K-19 Task Force
Minutes of Meeting, September 27, 2021
UKH

Meeting called to order: 13:35 pm

Attending:
Bashdar Sarbaz, Ministry of Ed
Shelan Khalil, Ministry of Ed
Dr. Amanj Saeid, MHE
Dr. Mohammad Ahmed, MHE
Dr. Naznaz Muhamad, Education Committee, Parliament
Dr. Galawej Osman, MP
AbdulSalam Medeni, Rwanga
Salih Akyol, Zakho BIS
Abdulqader Kakasur, UNICEF
Miran Bakir Agha, UNESCO
Behar Ali, Emma
Jayne Laurna B McAdam, Duhok BIS
Dr. Soran Saeed, Sulaimani Polytechnic
Dr. Zana Ibrahim, UKH
Kirstin Crawford, UKH
Dr. Honar Issa, AUK
Dr. Mildred Libot, AUK
Dr. Randall Rhodes, AUK

Not Present:
Dr. Mohammad Sadiq Jabari, Salahaddin University
Dr. Izaddin Ahmad Aziz, Salahaddin University
Burhan Argoshy, Ministry of Ed
Sherwan Mohammed Mahdi, GIZ
Eskandar Salih, BCF

Guest:
Dr. Bill Rammel, UHK

The session opened with welcoming remarks from the President of UKH, Dr. Bill Rammell. Points included HEIs needing greater autonomy, transparency in the recruitment of academic staff, and evidence-based decision-making.

As discussed at the meeting of the TF on September 20, the session began with members presenting the ongoing projects/initiatives of their respective entities. The venue was the UKH auditorium.

AUK: Dr. Mildred Libot
The presentation introduced a pedagogical approach to classroom teaching and learning that fosters creativity and innovation. This included the mention of the establishment of the Center for Excellence in Learning & Teaching at AUK and its objectives of offering a Certificate in Higher Education Pedagogy for faculty and teachers across Kurdistan.

UKH: Dr. Zana Ibrahim and Kirstin Crawford
Discussion of outcome-based education where the intended expectations for student learning outcomes drive the processes of teaching and learning. This methodology focuses on the development of knowledge, skills and behaviors. It is student-centered, while providing clarity and flexibility. Regarding UKH's admissions procedures, points covered included testing students English language proficiency, the execution of in-house designed tests based on grade 12 exit standards, interviews, and aptitude tests to demonstrate suitability for specific academic programs.

UNICEF: Abdulqader Kakasur
This was a review of recent and ongoing initiatives: national learning assessments for science and math (grade 4); educational sector plans; E-Parwarda (now undergoing assessment); non-formal education; integration policy for refugees, educational TV channel (on Nilesat); early childhood education; school-based management; an embedded life skills curriculum (grades 1-9); Edutaining Program (multi-media approach to learning); teacher preparedness training package.

Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research: Dr. Amanj Saeid, Dr. Mohammad Ahmed, Dr. Soran Saeed
Data were presented on student population and distribution between public and privates, and the percentage share of technical institutions. There are four areas of focus within the Ministry: quality, capacity building, research & development, adoption of best practices. Individual initiatives include: split-site PhD programs; ZEvA (German entity providing accreditation expertise); pedagogical trainings sponsored by Hame University of Applied Sciences, Finland; commitment to English-language proficiency; Bologna process; career-orientation to academic programs; TVET (role of polytechnics); quality assurance; internationalization; adoption of good governance structures (via Bologna process and other EU projects).

Ministry of Education: Bashdar Sarbaz, Shelan Khalil
The presentation focused on challenges in basic areas: facilities (insufficient number of buildings in operation), TVET (support and promotion), curriculum development and delivery (pedagogical paradigm shift), teacher recruitment and qualifications (with low number of teachers with bachelor's or graduate degrees, few can adopt any paradigm shift), and student learning outcomes. Another point raised was the unstable and inconsistent school calendar: 6 days per week, 170 days, 693 hours – far less than in international private schools and less than in other countries.

BIS: Salih Akyol, Laurna McAdam

Focus was on the philosophical model of student learning in the international private sector. The stated goal was to contribute to the betterment of public K-12 education to the point where distinctions between student learning outcomes from public and international private schools will be minimized.

After coffee break, the meeting resumed in a classroom to facilitate discussion.

The discussion centered on next steps forward: the identification of priorities, the methodology for the workgroups, and the construction of the workgroups. As the TF is new, it is important to start with action items that have consensus support and can produce results in the short-term. The two identified items were 1) University Admissions, and 2) Technical and Vocational Training.

The methodology to be used by workgroups should be consistent. Therefore, a model was presented to members for consideration using the topic of University Admissions:

1. Data collection/research
   - Identification of models
   - Benchmarking
   - Establishing metrics appropriate to the issue
   - Review of legal frameworks that challenge a reassessment
   - Invitation of experts (national and international)
2. Assess the level of autonomy desired across the range of schools/universities (one consistent-rigid standard or a desired level of flexibility in customizing to suit individual institution's needs)
3. Drafting of proposal(s)
   - Recommendation to draft multiple scenarios
   - Discussion with TF
4. Presentation of proposal(s) to stakeholders for feedback and suggestions
   - Define stakeholders for this particular policy/procedure
   - Organize focus groups, surveys, or other mechanisms to solicit feedback
5. Write final proposal with inputs and present to the respective Ministry and other KRG entities as appropriate.

Workgroups can meet virtually in order to facilitate participation and minimize/eliminate time and cost for travel.

The workgroup will report on its progress at each of the TF's meetings.

The role of the workgroup is to identify the research question, assess data, and formulate a draft proposal for review by the TF, stakeholders, and Ministries. The TF/workgroup does have an investment in the proposal and will work with the Ministries to ensure its implementation,

though the assessment and monitoring of the specific initiative is under the purview of the Ministries.

A similar approach will be adopted for the discussion of technical and vocational training.

- Current models and definitions will be reviewed (including the goals, mission, vision, etc. of the KRI and other such programs)
- There will be a discussion of the multiple access points to vocational pathways (from lower secondary and from post-higher secondary)
- An assessment of current resources and needed resources will be conducted.
- Curriculum and instructor credentials/standards to be assessed.

It was proposed that the third topic to be tackled would be K-12 teacher training/capacity.

Workgroup Memberships:
University Admission: Chairs - Dr. Mohammad Ahmed and Dr. Randall Rhodes
TVET: Dr. Soran Saeed, Shelan Khalil

Members were asked to self-nominate for workgroups and/or identify appropriate members from outside of the TF. It is important to have a broad membership to engage many perspectives.

Action Items and Important Points:

- ❖ If members of the TF have suggestions on workgroup membership, they are to send an email to the chairs of the respective workgroups with the names and emails.
- ❖ The next meeting of the Task Force will be in late October (TBD). The location will be the Polytechnic in Sulaimani.
- ❖ The shared drive set up at UKH will serve as the repository for documents and the PowerPoint presentations.
- ❖ It was recommended that for the more single topic, in-depth sessions, all PPTs should be distributed to members prior to the meeting for review. Presenters will only need to provide an executive summary. Then, the TF would have more time for discussion.
- ❖ Agenda for next meeting:
  - Progress report from work groups
  - Recruitment and capacity building of K-12 teachers

Meeting adjourned at 4:30pm