**K-19 Task Force**

**Minutes of Meeting, 10:00, July 25, 2024**

**Rwanga Foundation, Empire Tower 4**

Agenda

* Introduction of new members
* Review of topics identified in May
* Structure of meetings
* Events, visits, activities for upcoming year
* Schedule

Attending (alphabetical order)

Abdurrahman Wahab, TIU

AbdulSalam Medeni, Rwanga

Behar Ali, Emma Organization for Human Development

Dr. Galawezh Obaid Osman, MP, Education Committee

Joanne Ball, Cambridge International School

Kirstin Crawford, UKH

Dr. Mohammed Hussein Ahmed, Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research

Dr. Naznaz Muhamad, former Education Committee, Kurdistan Parliament

Dr. Randall Rhodes, AUK

Sarkhell Sirwan Nawroly, SPU

Shelan Khalil, Ministry of Education

Sherine Hassan, AIS

Dr. Soran Saeed, Kurdistan Technical Institute

Syako Sulaiman, Jobs.krd

Vida Hanna, CUE

Dr. Zana Ibrahim, UKH

**Meeting called to order at 10:15**

The discussion opened with the introduction of new members and review of the meeting agenda. There was also a review of the discussion points and recommendations presented at the previous meeting in May.

The MoHESR noted that the TF has made tangible impact as the Ministry has moved forward on the implementation of a university entrance exam, and based on TF conversations, also moved forward on the revision of academic programs to ensure their alignment with workforce expectations. The MoHESR also supports the upscaling of TVET as this has been identified as a priority by the KRG.

The TF serves as an advisory board to the MoE and MoHESR and is willing to continue to provide its inputs (and if necessary form an ad hoc group) on initiatives such as the university entrance exam as requested. The TF can also serve as a watchdog to ensure that appropriate actions are taken and programs are sustained.

At the May meeting, four areas of interest were cited:

* Curriculum Development across K-12
* Teacher Qualifications
* Teacher Capacity Building through continuous education
* TVET

In May, the TF saw the need to establish three workgroups:

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

The following points were raised during the discussion. Points are here collated under two headings: K-12 Curriculum and TVET.

Curriculum

* Curriculum is not equated with textbooks. Books are not even a requisite for the development of curricula. The development of curricula is not necessarily about the teaching of information; it needs to focus on students’ goals, aims, skills, and competencies.
* Teacher training/capacity building cannot be addressed prior to coming to an understanding on the new curricula. If the new curricula incorporates methodologies such as learning-by-doing, self-directed learning, practical learning, technology in the classroom, interdisciplinarity, co-curricular out-of-the-classroom activities, etc., then teachers would need to be trained in those pedagogies specific to the framework identified (pedagogies first, teacher training second). The assessment and monitoring of learning and teaching must be incorporated into the framework.
* Emphasis needs to be placed on teacher preparation and continuing education; students cannot be well educated without well-educated teachers.
* Capacity-building will also need to address gaps/deficiencies among administrators across the system as they need to lead the implementation, assessment, and monitoring processes.
* This core curriculum for K-12 should serve the needs of both those on the TVET pathway and those who are bachelor’s–seeking.
* Three polytechnics have experts in curriculum design.
* Curriculum reassessment and redesign necessitates the cooperation of both the MoE and MoHESR as the latter oversees admissions to basic education programs and the design and delivery of those bachelor’s degrees.

It become clear that the use of the word “curriculum” was problematic. The conversation truly focused on competencies, standards, and frameworks – not the design of instructional materials and lesson plans. Therefore, this section/discussion and all further references to the topic will be: **K-12 Framework**.

TVET

* Following UNESCO’s recommended framework, Kurdistan possesses instructional modules for TVET teachers. Currently, there are 2 super trainers and 28 master trainers who have, in turn, trained 1000 teachers. Much of this was accomplished with the assistance of British Council.
* UNESCO’s market studies have researched industry sectors and identified workforce needs.
* More needs to be accomplished in writing the curriculum. Micolearning should be investigated as a possible enhancement.
* Current facilities are deficient in providing hands-on practical learning mirroring workplace realities.
* As three ministries are involved, consensus is needed to move forward.
* TVET needs to be marketed to the public (parents and prospective students) in order to increase the number who elect that professional pathway (and decrease the number of those proceeding to bachelor’s degrees).
* Policies need to be revised to ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of TVET programming and articulating pathways to employment.

Conference

There was discussion of conducting a public conference in the upcoming year to facilitate communication on the progress of the TF and issues related to education with the public. The inaugural conference was in September 2021. It is time for a second event.

Other

Mention of the implementation of a university entrance exam raised an issue. The MoHESR is currently looking at implementation in 2026-2027. Does that provide sufficient time to prepare those in K-12 for the new assessment? Qatar was cited as a regional model, which has dramatically raised its level of K-12 education over the past two decades. Members liked the use of Qatar as a model and endorsed more research on how that country was able to advance educational outcomes. Since Qatar and Kurdistan are developing strong relations and looking for points of collaboration, there may be a window of opportunity to fund mobilities for TF members to visit Doha and/or experts from Doha visiting Kurdistan to present their case study. The Qatar Foundation should be targeted for assistance in moving Kurdistan K-12 education forward. The MoHESR can initiate discussion on mobilities. Dr. Issa can follow up.

Workgroups

Members agreed on the founding of two workgroups, the latter with three subgroups:

1. TVET (Soran as Chair)

2. K-12 Framework (Behar as Chair)

a. Early childhood (KG-Grade 2)

b. Grades 3-8

c. High School

These groups will research topics, solicit the perspectives of local, regional, and international experts, and draft concept papers and recommendations. As mentioned previously, it would be interesting to research the educational system in Qatar for inspiration.

Timeline

The TF will meet once per month, in-person.

Workgroups will meet during the interim weeks, online.

Next meeting: August 26th, Rwanga Foundation Office.

At this meeting, workgroups will report on their progress.

To facilitate communications, the following page contains the contact information of members. Suggestion was made to create a WhatsApp Group.

Action Item: Everyone needs to check to ensure the mobile phone numbers listed are correct for WhatsApp. If there is no number, please provide one. Everyone must understand that the email addresses and phone numbers are provided for the strict use of communications among TF members. None of the contact information can be shared without the permission of the member with people outside of the TF.

Thanks.

**Meeting adjourned at 1:25.**

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