into revised Outcome 1 and Outcome 2 			

Additional bilateral funds have been granted, enabling agencies to rehabilitate more schools than was originally planned. The Education SOT supported humanitarian education interventions in vulnerable areas by targeting 266 schools across the country, with over 105,252 students directly benefiting from these activities. 178 classrooms were rehabilitated or newly constructed. The sector also focused on education interventions in locations with high concentration of IDPs and the refugee settings in the northern and southern regions of Iraq.

The sector also contributed to improving the teaching/learning environment in 41 schools through providing them with school furniture (desks, chairs, blackboards, etc), in addition to providing basic materials to 650 ALP classes, inclusive teaching aids and kits for 2324 teachers. In order to promote education opportunities for pre-school activities, 500 kits containing education materials and toys suitable for the age group were purchased; these are currently being distributed. The emergency education needs of 2,000 students in Missan were met through the distribution of essential school items such as bags, stationary and books, as well as sufficient clothing and shoes to allow students to be able to attend classes.

Strengthening of school health and hygiene and raising awareness to prevent further communicable diseases: As part of the support to school rehabilitation in targeted schools as well as the IDP and returnee areas, the Education SOT- through its implementing partners - provided basic sanitation facilities to the 66 schools rehabilitated; in addition to upgrading of sanitation facilities.

C) RECOMMENDED ADJUSTMENTS IN UNCT AND/ OR SECTOR OUTCOMES (WITH RATIONALE)

The SOT group decided in the SOT workshop to integrate the indicators of Outcome 4 into the other three indicators as the humanitarian intervention will be mainstreamed and embedded within the other Outcomes development activities. The group also decided to further merge the indicators of Outcome 3 within the indicators of Outcome 2. Hence, the revised Education SOT's results matrix would include Outcomes focused on access and quality of education.

Another recommended adjustment might be the support of the Education SOT to the involvement of the GoI in developing a strategy with the private sector and consequently advocacy activities in its support.

D) KEY ASSUMPTIONS, RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Assumptions: a major key assumption is to ensure ownership and handing over to school authorities to enable sustainability of projects. The SOT continues to have severe doubts about the sustainability of projects beyond the scope of the Education sector's direct involvement. To ensure sustainability it is assumed that the relationship between the UN agencies and the GoI will continue to be strengthened and that coordination, both internally (between the various ministries and directorates) and externally (between ministries and UN and other stakeholders) will be further developed. Another assumption is to maintain the positive cooperation and collaboration of Iraqi partners and stakeholders to remain committed to the project's objectives. Finally, the sector is working on the assumption that the security situation will not deteriorate and that the country maintains a level of stability in all areas.

Moreover, the commitment of the Government to have in place a sustainable health education and adequate school environment system is an imperative requirement for the success of the project.

Another factor that has been raised within the context of the relatively improving security dynamics and which will gradually allow for the return of the displaced population is that the education system must also prepare itself to absorb the thousands of refugees and displaced persons who are expected to seek reintegration. This population will have specific educational needs after, for many, an extended period outside Iraq.

Risks: remote operation from Amman is still an obstacle towards achieving a balance between security risks and visibility. Therefore, The SOT's leading agency has adopted a new organizational structure in 2009, in order to increase its presence inside Iraq and consequently visibility and advocacy will be improved and opportunities to draw more attention to critical issues faced by children will be enhanced.

Some of the delays that occurred while implementing the projects were attributed to the increase of market prices and the inflation rates for the rehabilitation and construction cost and duration, leading in some cases to changes in scope of works. Furthermore, the frequent turnover of MoE and DoE officials has a major impact on the sustainability and quality of capacity building, with a lack of institutional memory posing a major challenge to the sector's activities and the sustainability of programmes.

Opportunities: despite the constraints faced, the sector through its agencies/NGOs members is still continuing to find flexible, innovative and alternative options for moving forward with the implementation of programmes. The progress in the implementation of education projects was made possible because of comparative advantages of having offices and sub-offices in the country, as well as the positive and synergetic partnership with the involved ministries. Such arrangements have proven to be an efficient way of mitigating the risks and at the same time maintaining a good implementation rate with prudent international presence on the ground.

E) JOINT PROGRAMMES, UN CONVERGENCE AND SYNERGIES

The UN in Iraq is currently implementing coordinated programmes through the Iraq Trust Fund (ITF) mechanism as the first step towards joint programmes. As per UNDG guidelines, the joint programmes that continued to take place under ITF satisfy part of the criteria on joint programmes but not in its entirety. Priorities are jointly developed and projects jointly agreed through the SOTs. This mechanism has resulted in closer UN synergy than many traditional forms of programming. The SOTs are the local adaptation of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) clusters and the Iraq specific clusters which are a hybrid of development and humanitarian partnerships/coordination.

A significant step towards stronger UN synergy was actuated through the Education SOT in 2008 where six UN agencies jointly developed a project, 'Supporting efforts of the government in developing the capacity of the Iraq education sector/enhancing the learning environment in vulnerable areas in Iraq, for meeting Education For All goals (EFA)', to be closely coordinated and implemented with the GoI and aiming at supporting the GoI in its response to the immediate and diversified needs of the Education Sector in Iraq with implementation in Suleimaniyah, Thiqr and Salaheldin.

F) LESSONS LEARNED

- The general global financial crisis has caused an increase in the prices of material and labour cost related to school rehabilitation and construction and this has had a dramatic effect on the predicted/budgeted costs.

- There is an immediate need for strengthening educational planning, policy and strategy for long term education planning and management.

- One of the major obstacles faced by the sector is the lack and delay of regular and updated education data which is critical to strategic planning and to build upon the sector's interventions. Deficiencies in policy-making and strategic planning, outdated management techniques and methodologies, lack of use of modern technology for policy-making, planning and management, as well as deficiencies in proper service delivery capacities all pose problems for the development of the education sector in Iraq and limit the efficiency of the Education SOT and GOI education reforms. These challenging symptoms are reflected in the limited coordination and information sharing both among ministries and also at the governorates level. In order for the Education SOT to be able to further develop its education initiative and support the GoI it will be necessary to have additional capacity building activities for the MoE at all levels in coordination with other ministries and to further support a decentralization process.

In addition, higher education also suffers from problems such as excessive centralized decision-making and a lack of autonomous institutions, a lack of highly qualified teaching personnel, outdated programmes and curricula, a lack of mechanisms for quality assurance, and an inadequate environment for research & development. Nevertheless, the sector has exerted considerable efforts to overcome the obstacles and also the sector's strategy is designed to address this issue by enhancing information flow and management among all partners/stakeholders working in Education (including MoE, Ministry of Health (MoH), NGOs and other international organizations).

- In the context of the government's decentralization process, a comprehensive and extensive education reform is a key task if the illiteracy and regional disparities in access to education in Iraq are to be addressed in earnest. Strengthening school communities, enhancing parents' engagement in school management and affairs, and ensuring community participation are critical to the development of a decentralized school system.

- Based on the experience of UN agencies and International NGOs in implementing projects in Iraq, early planning and coordination with partner ministries, NGOs and educational institutions were taken into consideration when designing programmes and implementing timeframes for projects. Nevertheless, during the past five years working through remote operational modality, it is evident that a tangible change of this modality needs to take place and implementing partners should be present on the ground to participate effectively and communicate directly with the beneficiaries; starting from the design phase and going through all the implementation stages. Therefore, UN agencies should strengthen their field presence starting with regular missions of international staff to engage communities and authorities at different levels of project implementation. If conditions allow a more permanent presence on the ground all the sector's activities and operations will benefit; but in particular this will allow for enhanced monitoring and evaluation.

- In this regard, an important lesson learned from experience, is the lack of monitoring and evaluation at the outcome level. Most agencies continue to focus their monitoring and evaluation on the activity and output levels and do not address the outcome level achievements and challenges. Accordingly, going forward the lead agencies may wish to take the responsibility for the overall programme monitoring and evaluation at all levels.

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