

COMPLETION REPORT FOR PROJECT:

Summary

Participating UN Organisation:

UNICEF

Cluster:

Cluster B: Education & Culture

Project No. and Project Title:

B1- 24: Essential materials for improved learning for all primary level students in Iraq

Project Location/Region/Province:

All 21 Directorates of Education in Iraq

Reporting Period:

October 2006 – March 2008

Report Number:

Completion report

Counterpart organisations / implementing partners:

Ministry of Education (MoE), Directorates of Education (DoEs), UN agencies and NGOs

Project cost: US\$ 18,172,619**Abbreviations and acronyms:**

MoE	Ministry Of Education
DoE	Directorate of Education
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
UNESCO	UN Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
UNHCR	UN High Commission for Refugees
CWC	Child Welfare Commission

Project Duration:**Project Status:** Completed

Project Duration: 02 October 2006 – 02 April 2007

Project Extensions: Two

- 15 February 2007 till 30 June 2007
- 30 June 2007 till 2 October 2007

I. Purpose

Main objectives and outcomes expected as per approved Project/Programme/project document:

Main objectives: The overall objective of this project is to enhance access to and quality of primary level education by providing essential learning materials to about 4.7 million students, with the goal to alleviate the effects of economic hardship on Iraqi families and thus promote the enrolment of age 6 children in primary schools while ensuring participation of children age 7-12 in primary schools.

Outcomes expected: A total of 4.7 million Iraqi children aged 6 -12 (grades 1-6) are provided with the necessary learning materials during the start of the 2006/7 scholastic year. All 4.7 students are receiving 8 exercise books, 10 pencils, 2 sharpeners, 2 erasers, colouring pencils and 1 ruler. In addition, 3,937,849 students in grades 1-6 are receiving one drawing book each, while 1.1 million newly enrolled grade one students are receiving school bags.

Reference to how the programme/project related to the UN Assistance Strategy to Iraq and how it aimed to support Iraq national development goals (National Development Strategy), the Millennium Development Goals and other goals as pertinent:

The project is fully in line with the 2005-2007 UN Strategy for Assistance to Iraq and conforms closely to priorities expressed by the Iraqi Authorities during meetings with MoE at the end of July 2006. MoE discussed the magnitude of the current dire economic hardship and its impact on families' ability to provide necessary school items for their children.

The main purpose of the project is to strengthen the overall quality of education and service delivery at primary and intermediate levels, as well to improve the overall learning environment.

The objectives are set against the background of the Iraqi National Development Strategy (NDS), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly Goals 2 and 3 and the Education for All (EFA) Framework for Action. The activities will be closely aligned with specific gender, environment, employment, and security rights, and will address -as closely as possible- the areas of reconstruction, rehabilitation and employment creation.

Project Management Arrangements

Line Ministry: UNICEF implements all activities in close collaboration with MoE and its DoEs, MoHE, local authorities, international/national NGOs, private sector and donors. The main implementing line ministry is the MoE, which collaborates with MoHE to provide direction and ensure Iraqi ownership of the programmes/projects. MoE manages all projects through DoEs in the governorates. Collaboration with NGOs is mainly in the area of rehabilitation of schools, with renewed focus on the soft component of hygiene and sanitation in schools, including mobilization and capacity building of local stakeholders (Parent Teacher Association (PTAs) and communities) in project implementation.

Collaboration with UN Agencies: UNICEF and UNESCO provide leadership for ensuring sector-wide perspective to the programme. UNICEF is primarily responsible for the development and implementation of the basic education strand, including Early Childhood and Primary and Intermediate levels of education, as well as for inclusion of learning opportunities for 12-18 year old out-of-school children. UNESCO's prime focus is on Secondary, Tertiary and Vocational/Technical levels.

Co-ordination: As Cluster Coordinator, UNICEF actively leads the process of ensuring the synergy of interventions by fostering joint programming and implementation with agencies,

based on their respective technical expertise, area of specialization and comparative advantage.

II. Resources

Total approved budget and summary of resources available to the programme/project from the UNDG Iraq Trust Fund and non-Trust Fund resources where applicable:

UNDG ITF funds received: As of June 2006, UNICEF's total Education Programme budget for 2004-2006 was US\$ 10,058,950. By the fourth quarter of the year, the UNDG ITF approved budget totalled US\$ 18,172,619 to cover costs of essential learning supplies for 4.7 million primary level students under this project. UNDG ITF also approved a second joint UNICEF and HABITAT project (US\$ 9,029,119) to cover upgrading 90 schools to child-friendly standards.

Human Resources: UNICEF has three well qualified education staff between the Baghdad, Erbil and Basra offices assisted by 10 qualified engineers and 15 facilitators hired under an institutional contract. In addition, UNICEF has full fledged operations, supply/logistics and finance support units in Baghdad and Erbil offices, which support education as well as other sectoral programmes. A senior international education officer (head of section), and 3 project officers are managing and supporting the project from the Iraq Support Centre in Amman (ISCA).

III. Results

An assessment of the extent to which the programme/project component / programme /project is progressing in relation to the outcomes and outputs expected for the year:

The Trust Fund significantly contributed to the procurement and distribution of essential learning materials to approximately 4.7 million students. 100% of the essential learning materials procured were delivered to all DoE warehouses and onward to 4.7 million Iraqi children aged 6-12. Each child received 8 exercise books of 194 pages each, a box of 10 pencils, 2 pencil sharpeners, 2 erasers, 1 ruler, one drawing book and one box of colour pencil. In addition, 1.1 million newly enrolled grade 1 students received one school bag each.

Main activities undertaken and achievements/ impacts:

All essential learning materials were delivered to DoE warehouses and a total of 4.7 million Iraqi children aged 6-12 were provided with essential learning materials. This most welcome development was made possible through the timely support of the European Commission following an urgent request from MoE. The Minister of Education had approached UNICEF and the UNDG ITF to help cater for this critical need, due to lack of funds to support this project at the Ministry level.

This initiative contributed to the improvement of teaching and learning practices in the classroom. It will also alleviate some of the cost burdens of education, especially for poor parents who will be encouraged to send their children, particularly girls to school, many of whom would have otherwise dropped out of school.

UNICEF-supported Back-To-School Campaigns in 2004 and 2005 have been a success. Large quantities of essential learning and teaching materials were procured and distributed to over 6 million primary and intermediate level (grades 1-9) students in 17,000 schools in Iraq.

Implementation constraints, lessons learned from addressing these and knowledge gained from assessments, evaluations and studies that have taken place during the reporting period:

The lack of improvement in the security situation and the high turnover of staff at MoE and DoE levels hindered the effective implementation of the project. However, UNICEF succeeded in establishing close working ties with the Minister of Education and his office; this helped reduce red tape and bottlenecks for implementation. Nevertheless, for various reasons, continuous replacement of key officials/directors remained an issue when it came to holding regular meetings of the Sector Working Group on Education.

Given the security situation and the consequent restricted movement of staff and government officials, monitoring of the activities is undertaken by a team of facilitators and engineers, hired by UNICEF through an external contractor. The facilitators and engineers (some of whom were previously UNICEF/UN staff) provided critical monitoring/supervisory input to the implementation of the project. They tracked the arrival of supplies/ equipment; supervised civil works and installation of equipment in various governorates, while reporting to UNICEF staff in Baghdad, Basra, Erbil and Amman for technical guidance and adherence to the implementation schedule. This allowed UNICEF to minimize the exposure of its national staff to risks involved in travelling to project sites, while still being able to monitor programme implementation processes and results.

Lack of proper coordination between MoE and DoEs continues to hamper the implementation of projects. This issue was discussed with MoE officials at UNICEF's Annual Review Meeting and will be tabled at Sector Working Group meetings to enable MoE, as well as supporting donors and agencies to explore remedies together.

Finally, the lack of recurrent budgets with the DoEs hinders their ability to distribute education materials to schools in an efficient manner.

Implementation and Monitoring

UNICEF Copenhagen managed the procurement of supplies from various sources around the world. Supplies were then delivered to DoEs, where they were stored in warehouses. UNICEF supported DoEs in developing detailed plans for the distribution of supplies, while also providing resources and expertise to support the process. By using private truckers, DoEs distributed all materials to schools and onward to students.

All programme implementation was monitored, to a greater or lesser degree, despite the extremely difficult working environment. Certification of work and signed receipt of materials was collected from all DoEs by UNICEF.

During and after completion of activities, reports including achievements, lessons learned and obstacles are prepared (including photos) and checked by Education staff on the ground, then sent to Amman, where they are analysed and feedback is given on ways to improve implementation and overcome obstacles.

Key partnerships and inter-agency collaboration, impact on results:

UNICEF is coordinating the Education and Culture Cluster within the UN Strategic Plan, while also chairing the Education Coordination Forum in Amman. It is also an active member of the Sector Working Group on Education and provides technical support to MoE jointly with USAID, UNESCO and the World Bank. This has helped ensure good prioritization of education projects funded through the UNDG ITF and helped avoid duplication by teaming up with other agencies on joint programming.

Highlights and cross cutting issues pertinent to the results being reported on, e.g. Gender disaggregation, policy engagement and participation of the public:

The programme has a strong gender dimension: the number of girls benefiting from the first phase of this project was 1,920,401, while the number of boys was 2,424,208. To offset this imbalance (0.13 gender gap), and based on findings of the 2003-2004 school survey, positive discriminatory measures were built within the UNICEF 2006 education programme, including an assessment to unveil constraints to girls' enrolment and attendance in formal primary schools, and identify ways of addressing these constraints. Based on findings from the survey, MoE and UNICEF jointly drafted a strategy for accelerating education for girls in southern Iraq, which was shared with donors and supporting partners as part of UNICEF's fundraising drive in 2006.

Under the UNICEF-supported Accelerated Learning Programme for out-of-school children, as well as under the Teacher Training programme, policy dialogue with MoE resulted in a more proactive engagement of their staff, and their training needs were identified in the areas of proposal writing and donor coordination.

IV. Follow up actions and sustainability

Priority actions that should be supported/implemented following completion of project to build on achievements and partnerships rectify shortcomings encountered, and use the lessons learned during the project with strong emphasis on achieving sustainability of the outcomes:

Anecdotal evidence (from UNICEF facilitators, key MoE officials and DoE staff) indicates that the delivery of essential learning materials has contributed directly to an increase in overall enrolment and attendance rates of primary level students, especially in rural areas, by reducing economic burdens on the most deprived families.

Indication of major adjustments in the strategies, targets or key outcomes and outputs:

No Major adjustment made.

Estimated Budget required:

NA

Annex 1: Key Performance Indicators – Log Frame Matrix

Objectives	Measurable indicators	Means of verification	Outcomes
<p>The overall objective of this project is to enhance access to and quality of primary level education by providing essential learning materials to about 4.7 million students, with the goal to alleviate the effects of economic hardship on Iraqi families and thus promote the enrolment of age 6 children in primary schools while ensuring participation of children age 7-12 in primary schools.</p>	<p>Enrolment and attendance rates in primary and intermediate schools</p>	<p>MoE reports School Survey DoE Reports</p>	<p>Anecdotal reports from MoE and DoEs show that the education supplies attracted more students to schools</p>
<p>Output A total of 4.7 million Iraqi children aged 6-12 (grades 1-6) are provided with the necessary learning materials during the start of the 2006/2007 scholastic year.</p>	<p>Enrolment and attendance rates in primary and intermediate schools</p>	<p>MoE reports School Survey DoE Reports</p>	<p>4.5 million Primary level students (6-12) in 18 governorates received essential learning materials</p>

Annex 2: Project Costs

CATEGORY	UNDG ITF approved budget (US\$)	Actual COST	Percentage of Approved	Budget Revision approved (US\$) (Date:25/02/2007)	Percentage of revision
1. Personnel • including staff and consultants	158,400	107,695.34	68%		
2. Contracts • including companies, professional services, grants	392,000	271,418.00	69%		
3. Training	-	-	-	-	-
4. Transport	-	-	-	-	-
5. Supplies and commodities (including freight)	15,584,932	15,791,977.74	101.4 %		
6. Equipment	-	-	-	-	-
7. Travel	50,000	3,699	7.4%		
8. Security	798,797.72	794,466.58	99.4%		
9. Miscellaneous					
10. Agency Management Support	1,188,489.20	1,188,489.20	100%		
Total Expenditure		18,157,745.86			

NB: Certified financial statement showing the actual cost will be separately provided as soon as it is made available by UNICEF Headquarters. .

Annex 3: List of contract awards by procurement method

Contract No.	Value US\$	Purpose
SSA/IRQA/06/1564	80,625	Contract for office rent and related services for education monitors for 6 months in Baghdad
SSA/IRQA/07/113	46,742	Contract for office rent and related services for education monitors for 6 months in Baghdad
SSA/IRQA/07/115	97,458	Contract for UNICEF monitors for a period of two months
SSA/IRQA/07/436	46,593	Contract for UNICEF monitors for a period of one month