

**K-19 Task Force**  
**Minutes of Meeting, September 20, 2021**  
**AUK, Board of Trustees Meeting Room**

Meeting called to order: 09:35 am

Attending:

Bashdar Sarbaz, Ministry of Ed  
Shelan Khalil, Ministry of Ed  
AbdulSalam Medeni, Rwanda  
Salih Akyol, Zakho BIS  
Abdulqader Kakasur, UNICEF  
Behar Ali, Emma  
Jayne Laurina B McAdam, Duhok BIS  
Dr. Amanj Saeid, MHE  
Dr. Mohammad Ahmed, MHE  
Dr. Naznaz Muhamad, Education Committee, Parliament  
Dr. Soran Saeed, Sulaimani Polytechnic  
Dr. Zana Ibrahim, UKH  
Kirstin Crawford, UKH  
Sherwan Mohammed Mahdi, GIZ  
Dr. Honar Issa, AUK  
Eskandar Salih, BCF  
Dr. Mildred Libot, AUK  
Randall Rhodes, AUK

Not Present:

Dr. Mohammad Sadiq Jabari, Salahaddin University  
Dr. Izaddin Ahmad Aziz, Salahaddin University  
Burhan Argoshy, Ministry of Ed

The meeting began with the introduction of members.

It was noted that UKH will serve as the venue for Erbil-located events associated with the Task Force (TF). Later in the meeting it was also suggested that a site be identified in Sulaimani to ensure the initiative's national visibility.

Regarding membership, it was acknowledged that there are gaps (unrepresented stakeholder groups not represented in the current roster). Recommendations for additional members will be presented to the TF for its consideration. Though, it is important to keep the number of members on the TF to a manageable number; too many can make it unwieldy. So, additional experts (local and international) as well as representatives of groups on the micro and mezzo levels (educational system users and employers) can be recruited to serve on the work groups.

Dr. Rhodes reviewed the Charge to the TF to establish a starting point for the discussion. It was noted that the Charge is quite overwhelming in scale and scope. Many of the points were taken from the Rand Report from years past. All agreed that it is important to address issues singly, and especially those of urgency so as not to get into the trap of being bogged down by theoretical and systemic issues that require much more time.

A brainstorming session followed. Based on their knowledge and experience, members were asked to identify areas of critical need and short and long-term priorities. Themes identified (in no particular order):

- Career Preparedness: disciplinary knowledge and skills needed for entry into the labor market and professional success; integrity of internships and field experiences/practica
- Vocational Pathways: societal acceptability, quality assurance, multiple ministries involved; assess the TVET initiative
- Assessment: quality assurance, monitoring, a national accreditation body, need for units on the school/university level to support assessment initiatives
- Capacity Building: 1) for teachers/faculty (instructional development, recruitment), 2) for curriculum revision/development (issues of implementation of current guidelines), and 3) for facilities and their operations (school environments need to support the learning process, e.g. new classroom configurations)
- Legislative-Legal Review: aim is to optimize the educational and higher educational organizational structures that frame the culture of teaching and learning
- Student Learning Outcomes: defined for each grade level and upon graduation, expectations for students; this also involves a pedagogical paradigm shift for teachers
- The vision/philosophy of education: sharing of current documents; can be multi-pronged – career oriented, humanistic, developing responsible citizenry – democratic, universal values, problem solving, creativity, etc.; holistic development of individuals – knowledge and enlightenment; model of 1) transferring culture, 2) transforming next generation, 3) student centered, 4) GDP factor.
- Access: facilitating entry points to system from Pre-K to university; access for girls/women, minorities, children with learning challenges, rural populations, IDPs and refugees.
  - An assessment of university admissions: 1) expanding the metrics and methodologies being used to assess applicants/candidates into university, 2) implementing a separate national university entrance exam (moving away from high school scores – Iran as model?), and 3) student access to the disciplines of their choice.

Other points raised included:

- Need more information on current mechanisms to evaluate performance by teachers/faculty and administrators.
- Current initiative to establish a national accreditation body

- Understanding that this is more than an introduction of tools/mechanisms for quality assurance, the culture needs to be built for everyone to support assessment, feedback loops, continuous improvement
- Even if a new curriculum is established, the appropriate resources/tools/mechanisms need to be available for effective implementation
- The recruitment of teachers with the correct personal, professional and disciplinary profile is seminal; the right people need to be recruited into the profession
- Disparity between student learning outcomes in private vs. public schools/universities though there are licensing and accreditation issues with some privates
- SDG model providing standards for educational outcomes
- Language policy from elementary through to university
- Implications of adopting the Bologna Process
- Past initiatives included funding graduate studies at universities abroad with the expectation that graduates would return to Kurdistan and contribute to the progress of the nation
- The ministries have worked with international institutions, organizations and universities to observe exemplary models with the intention of implementing many of those best practices
- Engagement of UNESCO, Save the Children, Parliament in future conversations

Rather than moving forward with the development of a summary strategic plan, members agreed on the importance of continued knowledge sharing to better understand initiatives in progress as well as what has already been accomplished. No one wants to duplicate past or current efforts.

Next Meeting of the Task Force: Monday, September 27 on the campus of UKH.

Topic: Knowledge sharing.

Presentations by the represented entities on current initiatives, ongoing projects, legislative proposals, documents under review, etc. The discussion will focus on points aligned with the charge of the Task Force and the general topics identified during the meeting of September 20.

Presenters will try to keep their presentations to 10 minutes. It is important that the members of the Task Force be made aware of research and data collection executed over the years as well as reform initiatives currently in the works.

Meeting Objectives: The Task Force will identify top priority items that are urgent and need to be addressed in the short-term. Once the items are identified, work groups will be identified – one per item. Each work group will have two members of the Task Force (serving as chairs and reporters back to the Task Force) plus other members as appropriate. It is important that these other members represent the variety of stakeholder groups pertinent to the issue under discussion. The

methodologies for research and operations for the work groups will need to be coordinated to ensure consistency across the initiative.

Photos were taken

Meeting adjourned: 03:00pm