**K-19 Task Force**

**Minutes of Meeting, 10:00, May 26, 2024**

**UKH, F12A**

**Agenda**

* Review of feedback from survey on regional stakeholders and areas of interest
* Review of status of reforms in the areas cited previously
* Brainstorming on new areas to be discussed by the Task Force
* Discussion of meeting formats and the invitations to others to join

**Attending**

Shelan Khalil, Ministry of Education

Bashdar Sarbaz, Ministry of Education

AbdulSalam Medeni, Rwanga

Dr. Zana Ibrahim, English Language Dept at UKH

Kristin Crawford, University of Kurdistan Hewler

Behar Ali, Emma Organization for Human Development

Dr. Soran Saeed, Kurdistan Technical Institute

Dr. Galawezh Obaid Osman, MP, Education Committee

Dr. Honar Issa, American University of Kurdistan

Dr. Randall Rhodes, American University of Kurdistan

Dr. Mohammed Hussein Ahmed, MHESR, official leave as part of the delegation with the minister in London for Education World Forum.

**Meeting was called to order at 10:05**

The discussion opened with the review of the agenda. As discussed at the previous online meeting, it is important to enrich the conversations and proceed more efficiently on areas identified. New members have the potential to provide data, research, and insights into current issues and contribute to workgroups in the development of recommendations and action plans.

A survey was sent to NGOs and other stakeholders in the educational sector soliciting their statements of interest in the mission of the Task Force along with their own specialized areas of expertise. The Steering Committee reviewed these submissions, highlighting the individuals’ commitments to educational reform as well as the specific areas in which they have worked. The preliminary identifications of new members were conducted.

Next, the floor was opened for the discussion and identification of areas of interest for the upcoming agenda of the Task Force. There was unanimous agreement as to the following:

* Curriculum Development across K-12: In addition to the codification of lesson plans, it is important to clearly state learning outcomes for each grade level for each of the disciplines.
* Teacher Qualifications: There must be assurance that the bachelor’s degrees in Basic Education across Kurdistan reflect the proper balance between theory and practice so that graduates are ready for the classroom. There also must be assurance that the certificate (or additional credential) offered to bachelor’s students who do not graduate from Basic Education have the supplemental training necessary to be effective teachers. Also raised was the issue of licensure (or syndicate recognition) for teachers: are there any standards or expectations beyond the candidates’ acquisition of a diploma?
* Teacher Capacity Building: Current teachers need continuous professional development to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to address the needs/expectations of 21st century learners.
* TVET: More needs to be done in communicating the importance of TVET as an alternative to bachelor’s degrees, and ensure that teachers, curricula, and lab facilities are appropriate. TVET programs should ensure that graduates are workforce ready.

The above points are not simple to address. Discussions need to take into account a myriad of issues, some beyond the educational ecosystem. These include:

* Status of the Teachers: If teachers are not viewed as “professionals”, then how does this affect expectations for their performance?
* Recruitment of Teachers: if a teacher-candidate’s merit is not foremost during the hiring process, then students and parents will not see hired teachers as experts.
* Teacher Performance Evaluation: There must be a mechanism for annual evaluations along with rewards for those who excel and consequences for those who fall below expectations. Obviously, this necessitates a clear articulation of expectations for teachers by grade level and disciplinary field. Supervisors need to be trained to implement such evaluations, and with integrity.
* Renewable Contracts: The elimination of life-long job security, regardless of performance, will help to nurture a culture of continuous improvement.
* Tools/Mechanisms to Encourage Excellence: What tools could be available to incentivize excellence? Salary enhancements, choice school assignments? Participation in workshops is of no value; what is important is the application of the content of that workshop to enrich the teaching and learning within the classroom.

Clearly, while international models can be researched, it is important that recommendations be mindful of local realities. These include: classroom management when classes are overcrowded; covering substantial content when class sessions are short; the lack of facilities, funding, and time for applied learning; and teachers who lack interest in professional development and intellectual growth. Overall, a culture of learning needs to be encouraged for teachers and students.

The vision of the Committee is that with an increase membership, work groups can be established as previously. Perhaps, three workgroups could be formed:

* TVET
* Teacher Qualifications and Capacity Building
* K-12 Curriculum Development including Assessment of Teaching and Learning

The Committee again reviewed the survey results and identified new members who can contribute to discussions on the specific issues listed above. Some individuals and NGOs were identified for inclusion (e.g. an individual from Intersos, UNHCR, UNICEF, university faculties, private international schools). All members were encouraged to forward names of others for consideration.

It was agreed that the next meeting be scheduled between July 20 and 25. This would be in-person and at Rwanga’s Board Room. A request for feedback on specific dates will be included in the email with these minutes.

Thanks.

**Meeting adjourned at 11:25.**