

Evaluation methodology

In the desk phase of the evaluation an **in-depth review** of relevant documents (policy documents and project-specific reports) was undertaken. In the field phase of the evaluation in-depth **interviews** and **focus group discussions** were undertaken with key role players, stakeholders and beneficiaries. Interview data were coded and analysed by the evaluation team to supplement the desk review and inform the findings of the evaluation.

Conclusions of the evaluation

The evaluation has reached the following conclusions:

- The objectives and design of the Capacity Building Program for Primary and Secondary Education in Iraq respond very appropriately to the **needs, policies** and **priorities** of the GoI.
- The programme has been very effective, despite the difficult circumstances in which it has been implemented. The approach of implementing agencies to adaptive management has been commendable.
- Despite multiple obstacles, the programme has been implemented as efficiently as possible under the circumstances, largely because of the **adaptive management approach** by implementing agencies referred to above, coupled with the accommodating approach of the **EU** in providing a no-cost extension.
- The programme is likely **to prove sustainable**, largely due to the government's strategy, the Education Sector Plan, and its commitment to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4.

- The **programme impact** is **positive**, particularly on institutional development, gender mainstreaming and social equity.
- Although other donors are providing assistance in pockets, the **EU** is the only donor **supporting the education system** as a whole.
- The **added value of EU support** for education is substantial, largely because of the system emphasis referred to above.

Recommendations of the evaluation

The most important strategic recommendation for the EU follows:

“ *The multi-pronged approach adopted by the programme should be replicated in the future, encompassing needs analysis, capacity building, evidence-based strategies to improve access and equity and support for the most marginalised children, including girls and the disabled.* ”

The most important strategic recommendation for the GoI follows:

“ *Develop a new mindset for a flexible, cooperative and decentralised education management system.* ”

Capacity Building Program for Primary and Secondary Education in Iraq



The programme

The objectives of the “**Capacity Building Program for Primary and Secondary Education in Iraq**”, funded by the European Union (EU), are to improve the **quality** and **equality of the education system** and to strengthen the institutional capacities in **education administration** at central and local level, promoting decentralisation in **education management**.

The programme derives its relevance from its compliance with the development strategies of the **Government of Iraq (GoI)**, such as the **National Education Strategy (NES)** 2011-2020 and the **National Development Plan (NDP)** 2013-2017. Its sector goal and specific objectives were in line with the main aspects of the NES and NDP. It was also consistent with the main thrusts of the EU Multiannual Indicative Programme 2014-2017 for Iraq for the period. The EU, through a grant, responded appropriately to the country's needs.



The programme context

The programme has been implemented in an extremely difficult context, characterised by:

- **Security issues** and **political instability** caused by mass protests that started in October 2019 in Central and Southern Iraq in particular;
- High numbers of internally **displaced persons (IDPs)** and **refugees**, who have increased the pressure on already-constrained national infrastructure and systems;
- Children and teachers having experienced the **trauma of conflict**, displacement and loss of loved ones;
- **Education infrastructure** in ruins in many parts of the country, causing many schools to operate in multiple shifts;
- A decrease in the number and proportion of **qualified teachers**;
- High **illiteracy** rates particularly in rural and remote areas, and even higher rates in the areas affected by terrorist acts;
- Closure of schools as a result of the **COVID-19 pandemic**.

Programme description

The programme comprises the following projects:



Capacity building in primary and secondary education: Improving **quality** and **equality** *implemented by the British Council);



System building and capacity strengthening of **Ministry of Education (MoE)** and its sub-national Directorates of Education for effective delivery of quality education (implemented by **UNESCO** at the national level and by **UNICEF** at the governorate and school level);



Access to **inclusive quality** primary and secondary education for IDPs and refugees in crisis-affected areas in Iraq (implemented by **UNESCO**).

Given the difficult context in which the programme has been implemented, the programme reach has been impressive. For example:



All **30,000** schools in Iraq have been supported.



171,939 vulnerable school-age children have received educational support and services.