**K-19 Task Force**

**Minutes of Meeting, 11:00, February 26, 2023**

**Online via Teams**

**Agenda**

Status Report

Steps for Moving Forward

**Attending**

Abdulqader Kakasur, UNICEF

Shelan Khalil, Ministry of Education

Bashdar Sarbaz, Ministry of Education

AbdulSalam Medeni, Rwanga

Vida Hanna, Catholic University of Erbil

Dr. Naznaz Muhamad, formerly Education Committee, Parliament

Dr. Zana Ibrahim, English Language Dept at UKH

Kristin Crawford, University of Kurdistan Hewler

Dr. Galawezh Obaid Osman, MP, Education Committee

Dr. Honar Issa, American University of Kurdistan

Dr. Randall Rhodes, American University of Kurdistan

**Meeting was called to order at 11:03**

The discussion opened with the current political challenges. As discussed previously, it is pivotal for the success of any educational reforms that ministries/units across the government work in a constructive and collaborative manner. Once these bonds are strengthened, it will be possible to move forward with the Symposium as previously discussed: plenary sessions, four concurrent sessions focused on Early Childhood, K-12 Curriculum Design, TVET, and University Admissions.

During the next weeks, the work groups can continue their discussions to enrich their presentations, either by adding new initiatives or fleshing out current ones.

The Higher Education Work Group is looking at the number of students graduating HEIs, their respective degrees, and workforce needs. This group is also looking at ways to embed more practical/applied experiences into bachelor’s program study plans as a step toward greater career preparedness. Vida commented that there is currently a draft implementation of such a portal for the region. Information will be shared.

Honar mentioned that the Higher Education Work Group must also continue pushing for TVET and do its part in capacity building for K-12 teachers.

Bashdar restated the role of the TF in serving as a repository for documents; these should include past studies/reports and market assessments. These could be uploaded to a virtual document room (in the cloud). *A shared folder was initiated by UKH in the past; it can be reactivated*.

Bashdar also reported wide confusion as to the role of the TF. There is the perception that the TF delivers reports/documents. The TF is solely a consultative, supportive body that provides input and/or recommendations on a variety of issues across the educational spectrum as its members represent a variety of experiences and knowledge. The TF is not a decision-making body, and other entities should not put their respective initiatives on hold pending the TF’s actions. There was mention that UNESCO wanted to duplicate its activities in Baghdad in Erbil, but put that on hold due to the presence of the TF. It is important for the TF to present itself at the Symposium to clarify its role, and provide evidence of its discussions/activities.

The example of the Ministry of Education was posed. It needs support in developing its long term plans and vision. The TF could assist in conversations to help the MoE to focus on the longer view in strategic planning, staging a SWOT analysis, setting goals, and developing an operational map. This planning session should be attended by organizations who are active in the educational sector. Also, the Ministry of Planning should participate. This is totally within the purview of the TF; from such conversation(s), the TF would produce a document/roadmap to help the Ministry achieve its objectives.

However, this initiative will also have its challenges. Abdulqader mentioned that UNESCO and UNICEF contributed to the development of strategic plans for the educational sector a decade ago. Yet due to the centralized nature of government, the planning process never filtered down to the level of the governorate. So, the organizations worked directly with the governorates on their sectorial plans. UNICEF assisted in the update and review of plans.

**Points discussed**

Date for event:

* It was agreed that the originally forecasted date of December 4, was not feasible.
* Due to the upcoming holiday season, scheduling in December is not realistic; key stakeholders will probably begin departing for their vacations by mid-month.
* The date should depend on the availability of the key ministers who have stakes in the outcome of these discussions – the Minister of Education, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, the Minister of Planning.
* As the program becomes more complicated, more time is needed to properly plan; therefore, the more realistic timeframe would be the first or second full weeks of February.

Guest list:

* As stated above, the Ministers with stakes in the outcomes would all be invited.
* Leaders in government, universities, and NGOs would be invited; invitations would go out to these entities; they would identify those to attend.
* As TVET has strong support from the TVET Steering Committee and Council of Ministers in Baghdad, it is very important that they also be invited.
* Regarding discussions of the University Admissions, stakeholders such as high school teachers/administrators, representatives of Ministries, parents, university alumni be invited.
* This should be a national event, and many of the country heads of the NGOs working in the educational sector should be invited.
* People may be participating online; therefore, there must be appropriate technologies available.
* Since leading business people/employers are focused on TVET, they should attend as well.

Agenda for program:

* The original vision was to have four concurrent sessions, one room/session per TF workgroup; if two concurrent rooms/sessions, then one room would have Early Childhood in the morning and K-12 Curriculum in the afternoon, and the other would have TVET in the morning and University Admissions in the afternoon.
* A couple of scenarios were discussed including having just one room – all participants listening to panel discussions with question and answer sessions to allow everyone to hear the breadth of topics. Question was raised as to whether this format would provide sufficient opportunity for feedback from the audience.
* If VIPs attend, especially the Ministers, then they should have the opportunity for plenary speeches to discuss gaps in the current system and the need for reform.
* Members agreed that it is important to give participants in the sessions sufficient time to discuss and provide input.

Decision on Program Agenda:

* Day 1
  + Arrival and Registration
  + Introductory Speech
  + Plenary Speeches by Minister of Education, Minister of Higher Education, and others as appropriate
  + Coffee Break
  + Breakout Session IA – ECE and K-12 Curriculum Design
  + Breakout Session IB – TVET and University Admissions
  + Lunch
  + Breakout Session 2A – ECE and K-12 Curriculum Design
  + Breakout Session 2B – TVET and University Admissions
  + Coffee Break
  + Breakout Session 3A – Identification of recommendations/actions
  + Breakout Session 3B - Identification of recommendations/actions
* Day 2
  + One session - Reporting out from Breakout Sessions with presentation of findings/recommendations/action plans for ECE and K-12 Curriculum Design
  + Coffee Break
  + Continued reporting out for TVET and University Admissions

Action Items:

1. Contact Ministries to identify dates in February when the Ministers are available to attend.
2. Each member of the TF will develop a list of prospective guests, again to include the span of educational stakeholders, Ministries, NGOs, Kurdistan and beyond.
3. Once the date for the forum is established, begin the process of inviting international and out-of-town guests (save the date). This would also include soliciting participation from people out-of-country who would be willing to participate via distance technologies.
4. Once the date for the forum is established, reserve the venue and establish a team to handle the logistics.
5. Refine the program for the event.
6. Write a one page narrative with agenda; distribute this document along with the invitation to inform invitees of the objectives and program of the event.

Members were asked to review the Minutes to ensure that the information accurately reflects the consensus. It is important that everyone be in agreement on the vision for the event as we move forward.

Meeting adjourned at 12:05