GIRLS EDUCATION IN IRAQ

2010

unicef

A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF GIRLS EDUCATION IN IRAQ

**With recommendations for the Government of Iraq and
for UNICEF Iraq in their support for the Government in the
development of girls' access to good quality education**

Dr Matthew Griffiths

*"This year's report presents a compelling argument as to why realising
the full potential of Arab women is an indispensable prerequisite for development in
all Arab states".*

The Arab Human Development Report 2005

Contents

Executive Summary

This report contains a situation analysis of girls' education in Iraq and recommendations for improving girls' access to good quality schooling. The situation analysis is based on enrolment data provided by the Ministry of Education in Iraq, a range of currently available reports and other documentation, and on the responses of 80 Iraqi girls to a questionnaire relating to their own experiences of school and their views on girls' education. The picture is incomplete because no data on girls' attendance or success rates are available and these are crucial to a full situational analysis.

In Iraq the overall number of children receiving primary education has declined between 2004-05 and 2007-08 by 88,164, with no improvement in the percentage of girls enrolled. Gross enrolment figures provided for the academic year 2005 – 2005 show 5,163,440 children enrolled in primary education. Girls account for 44.74% of students. Figures for 2007-2008 show 5,065,276 children enrolled in primary education, with 44.8 % being girls. This means that for every 100 boys enrolled in primary schools in Iraq, there are just under 89 girls.

This under representation of girls in primary school in Iraq has been known for many years. The fact that there are declining numbers of girls in each successive grade has also been identified analyses of the data. Analysis of the 2007 -2008 data shows the same picture. In every governorate a smaller percentage of girls than boys start school. There are no governorates where the number of children completing primary education is acceptable, and it is even less acceptable for girls. The current data replicate previously available data in showing a generally declining percentage of girls in each successive primary school grade. Some 75% of girls who start school have dropped out during, or at the end of, primary school and so do not go on to intermediate education. Many of them will have dropped out after grade 1. When all governorates' figures are combined, there are 21.66% fewer girls in grade 2 than in grade 1. Similarly there is a 28.63% national drop in the number of girls between grades 5 and 6. By the first intermediate class, only 25% the number of girls in grade 1 are in school; by the third intermediate class the figure is 20%.

The percentage of girls in primary school classes in highest in Erbil, Dohuk and Sulaimaniya. These three governorates also have the highest percentage of children in pre-school education. In Erbil 15.8% of children attend preschool provision, Dohuk 11.3% and Sulaimaniya 11.4% compared with, for example 5.7% in Baghdad, 8.6% in Kirkuk, or 3.3% in Diyala.

There is also a major issue with the number of children in each grade who are over age. The difference between gross and net enrolment data for 2007-08 shows that 659,896 children are above the age for the grade that they are in. This represents 13% of all primary school children - more than one in every ten. Of those children, 228,829 children were still attending primary school when they were aged 13 – 15+.

The net enrolment rate for girls 45.8%, as against a gross enrolment rate of 44.8%. This shows a significantly greater number of overage boys than girls. For example, only one third of teenagers still in primary schools were girls.

In order to increase girls' participation in education, it is vital to gain an insight into why they never attend school or drop out before completing their basic education. A small scale survey of 80 Iraqi girls was therefore included in this piece of work. While this is not a large or statistically valid sample, their responses provide a clear insight into many of the reasons why girls do not go to school. As would be expected, parents, particularly fathers, play a major role in whether the girls can attend school or not. The girls refer to a range of reasons why families do not support girls attending school. These include concerns about safety, family poverty, a reluctance to allow adolescent girls to continue to attend school, the distance from home to school, early marriage and the need to help at home. The journey to and from school presents problems caused by fast traffic, dogs or boys. Girls are frequently de-motivated by the behaviour of teachers who beat them, distress them and are unwilling to explain subject matter that a student does not understand. Their answers make frequent references to being beaten or insulted by teachers, and to teachers being unwilling to give explanations in lessons or support students in their learning. The girls describe their schools are unwelcoming and unpleasant with too few facilities and resources. Schools are described as dirty, poorly maintained and uncomfortable, with dirty lavatories and no drinking water available. Safety is an issue, particularly in areas of major instability and insecurity. The concerns about safety relate to both military conflict and civil crime such as abduction and rape.

To address the issues identified, two sets of recommendations are included in this report. The first for the government and education services in Iraq, address key policy issues and their implementation; the second for the Education Section of UNICEF Iraq are for consideration for inclusion in their work plan as is drawn up for the support of the provision of education in Iraq. Those for the government focus on policy development and implementation, awareness-raising, school improvement and development, pre-service and in-service teacher training, curriculum development, alternative education strategies, and security for girls travelling to and from school.

Those for UNICEF Iraq describe initiatives which would support national initiatives. They could be piloted in specific areas for ultimate mainstreaming in particular governorates or across Iraq. The recommended initiatives are designed to complement and extend the work already being carried out by UNICEF in collaboration with the Iraqi Government, Ministries of Education, Governorates and local groups, in line with the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) 2007-2010.

Terminology

All abbreviations or acronyms used in this document are explained in the text.

Educational disadvantage: a child is at an educational disadvantage if:

- enrolment at a school is difficult or impossible , and they do not have proper alternative educational provision;
- they are able to enrol at a school but regular attendance is difficult or impossible;
- they do not complete the full cycle of basic education;
- they find it difficult to learn when they are at school because of fears and worries, because they do not have effective teaching or the additional support that some children need in order to learn, because of a lack of text books, note books or other basic school equipment, disability, hunger, stigmatisation or other issue which has an impact on the individual child and her ability to learn;
- they are receiving a substandard education because of difficulties or failures in the educational system such as inappropriate curriculum, poorly developed or maintained buildings or inadequate basic facilities at school.

In order for all currently educationally disadvantaged children to benefit from education each child needs to have:

- a school place available to him or her;
- the means to take up that school place and to complete his/her basic education, with the additional support required to address his/her special needs, if this is needed
- the motivation to take up that school place and complete his/her basic education

Formal Education: education in school, taught by qualified teachers, within normal school hours, leading to accepted qualifications

Informal Education: education provided by qualified teachers in some other way than formal education, leading to accepted qualifications. For example e-learning, the Accelerated Learning Programme, classes taught out of normal school hours to enable children to catch up on missed years of learning.

Non Formal Education: education provided by those not qualified as teachers in any setting, not leading to accepted qualifications. For example, reading classes, training for parents and carers in child development, mother-craft and family care classes.

1- THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report sets out a situation analysis report based on all information available relevant to the situation of girls education and the issues surrounding lack of enrolment and attendance. It includes recommendations for national and local government in Iraq and recommendations for future programming for UNICEF Iraq. The report has been prepared to meet the requirements of Terms of Reference for a six week desk review plus two weeks in the UNICEF Iraq office in Amman, Jordan. The terms of reference for this piece of work are set out in appendix 1 of this report.

2- METHODOLOGY

In order to produce a picture of the current state of girls' education in Iraq, statistics on education compiled by the government of Iraq in 2004-05 and 2007-08 were analysed by a consultant working on an eight week contract for UNICEF Iraq. `The analysis of the data was supplemented by the contents of a range of reports and additional material made available through the UNICEF office for Iraq, and from elsewhere, and a survey of the attitudes to school of 80 Iraqi girls between the ages of 7 and 18 years. The complete list of resources is included in appendix 2 of this report. Appendix 3 contains the questionnaire used to explore the attitudes of the girls to schooling and an analysis of their responses. This small scale survey is not based on any scientifically valid sampling techniques and it is intended only to provide an insight rather than a full picture of the factors which are likely to influence the enrolment of Iraqi girls in school.

3- CONSTRAINTS

This report must be read within the context of several constraints, which affect but do not invalidate the findings. There was a long delay in obtaining the data on which the situation analysis is based. It was to be ready by mid 2008 but was not received until a year later. This means that the situational analysis that it not as up-date as it might have been and that the current situation may be different. The statistical data relate to the academic year 2007-2008. Initially it was planned that the data would be analysed before this piece of work would be carried out so that the report could be being based on that analysis. This plan could not be carried out. The academic year 2008-2009 has been completed, and the 2009-2010 year is well underway. Education Ministry spokesman Walid Hassan is quoted as saying[1], 'There are more 262,943 students this year than that in 2008'. Assuming that this is correct, the trends identified do not differ significantly from those observable in 2004-2005 data so it is

---

[1] New school year begins in Iraq amid parents' fresh worries' by Subhy Haddad. www.chinaview.cn 28-09-2009

therefore unlikely that they are currently very different. Overall numbers are, however, significantly different for 2007 -08, with a decrease shown in the net enrolment rates.

The questionnaire for girls was designed in September 2008. The returns were not received until July 2009. This means that they relate to the academic year 2008 -2009 rather than 2007-2008. The views expressed remain relevant, although the number of those interviewed who are now attending school will have changed.

In addition the situation in Iraq remains fluid and some areas the threat of violence has increased. Accurate data remain elusive. For example, the 2007-08 figures for children in each grade who are attending school are set against the number of children in the population of the age group for that grade. However, an analysis of the population data reveals that at grade 1, girls are said to make up 48.65% of 6 year olds in every governorate in Iraq. At age 11 girls make up 49.16% of the age group in every governorate. These population statistics cannot be accurate. This degree of consistency is impossible. So the data provided make it impossible to know the actual gap between the percentage of girls who should be in school at each grade, and the percentage who actually are attending. This would be an important measure of girls' school attendance, but it cannot be measured from the data available.

No data was provided on attendance. The figures available are for enrolment only, and so no accurate picture is available of how many girls are actually in school. Children who are at risk of dropping out of school usually attend irregularly, with longer and longer gaps in attendance before they stop going to school altogether[2]. This means that many of the girls who are enrolled are likely to have poor or irregular attendance. Similarly no data have been found that give any indication of the quality of education that the girls are receiving. The lack of data on attendance and quality are major gaps in this situation analysis. All efforts to encourage more girls to start school remain in school, and complete at least intermediate school must be matched by a focus on regular attendance and on the provision of good quality, relevant education.

The creation of an accurate situational analysis further complicated by the fact that some existing reports sometime quote statistics which are different from the government data . For example, the Iraq Comprehensive Food Security & Vulnerability Analysis (CFSV[3]) states that 'the percentage of females and males graduating from primary school is nearly equal (31% and 29% respectively) and 'around 90 percent of children under 15 years old are full-time students and attending school.'

The under representation of girls in education in Iraq and the declining numbers of girls in each successive grade has been known for some years and the analysis of the 2007 -2008 data gives the same picture. Many reports have already been written and many recommendations already made. The UNICEF online document archive contains over 19,000 documents. A key word search for 'girls' education' produces 2,400 hits. This means that at least 12.6% of the documents in the archive

---

[2] Survey of children who drop out of school. Ministry of Education and UNICEF; Sri Lanka 2009

[3] Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis in Iraq. United Nations Food Programme 2008

concern girls' education. The archives of other relevant organisations will house more reports on girls' education. There have been symposia, conferences and workshops on girls' education in many counties for many years, all examining the reasons why girls do not attend school and complete their education, and all making similar recommendations. The reasons why both boys and girls do not attend school and why girls have less access to education than boys are well known. A summary of these is given in appendix 4 of this report. Change will be brought about by action, not by further identification of the issues. It is hoped that real action, however small, will result from recommendations made in this report. Otherwise it will remain just another UNICEF report and merely add one more to the already considerable number of archived documents.

4- EXAMPLES OF INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE GIRLS EDUCATION OTHER RELEVANT COUNTRIES

Many reports contain a section on work carried out in other countries, although many factors which make initiatives successful in one country cannot always be replicated in another, even when there are significant similarities in culture, or percentages of girls attending school. A range of such initiatives to encourage girls into education in included in appendix 5 of this report.

The main features of successful programmes to improve access to education can be summarized as follows. They start with a clear understanding of the problem and come up with practical interventions designed to address those problems. They may be national, local or both. They may include policy development and implementation, awareness raising, new initiatives or specially developed syllabi and teaching and learning materials. They use available resources, and may include clearly designed mechanisms for training teachers (both centrally as well as in schools) and ensure that teaching is effective. The best programmes also include a well designed mechanism for monitoring.

5- DATA ANALYSIS

Between 2000 and 2006 the figures for children attending primary school in Iraq improved. Even so, in 2006 17% of primary school aged children were not attending school, with 32% of girls in rural areas not attending school. The discrepancy was even higher in rural areas in these figures. In 2000i some 24% of primary aged children nationally were not attending school. Thirty-two percent of girls were not attending, with 51% not attending school in rural areas. Data gathered in 2006 show that some 800,000 children were not attending primary school, 74% of them girlsii. Compared with the 2003/2004 school surveyiii this shows an increase of 200, 000 children not attending primary school, but no change in the percentage of girls. In 2003/ 04 some 4.3 million children were enrolled in primary school with 44% being girls. There is no evidence that girls are more likely to begin or complete their primary education in 2007- 2008 than they were previously.

Decline in Numbers

The 2007 -2008 gross enrolment figures show a drop in the overall number of children in primary education from the 2005 -2005 data. The number of children attending primary schools dropped by 88,164 between the school years 2004-05 and 2007-08; a drop of 2.02% in boys and 1.75% in girls.

Number and percentage drop in gross enrolment of primary school children by governorate 2004/5 – 2007/08

Governorate	Boys 04-05	Girls 04-05	Total Number 04-05	Boys 07-08	Girls 07-08	Total Number 07-08	Drop in number of boys	Drop in number of girls	% drop boys	% drop girls
Anbar	143808	115328	259136	143146	114705	257851	662	623	0.46	0.54
Basra	218119	180897	399016	217446	180675	398121	673	222	0.31	0.12
Kirkuk	98114	78796	176910	97783	78442	176225	331	354	0.34	0.45
Baghdad	571183	497975	1069158	569099	493417	1062516	2084	4558	0.36	0.92
Diwaniyah	104499	77634	182133	102529	77046	179575	1970	588	1.9	0.76
Muthanna	61626	43762	105388	60991	43574	104565	635	188	1.03	0.42
Najaf	110573	90699	201272	110543	90658	201201	30	41	0.03	0.04
Babil	160233	122922	283155	159113	122529	281642	1120	393	0.7	0.32
Diyala	112680	95597	208277	112306	95343	207649	374	254	0.33	0.26
Salahuddin	123662	95321	218983	122712	95123	217835	950	198	0.77	0.21
Kerbala	95646	74516	170162	94536	74131	168667	1110	385	1.16	0.52
Missan*	80347	57570	137917	80347	57570	137917	0	0	0	0
Nineveh	268903	206281	475184	267131	205887	473018	1772	394	0.66	0.19
Wasit	103727	74268	177995	102602	74224	176826	1125	44	1.08	0.06
Th Qar	162435	119026	281461	160201	118821	279022	2234	205	1.4	0.17
Erbil	143925	125106	269031	143444	124829	268273	481	277	0.33	0.22
Dohuk**	150551	125179	275730	109032	94046	203078	41519	35183	27.57	28.1
Sulaimaniya	143303	129229	272532	142653	128642	271295	650	587	0.45	0.45
Total	2853334	2310106	5163440	2795614	2269662	5065276	57720	40444	2.02	1.75

* Suspect data, as the 2005-05 and the 2007-08 figures are identical

** Suspect data, as the percentage difference is so out of line with other governorates

Analysis of the difference between girls and boys net enrolment in 2007-08 by governorate

Governorate	Boys 07-08	Girls 07-08	Total 07-08	% Girls
Anbar	78566	59758	138324	43.2
Basra	131565	84583	216148	39.13
Kirkuk	55916	46595	102511	45.45
Baghdad	350723	298205	648928	45.95
Diwaniyah	71398	52719	124117	42.47
Muthanna	27054	21542	48596	44.3
Najaf	62208	50697	112905	44.9
Babil	95320	69727	115047	45
Diyala	74952	67711	142663	47.46
Salahuddin	77391	60332	137723	43.8
Kerbala	41880	33879	75759	44.7
Missan	38741	31744	70485	45.03
Nineveh	130789	111379	242168	46
Wasit	52813	40031	92844	43.1
ThiQar	71434	57272	128706	44.5
Erbil	98358	90472	188830	47.9
Dohuk	68615	63915	132530	48.2
Sulaimaniya	91685	88952	180637	49.2
Total	1619408	1329513	2948921	45.08

Percentage of girls in primary education by governorate

Net enrolment data
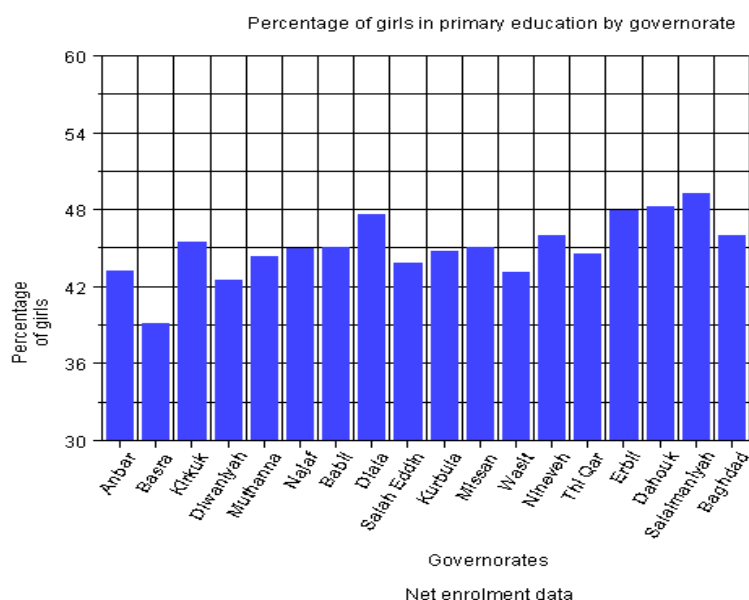
The three governorates with the highest percentage of girls in primary education also have the highest percentage of children in pre-school education. In Erbil 15.8% of children attend preschool provision, Dohuk 11.3% and Sulaimaniya 11.4% compared with, for example 5.7% in Baghdad, 8.6% in Kirkuk, or 3.3% in Diyala. In no governorate does the percentage of girls in primary school reach or exceed 50%.

At first sight, the data look mildly positive with regard to girls attending primary school. It appears that since 2004-05 the percentage of girls attending primary school has risen slightly. However, a closer analysis of the statistics reveals a less positive picture. The drop in the number of boys enrolled in Iraqi primary schools is greater than that for girls. In 11 governorates the decrease in the number of boys attending primary school is greater than the decrease in number of girls. It is not the number of girls has increased, but the number of boys has decreased. This makes girls a larger percentage of the primary school population without increasing their numbers.

**Under representation of girls in primary school**

In every governorate a smaller percentage of girls than boys start school. More girls than boys drop out of school over their school lives. The official data replicate previously available informal manual data in showing a generally declining percentage of girls in each successive primary school grade.

Only 39 in every 100 girls who are enrolled in grade 1 are enrolled in grade 6.


12
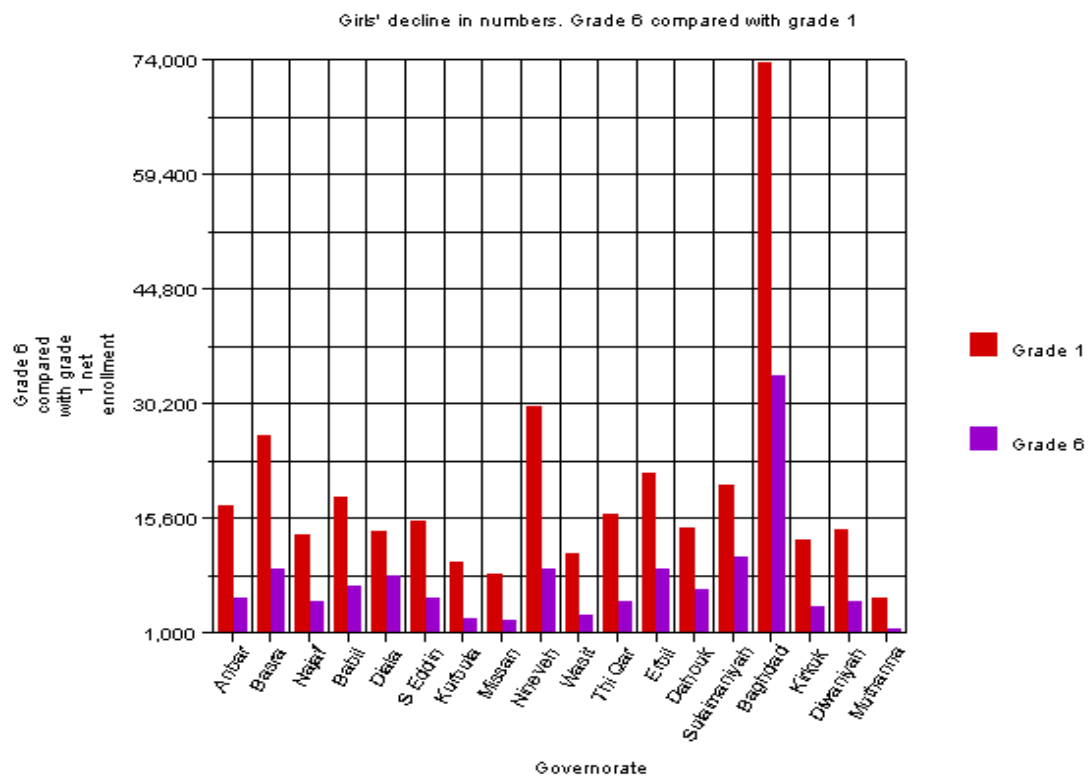
Net enrolment figures for girls show that in Diyala 60% of the number of girls in grade 1 were enrolled in grade 6. In Muthanna and Kurbala the figure was 28%. This suggests that in Diyala girls who start school are more than twice as likely to remain in school in Diyala as they are in Muthanna or Kerbala, but a much more extensive study than this one, in which trend data could be analysed against population data would be needed to confirm this.

On the basis of current data, the percentage of girls enrolled in grade 6, measured against those enrolled in grade 1 is shown below:

Girls' decline in numbers. Grade 6 compared with grade 1
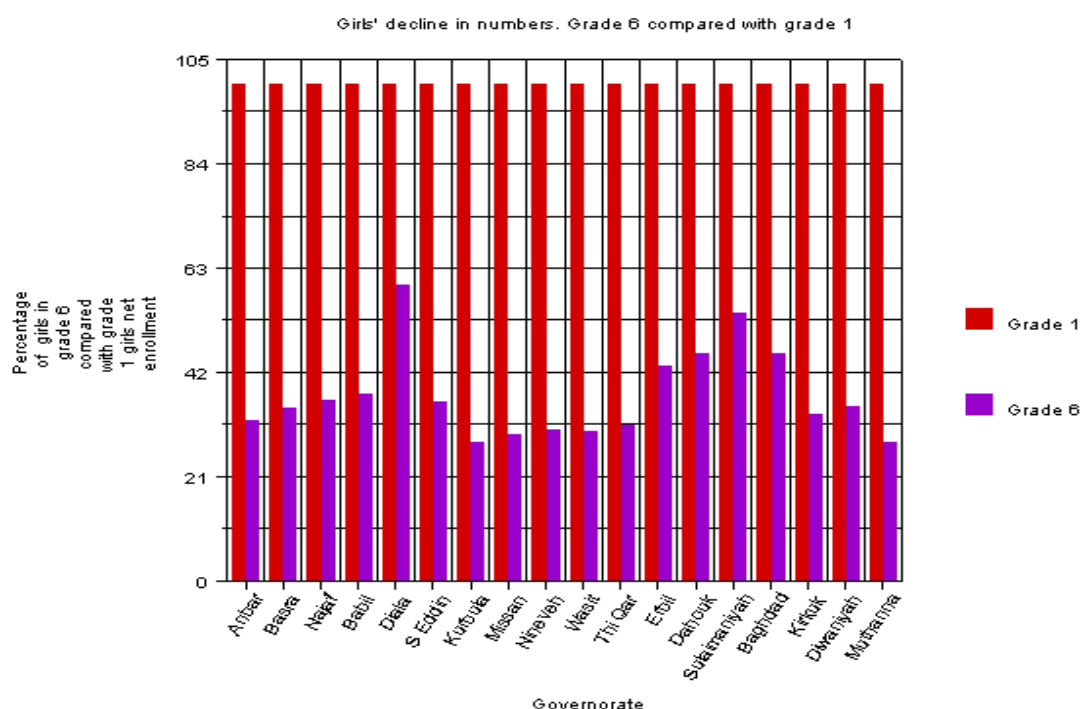
On the basis of this data, in Diyala about 6 in every 10 girls who start school complete their compulsory primary education. In Sulaimaniyah about half complete, with slightly less than half in Dohuk, Baghdad and Erbil. In Muthanna and Kerbala fewer than 3 in every 10 girls who enrol in grade 1 enrol in grade 6. In all other governorates the figure is between 3 and 4.

The most vulnerable points for girls dropping out of primary school are between grades 1 and 2, and between grade 5 and 6. National figures show a drop of over 21% in the number of girls in grade 2, when compared with grade 1. This indicated that more than 1 in every 4 girls who starts school does not progress to grade 2. The drop in numbers between grade 5 and grade 6 is more than 28%. The table below shows the percentage difference between grade 1 numbers and grade 2 numbers by governorate. The figures are most worrying for Kerbala (35.6%) and Anbar (31.5%) as these indicate that more than one girl in every three who starts school does not progress to grade 2.


Percentage drop in the number of girls between grades 1 and 2
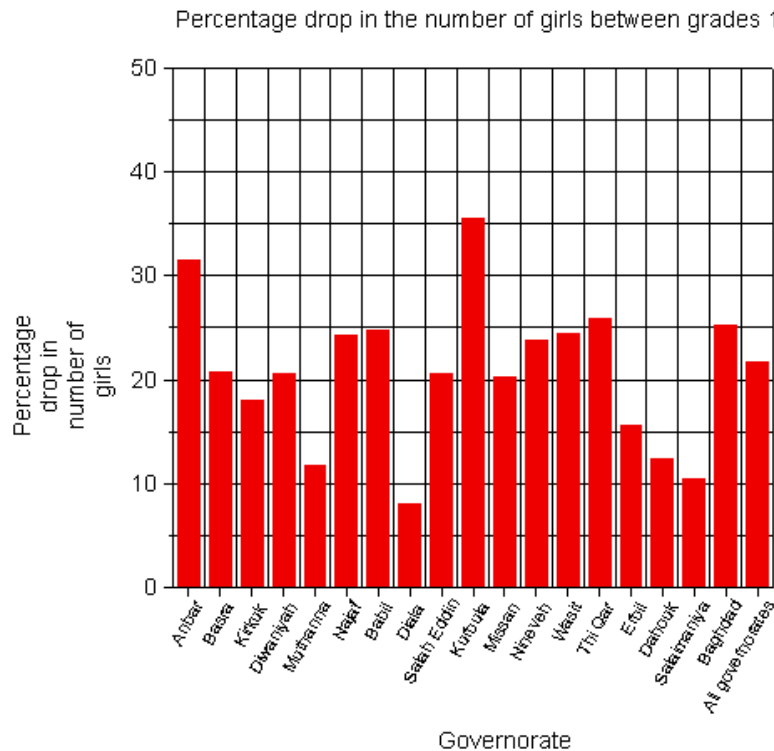
Intermediate School

Even fewer girls go on to intermediate education. The graph below shows the percentage decrease in the 2007 -08 academic year in the number of girls between grade 6 and the first intermediate class. The difference is least in Kerbala and Baghdad and greatest in Diwaniyah and Dohuk.

Percentage drop in the number of girls between grade 6 and 1st Intermediate
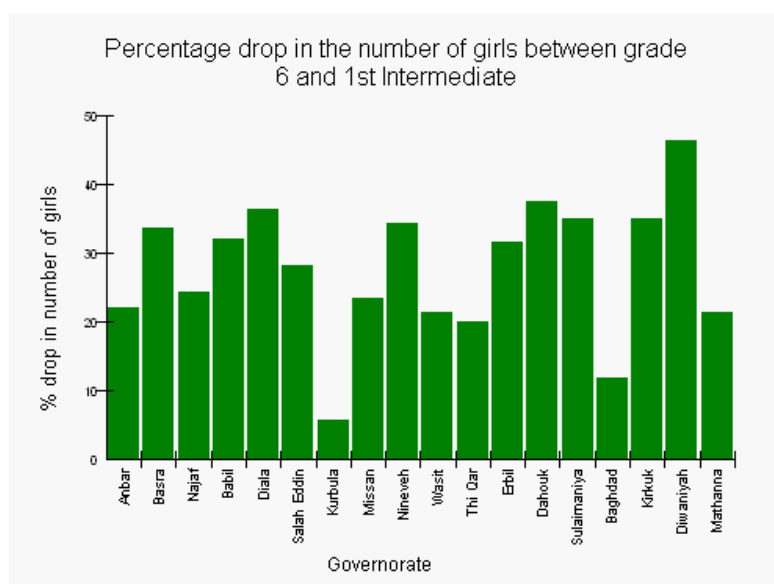
For every four girls in grade one of primary school in Iraq, there is one girl in the first intermediate class. Some 75% of girls who start school have dropped out during or at the end of primary school. Some governorates are better than others at retaining girls in school until intermediate education. In Baghdad the figure is highest at 40%. In Diyala, Sulaimaniyah and Erbil 38%, 35% and 30% respectively are retained. Fewest girls are retained until first intermediate grade in Diwaniyah at 19%; Nineveh at 20%; and Kirkuk at 21%.

The graph below shows the number of girls in the first intermediate class as a percentage of those in grade 1.

Percentage of girls in 1st intermediate class as compared with grade 1
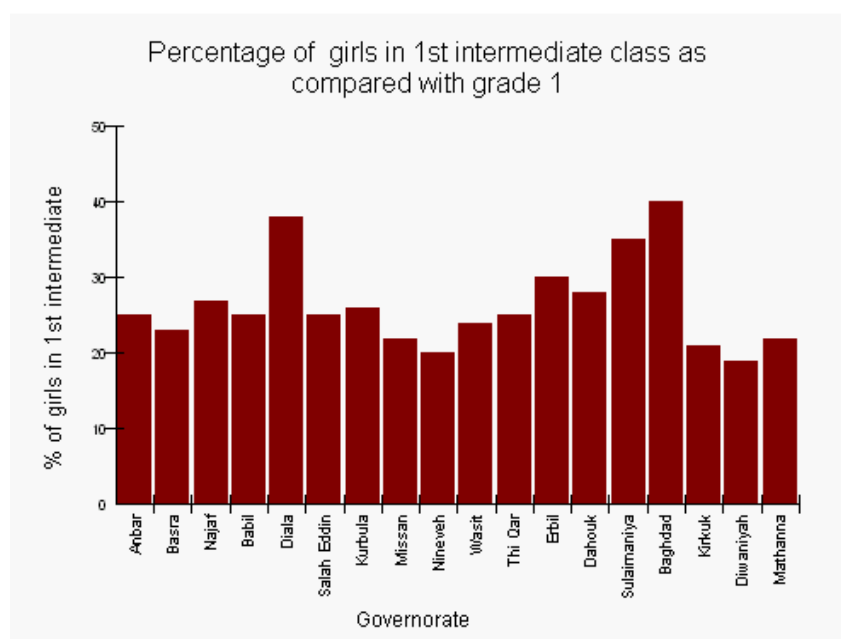
This decline in the number of girls in each successive grade continues through the intermediate classes and into secondary school. For every five girls in grade one of primary school in Iraq, there is one girl in the first intermediate class. Some 80% of girls who start school have dropped out by the third intermediate class.
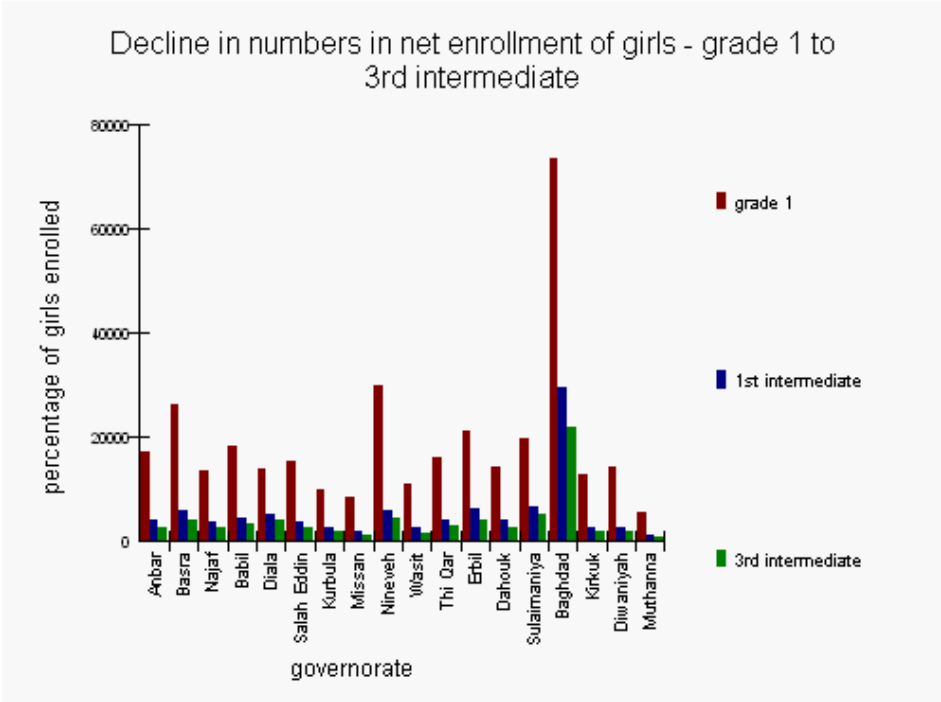
Overall summary of girls' net enrolments 2007-2008 in primary and intermediate schools

The graph below shows the overall picture for girls' enrolments in each governorate, comparing grade 1, and grade 6, 1st intermediate and 3rd intermediate classes. Other than in Diyala and Sulaimaniyah, most girls drop out during the primary grades.
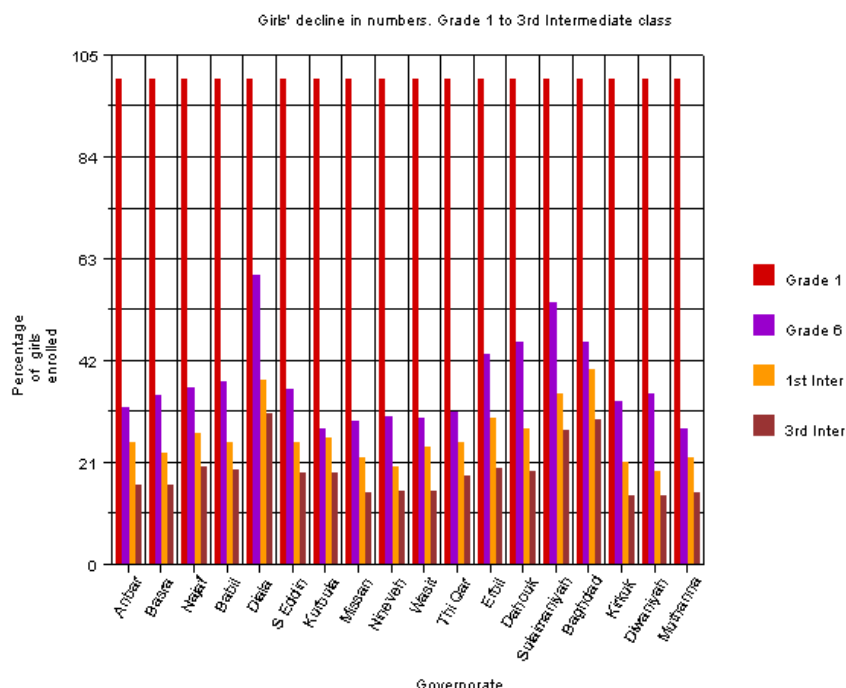
Girls continued to be retained at a higher rate in Diyala, Sulaimaniyah, Dohuk, Baghdad and Erbil throughout primary and intermediate school. After a huge difference between grade 1 and 6, the dropout rate slowed in Kerbala. The highest percentage of girls drop out between grade 1 and grade 6 was in Muthanna, Kerbala, Missan and Anbar.

Fewest girls enrolled for intermediate school in Diwaniyah, Nineveh Kirkuk, Missan and Muthanna. Those girls who remain in school until 1st intermediated class are likely to remain in school until 3rd intermediate class.

The biggest difference between 1st and 3rd intermediate classes was in Erbil and Baghdad, with 10.3% and 10.2% respectively. In Nineveh and Diwaniyah the difference was only 5%.

The biggest and most important national challenge is to retain girls in school during their primary years, and particularly to ensure that they progress from grade 1 to grade 2 and from grade 5 to grade 6.

The next challenges are then to increase enrolment rates at grade 1 and progression rates from grade 6 to intermediate school.

In Iraq there is also a major issue with the number of children in each grade who are over age. The data for 2008-2008 show that 228,829 children aged 13 – 15+ were still attending primary school, 5.3% of the overall primary school population. One third, 76,323, were girls. Overall, the data show a drop in pupil numbers at each successive grade, other than in grade 5, where the high number of repeaters boosts numbers before a substantial decline of over 200,000 in grade 6. The decreased percentage of girls in each grade shows that the older a girl becomes, the less likely she is to remain in school. There were 25,981 girls in grade 1 as against 208, 835 in grade 6 in the school year 2007/08. This is a drop over of over half, assuming a relatively stable number of children of each age.

Grade	Number of children	Percentage of girls	Percentage	Percentage over age girls	Notes
			over age boys		
1	916089	46.5			
2	808636	46.2	42.1	42.7	
3	708665	45.3	44.8	44.8	
4	664473	44.1	47.5	47	Percentages of overage boys and girls show little difference up to grade 4
5	727177	42.6	53.1	50.6	There is a high repetition rate in grade 5, shown by the increased number of pupils and increased percentages of overage pupils.
6	508114	44.1	52.6	49.5	Percentages of overage girls drops markedly in grades 5 and 6
Totals	4,333, 154	44.6 average			

Summary of the data analysis

Gross data show that the overall number of children enrolled in Iraqi primary schools has declined by 2% between the school years 2004-05 and 2007-08. The reasons for this drop, which may be due to a number of factors including, for example, a declining birth rate, families leaving Iraq, fewer over age children in primary school, an increased reluctance amongst families to send their children to school or an increased reluctance by children, particularly boys, to attend, must be explored to determine whether it is acceptable or not.

The percentage of girls enrolled in primary school has increased slightly since 2005-05 but this increase is caused by a steeper decline in the number of boys enrolling, rather than an increase in the number of girls. Girls in Iraq are not gaining ground in achieving the primary education to which they are entitled.

The first set of comparisons made is between girls' enrolments and boys'. When making this comparison, girls' enrolment in primary education is highest in the governorates of Erbil, Dohuk, Sulaimaniya, These governorates also have the highest percentage of children in preschool education, although this is still low. As a percentage of the primary school population, girls' enrolment is lowest in Basra, Diwaniyah and Wasit.

The second set of comparisons is between girls' year on year enrolments. Fewer girls attend school in each successive year. In the 2007-08 figures the highest percentages of girls dropping out in primary school were in Muthanna, Kerbala, Missan and Anbar. Nationally he most vulnerable points for girls dropping out of primary school are between grades 1 and 2, and between grade 5 and 6. National figures show a drop of over 21% in the number of girls in grade 2, when compared with grade 1. This indicates that more than 1 in every 4 girls who starts school does not progress to grade 2. The drop in numbers between grade 5 and grade 6 is more than 28%. In 2007-08 over 5% of the primary school population was aged 13 – 15+, one third, 76,323, were girls.

A second major drop in numbers occurs between the end of primary and the beginning of secondary school. Fewest girls enrolled for intermediate school in Diwaniyah, Nineveh Kirkuk, Missan and Muthanna. Larger number of girls progress to intermediate school in Diyala, Sulaimaniya, Dohuk, Baghdad and Erbil, which have better retention rates throughout primary and intermediate school

In all governorates, those girls who remain in school until 1st intermediated class are likely to remain in school until 3rd intermediate class. The biggest difference between 1st and 3rd intermediate classes was in Erbil and Baghdad, with 10.3% and 10.2% respectively. In Nineveh and Diwaniyah the difference was only 5%.

6- FACTORS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE CURRENT SITUATION

The current situation has developed over more than two decades. A brief description of the history of girls' education over that time is included as appendix 4 of this report. Reportsiv typically attribute poor attendance to the poor security situation which undoubtedly is a significant contributor to these figures, but the reasons for the poor enrolment figures for girls are more far reaching and more complex. Many are connected with attitudes to girls and education, the state of the nation's schools, what is taught and how it is taught, the skills and attitudes of teachers, family poverty. The analysis of the girls' responses to the questionnaire which contributed to this study reveals a range of barriers faced by girls with regard to education. Their views about school are very similar, wherever they live. Factors which contribute to girls either not enrolling or dropping out of school are clearly identified in their responses.

Difficulties in school access

Mini survey
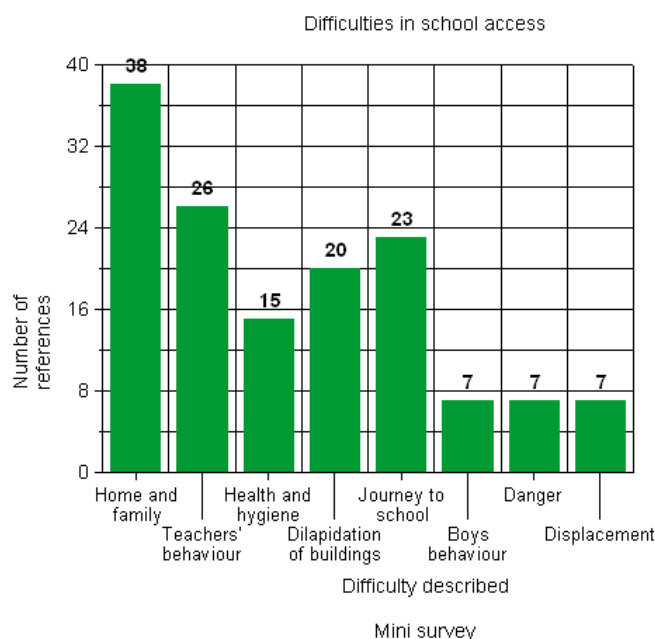
The girls' responses make it clear that most want to go to school, to succeed in education, and to have a valued place in society[4]. The girls say; 'I want to become an attorney and an important person';' I want to become a teacher'; 'I keep coming to school because I am a top performer and I want to finish my education'; ' I like to go to school and learn';' I want to learn how to read and write.'.

Family attitudes and family circumstances are identified as the most crucial factor in whether girls start school and whether they complete their education. Family poverty is always a significant factor in school attendance, even when education is free, as it is in Iraq. Family poverty was referenced as a reason for not attending school by one third of the girls who had never attended school or who had dropped out before completing their education. For example, sixteen year old Hajer, thirteen year old Ohoud stopped going to school because of their family's financial status. The father of 7 year old Ruqaya has never sent her to school because of the family's financial status. Salima, would like to finish her education says, 'I left school because my family cannot afford everything and my father's status is poor.'

Parents, particularly fathers, play a major role in whether the girls can attend school or not[5]. The girls say; 'I have not stopped going to school because of my father's encouragement'; 'I would like to go to school, but my father does not allow me to pursue my education.' 'My dad takes me to school himself';

---

[4] 37% of girls who are attending school mention their ambitions to complete their education, or attend university, or qualify as a teacher, doctor or attorney, or to contribute positively to society

[5] 54% of the girls list the attitudes of fathers, other family members and family pressures as reasons why it is difficult or impossible for girls to attend school. Five girls mention either encouragement from parents or action parents have taken to provide transport to and from school.

Attitudes to girls who have reached puberty are a key factor in girls ceasing to go to school: 'When I grew up, my parents forced me to leave school'; 'I have to convince my father that I should pursue my education and that I am still young'; 'All the girls in the village do not go to school after completing primary education.'

The journey to school and the distance from home to school can also be significant factors in girls' continuing with their education. Girls frequently referred to their difficulties in getting to and from school schools and whether their journeys to and from school were safe[6]. The journey from home to school was mentioned as difficult for younger pupils because of traffic and for older ones because of harassment: 'I am afraid to walk alone. I try to walk with a group of girls'; 'Our house is far away from school, so I have to walk a long distance to reach school';' I am afraid to cross the street. I ask help from older people'. Some girls did not continue with their education beyond primary school because they live too far away from an intermediate school: 'I stopped going to school as there was no intermediate school near and I could not go to a school that is further away.' Some parents support their daughters by enabling them to travel to school safely: 'My parents secured me a taxi'

Security is also an issue for some girls; 'I would not like to go to school because of lack of security and frequent abductions and bombings which take place every day. In addition, I had to go to school on foot as there is no means of transportation'; 'When there are bombings at the beginning of school hours, it is difficult to go to school on those days';' I stopped going to school in 2007 due to bombings and curfews that took place every day'; 'The number of girls has declined due to the security situation and distance from school'.' There are bombings and random killings which take place early in the morning, so we do not go to school on those days[7]'.

The schools the girls describe are not attractive and welcoming places which would encourage girls to attend. The girls say that they want clean, well maintained schools with adequate resources, clean drinking water and clean lavatories[8]. The lack of drinking water, the poor state of school buildings and the lack of clean lavatories were mentioned many times by girls in all the survey areas: *'There is nothing nice in the school building and there are always power cuts'; 'I hate the W.C. and never go there at all. In addition, there is no drinking water'; 'The school building is too old, and I hope the second floor will be replaced'; 'The school is not clean';*

Teachers and their behaviour can be a major disincentive to girls attending school. Girls do not want to be beaten or insulted by teachers and they want to be taught well and for teachers to be more willing

---

[6] 29%of girls mention difficulties associated with the journey to and from school

[7] 9% of the girls mention security. Most of those surveyed did not live in areas where security is a particular issue

[8] Nearly one fifth of the girls make particular mention of dirty lavatories and of the lack of clean drinking water.

to explain the subject matter in lessons[9]. They value education and want to read and write[10] and have lessons explained to them clearly. Teachers beating and insulting pupils was mentioned frequently, together with teachers reluctance to explain subject matter clearly if pupils did not understand: *'I do not like it when we are beaten by our teachers'; 'some teachers o not help students understand the subjects'; 'Lack of interest of teachers to explain the curriculum in an understandable way for students'; ''The school principal treats as cruelly'; 'Teachers were not willing to help me understand the lessons'; 'I stopped going to school as it was difficult for me to understand the lessons';*

Girls do not want to be in school with boys[11] and some mention the absence of boys as a significant positive point in their description of their school!

Displacement and lack of papers contribute to girls being unable to attend school. '*My parents did not register me at school as we were living in a rural area to where we had been displaced. In addition I did not have a nationality. Therefore I remained without schooling'.' I stopped going to school in 2007. We were living in Baghdad Governorate, but were forced to migrate to Kirkuk Governorate'.*

Once girls have stopped attending school, they feel that there is no possibility of taking up education again: Even though there are many overage children in Iraqi primary school, most are boys and so teenage girls feel too old to resume their education once they have dropped out; *'I would like to go to school to be a teacher and support my family. However, it is too late now'* says 13 year old Ohoud who left school because of her family's financial situation.' Others who have dropped out are afraid of failing again: *'I would like to go to school, but I am afraid that I will not understand the lessons again' 'My age is not suitable for primary school.'*

KEY FINDINGS

When the data, the respnses of Iraqi girls and all the other information reviewed as part of this survey are analysed, the ten most significant findings in this situaltional analysis are:

1. Data show that there has been no significant improvement in girls' enrollment in compulsory primary education Iraq;

2. Girls' enrollment declines sharply with each successive grade. Only 39% of the number of girls enrolled in grade 1 is enrolled in grade 6. The biggest drop in the number of girls in primary education is between grade 1 and grade 2. The next biggest is between grade 5 and

---

[9] 40% of girls who are attending, or have attended school, commented on their dislike of teachers beating them, insulting them, treating them harshly or being unwilling to explain subject matter in lessons

[10] All the girls who have never attended school and some who dropped out early regretted not being able to read and write

[11] Most of the girls attended single sex schools, but a some were in mixed schools and a few in mixed classes

grade 6. Only 25% of girls who are enrolled in grade 1 are enrolled by the 1st intermediate class. By the 3rd intermediated class the figure is 20% of those enrolled in grade 1;

3. Families and particualry fathers, are the most important factors in girls' school attendance;

4. Many factors associated with   school itselves have a significant impact on girls' enrolment. The responses of girls to a small scale survey conducted as part of this situaltional analysis paint a picture of   girls who attend school making often   dificult journeys to dirty and delapidated schools which lack basic facilities and adequate resources to support learning; where they will be taught by harsh teachers who are unwilling to help students understand their lessons. Those girls who do not attend school usually do not do so because of the wishes of their parents; because of their family's financial circumstances; or because there is no school near enough for them to be able, or allowed, to attend;

5. A few girls in the survey said that they were not interested in learning, but most of them understood the value of education and wished to be successful and educated women, or at least able to read and write;

6. There are often significant differnces between governorates in girls' enrollment and in staying on rates;

7. Governorates which have the highest percentages of children in pre- school education have the best rates of enrollment of girls in primary school;

8. There is an overall decline in the numbers of children enrolled in Iraqi primary schools;

9. The population data given are insufficiently accurate to determine the percentage of girls in each age group who are enrolled in school;

10 The figures available are for enrollment only, not attendance and so it is impossible to know the extent to which those girls who are enrolled actually attend school;

7- THE FACTOR FROM THE FINDINGS OF THE SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS WHICH LEAD TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The education system is facing a number of major difficulties. The system is chronically underfunded and is currently unable to respond to the demands despite efforts being made to improve the situation Even where conditions are improving, a significant number of older children and young adults have missed out on crucial phases of their education and there are few opportunities for them to make good the years they have lost.

The factors that contribute to placing Iraqi girls at an educational disadvantage and which need to be addressed through educational policy and its implementation include:

- Lack of a school place;

- Shortage of teachers, particularly experienced teachers;

- The unacceptable behaviour of some teachers and principals;

- Dirty and dilapidated school buildings which lack basic facilities;

- Attitudes to girls' education;

- Lack of security;

- Lack of transport when distances are considerable or the journey is hazardous;;

- Poverty; no money for clothing and school supplies and other indirect costs of going to school;

- Disability;

- Being needed in the home;

- Being needed to make a contribution to the family's business or income;

- Lack of official papers

Issues related to school infrastructure

If girls are to attend school, there must be a school for them to attend and teachers to teach them. Currently, there is an insufficient number of schools in good repair, with basic facilities for all girls to receive their entitlement to schooling[12] and it is often difficult for girls to travel to and from school and there are particular issues when intermediate schools are situated outside the communities in which girls live. The third most frequent response to the question as to why girls between 6 and 17 who are not in school are not attending was that no school was available nearby.[1] The number and location of schools, and their capacity, must therefore become a key educational issue for each governorate. There are places where schools are not available locally and some schools are very overcrowded and some have too few pupils. If universal basic education is to be achieved, there must be a school place for every child. This cannot be achieved easily or quickly, but an analysis of the number of school places needed, and where they are needed could lead to an effective and realistic action plan to provide them. An adequate number of school places would encourage more girls to enrol in school and decrease the need for the shift system, which many girls in the survey indicated that they disliked.

---

[12] "Demand for adequate schools has far outpaced available schools in Iraq' Official Website of the Multi-National Task Force. Http://Www.Mnf-Iraq.Com/Index.Php

Quality of infrastructure

The rehabilitation of dirty and dilapidated school buildings which lack basic facilities must also be a policy priority if girls are to be encouraged to participate in education. In many cases the quality of the physical environment does not encourage girls to go to school. Many schools are in poor repair, are being used for other purposes or have been destroyed. The lack of acceptable sanitation and hygiene facilities is particularly unacceptable to girls and to their parents.

Issues related to teachers and teaching

Even if a school place in a clean, modern building   were available for every girl in Iraq, this would count for nothing unless well trained teachers, upholding the expected standards of their profession were available to teach them. There is currently a shortage of teachers, particularly experienced teachers. The number of teachers available, particularly well qualified and experienced teachers is an issue and currently it is doubtful that there are sufficient skilled and experience teachers in Iraq to make it possible for all girls to go to school and receive good quality teaching "The number of teachers leaving the country this year (2006) is huge and almost double those who left in 2005," Professor Salah Aliwi, director-general of studies planning in the Ministry of Higher Education told reporters during an Aug. 24, 2006 interview in Baghdad. "Every day, we are losing more experienced people, which is causing a serious problem in the education system."

This has caused a decline in the quality of teaching as experienced teachers left the country or ceased teaching because of attacks and lack of security. As security is improving teachers may return to Iraq, or return to teaching, but it is unlikely that they will all do so. To address this issue, in-service training needs to be provided to existing teachers to upgrade their skills and the number of well trained new teachers entering the profession needs to be increased. High quality training programmes and packages need to be developed to achieve this.

The biggest drop in the number of girls enrolled in primary school in Iraq takes place between grade 1 and grade 2. Measures need to be taken to address this. The practice of using subject teachers rather than one class teacher for all subjects in the early grades makes schooling unfriendly for younger children and consideration should be given to phasing this out by training primary school teachers to deliver the whole curriculum to their classes, with only a very few exceptions for specialist subjects.

The unacceptable behaviour of some teachers and principals in terms of physical and psychological punishments must be stopped, through training, effective management and through the creation and implementation of an effective disciplinary system to deal with those who behave unacceptably.

Issues related to attitudes to girls and their education

Buildings and teachers, however high quality both may be, are of no value if girls are prevented from attending school by families, or societal attitudes or by cultural norms and expectations which do not encourage the education of all children

There is considerable anecdotal evidence ,and some research evidence, such as Yasmin Husein Al-Jawaheri's empirical research, published in *Women in Iraq: The Gender Impact of International Sanctions,* that attitudes towards girls and women have become, and are still becoming, more repressive and against the participation of girls in education and women in public life. Conservative beliefs are believed to be leading to violations of the rights of girls and women to life, physical integrity, education, health and freedom of movement.

A lack of optimism about the future means that families see little point in making the investment in the future that education represents, particularly for girls who are seen to be unlikely to have careers - 'Combined with the high rates of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorders suffered by a large part of the war-affected population, these factors could have serious consequences on the physical and psychological health of Iraqi women, requiring interventions to help families and communities cope.' A major challenge to the development of an effective education system for girls in 21st century Iraq is the need to challenge and change attitudes to girls, their education and their future live as women in society. Families and fathers in particular, need to be persuaded that their daughters must attend school. Religious and community leaders are key figures in promoting education for all children and for girls in particular and consideration should be given to involving them at all levels in campaigns to bring about universal basic education in Iraq and restoring the country to its previous position as a leader in region. Informal and non formal educational provision should be developed for girls who are not allowed to go to school and for older girls and young women who have missed the opportunity to benefit from basic education and are now too old to return to school.

Issues related to security and the journey to and from school

However much they may value education and however good it may be, parents are always unwilling to expose their children and particularly their daughters, to danger. The lack of security in some parts of Iraq makes parents reluctant to allow their daughters to go to schools and makes girls reluctant to attend. There is no doubt that the government of Iraq is making every possible effort to bring security to the country, but there are major issues in many areas which cannot be resolved quickly or easily. There are also issues concerning the lack of transport when distances are considerable or the journey is hazardous. The Ministry of Education should therefore consider home and distance learning options for girls for whom attendance at school is too difficult, dangerous or impossible in current circumstances. Home and distance learning options could also be useful for girls who cannot travel

outside their home area to intermediate school, for example, or for girls whose families will not allow them to attend school.

Issues related to poverty

Although education is free in Iraq, school attendance is not without costs, both direct and indirect. Some families have insufficient money for clothing and school supplies and others need their daughter's contribution to the family's business or income either by the girl working or by her providing domestic help so that others may work In the northern Kurdish territory, mounting poverty is said to contribute to the use of child labour and prevent children from attending school.

Although U.S. and Iraqi officials believed that the 2007-2008 school year would see a much larger number of new school enrolments, 76.2% of respondents to A Women for Women survey of 1,513 Iraqi women said that girls in their families are not allowed to attend school, and 56.7% of respondents said that girls' ability to attend school has become worse over the last four years. According to Women for Women International Iraq staff, the primary reasons for this are poverty and insecurity. While 49.6% of respondents describe their opportunities for education as poor, and 16.6% say they have no opportunities at all, 65.1% of respondents say it is extremely important to the welfare and development of their communities that women and girls in Iraq be able to access educational opportunities.

Issues related to disability

Every difficulty faced by Iraqi girls of school age in attending school will be at least doubled for girls with a disability. If the distance to school, the poor state of the buildings, the absence of basic facilities, unsympathetic teachers, and lack help in understanding lessons, family protectiveness and the attitudes of society are barriers to many girls attending school, they are likely to be insurmountable blocks for girls with disabilities. Careful consideration needs to be given to preventing disability wherever possible and to providing different access routes to education, including distance and home learning opportunities, for girls who cannot attend schools with their non-disabled peers.

Lack of official papers

Many children come from internally displaced families and do not have the documents required to register for school and this needs to be addressed through the appropriate channels as quickly as possible so that children do not continue to miss out on education. Children who stop going to school become less and less likely to return as time goes by and so it is essential that any gaps in school attendance are remedied as soon as possible and that children who have had a period out of school are helped back into regular attendance through bridging programmes.

Children who lack the skills for school

Although girls have more limited access to education than boys, are less likely to complete their primary education and much less likely to complete their secondary education, there is an increase in the number of boys are also not attending school or succeeding in their education. Participation would be improved by the provision of pre-school education, linked to feeding programmes in very poor areas, to increase children's language development and prevent the consequences of poor nutrition.

Evidence is increasing that it is likely that large number of children in Iraq suffer from preventable learning difficulties related to lack of early stimulation and learning. The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey carried out in 2006 found that 18% of two year old Iraqi children could not name at least one object. In Salahuddin as many as 35% of two year olds were not able to do this. Two year olds with normal language development could be expected to have a vocabulary of some 150 -300 words. This degree of language delay may result from widespread psycho-social consequences of war, including increased poverty and fearfulness. In times of peace and optimism adults naturally talk to babies and young children without being taught about the benefits of early stimulation However, psychosocial difficulties and poverty, including , preoccupation with day-to- day survival, amongst adults prevent them from being able to talk to or stimulate their children in the normal way. The children therefore do not develop adequate language skills.

Children with such very limited language are very unlikely to be ready to succeed in education when they reach school age. They will be unable to understand or respond to the school curriculum and are at risk of dropping out of school.

The same survey reports that 15% of Iraqi children between 2 and 14 years of age have at least type of disability – a large number being impairment or of speech and language. An emphasis on the development of early language skills could therefore increase the number of children entering school with enough language to participate in learning and decrease the number of children who drop out of school in the early grades because they do not have sufficient language skills to benefit from the education provided. Such initiatives would benefit all young children, but girls would benefit most.

Language delay and difficulties make school enrolment less likely as families will often keep children at home if they know that they will not be able to cope at school. For those who do enrol, difficulties in such a crucial area for learning create major barriers to achievement in school. Failure then causes children to drop out of education.

In addition to the difficulties caused by lack of stimulation, children's cognitive development is also affected by poor nutrition. Brain development is most sensitive to a baby's nutrition between mid pregnancy and two years of age. Children who are malnourished throughout this period do not adequately grow, either physically or mentally. Their brains are smaller than normal and they also lack a substance called Myelin. Myelin is a very dense, fatty substance that insulates the electrical pathways of the brain, rather like the plastic coating on a power cable. It increases the speed of electrical transmission and prevents adjacent nerve fibres from mixing their messages. Myelination

(the coating or covering of axons with myelin) begins around birth and is most rapid in the first two years. Because of the rapid pace of myelination in early life, children need a high level of fat in their diets-some 50 percent of their total calories-until about two years of age. Inadequate brain growth and inadequate myelination are reasons why children who were malnourished as foetuses and infants suffer lasting behavioural and cognitive deficits, including slower language and fine motor development, lower intelligence (IQ), and poorer school performance. So decreasing stunting and wasting as a result of poor nutrition will also increase the chances of children attending school and achieving.

Figures suggest that in addition to the worryingly large numbers of children who never enrol in school, over 100,000 children who enrol in grade 1 each year do not enter grade 2 and another 100,000 drop out between grades 2 and 3. Many of these children will fail in these early grades because they have learning difficulties caused by lack of brain development in their early years as a result of under stimulation or poor nutrition which has impaired their ability to learn.

8- RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAQ TO IMPROVE THE CURRENT SITUATION

As the 2007 Annual Report for UNICEF Iraq rightly notes ' Substantial impact on children's wellbeing will only emerge once major gaps in Iraq's weak legislative and social work systems for children are bridged – an effort likely to take some years.' The people who will be part of bridging those major gaps are the children of today. Half of them are girls. Unless efforts are made today to improve the education of children, especially girls who fare even worse than boys in the current situation, the nation's capacity to build a strong and effective legislative framework and a much needed, fully functioning social work system, will be severely compromised.

To improve the education system, it is recommended that the new Government of Iraq that will be in power following the 2010 elections:

- Makes education key priority by publicly and wholeheartedly subscribing to a vision for compulsory primary education in which all children are able to attend school, learn well and achieve their potential. This should be based on the concept that, other than in rare health related cases, there are no valid reasons for a child of primary school age to be out of school. All policies, strategic plans and action plans must include a specific section on the education of girls and strong reassertion, through at national level of the right of every girl to attend school and the benefits of education to the girls, their families and to the country in general
- develops an updated national policy framework based on the inclusion of every child of primary school age in school;

- implements the content of the policy through clear 10 year national strategic plan for improving education for all Iraqi children, with a substantial separate section on the issues which have a particular impact on girls' education. The strategic plan would include, for example, the identification of areas of greatest deprivation and need; the building and refurbishment of schools so that they all have decent lavatories and access to drinking water, the phasing down of the shift system, national awareness and attitude changing campaigns; strategies to enable even the poorest children to attend school; improving the training, in-service support and improved management of teachers. The section on issues which relate to the issues which have a particular impact on girls' education would include, for example, an increased number of intermediate schools for girls, strategies for keeping girls safe, the development of teaching materials and teaching methodologies which include girls and their learning styles
- establishes an annual action plans, linked to the national plan, in every governorate in Iraq, which is monitored and its implementation evaluated each year
- develops a major national initiative for the in-service retraining and management of teachers so that they develop skills for effective teaching to enable the range of children in their classes to learn effectively and do not physically or mentally abuse students and so that they can teach effectively
- plans and implements a national campaign, supported by influential religious and civil leaders and linked to improved security, to encourage families to see it as their religious duty and duty as citizens to send their daughters to school.
- increases pre-school education for 3-5 year olds to ensure that they are developing the skills and concepts that they need to learn successfully in school.
- develops home and distance learning programmes, and informal and non-formal educational approaches for girls who cannot attend school for any reason, including lack of security, parental attitudes, and disability.
- develops programmes for older girls and young women who have not completed their basic education and are now too old to return to school

The following section of recommendations to UNICEF Iraq is equally valid for the Ministry of Education in terms of developing pilot programmes as part of the implementation of national policy, but to avoid duplication they are set out only once.

9- RECOMMENDATIONS TO UNICEF IRAQ TO WORK WITH GOVERNMENT TO IMPROVE THE CURRENT SITUATION

UNICEF could consider supporting the government in these key areas which aim at improving the participation of girls in education and on increasing their successful completion of at least basic education. Their role would be particularly valuable in piloting initiatives which support the government's national initiatives, which could be used as models for national development. The recommended initiatives are designed to complement and extend the work already being carried out by UNICEF in collaboration with the Iraqi Government, Ministries of Education, Governorates and local groups, in line with the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) 2007-2010.

This section of the report could also be of value to the Ministry of Education and to the education departments of the governorates in developing initiatives as part of the national strategy to increase girls' access to high quality education.

1   Early intervention for children below school age;

2   Strategies for improving girls' access to the formal education;

3   Strategies for developing access to informal education for girls and young women who cannot currently benefit from formal education or for whom it would be inappropriate;

4   The development of non formal and informal education programmes for girls whose families believe that formal or informal education is inappropriate for them or girls who do not wish to participate in formal or informal learning.

5   The improvement of the quality of teaching and learning so that girls achieve well in school.

These recommendations are for the consideration of UNICEF Iraq to support and complement the recommendations made to the Government of Iraq which are about national policy and national and governorate implementation strategic planning and implementation. These recommendations are all set out for discussion and for prioritisation as UNICEF's resources allow. They focus on real possibilities for change that would be acceptable and possible in Iraq today All are specific and most are for pilot projects which could be started on a very small scale in one or more localities and scaled up when their worth has been established. Costs would depend on the size of the pilot and most could be adapted to a budget of any size – large or small. They all conform to UNICEF'S agreed targets for improving girls' access to education, successful completion of basic education and educational achievements and are designed to assist Iraq towards attaining the Millennium Goals and compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The best use of resources would occur if several recommendations were piloted together in a defined local area so that support for grass roots level initiatives could be combined, resources shared, distribution and training costs minimised and the impact of the work demonstrated more clearly.

Issues and Recommendations

ISSUE1

THE LARGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN WITH POOR COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND LANGUAGE DELAYS AND DISABILITIES WHO ARE UNLIKELY TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL

Recommendations for promoting early cognitive and language development. Wherever possible such initiatives should link to existing government structure to ensure sustainability like maternal and child care units at primary health care level.

Pilot projects on 'Talk to Your Baby' and 'Play with Your Toddler', in which mothers and other carers are encourage to stimulate their young children to begin to address the identified widespread language delay and lack of school readiness of young Iraqi children and their subsequent lack of school achievement, which is likely to result in their dropping out of school. These pilot projects could include training by an appropriately trained community volunteer , social worker for pregnant women and fathers-to-be, parents and grandparents of babies and young children ,on the importance of talking to and stimulating young children; the teaching of specific activities and skills; picture based handouts and follow up supportive home visits from the volunteer or worker.

- Pilot projects to mobilise grandparents, a major resource in child development, to talk to young children, sing to them and teach them traditional songs, rhymes and games for young children and encourage the physical development of babies and young children through active play. A group for grandparents could be run by a trained volunteer or social worker to promote their role in the early care and development of their grandchildren, particularly girls.

- Pilot neighbourhood play groups operating on a weekly or twice weekly basis which would provide both social contacts for adults caring for babies and young children aged 2 and under and stimulating activities for the children. These groups could provide psycho-social support for housebound mothers and grandmothers, through providing companionship, decreasing isolation, developing skills for communication and stimulation, which would in turn enable them to interact with the children more successfully.

Resources needed:

- Two workers for each pilot group working for 3 hours each week – two hours setting up and then running the group or home visiting and 1 hour for administration;
- Initial training of one week for each worker;
- Access to a suitable room for the groups to take place;
- Payment for workers or per diem + expenses for volunteers if this is more appropriate than employment;
- Some basic equipment for each playgroup plus materials for administration;

- Ongoing support for the workers/volunteers.

<u>*ISSUE 2*</u>

 INSUFFICIENT ACCESS TO PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Good child development, including language development, also needs to be promoted for 3-6 year olds to ensure that they have the skills they need to succeed in education. Very few children in Iraq have the opportunity to develop their social and communication skills in kindergarten or nursery school provision. Children are most likely to succeed in the early years of school if they have the required social, communication, physical and cognitive skills that are required for formal education. Those governorates which have the highest percentages of children in pre-school education in Iraq, also have the highest percentages of girls enrolling in primary education. Again the initiatives described below would benefit all children but as girls enter school in smaller numbers than boys, and drop out in larger numbers, girls would benefit most. The recommendations to government in this report already include the development of preschool education, but support from UNICEF would be very helpful, or perhaps crucial in enabling this to become a reality

Recommendations for extending access to pre-school education:

- Develop and pilot early education packs, with a particular emphasis on the inclusion of girls, for family members to provide pre-school education for their young children to increase the chances of their success in school. The packs could be used by family members in their own homes if they are unwilling or unable to join a neighbourhood group.
- Pilot neighbourhood pre-school groups, possibly linked with local NGOs or similar groups, which would provide social contact for adults caring for pre-school children and preschool activities for the children. As with the play group for very young children, these groups could be of particular benefit to the mental health of housebound mothers and grandmothers, which would in turn enable them to contribute to the early education of their children more successfully. The groups would also be useful in encouraging families to enrol their children, particularly girls, in school when they reach school age.
- Pilot similar female only neighbourhood pre-school groups, for pre-school girls and their mothers or other female relatives in areas where that would be more appropriate. Such groups could also be used to investigate whether girls who benefitted from girls only preschool education are more likely to enrol in school and continue their education than those who benefit from mixed groups.

Resources needed for packs:

- International expertise in developing the content and format;
- Production and distribution costs;
- Support to families in using the pack.

Resources needed for pre-school groups:

- Two workers for each pilot group working for 3 hours each week – two hours setting up and then running the group or home visiting and 1 hour for administration;
- Initial training of one week for each worker;
- Access to a suitable room for the groups to take place;
- Payment for workers or per diem + expenses for volunteers if this is more appropriate than employment;
- Some basic equipment for each pre-group plus materials for administration;
- Ongoing support for the workers/volunteers.

ISSUE 3

MANY CHILDREN WHO SHOULD BE IN GRADES 1-3, PARTICULARLY GIRLS, ARE CURRENTLY UNABLE TO GO TO SCHOOL

There is a real practical issue about school attendance when, however willing parents may be to send their daughters to school, there is no school for them to attend, no teachers to teach them or the conditions are such that it would be irresponsible of parents to send their children to school. Where this is the case, short term solutions must be found which, although they are not ideal, mean that children can receive some basic education at home. Family members cannot replace trained teachers but where access to school is impossible they can ensure that children learn the basics that will enable them to start school when conditions allow. Grades 1 to 3 are particularly important as children become literate during these three grades and children who are literate are more likely to continue their education in school as the situation improves. Home Schooling could provide a temporary answer if it is developed in partnership with the Ministry of Education (MoE). UNICEF could work with the MoE to allow families to have access to language' literacy and mathematics textbooks and help with the development of assessments which would help both families and the education service gauge girls' progress.

The reasons for the non- attendance of younger primary school aged girls are diverse and vary from district to district. Siobhán Foran in *Access to Education in Iraq: A Gender Perspective*, OCHA Iraq/UNAMI (Information Analysis Unit 2008)identifies nine reasons for children not attending school:

- The deterioration of the security situation;
- Limited amounts of classroom space because of damage and destruction of schools or their closure as the result of direct attacks;
- The commandeering and use of schools by those involved in warfare;
- Poverty;
- Internal displacement of students and teachers;
- The deterioration in educational services and standards;
- Cultural issues;
- Psychological and social effects of the current situation on both teachers and students.

In the Iraq Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis for 2008 [v]researchers found that around 90% of the children under 15 in the families surveyed were attending school but some 86% of them do not attend on a regular basis. This means that in every 100 children of school age, 90 are said to be 'attending school' but in reality only 23 attend regularly! Home schooling might be helpful in enabling these children to learn more effectively than their current school attendance allows.

None of these can be solved simply of quickly and children still need access to education while the current situation prevails and so whilst encouraging the school enrolment and attendance of girls wherever that is possible, alternatives need to be considered where that is impossible.

Recommendations for the provision of home schooling for grades 1-3 for children unable to attend school or unable to attend regularly:

- Develop and pilot three education packs for family members to begin the education of children, particularly girls, aged 6 to 9 (grades 1-3) for whom school attendance is currently impossible, so that as security and infrastructure improve they will not have to begin in grade 1. The pack for each grade would comprise the text books for that grade, a manual for the parents or other family members who would take on the role of teacher and three graded reading books to enable the child to develop their reading skills. For the pack to be used successfully one or more of the adults in the household need to be able to give the time and commitment to teaching the child(ren) regularly and have the ability to do so.

Resources needed for packs:

- International expertise in developing the content and format;
- Production and distribution costs;

Support to families in using the pack. This would require either a full time or part-time worker or workers, depending on the number of families involved and whether the remit included recruiting more families or working with a fixed number

ISSUE4

MANY CHILDREN WHO COULD BE ENROLLED IN SCHOOL, PARTICULARLY GIRLS, ARE CURRENTLY ABLE TO GO TO SCHOOL, BUT ARE NOT ENROLLED OR NOT ATTENDING

In 2006, 800,000 Iraqi children were out of school, 63% of them were girls. Although the barriers to education caused by the recent past and present warfare in Iraq are significant, attitudes are also very significant in girls' lack of participation in education. The most frequent responses to the question as to why girls between 6 and 17 are not attending was that no school was available or that the family is not interested in education .and The second most frequent response was that they are not attending for 'social reasons'. In difficult times, school may seem irrelevant, particularly when job opportunities for women are declining in number but efforts must be made to ensure that parents understand the value of educating their girls as an investment in the future and particularly an investment in the health and quality of life of their own grandchildren. Most indicators of the survival, health, life opportunities and wellbeing of children are closely linked to the amount of education that their mothers received. This is clearly identified in the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2006.

Recommendations for encouraging girls who wish to learn to enrol in school and attend regularly:

- Piloting the house-to-house persuasion of families, campaigns at local level; person-to -person, backed by national campaigns as recommended for government action, based on the national requirement for education for girls and the advantages of educating girls for themselves, their future families and for the country. As this will involve discussions with families, much useful and reliable information will be gathered about parents' attitudes to school, their concerns and any actions which could be taken to improve girls' access to school.
- Pilot 'Walking buses' to provide safe travelling for girls to and from school while decreasing the burden on particular families. A Walking Bus is the name given to a line of children walking to school together in the morning, along an approved route. Children are supervised and escorted by at least two trained adults acting as 'driver' and 'conductor'. Pre-registered children join the 'bus' at set places as the 'bus' takes the same route to school every day and picks the children up along the way. The adults can be parents or other family members or volunteers or workers who are trusted by parents.
- Pilot managed shared car pooling to increase safety travelling to and from school while decreasing the burden on particular families. Families who have cars and are driving their own child(ren) to

school agree to pick up other children, on a reciprocal basis with a different family picking up the children each day or each week. This means that a family does not have to provide transport to and from school each day, only when it is their turn.

- Pilot a 'buddy' system in which an older girl who is successful in primary school befriends a younger girl who is at risk of ceasing to attend school, accompanies her to school every day and generally supports and encourages her with her attendance and school work.

- Undertake a survey of primary school girls and their families where the girls of school age ARE attending school to discover how they are able to attend and what motivates them. The results of such a survey would be very helpful in working with families where girls are no attending school and would provide much needed evidence on how, despite all the difficulties, many girls do attend school and many succeed in doing well at school

- Continue to lobby for the development of the concept of class teachers, rather than a range of subject teachers, at least for grade 1-3, and advocating for the possibility of trialling this in some pilot schools to measure the impact on learning and retention.

- Lobby for the registration of all children, especially those whose documentation has been lost or destroyed during displacement, so that they are able to attend school;

- Advocate for the piloting of mobile schools as indicated in UNICEF'S Situational Analysis *Rekindling Hope In A Time of Crisis.*

- Advocate for the provision of free meals in school for children from poor families, particularly in food insecure areas;

- Consider and discuss with partners the concept of the development of safe and secure boarding facilities for girls living in areas where it is unsafe for them to travel to and from school each day.

Resources needed for campaign, walking buses and carpooling, buddy system and lobbying:

- Two full-time fixed contract workers from each district where the programme is to be implemented;
- Payment for workers or per diem + expenses for volunteers if this is more appropriate than employment
- Ongoing support for the workers/volunteers
- Two weeks training for each worker;
- A base for which the work can be managed and implemented;
- Administrative materials and equipment
- National media campaign
- National lobbying

Resources needed for survey

- National or international expertise in designing and implementing the survey

Workers to carry out the survey (could be those employed above)

ISSUE 5

ALL DATA SHOW THAT IN EACH SUCCESSIVE PRIMARY SCHOOL GRADE THERE IS A DECREASED PERCENTAGE OF GIRLS AGAINST BOYS AND THAT TOO FEW GIRLS COMPLETE THE FULL SIX GRADE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL

All available data suggest that girls form a declining percentage of pupils in each successive grade of primary school but there is little sound evidence as to the reasons for this and how they might vary in different parts of the country. As a result of declining numbers of girls in each grade, too few girls complete the full six grade of primary education.

Recommendations for beginning to address the decline in the percentage of girls in each successive grade of primary school

- Gather better information, from whichever groups or organisations hold any such information, or on exactly why children drop out of primary school and why girls are disproportionally affected ;
- Gather information as to why so many girls drop out between grades 1 and 2 and between grades 5 and 6, and what could be done to prevent this from happening;
- Develop strategies for addressing the identified causes of drop out when they are available;
- Gather information on whether the recommendations made above for encouraging girls to enrol in school and attend regularly also have an impact on the retention rates for girls.
- Drawings by Iraqi children seen in many documents scrutinised as part of this situational analysis and assessed using the Goodenough- Harris[13] Draw a Person Scale, indicate a considerable degree of cognitive delay. It might therefore be useful to pilot a project, based on the analysis of girls' drawings, to establish whether developmental delay is as widespread as informal evidence suggests, and whether girls with significant developmental delay are those failing to complete their primary education. The evidence for such a project would reinforce the need for early intervention programmes and pre-school education to promote normal cognitive development.

---

[13] *Goodenough-Harris Drawing Test*. Dale B. Harris. *Children's Drawings as Measures of Intellectual Maturity* (1963).

Resources needed for surveys and subsequent implementation work relate to the findings:

- National or international expertise in designing the survey, analysing the results and implementing action resulting from the findings of the survey;

  Workers to carry out the survey

ISSUE 6

ALL DATA SHOW A LARGE NUMBER OF OVER AGE CHILDREN IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Data for 2007/08 produced by the Iraqi Ministry of Education show that by grade 3, 45% of children are above the appropriate age for the grade and by grade 6 this has risen to 52.3%. For girls the figures are 45% over age in grade 3 and 49.5% in grade 6. This indicates an ineffective and wasteful primary education system where too few children start school at the right age and progress smoothly through each grade, finishing their primary education at the age of 11 or 12.

Recommendations to begin to decrease the number of over-age children in primary schools:

It is said by UNICEF staff that this is mostly related to community practices either due to ignorance of the age of the child, or due to overprotection to younger age groups. A study of over-age children is needed to determine how many children are over-age because they have started school late, how many are of unknown age and how many are over-age because of repetition of grades because of failure to progress.

To prevent children from having to remain in primary school for more than six years, the following initiatives may be useful:

- Continue with the promotion of child friendly schools, with a class teacher rather than subject teachers for at least grades 1-3 and normal progression through the grades with differentiated teaching in all grades;
- Work with the teacher training establishments, through providing international expertise, to improve the quality of teacher training, particularly focusing on differentiated teaching which focuses on learning rather than merely on the completion of the syllabus. International expertise is needed because of Iraq's longstanding isolation from developments in education and teacher training in other countries.
- Provision of in-service training for teachers in child- centred teaching

Other initiatives, such as those which enhance children's safety during the journey to and from school may be useful in encouraging parents to send their children to school at the correct age.

Requirements for fulfilling the recommendations

- International expertise on child-friendly schools and child- centred teaching ;
- Strengthening advocacy for the implementation of child-friendly schools and child-centred teaching;
- The development of a module on child-friendly teaching and school administration for use in teacher training establishments, in service training events for current teachers, and training events for school administrators at all levels.

ISSUE 7

ALL DATA SHOW THAT TOO FEW GIRLS TRANSFER TO INTERMEDIATE SECONDARY SCHOOL

A major change in girls' participation in life outside the home occurs at the end of primary school and this is exemplified in the sharp decrease in the number of girls attending school. For every 100 boys in secondary school there are 40 girls.

Recommendations to increase the number of girls transferring to secondary school:

Although schooling is free in Iraq, poverty remains a significant cause of school dropout, as it does in many other countries. This can be related to the family's inability to provide the direct cost of necessities for school attendance, or because of the indirect cost when a girl is needed to work in the home or as part of the family's income generation. Oxfam and the Al-Amal Association, their Iraqi partner organization conducted a survey of 1,700 women in the five provinces of Baghdad, Basra, Kirkuk, Najaf and Nineveh, over a period of several months, starting in the summer of 2008. Many of the women interviewed reported that they have been unable to secure financial assistance, in the form of a widow's pension, or compensation from the government for the loss or debilitating injury of family members during the current conflict or previous ones. Of the widows that were surveyed (25 per cent of respondents), 76 per cent said that they were not receiving a pension from the government. As a result, women who are now acting as head of household are much less likely to be able to afford to send their children to school. Forty per cent of all the women with children reported that their sons and daughters were not attending school

- It would therefore be useful to pilot a scholarship scheme to contribute to the secondary education of the most able girls from poor families (using the current official definition of poverty in Iraq);
- Pilot a buddy system in which girls already attending secondary school are paired with girls in grade 6, introduce them to the secondary school during their grade 6 year, help them become familiar with the school and he journey to and from school and generally promote the transition;
- Pilot leisure activities for girls between 10 and 16 at Youth Centres , which may schedule girls only days or through local existing NGOs Such activities provide girls with opportunities for friendship and leisure activities, but which would include a specific remit to encourage both participation of girls in education and an understanding of their rights

Resources needed for a scholarship scheme:

- Money for scholarships. The amount would depend on the level of financial support needed and on the number of girls to whom scholarships were awarded
- Administration of the scheme. The amount of administration would depend on the size and complexity of the scheme and it could be administered by secondary school head teachers, for example, without the need for more than a small payment for the extra work.

Resources needed for buddy system and non-formal leisure clubs;

- Two workers on three days a week fixed term contracts or similar.
- Training and support for workers and for buddies.

**ISSUE 8**

MANY GIRLS WHO ARE AGED 10-12 OR OVER WHO HAVE NEVER ATTENDED SCHOOL ARE LIKELY TO BE UNWILLING TO START SCHOOL BECAUSE THEY WOULD HAVE TO BEING IN GRADE 1 WITH VERY MUCH YOUNGER CHILDREN

Recommendations for encouraging girls currently between the aged between 10 and 15 who are out of school to begin or complete their primary education:

- Piloting girls-only 'Return to Learn' multi-grade classes in a spare classroom in a school building or in a room in other appropriate building which would provide easy access for girls. These classes would teach the regular national curriculum to enable the girls to complete their primary education without their having to learn alongside much younger children. They would also provide opportunities for girls to form friendships and to join in some leisure activities if they wish to do so;
- Continue and expand the already successful Accelerated Learning Programme, introduced in 2005 by the Government in collaboration with UNICEF to provide an alternative to formal education for children who had never attended school or who had dropped out early, to include more girls. Although this programme aimed to target girls specifically, current figures show a ration of 3:1 in favour of boys as participants in the programme. Information on another accelerated learning programmes are included in appendix 5 of this report;
- Encouraging these girls to participate in the informal education through leisure activities as described above.

Resources needed:

- International and national expertise on teaching in multi-grade classes;
- Additional staff for the development and expansion of the Accelerated Learning Programme, introduced in 2005 by the Government in collaboration with UNICEF;

Targeted information and publicity material to promote the Return to Learn and Accelerated Learning Programmes to girls and their families

ISSUE 9

THERE IS LITTLE INFORMATION ON THE ACCESS TO EDUCATION OF GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES

There is very little information about the lives of children with physical, sensory intellectual or other disabilities in Iraq. Some 15% of Iraqi children between 2 and 14 have a disability (see Issue 1) and an unknown number of these will be girls, who are likely to be doubly disadvantaged in their access to education. If families are not interested in sending their able bodied girls to school, or find it too difficult to enable them to attend it is unlikely that they will be making significant efforts to ensure that their daughters with disabilities are educated.

Most children with disabilities will be cared for a home and it seems unlikely that many will have access to schooling.

The Iraqi Child Welfare Commission reported that some 3,736 children with disabilities were living in Government institutions across the country in 2006. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs operates these institutions which provide basic education for disabled children and young adults. However, they do not have access sufficient training for teachers and funding for the provision of appropriate education.

Recommendations for improving the access to education of girls with disabilities

- Undertaking a research project in one or more defined areas to identify girls of school age with a disability and establish the situation with their access to education, with a view to piloting small scale provision for them in the future.
- Pilot the provision of basic information and home learning programmes for the parents of children with disabilities, in partnership with the Ministry of Education , to enable them to enhance their children's learning and development. Such a programme, based in a school in Kurdistan is described on page 72 of Rekindling Hope in a Time of Crisis, a situational analysis produced by UNICEF IN August 2007.
- Pilot a project on one of the institution for children with disabilities to improve the quality of education, with an emphasis on making such provision girl-friendly.
- Encourage the development of private programmes for the education of children with disabilities, with appropriate registration and quality assurance for the appropriate government department.

Resources needed:

- International expertise for the design of the research project, the analysis of the results, and the design of the pilot provision based on the results. Local staff to carry out the survey;
- Staff to replicate the information and home learning programme carried out in a school in Kurdistan, as described above, in another, very different area of Iraq;
- International expertise to enable a local staff member to examine the current education provided in an institution for children with disabilities; improve it, with a particular emphasis on making it more child-friendly.

THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF PROVISION, AND A LOW TAKE UP BY GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN OF THE PROVISION THAT EXISTS, FOR THOSE WHO ARE WELL ABOVE NORMAL PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE TO COMPLETE THEIR PRIMARY EDUCATION

'I was born in Baghdad and I finished some classes. I like to play and laugh, but I am serious about learning and I always hoped to be something in the future and to finish my school. I wish to finish my school and become something big but unfortunately my age does not allow me to go to school and finish my studies. Now I am doing nothing. My life is empty.'

Girl aged 18

Recommendations to address the shortage of provision and increase the take up of provision for the non formal education for young women who are well above normal primary school age:

- The piloting of distance learning packages, linked to the UNICEF E-learning Initiative supported by teachers through correspondence/ marking and returning marked work by post, mobile phone link (where available) or through the internet;
- Piloting 'Return to Learn' multi-grade classes for 15-18 years olds (no girls under 15, for whom there should be separate provision) in a room in an appropriate building which would provide easy access for young women. These classes would teach the regular national curriculum to enable the young women to complete their primary education without their having to learn in school or alongside much younger children. They would also provide opportunities for young women to form friendships and to join in some leisure activities if they wish to do so. Such classes should be separate from those piloted for girls under 15 so that they can be taught in ways particularly appropriate to adult education rather than those typical of schooling;
- Piloting separate informal leisure clubs, with a remit for encouraging education and an understanding of rights, as described above, for this age group, with an additional focus on access on employment opportunities and acceptable informal ways of gaining an income (for example, sewing, embroidery, food preparation)

Resources needed:

- Resources for the development and creation of distance learning packages, their distribution and the employment of teachers to provide the necessary teaching and support to learners;
- Training for teachers to run multi grade adult education classes and leisure clubs;
- Resources for informal leisure clubs.

ISSUE 11

THERE IS A NEED FOR ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF EDUCATION FOR GIRLS OF WHO HAVE COMPLETED THEIR PRIMARY EDUCATION BUT HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO TRANSFER TO SECONDARY SCHOOL, OR ARE CURRENTLY UNABLE TO ATTEND SECONDARY SCHOOL BUT WHO WISH TO BENEFIT FROM SECONDARY EDUCATION AND WOULD BE SUPPORTED BY THEIR FAMILIES IN DOING SO.

Only 40% of secondary school pupils are girls. Many girls, therefore, complete their primary education but are unable to go on to secondary school for a variety of reasons. As there are many fewer secondary schools than primary schools, travel often become a barrier, particularly when girls would have to leave their own village and travel to another district. The onset of puberty may also mean that parents no longer wish their daughters to be in the outside world, or regard it as less safe for them to be outside the family. Early marriage, sometimes as early as 13 years old, may prevent girls from attending school. Older girls may be needed more at home to help with household tasks.

Many girls, as shown in the small scale survey of girls who had stopped attending school, would have wished to continue their education, and many of their families would support them in doing so if ways could be found to enable this to happen in a way that would find acceptable. Well motivated girls who have successfully completed primary school would be able to study without continuous support, if the material supplied to them were well designed for self-study, but they would require access to teachers to mark and comment helpfully on their work.
 Some would be able to attend classes, set up specifically for them, out of school time or somewhere other than a school building, where they could benefit from group teaching and learning

Recommendations for alternative forms of secondary education:
- Make schools all age, by expanding existing primary schools up to grade 9, where numbers are sufficient for this to be viable, so that older girls can continue to attend a school near to their home, in an area with which they are familiar;
- Run evening classes in primary schools after the end of the school day where numbers are smaller – if the current shift pattern, or a change in the shift pattern, allows for this;
- The piloting of distance learning packages, supported by teachers through correspondence/ marking and returning marked work by post, mobile phone link (where available) or through the internet;
- Piloting girls-only 'Return to Learn' multi-grade classes in a room in an appropriate building which would provide easy access. These classes would teach the regular national curriculum to enable the young women to complete their secondary education without their having to learn in school or alongside much younger children. They would also provide opportunities for young women to form friendships and to join in some leisure activities if they wish to do so.

Ideally these two ways of learning could be combined, so that girls could study at home and have occasional group sessions, perhaps during school holidays when the buildings are not in use, or when security allows, to study together. This may be more acceptable to families than the girls going to school every day and would place less of a burden on family members who accompany them on the streets than daily school attendance.

ISSUE 12

THE NEED FOR INFORMAL EDUCATION FOR GIRLS WHO ARE NOT INTERESTED IN SCHOOL OR WHOSE FAMILIIES OPPOSE THEIR EDUCATION

Girls who do not wish to attend school, or whose families do not approve of education for girls must be provided with some opportunities to learn the skills that will enable them to provide the best opportunities for their future families.

The following three quotations from *Rekindling Hope In A Time of Crisis*; A Situational Analysis. UNICEF 2007 indicates why this is so important:

- 'Illiteracy is a key factor in the nutritional status of the child'
- 'Children of mothers with no education were almost three times as likely to be in the child labour force as those whose mothers had secondary education'
- 'Children whose mothers have secondary or higher education are least likely to be underweight and stunted'

Not only are these girls not receiving an education, they are not having opportunities to socialise with other girls, develop friendships and leisure interests, all of which will enhance their mental and physical well being.

Recommendation for non formal educational opportunities:

- Piloting social 'clubs' for girls from very traditional families, observing traditional values for girls whose families oppose their access to formal education and regard a woman's role as clearly different from that of a man, who would not wish their daughters to mix with girls from different backgrounds and traditions. Such clubs would provide girls with the opportunity to develop those skills needed to be effective wives and mothers, including cookery and nutrition; child care, including early childhood nutrition, the need for vaccination, the need for early childhood stimulation and the importance of education; family healthcare and the signs and symptoms of common diseases and illnesses and the necessary action; hygiene and sanitation, as well as

literacy and numeracy and leisure activities such as needlework or handicrafts , in a setting in which they can make friends and benefit from being outside the family home.

Such 'clubs could be part of the women's religious and health network, and linked to religious schools as one kind of non formal education. Such structures exist and are very active in several governorates, and UNICEF could build on such networks which is wide spread in the community

Resources needed for the development of non formal educational opportunities:

- The involvement of families and religious and community leaders who can advise on what would be acceptable to very traditional families, observing traditional values for girls who may oppose their access to formal education and regard a woman's role as clearly different from that of a man, who would not wish their daughters to mix with girls from different backgrounds and traditions;
- International and national expertise in devising non formal education programmes for girls and young women;
- Staff to carry out the programmes (number dependent of the number of girls to be involved) ;

Training for the staff (see below)

ISSUE 13

THE SHORTAGE OF WOMEN TRAINED TO RUN NON-FORMAL EDUCATIONAL PROVISION FOR GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN

If extended and alternative educational opportunities are to be made available to girls and young women, women must be trained and supported to provide them.

Recommendations for training and supporting women to provide non-formal and informal educational provision for girls and young women:

- Developing a training programme for older women, particularly widows, who have few opportunities for income generation, or other women who need an income, particularly those who head households, who have a some knowledge of some or all of the skills set out above so that they can run the non formal educational Girls' Clubs described above and receive a modest supplementary income for doing so.

Resources needed for training and support:

- National and international expertise in the development of curricula for Girls' Clubs
- Staff to deliver the curriculum
- Training for those staff and on-going support from management

ISSUE 14

Girls who have never been to school, who have been absent from school for some time or who have been prevented from attending school because of danger will need a bridging programme if they are to return to school and begin to study successfully.

School attendance is a habit, which, if not acquired or broken, needs to be established, or re-established, if girls are to attend regularly and learn effectively. Schools are also regulated institutions and require specific behaviours and attitudes from their pupils. Girls who have been leading unregulated lives, or who have been carrying out the roles of adult women instead of attending school, are likely to have difficulty in adjusting to school life and the expectations of teachers.

Recommendations for returning girls to school

The educational needs of girls in these situations can be met in two ways. Either by enabling them to take part in one of the alternatives to formal education recommended above, or by enabling them to take part in a bridging programme, together with local teachers, to enable both sides to develop strategies to adjust their expectations to enable both girls and teachers to work together to ensure the best educational opportunities for the girls and the greatest success for the teachers. A rapid assessment tool would need to be developed to evaluate the girls' levels of the educational attainment to design an appropriate bridging programme to meet their needs. Additional bridging sessions could be run in school buildings, if the shift system allows for this to happen, or could be adjusted to make it possible.

Resources needed for an intensive intervention and support programme for (re)introduction to school:

- Expertise in developing rapid assessment tools and intensive and support programmes for girls who have never attended school, or have ceased to attend school for over a year;
- Training for those carrying out the pilot programme(s);

- Materials for use during the pilot programme(s) – specific materials developed for this work, including school books and stationery.

<u>*ISSUE 15*</u>

Girls who have been traumatised will need specialised support in resuming normal activities, including education.

The traumatic events that many girls have experienced, or heard about, will have a profound impact on their ability to study, even if they are attending school, or could now attend school or take part in one of the other initiatives described above in this report. Children who used to feel they lived in a safe environment and could be protected by adults have had that reality shattered. Many will be experiencing sleep disturbances, eating disorders or an inability to concentrate that will have serious impact on their school performance. Even more seriously, whereas boys typically may become aggressive and violent in an attempt to drive out the anger and sadness they feel, girls are more likely to become withdrawn and unable to socialise, or they may become depressed, self harming or become suicidal. This has to be addressed and dealt with before they can learn.

Recommendation for supporting girls who have been traumatised and need specialised support in resuming normal activities, including education:

Developing and delivering, if something similar is not already in place through UNICEF Child Protection initiatives, an intensive six – eight week intervention programme, offering two or three sessions a week for groups of 10 -20 girls using artwork, drama, movement, music and games to explore different emotions and issues each week. The group must be led by someone the girls can trust and who is able to provide constant, reliable support. In the early weeks of the programme, the programme must enable girls to feel safe in their current environment and enable them to regain some self confidence. Once this has been achieved the girls can explore the difficult emotions and memories they may have, and discover that they are not alone. The girls can then work through these emotions, using art work and drama to articulate emotions and experiences that they may be unable, or unwilling to verbalise. In many cases, this may be the first opportunity a child has had to explore her emotions and work through her painful memories. Once the traumatic event has been brought into the open, the girls will be able to identify and practice coping strategies and think about their futures, including education. Similar programmes in other countries have indicated that they can be made simple enough to be implemented by facilitators without a formal psychosocial education and that local community workers with some facilitation skills, and a desire to help children in this way, need only about ten days training to begin the work.

Resources needed for an intensive intervention and support programme:

- Expertise in developing intensive and support programmes for traumatised children
- Training for those carrying out the pilot programme(s)

Materials for use during the pilot programme(s) – for artwork, music, making glove puppets and similar craft activities.

ISSUE 16

THE CURRICULUM

Curriculum can only be revised by the appropriate mandatory authorities , and this has already begun in Iraq, but UNICEF may wish to advocate for all aspects of the curriculum, at all stages and levels of education, to be revised so that both the content and the way in which it is taught support the importance of education for girls. It is particularly important that the current generation of boys, whose attitudes may still be malleable, are taught about the importance of education for girls, so that the education system may begin to bring about positive changes in attitude for both current and future generations.

This is a major undertaking and significant international expertise would be needed to support local experts who will have had little opportunity to be part of curriculum development internationally during recent years.

The development of the curriculum and learning materials to fully include girls is a key recommendation to the government of Iraq. This does not mean a separate or different curriculum for girls; girls should learn exactly the same subjects to the same level as boys. There is considerable research, however, to show that girls have different learning styles from boys and that they are ahead of boys in communication skills until at least secondary school. This needs to be addressed through the development of learning material and through pre-service and in-service teacher training. UNICEF may wish to play a key role in supporting the Ministries of Education in this could have a significant impact on the full inclusion of girls in educational achievement and success.

Appendix 1

Programme: Quality Learning and Development
Project and Sub - Projects: Monitoring and Evaluation
Activity Code Number: SC/2003/9901-43

1. Background:

In Iraq, girls make up a smaller percentage of net and gross school enrolment in most governorates and even a far less percentage of secondary enrolment (according to last year's education statistics that are still not confirmed by the government). The educational system in Iraq was widely regarded as among the best in the Middle East until 1980. Since then, education has been greatly affected by war, conflict and politicization; it is now facing one the most difficult times in recent memory. The escalating violence is putting education under critical attack, depriving thousands of children from having one of their basic rights. Illiteracy is widespread with 39% of the rural population unable to read or write, overall 22% of the adult population has never attended school, and more alarming; 47 % of women in Iraq are illiterate or partly illiterate.

The quality of Primary Education in Iraq has declined significantly, high sporadic school closures caused by insecurity, internal and external displacement and large-scale exodus of teaching staff have stretched school infrastructure to the limit. Forty-nine percent of school buildings in Iraq are in dire need for renovation and 21% are extremely unsuitable, leaving only 30% in an acceptable physical status. As a result, student to classroom ratio has reached 46:1 in some areas hosting a large number of IDPs. Net enrolment has dropped from 93% - reported by Iraq in its EFA 2000 Assessment - to 54% in 2006/2007, with 8% gender gap. Moreover, more than 220,000 school-aged children were internally displaced in 2007, and many were prevented from re-enrolling due to lack of appropriate residency papers.

Results from the latest MICS 3 (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2006) indicated that 78% is the percentage of children transferred from sixth grade of primary to first grade of secondary education. Conversely, MICS has indicated a very low percentage of attendance in early childhood education, not to mention the importance of pre-school education for the readiness of children to enter the school system.

As regards Secondary Education, the enrolment pattern is largely unbalanced, figures show a gap between males/females and rural/urban, as well as wide variations in enrolment between different geographical areas (governorates); the national secondary gross enrolment has fallen down to reach 46 % in 2006/2007, with female GER of only 39%, in addition to the high repetition rates. However, due to the low enrolment, resource availability in Secondary Education is not as scarce as it is in Primary.

The absence of a nation-wide schools survey in Iraq for the past 3 years has created an enormous gap of reliable and accurate data, causing confusion and discrepancies in figures, and thus making it very difficult to measure against set indicators for MD goals 2 & 3, as well as for many other Education Indicators.

Little substantive information on the situation of girls' education in general exists or is accessible for Iraq. Anecdotal reports of a growing trend for girls to remain at home and not be enrolled into education

opportunities are increasing believed to be due to an emergence of more conservative religious beliefs.

It is important to note that data and information will be emerging over the next few months that will greatly assist with an analysis of girls education in Iraq: 1) the 2007-2008 school survey is due for release in July and 2) the Iraq Knowledge Network survey will have information on why girls are not attending school and it is due out in August.

2. Purpose of Assignment:

Within the context of the education situation for children in Iraq in 2008, and in collaboration with Quality Learning and Development, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Communication units and staff, to prepare a desk review and analysis of the current situation of Girls Education in Iraq and provide recommendations and potential strategies and activities that UNICEF and the MOE could employ to strengthen support to Girls Education.

The end product of the consultancy will be a situation analysis report that will address all information available on the situation of girls' education and the issues surrounding lack of enrolment and attendance, and will also include recommendations for future programming.

3. Duty station:

Initial 2 weeks in Amman, Jordan

4 weeks in the UK (Home)

And **2 week** in Amman, Jordan

Key Tasks & Expected Outputs

Key tasks of the consultant:

1.   Using all existing information from surveys and other sources in Iraq, prepare a desk review/written analysis of the situation related to girls and young women's opportunities to education in 2008. The analysis will specifically look at the results of the 2003-2004 School Survey in comparison with 2007-2008. It will also analyze the results on reasons for lack of attendance from the IKN survey.

2.   Propose relevant strategies and activities inclusive of budget within the UNICEF Iraq office programme (end of 2010) to strengthen girls participation and enrolment in primary, secondary education in addition to non-formal learning opportunities (such as ALP).

3.   Work with the Moe in KRG and Baghdad in the preparation of the Situation Analysis and facilitate a presentation of the findings and the way forward in a workshop held outside Iraq with participation of high level decisions makers from Iraq.

Outputs:

Soft and hardcopy of the reports containing components as follows:

1.   Written analytical report on girls' education in Iraq and the reasons for non-enrolment/attendance.

2.   Detailed strategies and activities with budget for the remaining of 2008, 2009 and 2010.

3.   Plan and co-facilitate a workshop outside Iraq with key Iraqi government officials (25), Un/NGO partners 15 and interested donors in order to obtain endorsements by the MoE decisions' makers.

Duration of Assignment:

Eight weeks (56 working days) starting 26 September 2008 (approx)

Tasks

Review and finalization of TOR in consultation with UNICEF

Compilation of existing information and meetings with key organizations involved in Education in Iraq

Analysis of all available information regarding girls' education in Iraq.

Development of strategies and activities including budget costs for improved programming for girls' education.

Drafting of Situation Analysis of girls education in Iraq, including recommendations.

UNICEF review of first draft with feedback to consultant

Plan and co-facilitate a workshop with key Iraqi government officials, UN/NGO partners 15 and interested donors in order to obtain endorsements by the MoE decisions' makers.

Finalize and submit final report

7. Nature of Assignment: (Office or Field - Based, Frequency of travel, reporting mechanism etc.)
Office-based, alternately with consultant's home-based work.

Appendix 2

References and bibliography for this report

Access t[1]o Education in Iraq: A Gender Perspective, OCHA Iraq/UNAMI (Information Analysis Unit 2008

Al- Jawaheri, Yasmin Husein. *Women in Iraq: The Gender Impact of International Sanctions* 2008

The Arab Human Development Report 2005. United Nations Development Programme

Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations

Baghdad Burning: Girl Blog from Iraq, by Riverband, published by Marion Boyars 2005

Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis in Iraq. United Nations World Food Programme, 2008

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labour   February 28, 2006

De-Baathification of Iraqi Society," May 16, 2003 [online].

Educational statistics in Iraq 2003-2004. Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education in collaboration with UNICEF

Educational statistics in Iraq 2007-2008. Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education in collaboration with UNICEF

Foran, Siobhán; *Access to Education in Iraq: A Gender Perspective*, OCHA Iraq/UNAMI (Information Analysis Unit 2008)

Haddad, Subhy. 'New school year begins in Iraq amid parents' fresh worries' www.chinaview.cn 2009-09-28

Harris Dale B. *Goodenough-Harris Drawing Test*. *Children's Drawings as Measures of Intellectual Maturity* (1963).

Iraq Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2000

Iraq Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2006

Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2006: volume 1 Final report

Official Website of the Multi-National Task Force. Http://Www.Mnf-Iraq.Com/Index.Php

Rassam**,** Amal. *Political ideology and women in Iraq: Legislation and. Cultural constraints,* Journal of Developing Societies, vol. 8, 1992,

Rekindling Hope In A Time of Crisis. A Situational Analysis. UNICEF 2007

Revolutionary Command Council Law No. 139, December 9, 1972 Coalitional Provisional Authority Order No. 1,

Suad, Joseph, "Elite Strategies for State-Building: Women, Family, Religion and State in Iraq and Lebanon," in[1] *Women, Islam and the State*, ed. Deniz Kandiyoti (Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1992), p. 178-79

Survey of children who drop out of school. Ministry of Education and UNICEF; Sri Lanka 2009

UNDP/Ministry of Planning and Development Coordination: Iraq Living Conditions Survey.

UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund website

Appendix 3

The Mini Survey of girls' views on education was conducted in eight governorates in Iraq – Basra, Kirkuk, Kerbala, Diyala, Najaf, Muthanna, Missan and ThiQar

The survey questionnaire is included here:

Mini Survey of Iraqi girls' participation in, and attitudes towards, education.

These questions are intended for Iraqi girls aged between 6 and 18 years of age. Ideally they should be answered through a conversation with the girl(s) rather than completed as a questionnaire. Individual answers are particularly welcome but the outcomes of focus group discussions are also valuable.

Name(s) (given name(s) only)

Age(s). (under 18)

Location. village/ town/ city name +governorate

Do you go to school?

If the answer is yes, complete section 1.

If the answer is no, complete section 2

Section 1- for girls currently attending school

Do you go to school every day? If not, why not?

About how many girls are there in your class? Are there any boys? If so, about how many?

Are there fewer girls at school than there used to be? If so, why do you think some girls have stopped coming to school?

Do you experience any difficulties in attending school? Is so, how do you overcome them?

Some girls in Iraq have stopped going to school. What are the reasons why you have not stopped going to school?

What do you like best about school?

What do you like least about school?

What would you like to change about school?

Any other things you would like to say about school?

Section 2 - for girls currently not attending school

Have you ever been to school?

If you used to go to school, when and why did you stop going?

If you have never been to school, what are the reasons why you didn't go?

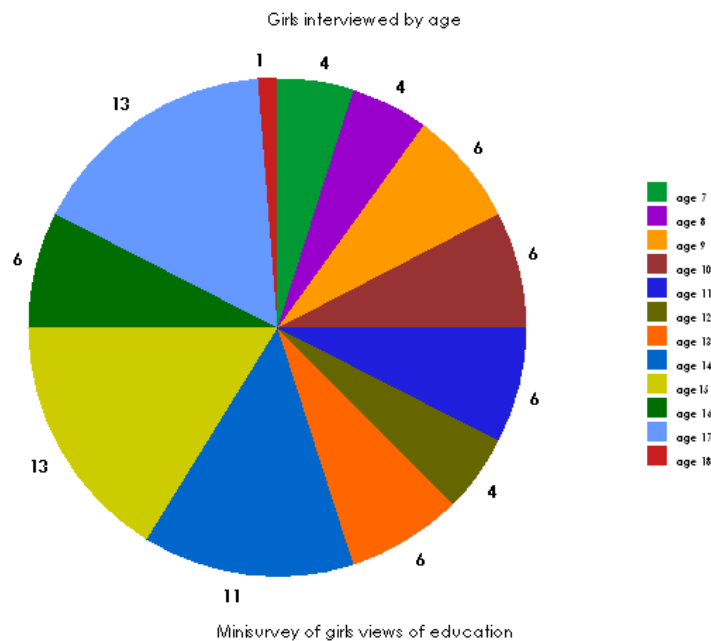*Would you like to go to school? Why or why not?*

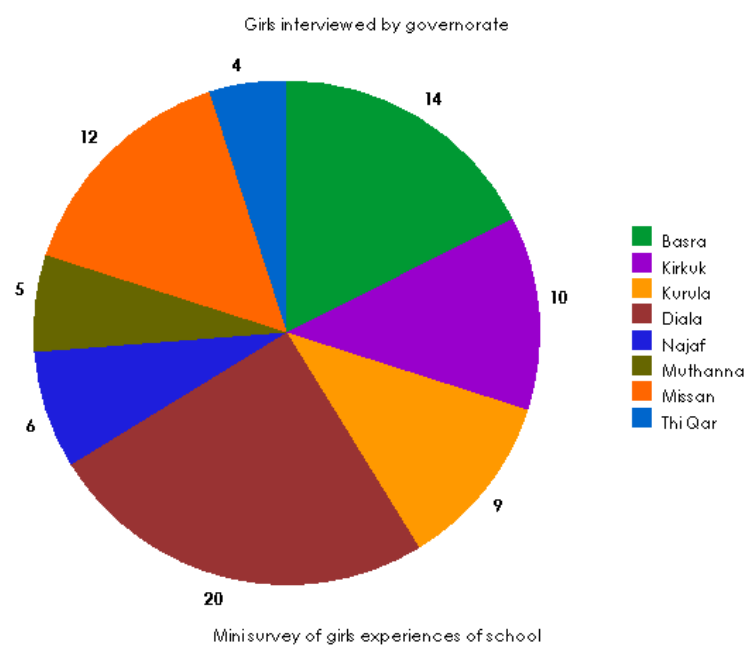*If you used to go to school, what did you like best about it?*

If you used to go to school, what did you like least about it?

What would have to be different for you to go to school?

Any other things you would like to say about school?

The number of girls interviewed in each governorate and their ages are shown below:

Girls interviewed by governorate

Legend:
- Basra
- Kirkuk
- Kurula
- Diala
- Najaf
- Muthanna
- Missan
- Thi Qar

Values shown on chart: 14, 10, 9, 20, 6, 5, 12, 4

Mini survey of girls experiences of school

APPENDIX 4

All the available data and available published information make it clear that Iraq's women, once a highly educated group, have lost ground in the last 15 -20 years as girls' participation in education has declined. A good quality educational system, which includes and encourages the full participation of girls, is vital for any country's development. The full participation of girls is needed not only because of the value of the contribution that women are then able to make in social, economic and political spheres, but because of the well documented benefit that the educational level of the wife and mother in a family makes to the health, well-being and success in life of all family members The value of providing good education for all children is even greater in the case of Iraq because of the immense development tasks facing the country. However the available information suggests that educational disadvantage is increasing for Iraqi girls as they are disproportionally less likely to participate and succeed in education at every age and every level. Half the future of the country is being wasted.

Educational disadvantage for girls in Iraq has complex causes. It is inextricably linked with the status of women in Iraqi society and with the opportunities available to women in the workplace and in public life, as well as with social conditions such as poverty, security and the quality of educational provision. Although historically Iraqi women and girls had relatively more rights than many of their counterparts in the Middle East, major discrepancies have always existed between rich and poor, urban and rural, traditional and liberal families with regard to the education of girls

The Iraqi Provisional Constitution (drafted in 1970) formally guaranteed equal rights to women and other laws specifically ensured their right to vote, attend school, run for political office, and own property. Since the 1991 Gulf War, the position of women within Iraqi society has deteriorated rapidly, with the predictable impact on girls' education. Women and girls were disproportionately affected by the economic consequences of the U.N. sanctions, and lacked access to food, health care, as well as education. These effects were compounded by changes in the law that restricted women's mobility and access to the formal sector in an effort to ensure jobs to men and appease conservative religious and tribal groups.

After seizing power in 1968, the secular Ba'ath party embarked on a programme to consolidate its authority and to achieve rapid economic growth despite labour shortages.[vi] Women's participation was integral to the attainment of both of these goals, and the government passed laws specifically aimed at improving the status of women. [vii] The status of Iraqi women was directly linked to the government's over-arching political and economic policies.

Until the 1990s, Iraqi women played an active role in the political and economic development of Iraq. A robust civil society had existed prior to the *coup d'état* in 1968, including a number of women's organizations. [viii] The Ba'ath Party dismantled most of these civil society groups after its seizure of power. Shortly thereafter it established the General Federation of Iraqi Women.[ix] The General Federation of Iraqi Women played a significant role in implementing state policy, primarily through its

role in running more than 250 rural and urban community centres offering job-training, educational, and other social programmes for women and acting as a channel for communication of state propaganda. Female officers within the General Federation of Iraqi Women also played a role in the implementation of legal reforms advancing women's status under the law and in lobbying for changes to the personal status code.

The primary legal underpinning of women's equality was set out in the Iraqi Provisional Constitution, which was drafted by the Ba'ath party in 1970. Article 19 declares all citizens equal before the law regardless of sex, blood, language, social origin, or religion. In January 1971, Iraq also ratified the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which provide equal protection under international law to all.

In order to further its programme of economic development, the government passed a compulsory education law mandating that both sexes attend school at the primary level. The Compulsory Education Law 118/1976 stated that education is compulsory and free of charge for children of both sexes from six to ten years of age. Girls were free to leave school thereafter with the approval of their parents or guardians. Although middle and upper class Iraqi women had been attending university since the 1920s, rural women and girls were largely uneducated until this time. In December 1979, the government passed further legislation requiring the eradication of illiteracy. All illiterate persons between ages fifteen and forty-five were required to attend classes at local "literacy centres," many of which were run by the GFIW. Although many conservative sectors of Iraqi society refused to allow women in their communities to go to such centres (despite potential prosecution), the literacy gap between males and females narrowed.

The Iraqi government also passed labour and employment laws to ensure that women were granted equal opportunities in the civil service sector, maternity benefits, and freedom from harassment in the workplace. Such laws had a direct impact on the number of women in the workforce. The fact that the government was hiring women contributed to the breakdown of the traditional reluctance to allow women to work outside the home. The Iraqi Bureau of Statistics reported that in 1976, women constituted approximately 38.5 percent of those in the education profession, 31 percent of the medical profession, 25 percent of lab technicians, 15 percent of accountants and 15 percent of civil servants. During the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88), women assumed greater roles in the workforce in general and the civil service in particular, reflecting the shortage of working age men. Until the 1990s, the number of women working outside the home continued to grow.

Legislative reforms in this period reflected the Ba'ath Party's attempt to modernize Iraqi society and supplant loyalty to extended families and tribal society with loyalty to the government and ruling party.[x]

In the years following the 1991 Gulf War, many of the positive steps that had been taken to advance women's and girls' status in Iraqi society were reversed because of a combination of legal, economic, and political factors. The most significant political factor was Saddam Hussein's decision to embrace

Islamic and tribal traditions as a political tool in order to consolidate power. In addition, the U.N. sanctions imposed after the war have had a disproportionate impact on women and children, especially girls. The gender gap in school enrolment (and subsequently female illiteracy) increased dramatically due to families' financial inability to send their children to school. When faced with limited resources, many families chose to keep their girl children at home. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as a result of the national literacy campaign, as of 1987 approximately 75 percent of Iraqi women were literate; however, by year-end 2000, Iraq had the lowest regional adult literacy levels, with the percentage of literate women at less than 25 percent.

Women and girls have also suffered from increasing restrictions on their freedom of mobility and protections under the law, which again predictably impact on the access of girls to education. In collusion with conservative religious groups and tribal leaders, the government issued numerous decrees and introduced legislation which had a negative impact on women's legal status in the labour code, criminal justice system, and personal status laws. In 2001, the U.N. Special Rapporteur for Violence against Women reported that since the passage of the reforms in 1991, an estimated 4,000 women and girls had been victims of so called "honour killings."

Additionally, as the economy constricted, in an effort to ensure employment for men the government pushed women out of the labour force and into more traditional roles in the home, so that the education of girls became less significant as they were unlikely to work outside the home. In 1998, the government reportedly dismissed all women working as secretaries in governmental agencies. In June 2000, it also reportedly enacted a law requiring all state ministries to put restrictions on women working outside the home. Women's freedom to travel abroad was also legally restricted and formerly co-educational high schools were required by law to provide single-sex education only, further reflecting the reversion to religious and tribal traditions. As a result of these combined forces, by the last years of Saddam Hussein's government the majority of women and girls had been relegated to traditional roles within the home and the education of girls had, predictably declined still further. . By 2000, budget constraints were also seriously limiting the provision of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials. Less money was available to rehabilitate dilapidated school so children were increasingly unable to study in properly functioning school buildings. The war begun in 2003 further contributed to the decline in the quality of education with the greatest impact on the education of girls with an increase in both real and perceived levels of danger outside the home, declining quality teaching and an increase of religious conservatism in some parts of the country.

Currently, despite some positive achievements in northern and southern Iraq, ongoing violence is posing new challenges in the country's central zone. In an insecure atmosphere where schools have been targeted, many parents have to choose between education and safety for their children, with girls once again the most affected.

Appendix 5

Lessons From Other Countries

Equal access to education for girls and young women remains a major challenge for many countries throughout the world. Conflict and post conflict recovery periods are also particularly challenging. Instability, lack of security, the destruction or occupation of school buildings, displacement of populations, an exodus of educationalists and a general disruption of everyday life are added to the major long standing reasons why children do not attend school - family poverty and a lack of belief in the relevance of education, particularly for girls.

Here some initiatives in countries where difficulties in including all children in education are being addressed. Similar initiatives, or variations of them, could contribute to strengthening girls' education in Iraq and the pitfalls encountered could be avoided.

1. Sri Lanka: Providing education in a country in the post conflict phase.

In Sri Lanka a particularly strong government commitment to universal education and gender equality has resulted in no significant difference between girls and boys in school enrollment and completion. Every child attending a state school receives cloth for one complete school uniform and free text books, and free transport is provided in hard to reach areas and children attending schools in particularly deprived areas receive free school meals

However, there was a civil war in Sri Lanka from 1983 until May 2009, between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE, also known as the Tamil Tigers), a separatist armed organization which fought for the creation of an independent state named Tamil Eelam in the north and the east of the island. Over 70,000 people have been officially listed as killed in the war since 1983. As one of the world's deadliest ongoing armed conflicts, it has caused significant adversity to the population, environment and the economy of the country. As a result the education of many children has been badly disrupted.

The Ministry of Education, supported by UNICEF, is creating an Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP). The purpose of ALP is to enable all children affected by conflict to regain the years of education which they lost; to enable children to rejoin the formal education system as quickly as possible; and to prevent children from failing to return to school and/or dropping out of school, because they do not have the necessary skills and knowledge to cope at their age level in a standard classroom. Children taking part in the ALP programme will be able to cover grades 1 - 9 in 6 years, or the grades they have missed in a faster time, so that they can rejoin their correct grade. Children will be placed by competency, not by age or previous grade. They will study the same curriculum as all other children, with the same standards applied, but they will be taught core subjects only, in a faster, more focused way. They will use the same textbooks as all other children, supplemented by other material. Teachers

will be supported by ongoing training and specially developed handbooks which focus on teaching the key learning competences thoroughly so that children will make progress at each level.

2. Viet Nam: A strong policy for the education of all children

Viet Nam remains a country in transition, although it is now over 30 years since the country was decimated by the Vietnam War, also known as the Second Indochina War. During the conflict, approximately 3.2 million Vietnamese were killed. This military struggle took place in Vietnam between 1959 and 1975. At the end of this war, the country was temporarily divided into North and South Vietnam. North Vietnam came under the control of Vietnamese Communists who had opposed France and who aimed for a unified Vietnam under Communist rule. The South was controlled by non-Communist Vietnamese. In 1965 the United States sent in troops to prevent the South Vietnamese government from collapsing. Ultimately, however, the United States failed to achieve its goal, and in 1975 Vietnam was reunified under Communist control; in 1976 it officially became the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. However, Vietnam's economy performed disastrously in the first decade after the war. Excessive government controls, lack of managerial experience, limited capital resources, and the absence of a profit incentive all contributed to the weak economy. In 1986 the government launched a reform programme called doi moi (economic renovation) to reduce government interference in the economy and develop a market-based approach to increase national productivity. Vietnamese leaders, however, have not yet entirely abandoned their dream of creating a Communist society. While stating their intention to create a modified market economy, they insist that state-run industries will hold the "commanding heights" in the system. Party leaders will not tolerate the creation of rival political organizations and rigorously suppress dissent from opposition forces. Conservative party leaders express open concern at the corrosive influence of decadent ideas from the West, which they view as a plot by "dark forces" in the United States to destroy the Vietnamese revolution.

As part of the strengthening of Viet Nam's position in the modern world, the government has adopted a strong policy on inclusive education

Sections of this policy are given here. A similar policy could be developed for Iraq.

SECTION 1 : GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Inclusive Education is defined as the high quality, effective and appropriate education of all children. Any child is entitled to at least nine years of education, including, children with disabilities, ethnic minority girls and boys, street children, and other groups of children for whom education has traditionally not been available. Inclusive Education includes systems and processes to meet the different needs of children by removing barriers to and within education. The aim of inclusive education is the creation of an education environment in which for all children are treated fairly in order to help them to participate in society and fully develop their potential.

The Vietnamese Government commits to universal high quality education for all children, including disadvantaged children. All international conventions and statements confirm:

- An educational system must provide education for all children regardless of their gender, ethnicity, mother tongue, religion or social status and despite any physical or psychological difficulties or other adverse conditions that children face.
- The right of every child to study must be recognised and respected. The education system must actively identify those children who do not have the opportunity to participate in the education process, be sufficiently flexibly to meet children's educational needs provide an appropriate curriculum to meet the needs of all learners/children.

SECTION 2

1. General purpose:

   To develop a legal framework to ensure for all children, and especially disadvantaged children, can access high quality education and fully develop their potential ability to integrate into community and social activities and prepare for successful adult lives

2. Specific targets:

   2.1 All children can access high quality education and learn effectively.

   2.2 Minimum suitable conditions for a fully inclusive education system are in place, especially sound management, effective service support systems, and a national budget to fully implement the inclusive education policy to provide high quality education in all localities

   2.3 Legal responsibilities and cooperation among ministries, departments and sectors are established for the successful implementation of the IE policy.

SECTION 6 : THE POLICY ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The inclusive education policy ensures all children can access quality education appropriate with their needs and learning capacity at their different stages of development.

The Ministry of Education and training is responsible for ensuring material, human and financial resources to implement the IE Policy with participation and co-operation of different agencies and sectors.

Children are enabled to learn effectively because they have adequate conditions regarding human resources and supporting service. For those who need them, additional support services are provided to ensure these children's access to effective, quality education.

3. Pakistan: Improving the quality of girls' education

The Second Female Secondary School Assistance Project, which began in 2002, aims to improve the quality of secondary education in rural areas of Bangladesh and improve girls' access to it. There are

three project components, which have considerable relevance to both primary and secondary education for girls in Iraq. The first component aims to:

- improve the quality of secondary education by financing teacher education, training, and support; providing incentive awards for school performance and improvement; and incentive awards for student achievement
- Improving school facilities, specifically providing access to safe drinking water and latrine facilities.

The second component aims to:

- increase access to education and retention of girls in school by supporting stipends and tuition
- provide an outreach programme.

The third component aims to:

- strengthen educational management, accountability, and monitoring by bolstering the programme management and project operations of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE),
- support school management and accountability
- provide for staff management training

4. Egypt: Experimental girl friendly small schools

Egypt has made good progress in achieving universal primary education, exceeding 90 percent in parts of the country for boys and girls combined and averaging 72 percent for girls nationally. But in rural and remote regions outside of major cities, particularly in Upper Egypt, girls' enrolment rates dip as low as 15 percent, and female literacy hovers around 40 percent for the country as a whole.

The Ministry of Education and USAID/Cairo are attempting to address this issue by setting up multi-grade, community-based small schools to help attract and retain primary level students who have dropped out from the mainstream educational system

A key objective in the small school programme is to ensure gender sensitivity in both curriculum and pedagogy. A "girl-friendly" curriculum is initiated in the small schools, where almost all students are girls. Although this will begin slowly as a small school teaching strategy, success could lead to the adoption of a "girl-friendly" curriculum as a national goal, with far reaching gains for Egypt.

Egypt is attempting to respond to the needs of hard-to-reach students by emphasizing student-centred learning approaches, increased curricular relevance, gender sensitivity, and, according to the Ministry of Education, the joy of learning.

For example, recognizing that small schools require alternative approaches to teaching and learning, the curriculum combines vocational training with academic learning. This is a strategy based on experience, which indicates that income-generating skill development appeals to parents and helps keep girls in school.

Small schools are typically divided into "learning corners" where students explore topics ranging from math and science to Arabic and art. A "quiet corner" provides a place for reading or working independently while the "listening corner" is devoted to stories or music. Some corners may be permanent and others temporary while still others may be designed around special themes

USAID/Cairo has launched a large programme to help improve Egypt's small schools, In addition to the official one-room schools launched through the "Mrs. Mubarak Initiative," community schools run by UNICEF, NGOs and others have demonstrated success in improving enrolment and retention of girls in basic education. Located near children's homes, the schools have only one classroom in which girls (and some boys) vary widely in age and skill level and where teachers are from the neighbourhood.

Recognizing that small schools require alternative approaches to teaching and learning, the Ministry of Education is restructuring the primary curriculum to make it more applicable in multi-grade classrooms. Teachers' guides, instructional support materials and supplementary learning aids are being designed with a focus on topics such as methods of multi-grade teaching, classroom organization and creative use of space, group formations, thematic learning and integration of subjects. The multi-grade materials are being produced in close cooperation with governmental and nongovernmental partners.

While English is now a required subject in grades 4 and 5 in Egyptian schools, most small school teachers have little or no English or foreign language teaching skills. Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) was specifically developed to meet this type of need, and a feasibility study confirmed that it could be used effectively in the Egypt context to deliver quality ESL instruction. IRI is an innovative teaching process that builds on USAID's long experience with radio instruction, spanning nearly a dozen countries and over a million students. Though IRI uses radio as a medium for education, unique characteristics differentiate it from most other instructional radio. For example, IRI promotes extensive interaction between learners and radio teachers, calling for a variety of responses from students at regular intervals. It also provides highly systematized instruction to ensure quality, with practice divided into short segments and distributed over time, and responses immediately reinforced. Print materials distributed to participating schools help to supplement lessons. This process corresponds to the interactive small school approach.

While providing effective ESL instruction in schools without qualified ESL instructors, the IRI programme in Egypt is also designed to meet the Ministry of Education's objective of familiarizing students with English "in a stress-free and fun-loaded atmosphere." Scripts with songs and music are being recorded with this goal in mind, and pilot testing is promising success.

5. A Remedial Education Programme in Palestine

In 2001, the idea of distance learning was raised in Palestine, due to the continuous closure of schools for long durations (three to four months at a time) due to conflict. A group of teachers and administrators started what they called the 'remedial education' programme. The aims were to simplify the curriculum content and make up for lost school days.

The project consisted of three elements – self learning remedial education work sheets, extension remedial programmes, and broadcasting of remedial lessons. In the early stages of the project, 230 worksheets covering all curricular areas and different grade levels were prepared. Children would take home a week's worth or more of the work sheets, complete them with the help of their parents and then bring them into school to their teachers when possible. The worksheets were of very high quality and included coloured pictures. Each work sheet had a clearly defined educational aim and contained clear instructions, so that children could use them independently. Work sheets were used so that children could either use them individually or in small groups at school. Attention was given to make the work sheets fun to use, to break the monotonous routine of the class work. The worksheets used clear and simple language, adjusted to the ability levels. There is some evidence of successful learning outcomes from this programme. For instance, in one remedial education programme out of the 57 children involved, only one failed the final examination, despite the fact that students had only followed half that year's curriculum in a regular classroom.

6. The COPE Programme in Uganda: Meeting the Educational Needs of Disadvantaged Children

Since 1995, UNICEF Kampala has provided technical and financial support for a complementary basic education initiative. This initiative, Complementary Opportunities for Primary Education (COPE), was designed to be a cost-effective means for meeting the educational needs of this group of disadvantaged and excluded children. COPE provides an accelerated primary education, enabling children to cover the five grades of primary in three years, through the use of high quality materials, an abbreviated school day, and paraprofessional teachers supported by ongoing training and supervision.

The COPE programme has demonstrated that there is a significant demand for flexible, basic education alternatives. The high initial enrolment and demand from areas not served by the programme indicated that this demand is significantly greater than what an externally-funded and sponsored programme can provide.

COPE has also validated the effectiveness of its methods and materials. Informal testing and anecdotal accounts indicated that children attending the programme for the full three years do reach an equivalent of primary grade 5. Interviews carried out in the communities also indicated that the methods and materials were attractive to both participants and parents.

However, an evaluation of COPE found that the initiative suffered from unacceptably high rates of programme failure and of children dropping out. A significant factor in programme failure and child drop out was found to have been caused by is the underinvestment in building local capacity

In addition, despite efforts on the part of UNICEF and MoE, COPE has remained, to some degree, a parallel primary education initiative. The planning and delivery of similar programmes in Iraq should ensure that this is avoided.

It is also clear in the evaluation that the development of complementary education opportunities requires that the COPE model be made more flexible. If complementary approaches are to promote universal primary education, they must allow movement between complementary programmes and the formal primary school. Complementary programmes must also evolve to meet the needs of learners at different stages of their education through multi-level methods and self-paced materials. Complementary approaches must also be sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of particular groups of excluded children in given communities.

It was stated as part of the evaluation of COPE that formal school practices and policies also make a significant contribution to the exclusion, and this may also be an important consideration for Iraq. A curriculum perceived as irrelevant, and methods and materials that lack dynamism are factors that must be addressed in a comprehensive effort to bring all children into the educational system. In order to address the issue of access for disadvantaged and excluded children, a change to the policies and practices currently implemented in the school system should be undertaken.

i. The Arab Human Development Report 2005. United Nations Development Programme

ii. Iraq Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2000

iii. Iraq Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2006

iv. Educational statistics in Iraq 2003-2004. Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education in collaboration with UNICEF

v. Rekindling hope in a time of crisis. A situational analysis august 2007. UNICEF

vi. Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis in Iraq. United Nations World Food Programme, 200

vii. Suad Joseph, "Elite Strategies for State-Building: Women, Family, Religion and State in Iraq and Lebanon," in *Women, Islam and the State*, ed Deniz Kandiyoti (Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1992), p. 178-79

viii. Ibid., pp. 178-79.

ix. Such organizations included the Women's Empowerment Society (Jameat al-Nahda al-Nisaeya - founded in 1924), the Kurdish Women's Foundation (founded in 1928), and the Iraqi Women's League (founded in 1951).

x. The goals of the General Federation of Iraqi Women were outlined in Revolutionary Command Council Law No. 139, December 9, 1972: (1) to fight the enemies of a socialist, democratic Arab society; (2) to ensure the equality of Iraqi women with men in rights, in the economy, and in the state; (3) to contribute to the economic and social development of Iraq by cooperating with other Iraqi organizations and by raising the national consciousness of women; and (4) to support mothers and children within the family structure. As of 1997, 47 percent of all women in Iraq belonged to the organization. The Coalitional Provisional Authority abolished the GFIW, which required Ba'ath party membership and represented the only channel for many women to access positions of political power, under the post-war "de-Baathification" policy. *See* Coalitional Provisional Authority Order No. 1, "De-Baathification of Iraqi Society," May 16, 2003 [online].

xi. Rassam, "Political Ideology and Women in Iraq," p. 91.