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Project Information Document (PID)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 02-Dec-2021 | Report No: PIDA33087



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country Iraq	Project ID P175721	Project Name Innovations Towards Learning in Lagging Iraqi Governorates	Parent Project ID (if any)
Region MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA	Estimated Appraisal Date 27-Dec-2021	Estimated Board Date 31-Jan-2022	Practice Area (Lead) Education
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Ministry of Finance (MOF)	Implementing Agency Ministry of Education (MOE)	

Proposed Development Objective(s)

To enhance teaching practices of Arabic and Mathematics teachers and improve literacy and numeracy skills among the most vulnerable primary students in lagging Iraqi governorates.

Components

Strengthen teaching practices of Arabic and Mathematics primary teachers in early literacy and numeracy
Support parents and schools with tailored learning tools to serve students while they learn at home or at school
Capacity building for school leaders, DOE and MOE and Monitoring and Evaluation

The processing of this project is applying the policy requirements exceptions for situations of urgent need of assistance or capacity constraints that are outlined in OP 10.00, paragraph 12.

Yes

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)

SUMMARY

Total Project Cost	10.00
Total Financing	10.00
of which IBRD/IDA	0.00
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS

Non-World Bank Group Financing



Trust Funds	10.00
Iraq Reconstruction Trust Fund	10.00
Environmental and Social Risk Classification	
Moderate	
Decision	

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Other Decision (as needed)

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

A. Country Context

Recent health, macroeconomic and political crises compound Iraq’s longstanding fragilities. Almost two decades after the Iraq war began, the country remains caught in a fragility trap and faces increasing political instability and fragmentation, geopolitical risks, legacy state driven economy, weak private sector, growing social unrest, and a deepening divide between the state and its citizens.

Recent favorable oil market conditions improved Iraq’s economic situation, although structural challenges persist. Iraq’s economy is heavily dependent on oil, with crude oil accounting for 95 percent of exports and 91 percent of budget revenues¹. With the recent recovery in oil prices, Iraq’s economy grew by 0.9 percent year-on-year in the first half of 2021², driven by a rebound in services and while oil GDP is restricted by OPEC+ production quotas. The economy contracted by 16 percent in 2020 following the twin shocks of the pandemic and the oil market collapse. The budget remains large, beset by rigid spending on wages and transfers, which reduces the ability of the Government of Iraq (GoI) to undertake fiscal adjustments or further stimulate the economy, and produces poor quality services. Large arrears—especially those related to electricity, public wages, and pensions—intensify pressures on Iraq’s public finances. In the absence of an accelerated process of reforms, average annual non-oil GDP growth is forecasted to remain under 3 percent in 2021 -23 due to the impact of the COVID-19 Delta variant on the economy and water and electricity shortages that affect agriculture and industries.

¹ Shares in 2020.

² Iraq Economic Monitor, Fall 2021



Iraq's economic and political challenges led to inadequate service delivery and high unemployment rates, especially among youth, which are likely to have worsened due to the recent crises. A nascent private sector, coupled with limited opportunities for job-relevant skills training programs, have translated into worsening economic and social outcomes for Iraq. Youth unemployment has been on the rise in Iraq – with one in four youth unemployed in 2019³ - fueling mass protests in October 2019 and unrest up to date. The government has not been able to substantially increase job opportunities and despite some progress, notably with the adoption of the 2021 Budget and the White Paper on fiscal and economic reforms, these challenges remain largely unresolved. In addition, budget rigidities and historically low budget execution rates⁴ have historically hampered progress and compounded economic growth challenges.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted Iraq's household welfare, disproportionately affecting children and the poorest areas. After years of conflict and displacement, Iraqis have become increasingly vulnerable, with conditions projected to have worsened due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Households' labor and non-labor incomes decreased due to the economic slowdown and reduced remittances, caused by global shutdowns and economic slowdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic. World Bank Projections suggest that poverty increased by 11.7 percent, increasing the poverty rate to 31.7 percent from 20 percent in 2017-2018⁵. This translates into 4.5 million additional poor as a result of the crises, adding to the 6.9 million already living in poverty before the crises. Children face a higher increase in poverty by 15.8 percent bringing the poverty rate among those under 18 to 37.9 percent (UNICEF-World Bank, 2020). The surge in poverty is expected to gradually reverse following the economic recovery and mass vaccination. However, the disproportional impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the pre-pandemic poor and vulnerable groups especially in terms of income loss and access to services, and the resulting inequality will be felt for a long time to come.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

Human capital development is imperative to achieve sustainable economic growth and overcome fragility in Iraq, however Iraq has one of the lowest shares of human capital of total wealth. Over the past decades, countries around the world have invested in human capital as a driver for economic growth. Today human capital constitutes the largest share (64 percent) of total wealth worldwide (Lange et al. 2018). However, Iraq's economy lacks diversification, and government revenues are still largely dependent on the volatile oil sector. Iraq's human capital expressed as a percentage of total wealth is only 15 percent, the lowest in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Investments in human capital are urgently needed in Iraq to spur economic prosperity.

At the heart of Iraq's human capital crisis is a learning crisis. A child born in Iraq today will reach, on average, only 41 percent of her potential productivity when she grows up, as measured by the World Bank's Human Capital Index (HCI) (World Bank 2020). Iraq has one of the lowest human capital indicators in the region. Iraq's poor performance on the HCI is largely attributed to the education outcomes calculated for the index. Based on current enrollment rates, an Iraqi child can expect to complete only 6.9 years of schooling. However, when considering the amount of learning that takes place, this child will achieve only 4.0 learning-adjusted years of schooling (LAYS)

³ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS?locations=IQ>

⁴ On average only 20% of investment budget is executed (2015 – 2019), Human Development Public Expenditure Review in Iraq

⁵ Assessment of COVID-19 Impact on Poverty and Vulnerability in Iraq (World Bank and UNICEF, 2020)



by age 18. As a result, 40 percent of the (already low) time spent in school fails to translate into productive skills (World Bank 2020). This is an alarmingly low level of learning, the lowest in the MENA region.

Years of conflict and structural inefficiencies have resulted in an education system that is not adequately conveying foundational skills – the basis for learning and skills development.⁶ The most recent learning assessment - the 2012 Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) highlight large learning gaps in the foundational years.⁷ By grade 3, the vast majority of students assessed had not yet acquired sufficient foundational skills – with over 90% of students not reading yet with comprehension.⁸ Almost one third of grade 3 students (28.7) could not answer a single question correctly about an age appropriate text they just read (EGRA), and 41% of grade 3 students were unable to answer a single subtraction problem question correctly (EGMA). While these percentages represent the poorest performing students, they highlight the large need to support the most vulnerable students, who are at the highest risk of being left behind and drop out of the education system.

Student drop-out in primary school has increased over the last years, with only half of the poorest students completing primary school. Participation in primary education increased from 76 percent in 2000 to nearly 92 percent in 2018.⁹ Of the around 6 million children of primary school age in Iraq¹⁰, around 500,000 students are estimated to be out of school.¹¹ Worryingly, Iraq’s primary school completion rate declined over the last years from 84 percent in 2011 to only 76 percent in 2018. Only 73 percent of girls enrolled in the last grade complete primary school, with only 54 percent of students from the poorest households completing primary school.

Recent school closures coupled with only limited and unequal remote learning opportunities will have devastating effects on children’s learning and risk further student dropout – especially among the most marginalized students. Since February 2020, COVID led to intermittent school closures for over 75% of the time, impacting more than 11 million Iraqi students. Remote learning opportunities have prioritized students in higher grades and favoring those with access to technology and from more affluent households.¹² In other words, inequitable access to education services has further expanded the inequity, increasing the risk of school-drop out, especially among the most vulnerable students. These limited learning opportunities are estimated to have led to a further reduction of between 0.8 – 1.1 learning-adjusted years of schooling from an already low baseline of only 4 years (World Bank et al. Forthcoming). Effectively, students in Iraq are facing more than a “lost year” of learning.

⁶ For more education sector background see Annex 1.

⁷ The EGRA and EGMA 2012 was implemented by USAID on a non-nationally representative sample of governorates. The EGRA/EGMA are the only internationally comparable assessment for student learning that Iraq took part in so far.

⁸ On the EGRA, it is generally accepted that when children are reading with comprehension, they can correctly answer 80% or more of their reading comprehension questions. 7.3 percent of grade 3 students answered 80% or more reading comprehension questions correctly. (USAID 2012).

⁹ GOI does not publish enrollment rates. Time-trend-attendance data (adjusted net attendance ratios, a proxy for enrollment) is available for Iraq from the UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey from 2000 to 2018.

¹⁰ 2018/2019 school year

¹¹ World Bank. 2021. “Public Expenditure Review of Human Development Sectors: Education Chapter.” Washington, DC: World Bank.

¹² According to the Iraq high frequency phone survey (conducted by the World Bank and World Food Program in 2020), among households with children attending school prior to lockdown, only 23 percent indicated their children engaged in any catch-up or learning activities in September 2020, most of which attended private schools. (IHFPS, 2020).



With Iraqi schools reopened in early November 2021, quick and innovative support is needed, focusing on the most marginalized students to mitigate learning loss and prevent further school-dropout. Innovative solutions to education service delivery – including support from schools, teachers, and caregivers alike - are essential to ensure learning for all, especially for the most vulnerable children, who were left behind during remote learning. These opportunities favor better off households with access to technology. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) infrastructure is sparse, and access to it is highly unequal. Using a blended approach for online and offline content delivery can ensure the most vulnerable children have access to continued learning. Such support can leverage the most widely available ICT technology, mobile phones¹³, while coaching caregivers on how to best support the learning of their children at home and continue doing so even when schools reopened. At the same time, schools are often best equipped to serve a coordination function between teachers and parents and the wider school community, and thus can reach the most vulnerable students more quickly.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

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Development Objective(s) (From PAD)

To enhance teaching practices of Arabic and Mathematics teachers and improve literacy and numeracy skills among the most vulnerable primary students in lagging Iraqi governorates.

Key Results

Component 1. Strengthen teaching practices of Arabic and Mathematics primary teachers in early literacy and numeracy

➤ **Activities**

- Train Arabic and Mathematics primary teachers on structured pedagogy and using guided lessons for literacy and numeracy skills, and implementing formative assessments.
- Implement continuous learning through peer learning (digital and face to face) and teacher coaching by mentor teachers.

➤ **Outputs and Intermediate Results**

- Teachers trained on structured pedagogy and guided lessons.
- Students assessed formatively by teachers.
- Peer to peer learning and communities of practice implemented.
- Teachers receiving on-going coaching.

Component 2. Support parents and schools with tailored learning tools to serve students while they learn at home or at school

➤ **Activities**

¹³ which 99 percent of households have (UNICEF 2019)



- Develop Providing primary students with supplementary literacy and numeracy booklets to promote Reading for Pleasure.
- Developing guidance materials (online and offline) to help parents/caregivers to their children’s learning and well-being.
- Offering school grants to provide basic supplies for teachers’, schools’, and students’ immediate needs.
 - **Outputs and Intermediate Results**
- Select students participate in catch up classes in literacy and numeracy.
- Supplementary reading and numeracy booklets provided to primary students.
- Guidance materials and tools to support children’s learning developed.

Component 3. Capacity building for school leaders, DOE and MOE and Monitoring and Evaluation

➤ **Activities**

- Developing a customized school grant manual and training of school management committees.
- Supporting implementation of the National Assessment Strategy and participation in an international large-scale assessment.
- Re-defining the role of educational supervisors located at the DOE level.
- Designing project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems for tracking student learning and teacher performance.

➤ **Outputs and Intermediate Results**

- Customized school grant manuals developed.
- School management committee members trained on SBM.
- Educational supervisor new TORs.
- Classroom assessment tools aligned with NAS developed.
- Participation of Iraq in an international large-scale assessment.
- M&E systems put in place.
- Select project interventions evaluated.

PDO Outcomes

Improved capacity of MOE & school leaders

- Evaluation of interventions

Improved literacy and numeracy skills among the most vulnerable primary students in lagging-behind governorate

- Students’ literacy scores
- Students’ numeracy scores

Enhanced teaching practices

- Ratings of teaching practices

D. Project Description

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Project Components

The project supports the most vulnerable primary students in acquiring early literacy and numeracy skills in three lagging Iraqi governorates, through support to schools, teachers, caregivers, as well as DOEs and the MOE. The project's component 1 aims to strengthen teaching practices of Arabic and Mathematics primary teachers in numeracy and literacy. Component 2 aims to support parents and schools with tailored learning tools to serve students while they learn at home or at school. Component 3 aims to support capacity building for school leaders, DOE and MOE and Monitoring and Evaluation.

Given the small funding envelope of US\$ 10 mil from the I3RF and limited timeframe of only two years for implementation (FY21-FY23), the project aims to maximize development impact and build the evidence base and capacity for future, larger operations by focusing on:

1. **Selecting primary schools in the three most lagging Iraqi governorates (Missan, Al-Qadisiya and Muthanna),** to provide support to the most marginalized and critically in need students, and to mitigate further deterioration of equity in learning.¹⁴ The project will benefit 270,000 primary students, their 4,500 Arabic and Math teachers in 804 select primary schools in three lagging governorates. This represents around 40% of students, Arabic & Math Teachers and Schools in each of the three governorates.¹⁵
2. **Foundational skills for primary student,** which are critical for students' learning and academic. Conversely, acquiring reading skills becomes more challenging as students become older, learning gaps often widen, effectively leaving poor performing and the most vulnerable students behind.¹⁶
3. **Building on, complementing, and adapting from** ongoing initiatives and operations, by building on the ongoing School-Based Management pilots supported by UNICEF, complementing distant learning measures and adapting teacher training materials developed under the Iraq Emergency Operation for Development (P155732).¹⁷
4. **Incorporating an evaluation and** national, governorate-level, and local **capacity building for potential scale up** under a future operation or larger program.¹⁸

¹⁴ See also targeting

¹⁵ See also Project Beneficiaries

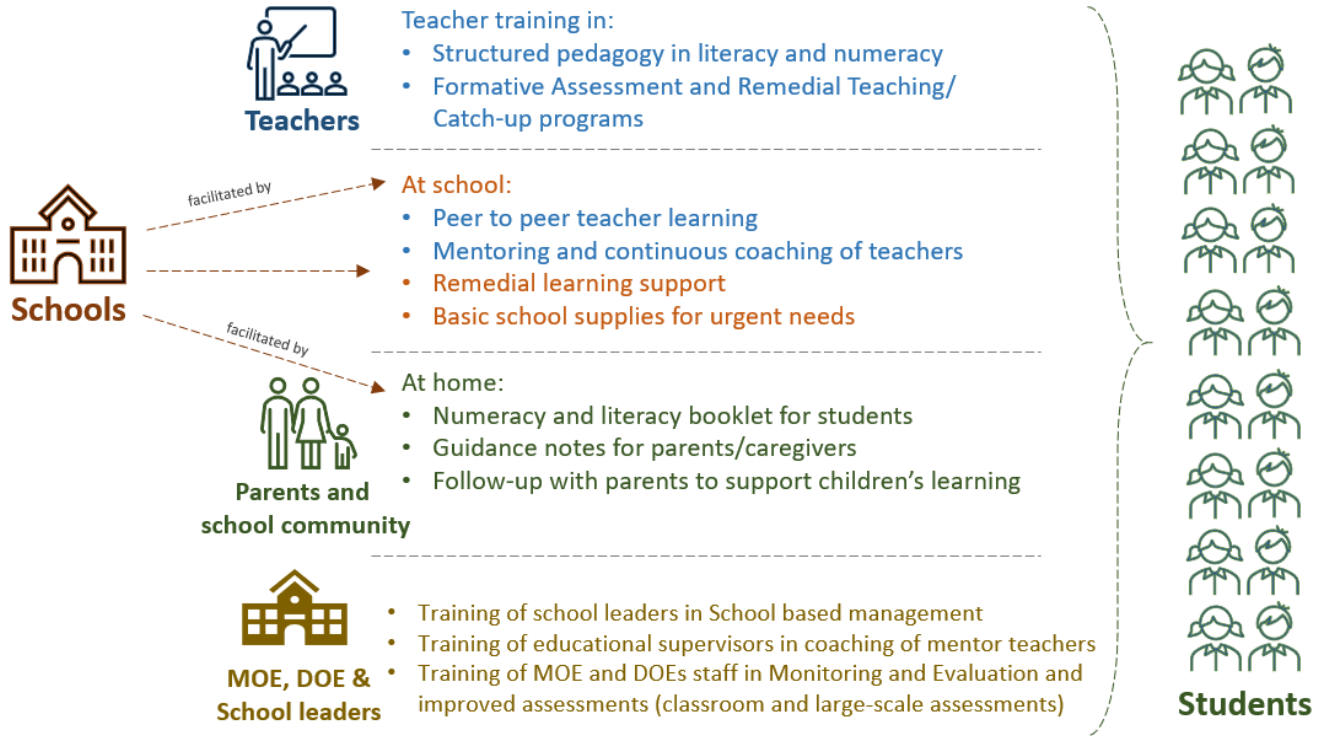
¹⁶ Recent research highlights the importance of focusing on foundational skills and measuring student progress, especially during the pandemic to ensure learning continuity. Spivack, M. 2020. To mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on education outcomes, systems should prioritize foundational skills and adapt instruction to children's learning levels. Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE). Issue Brief 20/01. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-IB_2020/01

¹⁷ See also lessons learned

¹⁸ See also: M&E



Figure 1: Support to students, teachers, schools and parents/caregivers under the project



Component 1. Strengthen teaching practices of Arabic and Mathematics primary teachers in early literacy and numeracy (US\$2.8 million)

The objective of this component is to improve the quality of teaching of early literacy and numeracy skills of primary school Arabic and Mathematics teachers. Activities under this component aim to support the development of a more competent cadre of primary teachers, effectively coached and mentored by local specialists, working together to improve the literacy and numeracy outcomes of students. This component will support around 4500 Arabic and Math primary school teachers, around 90 Master teacher trainers and, 1608 mentor teachers and around 5 DOE education supervisors.

1.1 Train Arabic and Mathematics primary teachers on structured pedagogy and using guided lessons for literacy and numeracy skills, and implementing formative assessments

This subcomponent will strengthen teaching practices in early literacy and numeracy, which are key skills for student's learning trajectory. In addition, the sub-component will support teachers to 'teach at the right level'¹⁹

¹⁹ 'Teaching at the right level' is an approach that focuses on the student's level of learning and adapts teaching to elevate student's individual learning levels. This is in contrast to a more curriculum focus, that might not reflect the actual learning levels of the student. This is particularly pertinent in a post-Covid scenario, where actual learning levels will likely not align with



to meet the needs of all students in their classes, including struggling readers and those who require additional (remedial or catch up) support with their learning, adapting their teaching practices to take into account the potential large learning losses incurred as a result of COVID-19. Formative assessments are the main diagnostic tool to *check in* and *act on* student learning levels in early literacy and math. With formative assessment practices in a very nascent stage in Iraq, this subcomponent will support development and teacher training on simple, easy to use formative assessment tools. The activities build on structured pedagogy and guided lessons on early literacy and numeracy developed under the EODP-AF Education component and implementing the same cascade teaching model, which proved to be effective.

Specific activities include: (1) Development of formative assessment and remedial support tools for teachers. (2) Adaptation of structured pedagogy in early literacy and numeracy developed under EODP-AF. (3) Training of around 90 Master trainers in structured pedagogy (early literacy and numeracy), formative assessment and remedial/catch-up support trained by the TA. (4) Training of around 4500 Arabic and Mathematics primary teachers by the Master Trainers at the DOE level (3 governorate DOEs).²⁰

1.2 Implement continuous learning through peer learning (digital and face to face) and teacher coaching by mentor teachers.

This subcomponent will support continuous coaching, mentoring and peer-to-peer learning – which is new to Iraq and proven successful in other conflict-affected countries.²¹ A large body of research on teacher training highlights the importance of regular follow-ups to teacher training, coaching and exchange of best practices among teachers for effective improvement of teaching practices and student learning.²² Education supervisors at the DOE level are well equipped to provide guidance to schools in teacher mentoring and allow for governorate level coordination of mentoring efforts.

The various activities will create a “community of practice” between principals, mentor teachers, teachers and educational supervisors. Building on the efforts of EODP AF Project²³, the around 4500 Arabic and Mathematics teachers trained under subcomponent 1 will receive training and coaching and be provided with continuous learning opportunities and engagement. This systematic engagement of the 4500 teachers will be carried out through online and offline peer-to-peer learning, for example through weekly meetings or WhatsApp group chats to exchange experiences and best practices. The key actors of change to influence teacher practices will be mentor teachers as they are present at the school and can coach teachers on a day-to-day basis with the extended support of the TA who will conduct regular checks and provide guidance notes. In addition, educational supervisors at the DOE level will also be trained as coaches and regularly check in with mentors at the school level to allow for inter-governorate coordination and quality assurance of coaching.²⁴ This group of “coaches”

curriculum expectations for the student’s specific grade level.

²⁰ International/consultant experts train the master trainers or trainer-of-teachers (TOTs) in the capital, and then those trainers train the teachers in their respective governorates (at the DOEs). Effectively, there is only one layer (the trainers) between the top experts and the teachers.

²¹ See USAID (2010) and USAID (2014).

²² Popova, Anna; Evans, David K.; Breeding, Mary E.; Arancibia, Violeta (2018).

²³ Which trained 95 trainers who then in turn trained 5000 teachers in early numeracy, literacy, and socio-emotional skills

²⁴ In Iraq, educational supervisors at the governorate level have so far been focused on quantitative, school infrastructure and personnel, supervision. As these supervisors are experienced senior teachers, who have been selected based on their accomplishments as teachers, the MOE has expressed interest in leveraging their experience more and expanding their role to more qualitative inputs and guidance to schools and teachers.



will receive an additional 2-3 structured 1-day training by the master trainers and TA during the academic year. All of the above will effectively create a “community of practice” between principals (their role is to support the creation of the community of practice and encourage attendance rather than to form part of the group per se), mentor teachers and teachers in which observations, feedback, and best practices on how to improve student learning are shared regularly to create an environment of exchange and learning among school staff. The aim of this sub-component is to improve the quality of teaching without “displacing” teachers from their classrooms.

Specific activities will include: (1) Development of guidance notes (digital and print) for teachers on peer-to-peer learning, including weekly plans. (2) Development of mentoring/coaching materials for mentor teachers including classroom observation tools (2) Training by TA of at least two mentor trainers per school (2 per school for a total of 804 schools) and educational supervisors in coaching of teacher and how to facilitate peer-to-peer learning. (3) Resources for and regular check in with mentor teachers during the school year.

The costs associated with component 1 include technical material development, training costs, production and distribution of training materials & guidance notes, TA and supervision. The evaluation and related costs are captured under component 3.

Component 2: Support parents and schools with tailored learning tools to serve students while they learn at home or at school (US\$5.6 million)

With blended learning likely continuing to be the norm in the school year 2021-2022, the objective of this component is to offer tailored learning support to students, caregivers and schools to serve students wherever they are learning. This component will supply tailored services, face-to-face at school or remotely at home, through catch up classes, additional reading materials targeted at the right level, and school grants to provide urgently needed supplies and equipment to mitigate further learning loss due to COVID-19 related school closures. With intermittent school closures, and access to remote learning and modality of remote learning varying significantly between regions and governorates, schools are best equipped to assess and target resources and equipment where they are needed most. This component will support the 804 selected primary schools, and around 270,000 students and their caregivers in the three lagging governorates

2.1 Providing primary students with supplementary literacy and numeracy booklets to promote *Reading for Pleasure*. Reading is an essential skill that unlocks the door to learning in every other area. However, many children in Iraq have little experience and guidance reading at home and for pleasure, which is proven to have significant positive effects in acquiring early literacy skills.²⁵ This subcomponent will leverage existing e-tech options, for example online e-libraries, and proven paper-based initiatives, such as the *little readers series* to provide quality, age-appropriate literacy and numeracy materials to children, along with accompanying materials for parents/caregivers to support children’s learning.

These accompanying materials are inclusive in that they support parents regardless of their educational level and reading skills.²⁶ Regular follow-up with parents, for example through text messages or community organizers, will

²⁵ Reading for pleasure, National Literacy Trust (2006)

²⁶ See Fernald et al (2013), Knauer et al (2020)



ensure continuous support of parents to students (see component 2.2). The age-appropriate materials will be a series of complementary booklets (little readers) that are distributed to students throughout the school year. It will be delivered to the students either through the school directly, or from schools to caregivers in case they remain closed or will need to close during the academic year 2021/2022.

Specific activities will include: (1) Adapt/Select literacy and numeracy booklets (series of little readers) through TA. (2) production/distribution of booklets to schools

2.2 Developing guidance materials (online and offline) to help parents/caregivers to their children's learning and well-being. To address the challenges of COVID-related school closures and better enable parents to support their children's learning, this subcomponent will distribute resources that will guide and support parents in helping their children learn at home. The project will leverage innovative communication tools, including on- and off-line options, such as text message nudges, live follow-up phone calls, smartphone apps, etc., along with paper-based written and printed materials, depending on local circumstances, to regularly follow-up with parents and offer support. These tools will be accessible to parents regardless of their education level in a variety of formats, including visual and audio. This subcomponent will build on implementation channels established with DOEs' and other partner's initiatives, for example initiatives from Sesame Street, Save The Children, and the UK's Education Endowment Foundation, and a pilot undertaken as part of the Iraq Social Protection Support Program of the World Bank's Social Protection and Jobs Global Practice on Supporting Parents and Students Learning Practices at home in two governorates of Iraq. The materials will be preceded by a communications campaign in targeted areas to increase community engagement and parental awareness and involvement.

Specific activities will include: (1) Communications campaign in targeted areas to increase parental awareness and engagement. (2) Material development parental support tools to children's learning & well-being (offline & online), including guidance reference to booklets. (3) Regular follow-up with parents through TA, for example through text message nudging.

2.3 Offering school grants to provide basic supplies for teachers', schools', and students' immediate needs. This subcomponent will build on UNICEF's School-Based-Management (SBM) pilot²⁷ to provide grants to schools through a direct transfer from the Ministry of Education - Project Management Team (MOE-PMT) to the school account.²⁸ UNICEF's SBM pilot in Iraq is a comprehensive program that contributes to gradually moving from strict centralization to decentralization at the school level, offering local communities the chance to participate in solving local issues that impact the quality of education for their children. The SBM focuses on improving the quality of school environments, learning outcomes and community participation through School Management Committees (SMC) and Parents and Teacher Associations (PTA) (UNICEF.2019). The program's impact evaluation²⁹ concluded that the SBM pilot improved the learning environment, led to increased parental support of children's learning and improved stakeholder coordination, and created channels for improved support to the most vulnerable students within the school. In combination with the added focus on catch-up classes, the SBM is expected to have positive effects on learning and retention. These school grants will follow a per capita formula

²⁷ The MOE-UNICEF's joint SBM pilot program was rolled out in 1,027 schools in 11 governorates over three school years (SY 2017/2018, SY2018/2019, SY2019/2020). The program comprised training for principals and teachers, provision of guideline materials, school improvement plan development, and monetary school transfers (UNICEF 2019)

²⁸ For more details on monitoring of fund transfer and use, please refer to FM section

²⁹ UNICEF Reference SBM Evaluation report



(US\$6 per student) and will fund urgently needed supplies, equipment as well as catch up programs with a focus on ensuring learning continuity for all children. All 270,000 students in the 804 schools will benefit from the school grants, which will be paid out twice, on an annual basis.

Specific activities will include: (1) School grants paid to schools twice on an annual basis

The costs associated with component 2 include consultancies/service providers, material provision, school grants, TA and supervision.

Component 3: Capacity building for school leaders, DOE and MOE and Monitoring and Evaluation (USD \$1.6 million).

The objective of this component is to strengthen the capacity of the MOE at the national level, to support the MOE and DOEs in establishing a holistic learning assessment system and M&E system more broadly, to strengthen the capacity of school leaders in target areas to effectively manage school grants, and further expand the role of supervisors to support mentor teachers. This component will support around 804 selected primary schools, their school principal and their SBM committee representatives, as well as around 20 MOED officials, 15 supervisors at the DOE level and 15 DOE officials (5 per each of the three governorates).

3.1 Developing a customized school grant manual and training of school management committees. A large body of international research highlights the positive effects of school-based management and school autonomy on student learning, teacher motivation and more efficient use of resources.³⁰ Decentralization has only recently been introduced in Iraq in 2019 but schools are not yet direct recipients of funds which would allow them to purchase even basic supplies. However, moving gradually to more decentralized management, SBM practices is an objective of the MOE and GOI under its decentralization plans. It provides a level of flexibility to schools to choose the supplies that they most urgently need. This subcomponent will build on the UNICEF supported SBM program to provide selected schools with the school grant implementation manual³¹ and capacity building/training, complementing the financial resources provided under component 2, to purchase basic supplies for students and cover costs to provide remedial/catch-up programs.

Specific activities will include: (1) Adaptation/Development of school grant manual including eligible expenditures. (2) Training of Principals/School Committee in School-Based-Management.

3.2 Supporting implementation of the National Assessment Strategy and participation in an international large-scale assessment. This subcomponent will build on the World Bank's ongoing Technical Assistance (TA), which supports the MOE in developing a National Assessment Strategy Framework. Iraq has never participated in any international large-scale assessment and is in acute need of updated learning data to improve learning in the country. This subcomponent will provide financial support to Iraq to participate, for the first time, in an international large-scale international assessment (the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA)'s Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2023 study for

³⁰ For example, OECD finds that "greater autonomy in decisions relating to curricula, assessments and resource allocation tend to be associated with better student performance, particularly when schools operate within a culture of accountability (OECD, 2011).

³¹ A list of eligible expenditures will be included in a customized school grant manual.



Grade 4 students).³² At the same time, classroom assessment, especially formative assessment is underdeveloped in Iraq. The need for teachers to continuously assess student's learning and adapt teaching based on the learning levels of students has become more important in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis and likely learning losses. This subcomponent will support the MOE in starting to implement its National Assessment Strategy Frameworks, specifically by providing technical support to classroom assessment development. These frameworks will also be informed by the formative assessment materials and training under component 1.

Specific activities will include: (1) financial support to participate in TIMSS 2023 Grade 4 (participation fee). (2) TA to develop classroom assessment tools.

3.3. Re-defining the role of educational supervisors located at the DOE level and supporting them in their new functions supporting the mentor teachers in schools. Improving the quality of education is a key priority for Iraq – and ensuring quality along the education service delivery chain from MOEs, to DOEs to schools, is imperative. Currently, the role of educational supervisor is reduced to visiting schools throughout the to conduct some general inspection of the school and its staff, specifically teachers, and mostly referring teachers to external trainings.³³ Iraq has a well-established system with national guidelines for school inspection and visits. In the three selected governorates, educational inspectors conduct between 2-4 school visits each week, with a ratio of between 60 – 115 teaches per educational supervisors.³⁴ Building on the established system of regular school visits, and to be aligned with international practices, the project will support the revision of the scope of work/TORs of educational supervisors to shift from a sole inspection role to a support function providing advice to mentor teachers and observing teachers in the classrooms.

Specific activities will include: (1) Revision of the ToRs of the educational supervisors. (2) Providing training on coaching.

3.4. Designing project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems for tracking student learning and teacher performance. Firstly, this subcomponent will support the evaluation of training and learning interventions, through an impact evaluation of activities, to inform scale up of the activities. Secondly, the component will provide technical assistance to support the MOE and DOE's in systematically monitoring learning, teaching practices and teacher satisfaction levels of training received. This will include monitoring tools to early grade literacy and numeracy skills leveraging innovative online and/or offline assessment methods and building on already developed learning assessments.³⁵ This sub-component is building on the Mobile Data Collection platform established under the EODP-AF education component offering quick data collection opportunities.

Specific activities will include: (1) Development and implementation of the Evaluation (TA). (2) Adapting M&E tools and providing training to MOE and DOE officials on monitoring and evaluation.

³² Iraq aims to participate in the IEA's TIMSS 2023, Grade 4. The Iraq MOED has signed an MOU with IEA to that effect in September 2021.

³³ School inspectors are selected and appointed by the General Education Directorates in the governorates.

³⁴ Number of education supervisors per governorate: Missan 130 supervisors, Al-Qadisiya 195 supervisors, Muthanna 56 supervisors

³⁵ Yet to be decided. Could be either another implementation of EGRA and EGMA, or a version of the WBG's SDI or the citizen led ASER, which was implemented in Iraq in 2017. Through tablets and phones, building on regional common goods developed as part of the World Bank's MENA Regional Education COVID-19 Response Project (P175697).



The costs associated with component 3 include TA, materials, training, supervision and operating expenditures.

Legal Operational Policies

	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No

Summary of Assessment of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

Note to Task Teams: This summary section is downloaded from the PAD data sheet and is editable. It should match the text provided by E&S specialist. If it is revised after the initial download the task team must manually update the summary in this section. ***Please delete this note when finalizing the document.***

The project has limited environmental impacts and the environmental risk has been rated moderate. The relevant Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) are ESS1 on Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts, ESS2 on Labor and Working Conditions, ESS3 on Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management, ESS4 on Community Health and Safety, and ESS10 on Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure. The project is envisaged to finance activities such as capacity building and technical assistance, provision of supplementary reading materials at home, implementing communication tools, including online and offline, for parents to best support the learning of their children at home and continue to support when schools reopen, grants to serve teachers and families immediate needs, including teaching and learning supplies, and supplementary reading materials to strengthen reading. The environmental impacts associated with using these resources are the aspects of solid waste management, management of e-waste at end of life of equipment, and the usual occupational health and safety and due to COVID-19.

The social risk has been rated Moderate. The social risks can be summarized as follows: (a) risks related to social exclusion and targeting in two activities including i) Tailor support for students at home or in school; ii) Provide school grants for the poorest, most resource deprived schools to improve supply in resource-limited areas and thereby enhance equity, (iii) risks related to labor and working conditions for project workers of the PIA, and iv) Risk of exposure of youth, including vulnerable youth and women to sexual harassment or exploitation SH/SEA, and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) and Community Health and Safety Risks due to COVID-19 contagion. The project will not result in any risks related to involuntary resettlement.

In accordance with the ESSs, the necessary instruments have been identified. However, the project has been processed under the application of Paragraph 12 of Section III of the Bank Policy: including the deferral of safeguards instruments to implementation. It was also decided that safeguards instruments will be combined into one document. As such in accordance with ESS1, an ESMF will be prepared by the PIA and will include all the requirements for managing solid waste, e-waste, and occupational health and safety. In accordance with ESS2, a Labor Management Procedure (LMP) will be prepared by the PIA in order to identify the types of labor, measures to mitigate for any GBV issues at the



workplace. In accordance with ESS3, resource efficiency and climate-change benefits will be analyzed. Measures for the management of waste and pollution prevention will be described in the ESMF. In accordance with ESS10, the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) with specific deliverables, timeframe, and responsibilities, and a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) will be prepared by the PIA. The ESCP and SEP will be disclosed before project negotiations in the country by the client. The ESCP, ESRS, and SEP will be disclosed prior to project appraisal, while the ESMF and LMP will be disclosed on the World Bank's external website before project negotiations.

Note: To view the Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts, please refer to the Appraisal Stage ESRS Document.

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E. Implementation

Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

Project oversight will fall under the purview of a multisectoral task force (“the Advisory Committee”), which is chaired by the MOE with overall responsibility for policy formulation and coordination. This task force will comprise staff from the MOE’s Financial Affairs, Curriculum Directorate, Teacher Training and Development Directorate, Assessment and Examination Directorates, as well as representatives from the Ministry of Planning. The task force has already been established early on during the project design and has provided technical input and made decisions on activities, project design and targeting.

Project day-to-day implementation will fall under the purview of a multisectoral committee which is chaired by the MOE with overall responsibility for policy formulation and coordination. The MoE through its Project Management Team, under the Deputy Minister of Planning will serve as the implementing agency and will be responsible for implementation, ownership, and accountability of results. Coordination and cooperation on education activities between the MOE, the Ministry of Planning and the PMT is well established through implementation of ongoing EODP-AF and ASA activities. The existing structures including staff will allow for a smooth transition to implement the activities under this grant.

The DOEs will serve important coordinating and quality assurance functions. DOEs will serve as a coordinating function between MOE and schools. Specifically, they will support coordination and distribution of centrally procured items, including reading materials, to schools. They will coordinate and facilitate teacher, educational supervisor and principal training, specifically those activities following a cascade training approach that will require training provision at a central, governorate level location. They will play a coordinating function on school-based management implementation (intra governorate coordination) and exchange of best practices, also with other governorates (inter governorate coordination). DOEs play a crucial role in supporting education supervisors, located within the DOE, and their changing role to provide more qualitative support to schools, as mentor teachers, in addition to the annual inspection of school and its staff. Lastly, DOE’s play a supporting role in ensuring implementation of monitoring and evaluation of project activities, specifically facilitating, and supporting the implementation of student learning and teacher performance assessment at the beginning and end of the project.



Schools will play a facilitating function to ensure all activities are cohesively implemented and reach its intended beneficiaries – students, teachers and parents. The project recognizes that schools are often best equipped to serve a coordination function between teachers and parents and the wider school community, and thus can reach the most vulnerable students more quickly. Schools will facilitate continuous professional development of teachers – creating the community of practice. They will facilitate school improvement and school-based management plans. Schools will also facilitate distribution of offline and online learning materials to students and caregivers for learning at home and provide additional catch up classes and materials.

The project will be implemented over two academic years (2021/2022 and 2022/2023).

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