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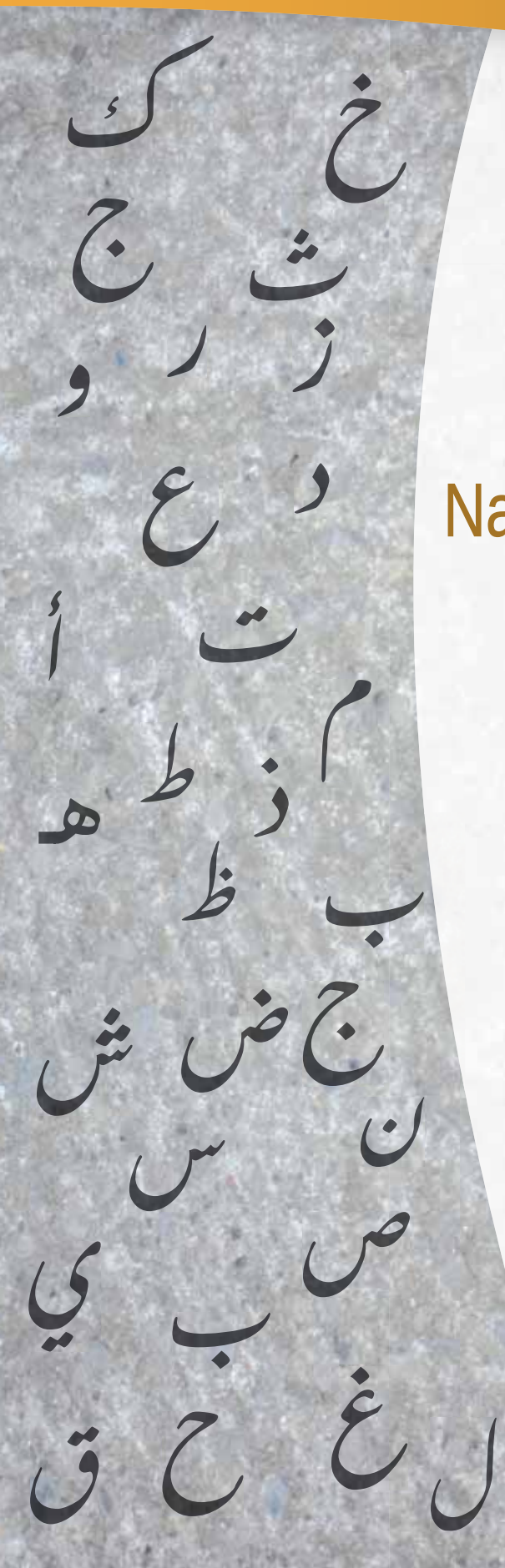

National Strategic Framework for Literacy in Iraq

2011-2015

Preface

Stemming from the notion that each individual has the right to an education, both as a basic right and a human right, fast steps are being made all over the world to provide literacy for all. Rivalry among nations today, even if it takes on different political and economic forms, is at core, an educational conflict and competition.

All developed countries, which have achieved a great leap forward in various areas of development, did so through literacy. Iraq is among those countries, which agreed through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that education is a basic right for every human being. Despite that and despite all efforts it made to provide education for all, particularly in the area of literacy, Iraq still lags behind. This means that many groups are still deprived of a number of opportunities including education, development of life skills, and the use of techniques and technologies that can assist them in improving the quality of life and adjusting to the increasing socio-economic and cultural developments.

It may be difficult for any country to eliminate illiteracy without a strategy with clear goals and features, and which identifies means and mechanisms for action that are directed towards the achievement of desired objectives.

We are delighted to introduce in this context "the National Framework for the Literacy Strategy in Iraq." This framework is the result of fruitful cooperation and constant hard work between the Ministry of Education and UNESCO / Iraq Office.

The importance of this Strategy lies in the fact that it resorted to situational analysis in participation with various governmental and non-governmental bodies. It is characterized by many features, the main ones being flexibility in understanding new situations or conditions, effectiveness in planning for all available resources and means of investing them, and the adoption of a comprehensive approach in dealing with all aspects related to literacy.

Several measures are required in order to achieve the Strategy goal of reducing illiteracy among males and females in Iraq by 50% by the end of 2015. The main measure would be to address the causes of illiteracy by paying particular attention to the quality of basic education, ensuring the enforcement of compulsory basic education, increasing its efficiency to accommodate for all enrolled children and prevent them from dropping out, preparing appropriate curricula, and identifying suitable means to meet the needs of all categories of students. Furthermore, there's a need for ensuring that the curricula are in line with students' psychological characteristics, meet their needs and interests, and address the practical and academic problems which they face. The needs of older students are numerous and vary according to their situation and circumstances.

Special emphasis needs to be made in providing literacy teachers with special training and preparation as they are mediators between students and the curricula. Literacy teachers are those who coordinate and direct literacy activities in addition to the educational process. They are also considered the channel through which knowledge, trends and values are passed on to students. Therefore, certain characteristics for the literacy teacher in addition to his preparation and training programs need to be identified.

Moreover, work entails setting forth priorities for literacy target groups. Priority goes to categories that are larger in size and which are most disadvantaged, while focusing at the same time on female literacy to bridge the gender gap between males and females especially in rural and poor areas. Thus, literacy becomes a way to reduce social, economic, and cultural disparities in Iraq. Active community participation should be emphasized in any literacy campaign in a way that ensures an effective role for civil society institutions and non-governmental organizations in supporting literacy efforts, increasing motivation, and achieving integration of all endeavors.

In conclusion, we emphasize the need for hard and innovative work as a way out of the literacy predicament, as we also highlight the need to strive for better education for all if God wills.

Dr. Mohammed Ali Tameem

Minister of Education

Chairman of the National Commission for Education, Science and Culture

Baghdad - Iraq

Preface

We highly value the efforts of those working on the modified draft of the National Framework for the Literacy Strategy in Iraq. We also appreciate the efforts of those who participated in completing the guidelines during the consultative workshop held in Erbil from 1-2 June 2011 for approval as a final report.

At the Ministry of Education in the Kurdistan Region, we see this Strategy with all its seven components as a rescue initiative, which however late, came at the right time. Nevertheless, the right systematic application of a comprehensive approach in monitoring and evaluation, which will be carried out by the Central Technical Committee and the Higher Committee for Literacy, will compensate for what has been previously overlooked. Past hindrances include disinclination in decision-making, delay in the implementation of actions, and a deeply rooted fear of challenges. This is what we are suffering from thus far. Implications of widespread illiteracy impact all aspects of the country and adversely affect the work of its institutions. Such implications increase in risk particularly when they become the main factor contributing to the erosion of infrastructure, collapse of social relations, and voluntary escape from proper knowledge sought by the civilized world.

Reasons behind such tardiness and the contributing factors in its spread are extensively illustrated in the various sections of the final report. Therefore, there is no need to go into more depth at this stage. We fully agree with and support what has been mentioned thus far, since we are advocates of its application. We still strive to implement it through our ongoing projects, which include the opening of literacy centers and accelerated learning schools, the number of which exceeded 9,000 centers and schools throughout the past decade.

We are not trying to pride ourselves for our modest experience in the region. Rather, we are sad for the fact that other areas in Iraq are in dire conditions. While literacy numbers have decreased to 50% in the region during the last decade, these numbers have doubled in other areas in the country as highlighted in this report and other reliable educational sources. Indicators for literacy charts increase when comparison is made between urban and rural centers at the one hand, and male and female at the other hand.

Our aspiration for this project, which is designed at the Iraqi level, is to make sure it is on the right track and implemented in parallel with the final report. Our focus at this stage is not to let difficult and intractable conditions make us lose sight of fact that perfection is the desired goal. Literacy in this context is a service that targets adults who have been deprived, either forcibly or voluntarily, from learning to read and write only, which in itself is part of the problem. More specifically, illiteracy is the inability to read and write (functional illiteracy); however, when we delve further into the meanings

of the term and its various contemporary concepts, we find that the different aspects of ignorance are classified according to human interactions with recent developments, which control and manage all aspects of everyday life, and which can be limited to four types: 'illiteracy of civilizations' which entails an individual's ignorance in applying and practicing the principles of democracy and human rights; 'cultural illiteracy' which is an individual's ignorance of languages other than his/her mother tongue; 'technological illiteracy' which means ignorance of individuals in utilizing modern technical means; and 'functional illiteracy' the subject of our discussion, and which means the inability to read and write.

These are the key aspects that separate between individuals represented in the first step, i.e. those weighed down by ignorance, and individuals who passed this step and started climbing the ladder of civilization.

The Strategy used by our Ministry includes all four aspects. Our desire and determination is for the National Framework for the Literacy Strategy in Iraq to be a comprehensive umbrella for all four literacy activities. By doing so, we would have properly served our citizens as skilled elements in the labor market, and at the same time, we can catch up with the civilized world.

Safeen Mohsin Dizayee

Minister of Education

Kurdistan Regional Government

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Foreword

Literacy is an indispensable means for effective social and economic participation, contributing to peace, human development and poverty reduction. It is also important for personal development and empowerment. This is why literacy is the fundamental goal of Education for All (EFA) and constitutes the basis for ensuring sustainable development.

Over the course of many decades, Iraq has witnessed several crises including wars, economic sanctions, military policies, occupation, lack of security, and political instability. As mentioned in the UNESCO National Education Support Strategy 2010-2014, despite considerable efforts, Iraq still strives to ensure the right to an education for all Iraqi citizens. Illiteracy is one of the challenges that the Government of Iraq and its counterparts are facing in their efforts to implement reform at all levels of education (early childhood, primary, secondary, and higher education) in order to restore the high educational standards previously enjoyed by Iraqis.

National illiteracy rates are estimated at around 20% in Iraq. Women are particularly affected by illiteracy especially in rural areas, where close to 50% of women aged between 15 and 24 years are illiterate compared to 28-30% of women living in urban and major cities.

To address current literacy challenges, UNESCO, as the lead agency and international coordinator of the United Nations Literacy Decade 2003-2012, launched the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment for Iraq (LIFE Project) in 2010. UNESCO launched this initiative in partnership with the Office of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, First Lady of Qatar, and UNESCO Special Envoy for Basic and Higher Education, following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between UNESCO and the Government of Iraq in 2009. The overall goal of the LIFE Project is to ensure the formulation of a nation-wide coordinated literacy response together with the Iraqi Government and civil society to meet the learning needs of illiterates in Iraq and to contribute to the building of a literate and peaceful society.

The development of a national literacy strategy is the first step towards the achievement of the overall goal of reducing illiteracy by 50% by the year 2015. To this end, the government of Iraq, with the support from UNESCO, has developed a national vision and detailed policy in response to the critical and immediate needs of Iraqi illiterates, emphasizing the rights of vulnerable and currently excluded population groups.

The Strategy sheds light on the way forward for ensuring the effective access to quality literacy and life skills programs for all over the next five years, building on evidence-based, results-oriented, and participatory approaches. UNESCO will continue to play the lead role in providing technical assistance for the implementation of the Strategy and I am confident that the Iraqi Government, together with the civil society will build a fully literate community equipped to address the challenges of the future.

Mohamed Djelid
Director
UNESCO Iraq Office

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Executive Summary

The vision of the National Framework for the Literacy Strategy is based on the notion that although illiteracy appears to be an educational problem, it is in fact a problem with serious and dangerous socio-economic implications. Any interventions to eradicate illiteracy should be viewed as developmental interventions, meaning that they should be linked to empowerment interventions.

The importance of the Strategy lies in developing specific and clear objectives and determining areas of intervention, which constitute integrated elements that contribute to the achievement of these objectives. Additionally, the Strategy specifies and outlines responsibilities in light of the different components, and stresses the importance of coordination among stakeholders so that to develop an effective response to illiteracy.

Within this context, the Iraqi government strives to build a legislative umbrella anchored in solid legal basis for providing allocations in the form of human and physical resources and for working at the policy level by approving the literacy law.

The National Framework for the Literacy Strategy has identified seven areas of intervention, which are: governance; capacity building; partnership and community participation; awareness-raising and community mobilization; Monitoring and Evaluation; Equivalency educational programs; and classroom environment. Each of these areas of intervention constitutes a challenge in itself.

Moreover, the National Framework for the Literacy Strategy indicated the need for adopting a philosophy based on partnership, networking and distribution of roles among other governmental and civil society organizations, which have actively participated in building the Strategy.

To this end, the National Framework for the Literacy Strategy developed work mechanisms and measures to accomplish its various objectives in accordance with the different areas of intervention. Recommendations entailed forming a Higher Committee for Literacy consisting of representatives from various respective ministries, departments, and civil society organizations. This committee will endorse and approve higher policies and will form a central technical committee to translate strategic objectives into action plans and business plans. These plans shall include monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, which will be approved by the Higher Committee along with the processes of supervision, monitoring and evaluation of implemented operations. Furthermore, the Head of the Technical Committee shall report to the Higher Committee.

For purposes of field work implementation at the local community level, sub-committees will be formed by executive bodies at the governorate level. These committees will be responsible for monitoring and evaluation of implementation processes in governorates and local communities. They will also regularly submit progress reports to the Central Technical Committee.

Introduction

Illiteracy constitutes a real problem that truly contributes to the obstruction of developmental processes in different countries ,particularly in poor countries or those known as third world countries .Illiteracy is manifested by the fact that it hinders large numbers of the population from effective participation, which in turn can prevent them from breaking the chains of poverty and ignorance.

Moreover ,illiterates do not only represent an inoperative socio-economic force ,but their situation inhibits them from grabbing opportunities to break through the cycles of misery and intellectual isolation .To this end ,illiteracy becomes an incubator of serious problems such as poverty, unemployment and ignorance .It contributes to the exclusion of large numbers of people from being actively involved in social issues .Hence ,they become marginalized and passive ,and at worst scenario, they become powerless ,constantly dependant on others ,and lacking the will and hope for a better future.

To be able to assess the magnitude of illiteracy ,a quick review of the EFA Global Monitoring Report for the year 2008 can provide some answers .The global situation indicates that absolute numbers of illiteracy among adults are on the rise .There are nearly 774 million adults who lack basic reading skills, of which women constitute .64% Moreover ,one out of every five adults is deprived of the right to literacy.

As for the Arab world ,and according to statistical reports issued by the Arab League for Education, Culture and Science Organization) ALECSO ,(the illiteracy rate has reached ,29.7% and increases to 46.5% among females .Statistical data on illiteracy in the Arab world indicates that the number of illiterates for the age groups of over 15 years has amounted to nearly 99.5 million ,and 75 million of Arab illiterates are between the age range of 15-45 years.

In Iraq ,it is difficult to speculate a logical and reasonable projection of the magnitude of this phenomenon due to the lack of recent accurate surveys that reflect the actual and real size of illiteracy. Within this context ,and based on estimates provided in the Ministry of Education reports ,we can say that illiteracy rates range between 20% and 25% of the total population ,bearing in mind that it is more widespread in rural areas and communities as opposed to urban ones .On a second note ,illiteracy rates among women in both rural and urban areas are higher than those for men.

To determine the accurate magnitude for illiteracy in Iraq ,it would be necessary for the upcoming national survey to cater for the situation of illiteracy in the country.

In light of this reality, and in an attempt not to replicate it in different societies, UNESCO seeks to provide technical support and advice to member countries to promote the development of policies for sustainable literacy. It provides support at the national and sub-national levels by designing comprehensive and coherent literacy policies and strategies that regard the attainment of basic literacy skills a main component of Education for All.

At the national level, UNESCO encourages member countries to consider literacy policies a core component of educational systems and developmental efforts. In this respect, several challenges arise,

particularly that "literacy remains one of the educational objectives that gets the least attention." (The 2010 EFA Global Monitoring Report, p 94).

Within the framework of the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE Project) in Iraq for the years 2010-2015, and for the purpose of building interventions that seek to curb the increase in illiteracy and reduce its rate in the country, the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with UNESCO Iraq, supports the efforts and endeavors of the Iraqi government to launch the (LIFE) Project. This initiative aims to build and develop a national literacy strategy in Iraq to ensure the reduction of illiteracy by 50% at all levels by the year 2015 via a series of national and global literacy commitments in the country.

UNESCO Iraq has extended support for designing the National Literacy Strategy in Iraq despite all current global situations, particularly the intensification of the international financial crisis. "With increased poverty and unemployment rates and diminishing financial aids, several poor families have been forced to cut down on educational expenditure or to take their children out of the educational system." (The 2010 EFA Global Monitoring Report, p 9).

Methodology

The methodology used in designing the National Framework for the Literacy Strategy in Iraq is participatory situational analysis. This involved the participation of all stakeholders, including governmental or non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations, in all phases of Strategy development. Participants included representatives from the Ministry of Education in Baghdad and the Kurdistan Region, city councils, and national organizations. They took part in the situational analysis and evaluation processes using SWOT and needs assessment, and also participated in identifying Strategy domains and objectives. To build a realistic knowledge base for the Strategy, the Ministry of Education in cooperation with UNESCO Iraq, undertook the organization of a number of activities including:

1) Developing a "Literacy Network for Iraq" through a national workshop held in Erbil, Iraq from 2-3 June, 2010 in cooperation with 26 national and international NGOs. Representatives from both ministries in Baghdad and Erbil attended the workshop. Since then, the network has been expanded, where 261 NGOs registered with the Ministry of Education in Baghdad until March 2011.

2) Conducting a workshop in Amman – Jordan for the period from 21-23 July, 2010 with the aim of assessing literacy needs in cooperation with international experts and participation of a nominated task force consisting of concerned Iraqi public planners (Ministries of Education in Baghdad and Erbil).

3) Conducting a workshop entitled "Building a Framework for the National Literacy Strategy in Erbil, Iraq" from 21-24 February, 2011. The workshop aimed at building and developing a framework for the National Literacy Strategy in Iraq. High level employees and representatives from the following entities took part in this workshop:

- Office of the Prime Minister
- Ministry of Education in Baghdad, and the National Commission for Education, Culture and Science
- Ministry of Education in Kurdistan
- Public Education Directorates, and Ministry of Planning
- Ministry of Displacement and Migration, and Provincial Councils
- Associations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- UNICEF / Iraq Office
- UNESCO / Iraq Office

This approach in developing strategies is both effective and important as it reflects the situation as is without exaggeration. Consequently, the development process would be totally in line with the real Iraqi situation because the resulting knowledge is that of the main parties concerned, and thus, is

not strange to their situation and culture. This is an important point in achieving ownership of plan outputs.

4) Review of the following policies and official documents:

- The Iraqi Constitution;
- The legal framework, which governs the Ministry of Education;
- Important data;
- Laws and regulations;
- Administrative organizational structures;
- The general education budget of the Ministry of Education;
- The National Action Plan for Literacy 2010-2015 (Draft);
- Baseline survey for the evaluation of non-formal education in Iraq;
- Assessment of literacy and adult learning textbooks in Iraq;
- The current literacy and non-formal education strategy / Ministry of Education, Erbil;
- Current strategy and situational analysis of literacy and non-formal education / Ministry of Education – Baghdad;
- Draft literacy law, adult education, and literacy related legislations;
- National Development Plan for the years 2010-2014;
- Documents/guidelines related to the National Strategy for Building Partnerships;
- Previous analysis of the Ministry of Education (KRG and Baghdad);
- VAM Survey for 2007 conducted by the Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment Mapping, WFP, and the Iraq Household and Socio-economic Survey IHSES 2007 for the World Bank; and
- Literacy needs assessment report, UNESCO Iraq/Jordan office, 2010.

While preparing the Strategy framework, a series of general characteristics have been considered to ensure as many success opportunities as possible as highlighted below:

Flexibility: What is meant in this context is the ability of the Strategy to take into consideration the most recent developments or conditions, whether internal or external, and to ensure a speedy response to such circumstances, while taking the time factor into account.

Efficiency: This means sound and careful planning for all resources and means of investing them within the given circumstances.

Inclusiveness: The Strategy shall deal with all aspects related to literacy and adult learning, and shall consider this vital step as being part of the comprehensive development process and not only an

educational one, i.e. linking education to empowerment.

Decentralization: This is closely linked to flexibility and enables optimal benefit from the local governing system in Iraq within the framework of provincial councils and through an executive work structure that caters for this reality.

Integration and correlation: Even though the Strategy essentially targets adult literacy, one cannot overlook other non-formal programs such as the youth program and the accelerated learning program, which are considered key ancillaries for curbing school dropouts.

The implementation phase: Implementation processes are linked to timeframes according to executive action plans, whereby ample opportunity is granted for revision and evaluation, thus allowing for the introduction of necessary amendments to the intervention process, which would enhance the efficiency of implementation.

The Current Situation of Illiteracy in Iraq

The Iraqi society is considered a young society, where those below 15 years of age constitute 42.9% of the total population. In this respect, the literacy needs assessment report in Iraq, implemented by UNESCO Iraq office in Jordan in cooperation with the task force appointed by both Ministries of Education in Baghdad and Erbil as part of the literacy initiative for empowerment in Iraq 2010-2015, indicates that most available statistics on illiteracy are based on ten year-old data given that the latest official statistics were conducted back in 1997. Surveys that have been conducted lately, present a more recent idea about the situation of illiteracy, however, not a comprehensive one, as is the case with official statistics and/or wide scale evaluation targeting education.

This situation is seen as one of the most important challenges faced by policy-makers and strategies directed towards the development of effective programs for reducing and combating illiteracy in Iraq. On the other hand, the working paper prepared by the Director of Public Education / Ministry of Education in Baghdad (Annex 1) and submitted during the national workshop for the development of the Literacy Strategy in Iraq held on 21-24 February, 2011 in Erbil - Iraq, indicates that "the reduction of illiteracy by 50% requires a reasonable and logical estimation of the magnitude of illiteracy in Iraq". Based on estimates by the Ministry of Education, one can conclude that the illiteracy rate ranges between 20-25% from the total population.

Within this context, and in the absence of recent and accurate surveys reflecting the realistic illiteracy rate, and due to the existence of figures and rates that differ according to sources, the National Development Plan 2010-2014 launched by the Iraqi Ministry of Planning indicates that "the illiteracy rate is 28% of the total population aged 10 years and above," page 118. The IHSES survey conducted in Iraq by the World Bank in cooperation with the Ministry of Planning in 2007, estimated the rate of illiteracy in Iraq to be from 18-20%. This difference in rates is due to the difference in identifying age categories. While the Ministry of Planning identified the age category at 10 years and above, the Ministry of Education identified it as being over 15 years of age. Within the same framework, and according to data and estimates of the Ministry of Education reports, it can be deduced that the illiteracy rate may amount to 16.3% of the total population.

For purposes of completing the development of the Literacy Strategy, and after consultation with the Ministry of Education - Center during "the National Workshop for the Development of the Literacy Strategy in Iraq", and according to the aforementioned working paper, the number of 5,193,682 illiterates has been approved, of which the Strategy targets 50%, i.e., around 2,500,000 illiterates by the year 2015.

For further clarification, Table (1) demonstrates the distribution of illiteracy rates by gender and location.

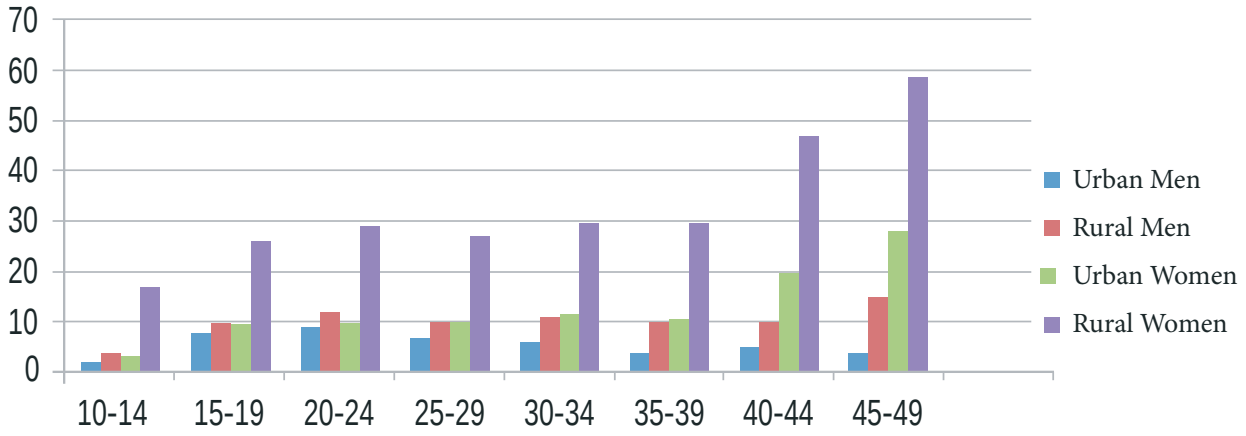


Table (1) Illiteracy Rates by Gender and Location
Source: World Food Program, Analysis of the Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis Mapping 2007

As demonstrated in the above table, rural areas and societies are impacted by illiteracy more than urban societies. However, the illiteracy rate for women in both rural and urban areas is higher than that for men.

This implies that it would be necessary for the Strategy to focus on targeting rural areas and developing interventions that take gender into account when targeting both the women and youth sectors.

In light of this situation, the Ministry of Education has put an effort to develop interventions consisting of literacy and non-formal education programs in Iraq as highlighted below:

Literacy and Adult Education Program at the Ministry of Education - Center:

This program includes the provision of literacy courses to adult illiterates, mainly women of the age group 15-45 years. The program is divided into two levels: basic and complementary. Each level is for 7 months, and when completed, provides a certificate that is equivalent to the fourth grade certificate in formal education. In 2009, there were nearly 48,000 students distributed among 1,041 centers located in official schools with an average of 50 students per center. Recently, both Ministries of Education in Baghdad and Erbil have developed new curricula for literacy textbooks. These textbooks comprise math, Arabic language, and general education, and have been developed with technical support from UNESCO.

The new textbooks include subjects related to health and other basic life skills. However, limited room has been left for any additional subjects post the literacy programs. Moreover, literacy teachers are mostly teachers in formal schools who have not been trained to teach adults, and do not receive any tangible incentives for additional teaching hours.

Youth Schools:

This is another non-formal education program that started in 1978 and is still under implementation in Iraq. This program aims at enabling children of ages 9-15 years, who have dropped out of the formal education system, to regularly attend special classes through which they can acquire reading, writing, and numeracy skills. The program is implemented by the Ministry of Education in Baghdad only, and provides children and youth dropouts with opportunities to access special education programs. The youth program combines four years into two, and includes the curricula of both grades one and two in one year. It also combines the curricula of grades three and four in another year, and grades five and six into two years. Thus, the basic education cycle is squeezed into four years instead of six. Students acquire skills according to their curricula in addition to a special curriculum that guides, trains and develops them to become better students and citizens. Completion of this program enables students to obtain a certificate, which is equivalent to the elementary education certificate.

Accelerated Learning Program:

Very recently, two non-formal education programs have been introduced in Iraq: the accelerated learning program; and the program for the development of reading, writing and life skills. The accelerated learning program had been designed for the first time by the Ministry of Education in cooperation with UNICEF and USAID in 2005. The purpose behind it was to provide learning opportunities for students and adolescent dropouts of the Ministry of Education in Baghdad, whose ages range between 12-18 years. This program targets females who have never been enrolled in schools, or particularly those who have dropped out of school.

The main objective of the accelerated learning program is to provide opportunities for older children who have dropped out of school to complete their elementary education phase in three years instead of six. Some of these children may not complete their education after this phase. But those who wish to pursue their education have the right to obtain the necessary certificates, which qualify them to choose any of the following alternatives:

- Enroll in the formal education system through enrolment in secondary education;
- Enroll in suitable vocational education courses; and
- Obtain higher education degrees through distance learning or alternative educational models.

The numbers of students and schools have greatly increased since the launching of the program, where for example, the number of schools in 2007 was 189 while it reached 426 in 2009. Within the framework of program operations, new curricula have been developed to compress the formal curricula, while at the same time supporting the use of new textbooks and designing special training for teachers of the accelerated learning program.

Literacy and Non-Formal Education Programs of the Ministry of Education in the Kurdistan Region:

Non-formal education in the Kurdistan Region consists of two basic programs: literacy and adult education; and accelerated learning.

a) **Literacy and Adult Education:** In the year 2000, the Ministry of Education, with assistance from international organizations, conducted a comprehensive educational survey to estimate the number of illiterates in the Region. The survey indicated an illiteracy rate of around 34%, of which over 60% were females. Based on these results, the Ministry initiated a massive campaign to combat illiteracy under the slogan of "Illiteracy Free Kurdistan". The campaign included an age group of 15-45 years.

   Over a period of ten years (i.e. the period from 2000 and until 2010), the Ministry had been able to educate around 340,000 male and female illiterates. Thus, the illiteracy rate declined to around 16% (Working Paper of the Ministry of Education in the Kurdistan Region in the field of non-formal education, prepared by the Director of the General Directorate of Primary Education and Kindergarten / Directorate of Non-Formal Education - Appendix 2).

   The Literacy program consists of three study phases, which are equivalent to the sixth basic grade, where each phase is equivalent to two basic education grades. The student who successfully completes the first phase is given a certificate of "Read and Write". The student who completes the second and third phases is considered to have completed the sixth basic grade.

b) **Accelerated Learning Program (ALP):** The Accelerated Learning Program began in the Region during the academic year 2005/2006 with support from UNICEF. At that time, the program included the age group of 9-15 years and comprised three phases. The curricula for each two academic years were summed up in one year, so that the student could get the primary education certificate in three years instead of six. This gave a strong incentive to both school dropouts and those who were not enrolled to re-join school.

   This model competed with the youth education system. Thus, through its educational conference, the Ministry suspended work in youth schools as of the academic year 2007/2008. It also extended the accelerated learning program to include five study phases instead of three, which is equivalent to the ninth grade in basic education. The age group was also amended to become 9-22 years for males, and 9-24 years for females.

Target Group

Challenges faced by literacy workers in Iraq entail the objective identification of target group numbers for both sexes. The Strategy aims at reducing illiteracy by 50% by the end of 2015, and this requires a logical and reasonable estimate of the magnitude of illiteracy in Iraq. As pointed out earlier, the working paper presented by the Director General of Education at the Ministry of Education in Baghdad (Annex I) during the national workshop for the development of the literacy strategy in Iraq 21-24 February, 2011 in Erbil, the number of illiterates is estimated at 5,193,682, which constitutes 20-25% of the total population.

For the purpose of developing necessary interventions in a logical, effective, practical, and attainable manner, the target number of illiterates had been identified in light of the data and information available prior to conducting the next population census. To this end, various sources have been taken into account: the 2009 data from the Ministry of Planning included in the National Development Plan for the years 2010-2014, estimated the illiteracy rate to be 28% of the total population (p. 118). The Iraqi Household Socio-Economic Survey conducted by the World Bank in 2007 in cooperation with the Ministry of Planning points out another rate for illiteracy ranging between 18-20% of the total population.

Despite discrepancies, the data caters for a target population of over 10 years of age. However, as per the national structure for education, the target population should be over 15 years of age, and so, official data and figures provided by the Ministry of Education (Appendix I) have been adopted as a baseline for the Strategy. Such data estimated the number of illiterates to be 5,193,682, which constitutes 16.3% of the total population.

The above-mentioned information means that around five million Iraqi citizens are illiterate. This figure should not be underestimated as it represents the number of people who are not able to actively participate in building the community and easing the burden off the State, which is still recovering from the harsh circumstances it went through. On the other hand, for the State to be able to provide services for illiterates, it needs to identify their location and deployment rates by local community and gender.

Illiteracy is usually associated with poverty and unemployment, and is considered a major obstacle to development, especially in the current era that is characterized by technological revolution and unprecedented advanced levels of knowledge. This may deepen the marginalization and isolation of illiterates, thus exacerbating the social and economic problems in the community.

Since rural areas and communities are affected by illiteracy more than urban communities, and since illiteracy for women in both rural and urban areas is higher than that for men, it becomes very essential for the Strategy to focus on rural areas, whilst developing gender sensitive interventions. Furthermore, targeting governorates where high rates of illiteracy appear should be given priority when developing intervention measures within action plans. Examples include the governorates of Al Muthanna and Maysan in the center and Sulaimaniyah in the Kurdistan Region, etc.

According to the illiteracy law, an illiterate is “any citizen who has completed 15 years of age, does not know how to read and write and did not attain the level of civilization.” The law also defines the

level of civilization as "the individual's possession of reading, writing and numeracy skills, as means to develop his career and raise his cultural and socio-economic living standards, thus enabling him to exercise his citizenship rights and participate in the decision-making process and performance of public duties." This knowledge should be in line with community mobilization. Accordingly, the target group identified those who completed fifteen years of age and above and cannot read and write".

Situation Analysis

For purposes of developing the Strategy's national framework, (SWOT) had been used as a methodology and analytical tool in the situational analysis. SWOT helps identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

Strengths are the internal components and pillars, which an institution enjoys and utilizes in facing potential threats. Threats comprise external factors that may negatively affect, in one way or another, the institution's accomplishments. On the other hand, available opportunities are identified and linked to weaknesses, so that these can be transformed into points of strength in institutional work.

The situational analysis process took place during the National Workshop for the Development of the Literacy Strategy in Iraq held from 21-24 February, 2011. Results were based on focus group discussions with administrators and representatives from the Ministries of Education in the Center and the Kurdistan Region in addition to representatives from civil society organizations. Discussions led to the identification of strengths and weaknesses in addition to opportunities and threats. Results were as follows:

Strengths	Analysis
Endorsement of the Literacy law.	The law includes effective frameworks and work mechanisms that take into account flexibility and decentralization, which in turn reinforce the capacity to combat illiteracy.
The desire to set forth and adopt a literacy strategy.	Officials have a strong sense of the problem of illiteracy in Iraq at all levels. Cooperation and coordination with the UNESCO Office in the "Literacy Initiative for Empowerment in Iraq 2010-2015" is a good example.
Significant previous experience in areas of non-formal education, particularly literacy.	Iraq has extensive accumulated experience in literacy issues, which can be traced back to the Comprehensive National Literacy Campaign in the 1980s.
Availability of human resources (teachers).	Despite the availability of human resources, they are deployed ineffectively. To turn this weakness into strength, it would be necessary to reconsider deployment in a manner that maximizes the effectiveness of geographical distribution.

Availability of literacy centers throughout Iraq.	The number of these centers is not sufficient to realize the Strategy's main goal. This point can be linked to opportunities such as the presence of religious centers, and centers of civil society organizations, which can help alleviate the buildings impediment.
The existence of a literacy curriculum, which can be developed and built on.	UNESCO is currently working on developing new curricula that are appropriate to the current phase, and this step is now in its final stage.
The existence of supervision and follow-up mechanisms.	This contradicts a previously mentioned point of weakness, and that is the weak coordination between the various Ministry departments and the field. This requires exerting greater efforts in developing appropriate mechanisms for supervision and follow-up.
The existence of a real desire to eradicate illiteracy, which is reflected in MOE's seriousness in seeking to decrease the number of illiterates in cooperation with the Directorates of Education, the UNESCO Office, and civil society organizations.	To turn this desire into a tangible reality, it is important to develop and adopt policies, regulations, instructions, and mechanisms, which can lead to the realization of objectives.
The existence of institutional awareness among actors in the educational process for the eradication of illiteracy.	This supports the previous point and constitutes an opportunity to realize it.

Analysis	Weaknesses
This task can be accomplished in the shortest time and lowest cost possible through cooperation and networking with civil society organizations, whether NGOs or provincial councils.	Lack of a recent and accurate population survey for literacy in all areas.
This point can be linked with opportunities such as "the availability of large numbers of unemployed undergraduates or graduates." They can be recruited or contracted to benefit from their capacities in making this project a success.	Low qualifications of the teaching cadre in literacy centers.

This point can be linked to that under opportunities: "the existence of a large number of satellite and media channels, and the use of computers and mobiles…" All of these are successful instruments for the support of the project. However, the emergence of civil society organizations, a new phenomenon in the Iraqi society, constitutes an important basis for the project. Civil society organizations are known for their ability in recruitment and mobilization.	Weak outreach (mass-media).
Establishing a literacy network in Iraq with support from UNESCO Office as part of the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) is very essential.	Lack of cowordination among parties concerned with the eradication of illiteracy.
This leads to higher opportunities for school dropouts or non-enrolment, which means the inability to control or eradicate illiteracy. This can be overcome after the enforcement of the Literacy Law, and also through the funding of civil society organizations.	Non-enforcement of the compulsory education law.
This can be overcome after the enforcement of the Literacy Law. However, we can benefit from the funding that civil society organizations obtain, at least until the law is endorsed.	Scarcity of financial resources.
This point can be linked to the implementation of a program or action plan to build the institutional capacity of the Ministry and its partners. An example on such activity is included in the strategic plan and adopted by the UNESCO Office.	Lack of good and effective planning, and weak coordination among the Ministry, its directorates, and other parties.
UNESCO is in the process of finalizing the development of new curricula that are suitable for the current phase.	Gender and cultural diversity in Iraq is not catered for in the curricula.
Developing standards for an appropriate classroom environment would be made possible by engaging the target group in the process of cooperation with partner civil society organizations.	Lack of an appropriate literacy classroom environment.

In light of partners' roles and the development of effective interventions, this point can be turned into a point of strength through initiatives similar to "IQRA" (Read Initiative).	Insufficient interest in non-formal education, and the inability to reduce the number of dropouts and non-enrolled.
Activation of educational processes requires the adoption of appropriate teaching methods such as the participatory learning approach. This task also requires the preparation of a special training team (training of trainers) with support from the UNESCO Office.	The use of conventional teaching methods by teachers, which don't cater for adult educational characteristics.
UNESCO is currently in the process of finalizing the development of new curricula that is suitable for the current phase and entail such subjects.	The curricula lack directives and trends for life empowerment programs.
One possible solution would be to establish and develop a Monitoring and Evaluation, where the Literacy Network for Iraq to be launched by UNESCO, can take part in and contribute to it.	Lack of an accurate Monitoring and Evaluation, whether for illiterates or those who became literate.

Opportunities
Cooperation of local administrations in provincial councils and provision of support to ensure the success of the project.
Cooperation and support of international organizations to ensure the success of the project.
Cooperation of local non-governmental organizations and directing their activities towards illiteracy eradication programs.
Diversity and multiplicity of means of communication inside Iraq.
The desire by most political entities to eradicate illiteracy.
Availability of cadres that can be benefited from.
Large numbers of undergraduates or graduates who can be recruited or contracted to benefit from their capacity in making the project successful.
The large number of satellite and media channels, the widespread use of computers, internet centers, and websites, are all means which can be utilized to make the project successful.
The existence of religious and civil society organizations centers can effectively contribute to the reduction of the buildings crisis.
There are good initiatives for civil society organizations that one can cooperate with and develop.
Promoting the role of women within the family through education.
The Literacy Law was endorsed by the Council of Ministers and underwent a first reading at the Council of Representatives.
Iraq is rich with financial and human resources, which constitute an important opportunity that must be utilized.

Threats
Weak response by parties concerned to work in literacy and adult education programs.
The continuous flow of illiterates due to the dropout of students from formal education.
Non-enforcement of the compulsory education law.
Security instability on many occasions.
Lack of clear roles and frameworks for the partners.
The deteriorating economic situation of Iraqi households.
Weak community awareness about the seriousness of illiteracy as a phenomenon.
The desire of some ministries to educate their illiterate members without coordination with MOE, which jeopardizes the possibility of their receiving good education.
In the absence of an umbrella for coordinating work among all parties, funding remains scattered between civil society organizations and governmental institutions.
Limited school buildings in some geographical areas, and the problem of the two and three-shift schools.
The abstention of illiterates from enrolling in literacy centers.

Basis and Foundations of the National Framework for the Literacy Strategy

The UNESCO Iraq Office supports the Iraqi government's efforts in launching the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE). To this end, the Ministry of Education in cooperation with UNESCO Iraq Office has been keen to develop a national strategy for the eradication of illiteracy in Iraq to ensure the reduction of illiteracy by 50% by the year 2015. Accordingly, a set of national and global commitments to eradicate illiteracy in Iraq have been developed, mainly the following points:

First - At the National Level: The Iraqi constitution in this respect refers to the following:

- Learning is a right guaranteed by the State for all citizens;
- Education should be free for all Iraqis at all levels of education;
- Education is compulsory at the elementary level; and
- The State guarantees the eradication of illiteracy.

The National Development Plan for the years 2010 – 2014 (p. 119-120) also refers to the following:

- Achieving literacy for illiterate citizens of ages between 15-45 years during the target year.
- Achieving an average of 30 learners per center until the year 2014.

Second - At the Global Level: This process comes in response to the goals of the Dakar Conference - Education for All - and especially the fourth and fifth objectives. The fourth objective caters for increasing the proportion of adult education by 50% by 2015, while the fifth objective stipulates the achievement of gender equality by 2015. This also comes in response to the Millennium Development Goals:

- Goal 2: Achieving basic education by 2015.
- Goal 3: Promoting gender equality and empowering women.

Third - At the Humanitarian Level:

- Education is a fundamental human right (Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights).
- Learning reduces fanaticism and contributes to socio-economic development.
- Education contributes to economic development (an important pointer of the Human Development Index - HDI).

Mission Statement

To develop non-formal education and literacy programs according to quality assurance criteria. This would help illiterates reach the civilized level and thus enable them to develop at the cultural, social and economic levels. Also, it would enable them to practice the rights and commitments of good citizenship, since Education for All, is a right guaranteed by the State and is the basis for society's progress, guided by the principles of democracy, social justice and human rights.

Strategy Goals

To reduce the rate of illiteracy among males and females in Iraq by 50% by the end of 2015.

Strategic Objectives

1. To establish justice and ensure the delivery of educational services for adults, and to eradicate illiteracy in all areas by providing access to education to all members of society in accordance with illiteracy rates for both sexes.
2. To overcome, through education, the socio-economic challenges represented in poverty and unemployment.
3. To invest in human capacities and maximize benefit from available potentials in society so that to promote the concept of empowerment via education to ensure the development of illiterates, their independence, and reinforce their participation in public life.
4. To promote cooperation and coordination among the various public, national, and private sectors, and to combine their efforts to achieve a society that is free of illiteracy.

Policies

- Empowerment via education and literacy is fundamental for helping illiterates reach a better socio-economic life.
- Illiterates are an effective productive force and are partners in the development and enhancement of society. Their roles should be activated and their contribution facilitated by liberating them from the chains of illiteracy.
- Education is detrimental to raising community efficiency, and is an important indicator of the prosperity and advancement of States.
- An educated family is the nucleus of society and the natural environment through which its members grow. It is also a basic condition for the development and advancement of society.

Stakeholders in Achieving Strategy Objectives

To achieve Strategy objects, a process that requires the mobilization of many efforts within a specific timeframe, the draft law (literacy law) identified 17 governmental bodies forming the High Commission for Literacy. These bodies consist of ministries and respective departments, whether directly or indirectly involved. At the executive level, however, civil society organizations (local associations and provincial councils) play a key and pivotal role in the following areas:

- Benefiting from the existing experiences of institutions working in the field of education and in socio-economic empowerment.
- Civil society organizations enjoy higher flexibility in their actions, in that they work directly with local communities and the local leadership in society. They have the advantage of reaching target categories and bridging the gaps, which are otherwise difficult to access by public institutions.
- The ability of some organizations to attract donor funding for literacy and empowerment projects, which can cover part of the financial costs and compensate for the scarcity of resources.
- Civil society organizations can, in cooperation and coordination with the Ministry of Education, implement literacy programs within their locations, open educational centers, and recruit teachers, all of which to be conducted under supervision and follow-up by the Ministry of Education.
- Civil society organizations have the ability to organize and implement awareness-raising and mobilization programs that would serve Strategy objectives. They can also serve as an incubator for socio-economic empowerment programs for graduates of literacy programs. (This makes it possible to benefit from the experiences of provincial councils within the "Read" project. Greater coordination with the Ministry of Education needs to be taken into consideration, so that to institutionalize such initiatives and provide graduates with official literacy certificates).

For quality control purposes, it would be important to take into consideration the following criteria when working with these institutions:

- The institution should be officially registered at the Ministry of Education, particularly civil society organizations.
- It supports institutional work, has an accredited internal policy, a clear organizational structure, in addition to financial and administrative systems.
- It has former experiences working with local communities, and has gained the trust and respect of the communities it works with.
- The institution is flexible in dealing with partners, in decision-making, and implementation.

- It is able to lobby, advocate, and mobilize in favor of literacy.
- It has the ability to learn and develop its institutional and technical capacities, while at the same time maintaining accountability and transparency.
- Its roles contribute to reinforcing national unity and taking into consideration cultural and social disparities (i.e., is not biased at the religious and partisan levels, and is non-profit making).

Table (2) highlights the expected interventions in accordance with the roles of each of the following entities:

- The Ministry of Education
- The Literacy Department
- Civil Society Organizations
- Provincial Councils
- Literacy Centers

Table (2) Frame of Reference for Key Stakeholders / Expected Interventions According to Roles					
	Ministry	**Literacy Department**	**Civil Society Organizations**	**Provincial Councils**	**Literacy Centers**
Partnership Relations	Official Umbrella and legislative cover for the project.	Supervisory umbrella and organizer of official relations with the partners.	Communications link with the local society and sponsor of the social mobilization processes.	Coordination body at the local community level, and financial and moral supporter.	Build field communication channels with the partners.
Management & Follow-up	Funding and policy-making and follow-up on implementation, approving the main plan of action, and verifying that the general objective has been attained.	Developing work mechanisms and follow-up systems, realization of sectoral goals, and building effective communication channels for replenishment, feedback, and outputs-based assessment.	Adapting the project's work mechanisms to the institutional structure, while ensuring the adoption of strategy objectives and tasks.	Participating with partners in follow-up and evaluation processes at the level of secondary objectives.	Designing and implementing field plans according to measurable key indicators and submitting reports to concerned parties.
Target Group	Provision of support at the level of rights-based and humanitarian needs in governmental and non-governmental organizations.	Networking with other governmental and non-governmental organizations to facilitate the enrolment of illiterates in educational centers.	Adopting community development programs and activities to cater for illiteracy issues in society.	Supporting illiteracy campaigns by providing resources and forming joint committees for this purpose.	Providing appropriate resources and tools to attract illiterates via activities, mobilization, classification and enrolment processes.
Classroom Environment	Supporting the provision of a suitable classroom environment, while emphasizing the quality of the program according to specific and acknowledged criteria.	Setting classroom quality control criteria and following-up on it.	Accomplishing objectives and outputs in accordance with acknowledged criteria and indicators.	Contributing to the development and monitoring of the classroom environment through follow-up committees specifically established for this purpose.	Utilizing and investing in the classroom environment to accomplish the objectives and tasks through implementation of activities and submission of reports.

Strategy Components / Areas of Intervention

Given the situation in Iraq, achievement of Strategy objectives would be a big challenge, particularly in light of the results of the situational analysis (SWOT analysis, Annex 1). To this end, and in order to facilitate planning for suitable and effective interventions, a number of components have been identified as areas of intervention, taking into consideration that the processes are of an integrated nature:

Governance: is a group of systems, laws and procedures that regulate and facilitate the management of illiteracy eradication processes, and pave the way for involving different sectors in this practice.

Capacity building: equips and reinforces institutions and human resources (the Ministry, the Literacy Directorate, civil society organizations, and provincial councils) concerned with the implementation of the Strategy, and provides them with a common understanding of the various processes and interventions needed to achieve Strategy objectives.

Partnership and community participation: are achieved through designing roles according to the interventions of different parties to facilitate the realization of objectives.

Awareness-raising and community mobilization: do not only target illiterates, but also all segments of society in addition to the media, in order to mobilize efforts and incite potentials, considering that illiteracy is a social development problem.

Monitoring and Evaluation: reflects the situation of illiteracy, dropouts, and educational centers in target communities, and forms a reliable documentation and follow-up system.

Equivalency education programs: are programs that enable children and youth, particularly those below sixteen years of age, who have dropped out of the educational system or did not enroll in the first place, to return to formal education, thus, making it possible to control the sources of illiteracy.

The Educational Environment: consists of teachers, educational methodologies, classrooms, and curricula.

First: The Governance Component

Concept

Identification of the form and framework of the different educational stages is reinforced by laws, and executive and administrative systems and procedures. This in turn constitutes governance and education related policies, through which work mechanisms are identified to achieve the objectives.

Educational policies are important in that they are considered an indispensable requirement for the planning processes. Such policies constitute the official frame of reference for all interventions at all levels. Policies can generate a strong incentive for work and accomplishment. They can sometimes constitute some of the most serious challenges and impediments if they are not reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that updates are in line with the needs and requirements of the current situation.

Sectoral Goal: To develop significant governance that is in line with the situation of literacy and non-formal education in Iraq.

Objectives

1. To develop and unify adult learning and literacy legislations to be in conformity with the educational development objectives in Iraq.
2. To develop better policies and work mechanisms, which are flexible and effective for registering NGOs working in the field of education and literacy.
3. To coordinate with other concerned governmental parties (such as the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs…) to develop supportive policies for graduates of literacy programs.
4. To develop and build empowering policies and work mechanisms for the post literacy phase.

To adopt research and regular survey methodologies in setting and renewing policies pertinent to non-formal education and literacy.

Policies

- Regular review of policies and legislations is a corner stone in the accomplishment of the greater objectives.
- Evaluation of programs and projects is a way to achieve the objectives and identify implementation results at the target group level.
- The existence of work programs and interventions for the post literacy phase promotes the concept of empowerment by education, and increases the mobilization rate at literacy centers.

Coordination and networking are effective tools for mobilizing efforts and resources.

Second: Institutional Capacity-Building Component

Concept

Building institutional capacity means enabling an institution to work effectively towards attaining its vision and tasks in a highly efficient manner. This entails empowering the institution with technical and organizational capacities, in addition to capacity in building relations and partnerships for networking purposes, all of which can contribute to achieving institutional goals. Therefore, in order for Iraq to have national capacity to implement literacy programs, it would be important to acquire knowledge and professional skills and link them to institutional resources in the different sectors, and utilize them in achieving goals and objectives.

Clearly, the process of combating illiteracy in Iraq is not an easy task. Moreover, the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment cannot be implemented if activities were not accompanied by an organized and meaningful process of institutional capacity-building in the field of literacy, whether governmental, specifically the MOE in Baghdad and in Erbil, or non-governmental such as community based organizations.

Capacity-building is viewed as an external intervention process used to reinforce and develop institutional performance to ensure the fulfillment of mission and goals, and the effective utilization of resources in a way that achieves sustainability.

There are two main perspectives in looking at capacity-building; the first being the ability to develop human resources (namely team-building), distribution of roles, or human resource mobilization, whether internally (i.e., within the institution) or externally (i.e., within the local community). The second perspective is technical and is manifested in the ability to manage projects and programs (planning, implementation, and monitoring), the system's capacity with regards to policy-making and decision-making, financial management and accountability, and financial capacities. It is important, however, to tap on the following aspects with regards to capacity-building:

- Information management means the efficient and easy flow of information derived from Monitoring and Evaluations, research and documentation.
- Building meaningful and professional relations with NGOs that share the same aspirations and objectives at the local, national, and international levels to reinforce partnership and networking.
- Building and developing strategies that provide an institutional vision, which forms the basis for long-term institutional planning.

Therefore, the process of institutional capacity-building is a cumulative, renewable, and continuous one. From a procedural perspective, it is important to build the capacity of key stakeholders concerned with literacy and non-formal education programs in Iraq, as otherwise, these programs would not be successful. Key stakeholders in this respect include both Ministries of Education in Baghdad and Erbil, civil society organizations selected according to objective criteria, provincial councils and local community councils.

This procedure is important because it brings together the vision and efforts in achieving Strategy objectives. It also builds a common understanding among all parties regarding the aspects of the Strategy, policies, and executive procedures, a matter that enhances efficiency and reinforces effectiveness of implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Sectoral Goal: to build the institutional capacities of organizations working in the field of literacy, namely the Ministry of Education, to ensure the accomplishment of Strategy objectives.

Objectives

1. To enhance the technical capacities in mobilizing target groups through planning, implementation and monitoring.
2. To qualify and equip an efficient and flexible administrative body capable of developing interventions and taking necessary measures to achieve the literacy objectives.
3. To build capacities in programs and projects management, planning, monitoring and evaluation.

To build a cadre of employees with the necessary qualifications and motivation for implementing institutional operations.

Policies

- Organizational and administrative capacities enable institutions to carry out their tasks and duties in line with their vision and mission statements.
- Institutional skills, knowledge, and resources form a strong basis for accomplishment and success.

Capacity-building programs are both intensive and comprehensive. They are useful for program implementers and stakeholders, and lead to the successful implementation of literacy and non-formal education programs.

Third: Partnership and Community Participation Component

To understand the importance, dimensions, and components of partnership, it is necessary to look into some basic principles embedded in the relationship between all these constituents. The State has embarked through its various institutions, to solve the socio-economic problems of society using different methods and strategies. However, because the State is not usually isolated from its external surroundings, and is not in control of it or even relatively of its internal operations, and given that its capacities and institutions are governed by different kinds of resources and by the socio-political identity, the State cannot solve most of the different social problems, considering that illiteracy is one of these problems.

Accordingly, many States resorted to voluntary organizations to assist them in solving these problems. They also developed legislations to organize the work of that sector. Nowadays, Iraq witnesses a strong and impressive presence of NGOs and civil society organizations. The Ministry of State for Civil Society Affairs, a specialized new ministry, has been established to promote the role of civil society organizations and assist them in becoming effective and supportive of the efforts of the government and its different institutions.

Partnership, Concept, and Mechanisms

During the second half of the last century, NGOs/voluntary organizations started playing different and varied roles. They emerged on the global scene as a force for development and change, urging forward human advancement in several fields. Thus, the role of these organizations is no longer restricted to complementing the duties of the State, although they still provide support in areas where the State falls short. In addition to the support they provide the State with, NGOs/voluntary organizations have expanded and reinforced their role adding new dimensions to it including the adoption of policies related to advocacy, empowerment, social development, environmental protection, and democratic freedom. This is what made them establish good relations with governmental and non-governmental organizations, which naturally include private sector institutions and the various social segments and groups.

The most prominent bases for these relations can be summarized as follows:

Legal Relations: Relate to all systems, laws and legislations of the State, which regulate and solidify the work of NGOs. However, this in itself is not adequate for an Organization to acquire legitimacy in terms of work and continuity. It must endeavor to obtain its legitimacy from society and its various social categories. Otherwise, it will not be able to continue despite of its noble causes, and even if it does, it will lose its effectiveness and efficiency.

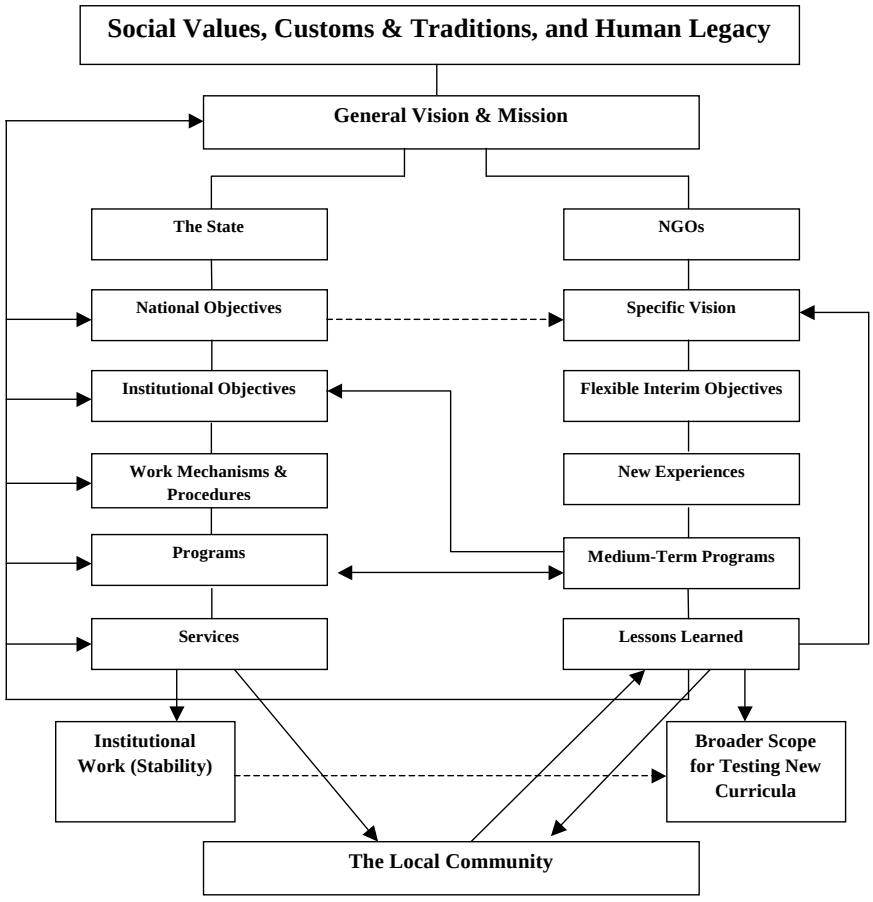
Administrative Relations: This type of relations usually takes on different forms and dimensions. Based on different data from various phases of operation and based on the nature of the programs implemented by the organization, some of these dimensions and forms can be classified as follows: cooperation; facilitation; impediments; and conflict.

Technical Relations: This is manifested in the harmony between an organization's outputs and the expectations and goals of the State and the local community, where each State has its own goals and each local community its own needs. In fact, this is a highly complex level of relations, where organizations are not only classified according to efficiency and effectiveness, but more importantly according to credibility and good intentions.

Having realized the important role voluntary organizations play in the process of sustainable development, the State has diligently been attempting to attract a number of them, including international ones, to work in the different fields whether educational, health, social, etc. The attention given to such organizations is due to the longstanding international experience they enjoy in addition to their ability to provide the necessary funding to the State's programs and activities.

This in turn reinforces the concept of "partnership," which is expressed through the nature of relations between the State and NGOs/voluntary organizations within a coordination framework that allocates roles for the different partners.

In fact, the national objectives of the State usually constitute the vision and grounds for the work of national voluntary institutions, which in turn reflect feedback on the overall national objectives of the State. This highlights the importance of institutional work in the State, in that it allows for more room for voluntary organizations to try and test new methodologies, which reflect on the performance of all partners. Such interactive relationship can be expressed according to the following model:



Sectoral Goal: To invest the potentials and capacities of civil society organizations in building an effective and solid partnership between governmental and non-governmental organizations to accomplish Strategy objectives.

Objectives

1. To identify the impact of civil society organizations' programs and projects on the quality of life of target categories.
2. To activate the role of civil society organizations working in the field of literacy and empowerment to contribute to the reduction of illiteracy rates and assessment of their work.
3. To establish permanent and effective literacy partnerships at the local community and governorate levels.
4. To strengthen cooperation and integration between civil society organizations and governmental institutions for all literacy related activities.

Policies

- Partnership is fundamental for building alliances, mobilizing efforts, and networking for achieving Strategy objectives effectively.
- Analyzing the situation of local communities in terms of strengths, resources, and needs to build realistic interventions with partners, contributes to the reduction of illiteracy rates.
- Linking local communities with additional resources within their locations, increases the efficiency of literacy programs.
- Establishing networks to exchange experiences and knowledge with national and international organizations reinforces the roles of institutions and bodies working in the field of empowerment and literacy.
- Organizing the roles and performance of institutions and associations working in the field of literacy helps accelerate the achievement of objectives.

Fourth: Community Mobilization Component

Community Mobilization, Concept, and Mechanisms

Community mobilization is an awareness raising process for individuals and groups in local communities on issues that may not be of interest to them. It helps build positive attitudes towards that issue(s), which individuals/groups would adopt and, in doing so, become agents of change in society.

The role of local civil society organizations in community mobilization for illiteracy is as follows:

- To identify illiteracy as a social development impediment that disrupts the potentials of community members, and to identify all its negative aspects so that to mobilize efforts to remedy the problem.
- To guide society in mobilizing its potentials, resources and sources, and in reaching consensus on the importance of implementing literacy campaigns.
- To raise public awareness on the available educational services and the necessary changes required for improving Education for All.
- To raise the awareness of families and dropout children about the types and quality of available educational services, particularly for those who work.
- To institutionalize actions for solving illiteracy through coordination with local committees and provincial councils, and in the event of their absence, to establish local committees to work on this matter.
- To enhance and build the capacities of local community members in certain needed skills such as communications, leadership, and conflict resolution, in addition to other skills necessary for enabling communication among them.
- To assist community members and guide them on how to develop plans that include activities, and how to identify media contributions necessary for spreading awareness at the community level about the importance of literacy.

Practical Strategies for Community Mobilization:

To inform decision-makers of the illiteracy problem, literacy programs, and empowerment via education, through coordination with competent authorities at the various levels of planning and implementation.

- To invite decision-makers to a general meeting to introduce illiteracy as a social development problem, and inform them of available educational services.
- To coordinate with local committees in governorates and local communities targeted by the campaign, urging them to include illiteracy in their plans and raise the awareness of community members about this problem.

- To organize dialogue sessions on illiteracy with local community members through social gatherings such as those for men or women.
- To organize dialogue sessions with the parents of working children and youth, to raise their awareness about the disadvantages of work and the importance of education for the future of their children.
- To implement awareness-raising campaigns through the program's partner institutions, in addition to associations, local committees, clergy men, and local councils.
- To disseminate awareness-raising material for combating illiteracy such as posters and leaflets in public places, social centers, associations, schools, health centers, and municipalities.
- To coordinate with the local media, such as newspapers and local radio stations, to adopt an awareness-raising media campaign for combating illiteracy and to introduce to the public literacy programs and empowerment through education.

Sectoral Goal: To develop special community awareness among the different social categories (families, individuals, institutions….) regarding illiteracy and the need to address it.

Objectives:

1. To use effective media, such as central or local radio stations and satellite channels, in serving literacy issues and programs.
2. To build positive trends within the population and local communities to promote the inclusion of illiterates in literacy programs and activities.
3. To promote partnership and cooperation among the different governmental and non-governmental organizations to combat illiteracy.
4. To develop and adopt an effective media policy directed towards encouraging learning in communities in general and among illiterates in particular.

Policies:

- Communication and coordination are detrimental to the success of media plans and campaigns.
- Community awareness is an important means and tool for accomplishing objectives.
- Early awareness-raising helps limit the aggravation of illiteracy.
- The involvement of institutions, individuals, groups and local communities in developing and participating in awareness-raising interventions lead to better outcomes.
- Ensuring access to all individuals, groups, and communities from different locations and levels contributes to the achievement of as many objectives as possible.
- Diversification of outreach means and methods is necessary for addressing all social categories.

Fifth : Monitoring and Evaluation Component

Concept

Technological progress in the current era, coupled with the socio-economic changes, makes the provision of accurate, clear, and fast information very difficult in the absence of a computerized and effective Monitoring and Evaluation. More specifically, accurate information regarding illiteracy rates for males and females, the number and location of illiterates, and the change in their status over time will be difficult to obtain without a Monitoring and Evaluation.

Therefore, computerized Monitoring and Evaluation are important and effective tools, and are indispensible for the advancement of society. They form the basis for sound planning and provide accurate and reliable information in times where socio-economic or other variables abound.

Computerized documentation processes in literacy programs in Iraq are not only limited to safe documentation and easy extraction of students' data and their follow-up forms. This matter goes far beyond that and includes the opportunity to provide accurate data on the situation of illiteracy in local communities, and accurate information and statistics for planners and decision-makers. This is in addition to the ability to provide an effective and strong tool for monitoring and evaluation of literacy interventions, identification of the magnitude and efficiency of these interventions, and provision of a high degree of transparency before officials and donors.

Sectoral Goal: To build a Monitoring and Evaluation that reflects the situation of illiteracy, dropouts, and educational centers in target communities.

Objectives

1. To map illiteracy and school dropouts for local communities and governorates.
2. To provide an information feeding system that connects the Monitoring and Evaluation to the Ministry's computer network.
3. To provide information and statistics to planners and decision-makers to assist in the planning process and objective decision-making based on accurate information.

Policies

- Concrete and effective plans and programs emanate from integrated and reliable information.
- Identification of problems through updated research and information positively contributes to the development of appropriate and effective interventions.
- Automated Monitoring and Evaluation assist in documenting institutional efforts and facilitating measurement of accomplished work.
- Continued monitoring of illiteracy and its analysis constitutes a strong base for building suitable plans.

Sixth: Equivalency Education Programs Component

The Concept

One of the biggest challenges that will stand in the way of achieving Strategy objectives is the continued school dropout incidence, a matter of huge concern for the Ministry of Education. Another challenge is the non-enrolment rate estimated at around 15%, which is not a negligible percentage.

The strategic objective is to liberate 50% of illiterates from illiteracy. But, if it was not possible to dry-up the sources of illiteracy, it would not be possible to verify what this 50% represents in numbers. Accordingly, 2,500,000 is the number of illiterates set for the target year, bearing in mind that it may not necessarily constitute 50% by the end of 2015.

It would be important within this vision that all non-formal education programs function in an integrated and interdependent manner. The importance of Equivalency educational programs that the Ministry is working on is manifested in both "the Youth Education Program" and "the Accelerated Learning Program". These programs have mainly been designed to block illiteracy nourishing sources. However, it is worth noting that any reinforcement and development of these ancillary programs directly contributes to the accomplishment of the Literacy Strategy objectives.

Despite the importance of these programs, accelerated learning is still an institutionally incomplete initiative at the Ministry of Education in Baghdad. However, it is an officially accredited program at the MOE in Erbil, where the Youth Education Program has been dispended.

To identify a better path for Equivalency educational programs, it would be important to conduct an objective evaluation for both programs, while taking into consideration elements such the ability to mobilize, target group identification, duration, results and educational outcomes, etc. This way, it would be possible to reconsider these programs or even merge them into one, while taking into account the age range of target groups so that they don't overlap with that of the literacy program.

Sectoral Goal: To support the literacy campaign by drying up illiteracy sources through the activation and reinforcement of Equivalency education programs.

Objectives

1. To reduce the number of illiterates of the age groups targeted by the youth education and accelerated learning programs.
2. To provide Equivalency education programs and environments that are suitable for the needs and characteristics of dropouts and those not enrolled in formal education that fall within the same age category.

Policies

- Equivalency education programs are a major support for literacy programs, and are conducive to formal education.
- Equivalency education programs provide new opportunities for those who have not yet received an education and aspire to complete their academic education.
- Equivalency education programs are a tool to reach disadvantaged groups that are currently not included in the educational file.
- Equivalency education programs are effective tools for targeting school dropouts.

Seventh: The Educational Environment Component

Concept

The educational environment comprises a group of integrated basic elements including the teacher, the curricula, teaching methods, and the students. In order to ensure optimal efficiency, it is important that these elements are built within an integrative framework that takes into consideration the social and cultural characteristics of students. Adults willingly engage in learning outside the scope of formal education more than they do in mentoring programs, and in fact, they mentor themselves as learners. Moreover, adults learn better if they themselves take part in identifying when, how, and what is it they want to learn.

Adults need to know why they have to learn this or that particular matter, and they also have a deep need to mentor themselves. The size and quality of adult experience is different than that of the young learners, and thus it would be important:

1. To build a suitable learning environment that caters for the characteristics of the target group.
2. To qualify teachers through special training for adult education.
3. That the applied curricula take into consideration a number of factors related to the needs of illiterates in terms of knowledge and skills, whereas:
    - Adults learn through application and participation;
    - Adults feel bored when they sit passively for a long period of time;
    - Adults cannot handle passive listening for a long period of time;
    - Adults do not easily accept the ideas and experiences of others, and tend to hang on to their own life experiences;
    - Adults easily learn things they find useful; and
    - Adults learn better when they have some control over the learning environment.

Sectoral Goal: To develop and foster educational environments in order to promote learning and teaching in accordance with the needs and characteristics of the target group, giving particular consideration to gender.

Objectives

1. To build the capacities of teachers in the area of adult education, participatory learning, and the use of active learning methods.
2. To develop literacy curricula, which cater for the social, cultural and environmental characteristics of the target groups.

3. To qualify sufficient numbers of education centers to ensure an attractive learning environment for students.
4. To develop criteria for achieving greater quality control of the educational environment.

Policies

- Ongoing training is essential for increasing the efficiency of teachers, and developing their creativity.
- Educational curricula and subjects that take into consideration the environment and characteristics of students, motivate students to continue learning.
- Including subjects pertaining to life skills, human rights, and situational analysis, develop students' creative thinking and critical consciousness.
- Building and developing a culture of quality, reinforces educational environments and improves their performance.
- The use of the media, satellite channels, and educational television, enriches the educational environment and renders it non-conventional.

The Logical Framework of the Strategy

Governance Component

Sectoral Goal: To develop meaningful policies and systems for literacy and non-formal education, which are in line with the situation in the Republic of Iraq.

Objectives:

Stakeholders	Indicators	Objective
• Literacy Department • Ministry of Education • Council of Ministers	• Decisions at the higher level. • Partners adoptive of the policies. • Documents for endorsed official policies.	To develop and unify adult learning and literacy legislations to be in line with the objectives of educational development in Iraq.
• Ministry of Education • Literacy Department • NGOs	• Documents for work mechanisms and policies. • Increase in the number of organizations working in the field of literacy.	To develop better policies and work mechanisms characterized by flexibility and efficiency in registering NGOs working in the field of literacy.
• Ministry of Education • Council of Ministers, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Agriculture, NGOs	• New policies adopted by parties concerned that support literacy program graduates.	To coordinate with relevant governmental bodies to adopt supportive policies for literacy graduates.
• Ministry of Education • Civil society organizations • Literacy centers	• Reports of implemented research. • Decisions made based on research.	To conduct research and periodic surveys as an approach in developing and renewing policies for non-formal education.

Institutional Capacity Building Component

Sectoral Goal: To develop the institutional capacities of organizations working in the field of literacy, namely the MOE, to ensure the achievement of Strategy objectives.

Objectives:

Stakeholders	Indicators	Objective
• Literacy Department • Teachers • Civil society organizations	• The rate of increase in the numbers of students. • The rate of increase in the numbers of program graduates.	To reinforce technical capacities for the mobilization of target groups through planning, implementation and follow-up.
• Literacy Department • NGOs	• Size and type of implemented training programs. • Literacy action plans and executive plans. • Monitoring and progress reports.	To qualify a management system that is efficient, flexible, and able to build interventions and take the necessary measures to accomplish literacy objectives.
• Ministry of Education • NGOs	• Monitoring and evaluation tools for the program. • Monitoring and evaluation reports. • Documents containing the decisions made based on feedback.	To build capacities in programs and projects management, planning, monitoring, and evaluation.
• Ministry of Education • Civil society organizations • Literacy centers	• Size and type of implemented training programs. • Plans and interventions. • Monitoring and progress reports. • Budgets and expenditure.	To build a cadre with the qualifications and incentives needed for the implementation of Institutional operations.

Partnership and Community Participation Component

Sectoral Goal: To invest the potentials and capacities of civil society organizations in building an effective and solid partnership with governmental and non-governmental institutions to achieve Strategy objectives.

Objectives:

Stakeholders	Indicators	Objective
• Literacy Directorate • Civil society organizations	• Post results of questionnaires regarding beneficiaries' quality of life. • Documented success stories.	To identify the impact of programs and projects of civil society organizations on the quality of life of target groups.
• Ministry of Education • Literacy Department • NGOs	• The number of the literacy centers run by civil society organizations. • Monitoring and recommendations reports.	To activate the role of civil society organizations working in the field of literacy and empowerment, to contribute to the reduction of illiteracy rates and the assessment of their work.
• Ministry of Education • Civil society organizations	• Memorandum of Understanding including type of intervention according to the role of partners.	To lay the foundation for permanent and effective partnerships in the field of literacy at both the governorate and local community levels.
• Ministry of Education • Civil society organizations • Literacy Centers	• Coordination committees at the local community level.	To promote the principle of cooperation and integration between civil society organizations and governmental institutions in all activities related to literacy.

Community Mobilization Component

Sectoral Goal: To develop special community awareness at different social categories (households, individuals, institutions…) regarding illiteracy and the importance of confronting it.

Objectives:

Stakeholders	Indicators	Objective
• Literacy Department • Ministry of Education • Council of Ministers	• Implemented media programs. • Introductory newsletters and posters.	To use the media, such as central or local radio stations and satellite channels, to serve literacy issues and programs.
• Ministry of Education • Literacy Department • NGOs	• Rate of increase in the number of enrolled students as a result of the media campaign.	To build positive trends among the population and local communities to promote the involvement of illiterates in literacy programs and activities.
• Ministry of Education • Council of Ministers • Relevant ministries • NGOs	• Media committees at the national, governorates, and local community levels.	To promote partnership and cooperation between the different governmental and non-governmental institutions to combat illiteracy.
• Ministry of Education • Civil society organizations • Literacy centers	• A media document adopted by the different parties concerned. • Media messages.	To develop and adopt an effective media policy directed towards the encouragement of learning among communities in general, and among illiterates in particular.

Monitoring and Evaluation Component

Sectoral Goal: To build a Monitoring and Evaluation that reflects the situation of illiteracy, dropouts, and educational centers in target communities.

Objectives:

Stakeholders	Indicators	Objective
• Literacy Department • Ministry of Education • Civil society organizations	• Illiteracy rates according to the different geographical regions extracted from the Monitoring and Evaluation. • Dropout rates according to the different geographical regions extracted from the Monitoring and Evaluation.	To map illiteracy and school dropouts for local communities and governorates.
• Ministry of Education • Literacy Department • Literacy centers • Executive partners	• Reports with accurate data extracted from the Monitoring and Evaluation and tailored according to request.	To develop an information feeding system that connects the Monitoring and Evaluation with the computer network of the Ministry.
• Ministry of Education • Literacy Department	• Accurate periodic statistics for officials and parties concerned. • Monitoring and Evaluation reports reflecting the program's performance indicators.	To provide accurate information and statistics for planners and decision-makers to assist in the planning and objective decision-making processes.

Equivalency Education Component

Sectoral Goal: To support the literacy campaign by drying up sources of illiteracy through the activation and reinforcement of Equivalency education programs.

Objectives:

Stakeholders	Indicators	Objective
• Literacy Department • Civil society organizations	• Turnout rate in youth and accelerated learning programs. • Reduced dropout rates. • Decrease in the overall number of illiterates.	To reduce the numbers of illiterates for target age groups in youth education and accelerated learning programs.
• Ministry of Education • Literacy Department • Executive partners	• Number of enrolled students compared to registered students (cohort).	To provide Equivalency education programs and environments that meet the needs and characteristics of the same age group of dropouts and those not enrolled in formal education.

Educational Environment Component

Sectoral Goal: To reinforce and develop all elements of the educational environment to ensure that teaching and learning processes meets the needs and characteristics of the target group, while taking gender into account.

Objectives:

Stakeholders	Indicators	Objective
• Literacy Department • Ministry of Education • Civil society organizations • Teachers	• A list of teachers participating in the various trainings. • Participation of students in formulating educational topics. • The degree to which dialogue is used as an education tool.	To build the capacities of teachers in areas of adult learning, participatory learning, and application of active learning methods.
• Ministry of Education • Literacy Department • Literacy centers • Executive partners	• Feedback reports from teachers and target groups.	To develop literacy curricula, which cater for the social, cultural and environmental characteristics of the target groups.

• Ministry of Education • Literacy Department • Executive partners	• Numbers of new centers. • Numbers of educational centers at the Ministry of Defense and civil society organizations.	To equip and qualify adequate numbers of educational centers in forming an attractive learning environment for students.
• Ministry of Education • Executive partners	• List of quality control criteria. • Clarity of procedures, work mechanisms and documentation processes.	To develop criteria to ensure further quality control of the educational environment.

Quantitative and numeric projections according to the logical framework*

Year	Target Group	Education Centers	Education Streams	Teachers
2011	200,000	2,222	6,667	6,667
2012	300,000	new 1,111	3,333	3,333
2013	500,000	new 2,222	6,667	6,667
2014	700,000	new 2,222	6,667	6,667
2015	800,000	new 3,333	10,000	10,000
Total	**2,500,000**	**11,110**	**33,334**	**33,334**

* Data were based on the assumption that during the implementation phase of the Strategy, one educational center would have absorbed more than one cohort of students, and that every center has three education streams, each comprising 30 students.

Estimated financial cost per student in literacy centers in both the basic and complementary phases - 14 months / Baghdad in Iraqi Dinar*

Details	Center Cost per Month	Center Cost per Academic Year	Cost per Student for both Phases
Teachers & lecturers	62,040	868,560	28,952
Transportation cost	39,428	552,000	18,400
Service costs	36,428	510,000	17,000

Educational supervision	44,464	622,500	20,750
Textbooks & stationary	175,714	2,460,000	82,000
Educational Methods	42,857	600,000	20,000
Central administration	51,428	720,000	24,000
Miscellaneous & contingency	53,571	750,000	25,000
Incentives and prizes	137,142	1,920,000	64,000
Total	**643,072**	**9,003,060**	**300,102**

Estimated financial cost per student in literacy centers per academic year - 10 months/ Kurdistan Region in Iraqi Dinar*

Details	Center Cost per Month	Center Cost per Academic Year	Cost per Student per Academic Year
Administration	150,000	1,500,000	50,000
Teachers	150,000	1,500,000	50,000
Users	60,000	600,000	20,000
Sub-committees	60,000	600,000	20,000
Supervision	60,000	600,000	20,000
Textbooks & Stationary	90,000	1,900,000	30,000
Activities	60,000	600,000	20,000
Transportation	60,000	600,000	20,000
Miscellaneous	60,000	600,000	20,000
Total	**750,000**	**7,500,000**	**250,000**

*The tables contain official numbers approved by the Ministry of Education in Baghdad and Erbil.

It is worth highlighting here the importance of connecting quantitative and numeric projections within two main directions:

- **First Direction:** To legislate the literacy law, which will open room for the absorption of larger numbers of illiterates than expected (here the role of governmental institutions becomes stronger while the role of NGOs weakens).
- **Second Direction:** The endorsement of the law is delayed, and so the mobilization of illiterates becomes more difficult (here the role of NGOs and civil society organizations becomes stronger, and the role of governmental institutions becomes weaker).

Implementation Measures for Achieving Strategy Objectives

To facilitate the achievement of objectives, the following steps can be pursued to form a structure for implementation:

1. To form a higher committee for literacy consisting of representatives from various ministries and departments concerned with literacy, in addition to representatives from civil society organizations for the purpose of endorsing supreme policies.
2. To form a central technical committee to translate strategic objectives into action and executive plans containing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. These plans will be approved by the higher committee, which will also be responsible for the supervision, monitoring, and evaluation of the implementation process. The chairman of the technical committee will report to the higher committee.
3. To form technical sub-committees at the governorate level, including parties responsible for following up on implementation and evaluation. The sub-committees will submit periodic progress reports to the central technical committee.
4. To form an advisory committee consisting of drafters of the strategic framework for literacy to follow-up on Strategy implementation.
5. To obtain positive results, the following recommendations need to be taken into consideration:

- To re-evaluate literacy policies in light of the general objectives, and to unify systems and policies at the State level. To also develop an intervention plan that takes all programmatic elements into account such as the curricula, teachers, procedural operations, policies, exchange of experiences, and field visits (with support and supervision from the UNESCO Office).
- To activate periodic meetings between the MOE and the public directorates for education on the one hand, and civil society organizations on the other hand.
- To open literacy centers by partners, whether civil society organizations or governmental institutions. These centers need to operate in line with the systems, standards and criteria adopted by the MOE, and according to the curricula and evaluation methods of the Ministry.
- To identify rehabilitation and training institutions to assist learners in acquiring suitable life and professional skills for empowerment and capacity building purposes, particularly for graduates.
- To use electronic means of communication (website for the literacy network for Iraq) in order to promote coordination between parties concerned, and exchange information and experiences.

- To build better work mechanisms to promote partnership between governmental institutions and civil society organizations.
- To build better policies and work mechanisms for registering NGOs working in the field of education and literacy.
- To put in action monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the activities of partner NGOs.
- To review files and activities of NGOs registered at the Ministry of Education, and to create a list of active ones according to unbiased, objective, and approved criteria, in order to promote their roles based on desired inputs for literacy programs.
- To activate the work of relevant committees at the MOE, general directorates, and education directorates. To also have stakeholders and parties concerned establish other joint committees in each governorate to stay in tune with the work and roles of other Ministry departments. These committees will be responsible for promoting coordination by setting forth field work mechanisms that ensure similar activities do not overlap within the same region. Their work also entails the identification of roles in terms of monitoring and evaluation, training, needs assessment, and community mobilization.
- To build an effective Monitoring and Evaluation at the central and provincial levels with support from the UNESCO Office. The Monitoring and Evaluation should comprise basic information about the learners (name, age, sex, housing…etc.), identifying data (attendance, absence, exams results, and final result), in addition to a tracking system for graduates.
- To conduct monitoring and evaluation through field research to identify the performance of centers and concerned bodies, and to set forth recommendations for improving the quality of performance.

Annexes

Annex I

Working paper presented at the National Workshop for the Development of the Literacy Strategy - 21-24 February, 2011 – Erbil

Literacy is a phenomenon that has accompanied man since creation, because reading, writing, and numeracy are skills that man should acquire. Monotheistic religions called for the eradication of illiteracy and highlighted the need for learning. God Almighty said ("Read in the Name of your Lord who created man from a clot. Read and your Lord is the Most Generous, who has taught by the pen Has taught man that which he knew not.") It is a phenomenon that exists in every nation, and therefore, various governments and international organizations have strived to organize educational programs directed towards literacy and adult education.

The State of Iraq in addition to its Ministry of Education have kept abreast of these endeavors by issuing the Regulations for Managing Elementary Schools and Kindergarten, Basic Education, and Combating Illiteracy no. 37 for the year 1964, in addition to the Law for the Comprehensive National Campaign for Compulsory Literacy no. 92 for the year 1978. This campaign had clearly been successful in eradicating the illiteracy of more than 2 million people.

The wrongful and totalitarian policy of the former regime resulted in regression, where the deteriorating economy and declining level of education led to the emergence of poverty and a decline in the value of science and education. Furthermore, the youth lost their opportunity to learn because they were preoccupied with the wars of that regime, and thus illiteracy returned once more.

The Magnitude of the Phenomenon:

UNESCO's comprehensive report presented during this workshop sets a goal for the literacy project for the next five years. This goal aims at reducing illiteracy by 50%; a matter that requires reasonable projections of the magnitude of this phenomenon in Iraq so that needs can be properly assessed.

Estimates carried out by COSIT in 2004 for the age group 15-45 years can be adopted, where the number of illiterates reached 3,843,682. Accordingly, if the only source for illiteracy was children who were not enrolled in school and those who dropped out of school, the non-enrolment rate would be around 15%. If the number of students in the preparatory phase was 5,000,000, then the number of the non-enrolled would be 750,000 children and the dropout rate would not exceed 100,000 children. Therefore, the total number of dropouts for the last six years would be 600,000 children and the total number of illiterates would be around 5,193,682. The General Directorate for Planning can provide more accurate numbers. But in all cases, the rate approved by UNESCO which is 18-20% of the population corresponds to the real situation.

Approval of the former report means that 2,500,000 illiterates should be taught during the coming five years, i.e. 500,000 learners every year, bearing in mind that there are currently around 1,000 centers with approximately 50,000 learners. This means that we need to double our efforts tenfold in terms of centers, cadres and potentials, to be able to achieve the goal.

Work Conditions:

We work under two different conditions:

First: Optional literacy, the existing condition, which is reflected in the lack of financial allocations, and weak potentials of the Ministry in terms of centers, cadres and capacities.

Second: Compulsory literacy, which is the anticipated condition upon endorsement of the Compulsory Literacy Law by the Council of Representatives. This will include a set budget, presumed system and body, the necessary foundation for coordination, and the ability to mobilize and lobby. However, plenty of efforts will still need to be exerted at the technical level.

Project Strengths:

1- Iraq has long and extensive experience from its previous literacy project in the eighties.

2- The existence of a political regime that paves the way for participation, control, and transparency.

3- The emergence of civil society organizations, a new phenomenon in Iraq, constitutes an important foundation for the project. In spite of their lack of funding, specialization, and expertise, they are still important in that they have the ability to mobilize and lobby.

4- There are large numbers of unemployed graduates who can be appointed or contracted in order to benefit from their potentials for the successful implementation of the project.

5- Iraq enjoys significant wealth that can be invested by providing the necessary budgets and allocations for financing the project.

6- The existence of multiple satellite and media channels, the widespread of computers, mobile phones, and internet centers and sites, are all successful means in supporting the project.

7- The existence of an encouraging cultural and religious value system constitutes an incentive to supplement the project.

8- There are religious centers that can effectively contribute to the mobilization, lobbying, and mitigation of the buildings crisis.

Project Weaknesses:

1- The absence of a clear response by target groups. Although it's been five years since the onset of literacy events and activities, the number of learners does not exceed 50,000.

2- The weak response of some stakeholders in the educational system. We have issued a circular to the General Directorates for Education to open literacy centers in every district that does not have a center. The reason behind this was to expand and prepare for the coming phase. However, none of the directorates have responded to us thus far, except for one, which provided a largely negative response.

3- Overlap of work and authority among the general directorates of the Ministry, lack of clear leadership, in addition to the fact that some entities outside the Ministry are heading towards the same direction.

4- Some ministries seek to provide education to their members without coordinating with the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Interior, for example, asked for textbooks only, and when we asked to coordinate with them on the matter, they did not respond.

Suggestions:

1- To hold a workshop for general directors, directors of the general education departments, and directors of illiteracy and adult education sections, to provide them with further information about the course of events.

2- To prepare media mobilization plans and programs.

Adel Abdel Rahim Mageed

Director General of General Education

21/2/2011

Annex II

Working Paper on Non-Formal Education Presented by the Ministry of Education in the Kurdistan Region

Introduction:

Undoubtedly, education is a basic human right as stipulated by international laws. Also, the progress of nations and people is measured by the advancement of the educational process and the scope of interest stakeholders have in that process. Progress in education affects thinking patterns and living styles in any given society. This requires the provision of an adequate climate to produce the necessary human force, in addition to the allocation of a suitable budget by the State. This can be achieved through the adoption of a clear strategy for accomplishing education for all categories of society (Education for All) within a clear pedagogic philosophy that embodies democracy, principles of human rights, and ensures equality in educational opportunities without bias to race, religion, and sex.

Within this pedagogic philosophy, the Ministry of Education in the Kurdistan Region in Iraq provided various educational opportunities (formal and non-formal) to all categories of society. They started with kindergarten, then basic education when the child reached six years of age, taking into consideration school dropouts or illiterates who have not been enrolled in school before despite their old age. As part of its educational system and philosophy, the Ministry took on free education for all categories and educational phases, in addition to compulsory education up to the ninth basic grade for 15 year-olds in day or evening schools regardless of age and in line with MOE applied regulations and instructions.

The following is required for achieving the above-mentioned goals and objectives:

1- To provide further new opportunities for dropouts, or those who did not enroll in school at the legal age, and for all categories of society based on the principle of human rights and the realization of social justice and equality.

2- To exert further efforts to spread pedagogic awareness through coordination with civil society organizations, governmental bodies, in addition to the media and publishing agencies.

3- To create further interest in civic and national education.

4- To increase women's participation through further awareness-raising, family life organization, and the acquisition of life skills.

5- To increase interest in youth and adolescents through the development of special programs for dealing with and reducing the dropout phenomenon and for creating incentives.

6- To increase the number of literacy and accelerated learning centers, especially in the low-income and remote areas.

7- To cooperate and coordinate with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs to open literacy centers and accelerated learning schools in juvenile and adult prisons.

8- To open literacy centers and accelerated learning schools for gypsies and nomads according to the area.

9- To create some incentives for non-formal education learners through teaching them certain vocations (such as sewing, hairdressing, cooking, electricity, etc.), which they can benefit from in their everyday life and professionally apply in the labor market after completing a certain phase of education.

Work Mechanisms and the management of non-formal education:

1- The Non-Formal Education Directorate, a new directorate, has been established, and it includes two sections: the literacy section; and the accelerated learning section. This directorate is linked with the General Directorate for Basic Education at the Ministry of Education.

2- To form a Higher Committee for Non-Formal Education at the Ministry level headed by the Director of Basic Education. Membership includes a representative from each governorate representing the Director General of Education, and meetings are held periodically, every three months.

3- To form sub-committees at the governorates level headed by the Director General of Education. Membership of the sub-committees does not exceed five members and meetings are held on monthly basis.

4- To form sub-committees at the districts level, with not more than 4 members, and chaired by the Director General of Education. Meetings of the sub-committees shall be held on monthly basis.

5- Non-formal education centers shall be distributed among educational supervisors for monitoring and follow-up purposes as is the case with formal schools.

6- Official letters shall be sent whenever needed to ministries and other concerned departments to activate their contribution in this respect.

7- To follow-up on the role of the media and civil society organizations in spreading awareness and highlighting the benefits of this type of education.

8- To reconsider school curricula for all phases.

9- To look into possible means to integrate illiterates into socio-economic development projects after they graduate from non-formal education.

10- To call upon both UNESCO and UNICEF for further cooperation and coordination with the Ministry of Education through their training programs and research in this area.

11- To look for successful international experiences in this respect and to make the best use of them in cooperation with UNESCO and UNICEF. Benefit can be obtained through training additional numbers of staff members and introducing them to modern experiences of some countries that are successful in this field.

12- To pay further attention to women and to work on raising their rate of enrolment in non-formal education.

13- To issue the necessary instructions to the general directorates of education whenever needed.

14- To issue an annual report on the situation of non-formal education and to submit a copy thereof to UNICEF and UNESCO.

Non-formal Education in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Non-formal education in both its streams (Literacy and Adult Education, and Accelerated Learning) has been given an important share of the pedagogic and educational policy of the Ministry of Education. This has been achieved through the allocation of necessary funds and activation of the role of the media and concerned committees at the Ministry, in governorates, and in districts to overcome difficulties and find appropriate solutions for the success and advancement of this type of education to cater for all categories of society including the farthest point in the Region.

First Component - Literacy and Adult Learning:

- With assistance from UNICEF in the year 2000, the Ministry conducted a comprehensive pedagogic survey to identify the numbers of illiterates in the Kurdistan Region. The survey indicated an illiteracy rate of around 34%, more than 60% of which were women. At that point, the Ministry had, through plans and strategies, allocated the necessary funds with initial assistance from some organizations and direct support from the government of the Region. The funds had been allocated for a comprehensive campaign for combating illiteracy under the slogan (Towards an Illiteracy Free Kurdistan). The campaign started on 20 December, 2000 and targeted the age group of 15-45 years.
- The Ministry had succeeded throughout the past ten years 2000 – 2010 in liberating around 330,000 individuals from the scourge of illiteracy. Thus, the illiteracy rate decreased during the year 2010/2011 to around 16% and is expected to further decrease to less than 10% by the year 2014/2015. Despite that, accurate statistics in this area are not adequately available because no other educational surveys have been conducted since the year 2000. The blow table demonstrates the number of graduates during that period according to governorate:

Statistics of Literacy Centers for the Academic Year 2010/2011

No	Governorate	No. of Centers			No. of Learners			No. of Classes	No. of Teachers			Location of Centers		
		M	F	Total	M	F	Total		M	F	Total	Cities	Districts	Villages
1	Erbil	39	59	98	767	1,269	2,036	230	49	169	218	32	27	39
2	Sulaymaniyeh	27	121	148	4,053	5,010	9,063	378	361	372	733	38	46	64
3	Dahouk	53	95	148	2,723	3,875	6,598	216	211	305	516	28	46	74
4	Tarmyan	15	15	30	797	836	1,633	93	62	72	134	13	-	17
Total		**134**	**290**	**424**	**8,340**	**10,990**	**19,330**	**917**	**683**	**918**	**1,601**	**111**	**119**	**194**
Percentage %		**31%**	**69%**	**100%**	**43%**	**57%**	**100%**	-	**44%**	**56%**	**100%**	**26%**	**28%**	**46%**

The Numbers of Graduates at the Literacy Centers for the Years 2000 – 2011

Governorate	Number of Centers	Number of Learners	
Erbil	3,371	114,122	60% women 40% men
Dhouk	4,624	88,458	
Suleimaneyeh	4,245	139,344	
Total	**12,240**	**341,924**	

- The plans of the General Directorate for Basic Education at the Ministry for the coming five years are: to absorb nearly 150,000 individuals in literacy centers, where we hope this will result in a decline in the illiteracy rate in the Region by 50% so that it would become 8% according to the LIFE project. We also hope that a population census will be conducted in Iraq during this period, or at least a comprehensive education survey with assistance from UNESCO and UNICEF. The census or survey would help identify the actual remaining numbers of illiterates and dropouts and their age categories in order to develop more accurate plans in this field, which include all the areas in the Region.

Literacy Plan for the Next Five Years 2010/2015

Years	Number of Centers	Number of Classes	Number of Learners
2010/2011	500	800	20,000
2011/2012	600	1,000	25,000
2012/2013	700	1,200	30,000
2013/2014	800	1,400	35,000
2014/2015	1,000	1,500	40,000
Total	**3,600**	**5,900**	**150,000**

Estimated Cost per Learner in Literacy Centers per Academic Year for the Period of 10 Months

Details	Center Cost per Month (in Dinars)	Center Cost for an Academic Year (in Dinars)	Cost of Learner for an Academic Year(in Dinars
Administration	150,000	1,500,000	50,000
Teachers	150,000	1,500,000	50,000
Employees	60,000	600,000	20,000
Sub-committees	60,000	600,000	20,000
Supervision	60,000	600,000	20,000
Textbooks and Stationary	90,000	1,900,000	30,000
Activities	60,000	600,000	20,000
Transportation	60,000	600,000	20,000
Miscellaneous	60,000	600,000	20,000
Total	**750,000**	**8,500,000**	**250,000**

Literacy and Adult Education Structure and System Applied in the Kurdistan Region:

1- Literacy centers comprise three study phases, which are equivalent to grade six basic.

2- Each study phase is equivalent to two grades in the basic education phase and includes special curricula.

3- Phase One - Basic and Supplementary Phase: equals grades one and two and is called the literacy phase. Learners graduates from it with a 'Read and Write' certificate. During this phase, Learners get lessons in reading, writing, math, and general education.

4- Phases two and three: are called adult education phases:

   a) Phase two is equivalent to both grades 3 & 4 basic; and

   b) Phase three is equivalent to both grades 5 & 6 basic.

5- Working hours at literacy centers are five days per week with an average of three classes per day for phase 1, and an average of four classes a day for both the second and third phases.

6- The old curriculum has been reviewed and a special one has been prepared this year 2010/2011 for phase one. The reviewed curriculum is age group appropriate. After completing this phase, learner learns the principles of reading, writing, basic math, and general education. Accordingly, the curricula for the two remaining phases (phases two and three) will be reviewed and updated for adult learning (the curriculum for accelerated learning has recently been printed).

Second Component - Accelerated Learning:

This kind of education was first applied in the region in 2005/2006 with assistance from UNICEF. It comprised then the age group of 9-15 years and continued until the academic year 2007/2008. This type of education was for 3 study phases, where the curriculum for every two study years was compressed into one year. The learner is thus able to obtain primary education in three years instead of six. This gives an incentive for this age group and for those who were not in school, whether dropouts or those who did not enroll in school in the first place because of their circumstances or their advanced age. This experience has been successful. It was initially applied in both governorates of Erbil/Suleimaneyeh, then in all the governorates in the Region (Erbil-Dehouk-Suleimaneyeh-Kermeyan). This type of education used to be applied in parallel with the youth schools within formal education, where the study period was 4 years and comprised a small age group of 9-14 years only. Several meetings and seminars were held with UNICEF and other concerned parties to examine the overlap between the age group for youth schools and accelerated learning schools. The Ministry, through its educational conference, made the following decisions:

1- Halting admission for grade one in youth schools as of the year 2007/2008.

2- Students in the youth schools were enrolled in accelerated learning schools, each according to his study phase.

3- Studying was extended in accelerated learning schools from three study phases to five study phases so to become equivalent to grade nine of the basic phase as follows:

- Phase one: equivalent to both grades 1 & 2 of the basic phase.
- Phase two: equivalent to both grades 3 & 4 of the basic phase.
- Phase three: equivalent to both grades 5 & 6 of the basic phase.
- Phase four: equivalent to both grades 7 & 8 of the basic phase.
- Phase five: equivalent to grade 9 of the basic phase.

4- Accelerated learning includes the age group 9-22 years for males and 9-24 years for females for the first three phases. Enrollment in these schools is allowed up to 28 years of age for both study phases (fourth and fifth). This would provide further opportunity for this age category, those who previously obtained the sixth grade certificate, and those who left school, to enroll again in accelerated learning.

5- The school curriculum was reviewed and updated for this type of education for all phases with assistance and support from UNICEF.

6- There are four days of study per week amounting to 20 classes for phase one. As for the other phases, there are five days of study per week amounting to 25 classes (according to a special schedule for the distribution of classes).

7- Graduates of grade five of the Accelerated Education Program, with certificates equivalent to grade nine of the basic phase, can enroll in preparatory schools (day or evening school) based

on their age group and according to the regulations of formal education.

8- Cooperation is being made between the MOE and MOLSA to open accelerated learning schools in the directorates of prisons and juvenile correction centers. They will provide textbooks and teachers, and will supervise implementation through MOE.

Accelerated Leaning Schools Statistics for 2010/2011

No.	Governorate	No. of Schools			No. of Learners			No. of Classes	No. of Teachers			Location of Schools		
		M	F	Total	M	F	Total		M	F	Total	Cities	Districts	Villages
1	Erbil	13	21	34	5198	4667	9865	340	216	138	354	15	19	-
2	Sulaymaniyeh	6	16	22	1981	1737	3718	131	121	101	222	10	12	-
3	Dahouk	15	10	25	2233	1093	3326	125	88	55	143	10	15	-
4	Tarmyan	9	10	19	1134	896	2030	95	98	78	176	6	4	9
5	Karkouk	8	32	40	402	871	1273	70	40	78	118	26	14	-
Total		**51**	**89**	**140**	**10948**	**9264**	**20212**	**761**	**563**	**450**	**1013**	**67**	**64**	**9**
Percentage %		**35%**	**65%**	**100%**	**54%**	**46%**	**100%**	**1-24**	**55%**	**45%**	**100%**	**47%**	**46%**	**7%**

Accelerated Learning Plan for the Next Five Years 2010/2015

Years	Number of Schools	Number of Learners
2010-2011	140	20,000
2011-2012	150	22,000
2012-2013	160	25,000
2013-2014	170	28,000
2014-2015	180	20,000
Grand Total	**800**	**115,000**

Suggestions and Recommendations:

1- To conduct a comprehensive survey to identify the actual numbers of illiterates and dropouts and their age ranges, and to analyze such data in order to recognize the causes and find appropriate solutions.

2- To provide incentives for learners such as facilitating transportation, teaching them certain vocations, or providing them with meals and clothing, etc.

3- To create additional incentives for the administrative body and the teachers such as increasing their wages, enrolling them in developmental courses, and familiarizing them with successful experiences of other countries through field visits.

4- It is necessary to activate the role of the media and to broadcast television programs.

5- To increase the role of international organizations such as UNESCO and UNICEF through

the provision of further necessary support. Such support would be in the form of training, capacity-building of staff, familiarizing staff with the experiences of other countries, in addition to the effective upgrade of the curricula, provision of illustration methods, and vocational training.

6- To urge the community and private sector to seriously take part in activating their roles in this project.

7- To effectively include non-formal education learners in school health services, through the visits of health teams to these centers, and the provision of consultation and necessary treatment.

8- To increase the rate of female participation, especially in rural areas, through further awareness-raising and incentives. Women have a clear influence in society, in the labor force, and in the socio-economic life. Raising women's health and educational awareness will positively reflect on their childrearing practices and family life.

9- To reformulate the definition of literacy and adult education, and to clarify and unify the age ranges among Arab countries, or at the local level at least in Iraq.

10- To examine the unification of regulations and instructions pertaining to non-formal education in the Arab countries, or at the local level at least in Iraq.

11- To create accurate standards for quality assurance.

12- To conduct further studies and research by concerned parties, namely UNESCO and UNICEF.

13- To benefit from the new information technologies.

14- To call upon universities and training institutes to develop effective and contemporary programs for teacher training, and urge them to carry out further research and studies on this matter.

General Directorate for Basic Education and Kindergarten

Directorate of non-formal education
1/6/2011