

**UNDP/CERD/UNESCO PROJECT
LEB/96/005
Program of Support to the Reform of the Educational
System in Lebanon**

External Assessment Report

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I. General Background

The Civil War perpetrated in Lebanon for more than 15 years, seems to have not only succeeded to demolish towns and ruin infrastructure, but it also has probably succeeded in undermining confidence and mind flexibility, developing distrust and sterilizing communication. In other words, it succeeded in breaking the basic personality of the Lebanese person. That is probably why the Taef Accord signed in

1990 marking the end of the civil unrest in Lebanon considered education as one of the most important tools capable of rehabilitating the Lebanese person and redressing the climate of paralysis prevailing in the country. Therefore, Taef Accord considered Education as one of five issues that needed reform.

Since then, "successive Governments have stressed the priority of education and the development of its potentials to enable it to contribute to sustainable human development". In fact, "sixteen years of civil unrest in the country resulted in an education sector in need of rehabilitation of its infrastructure, a complete reform of its curricula, a reorganization of its management system, skills development and training for all its personnel. The launch of the Education Recovery Program in 1996 confirmed the commitment of the Lebanese Government to reform the education system" ¹.

II. The LEB/96/005 Project

"The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in collaboration with UNESCO, has since 1996 provided assistance to the Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports (MNEYS) and the National Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD) for the preparation and implementation of a program to support the development of the basic education sector. The Preparatory Assistance Document was signed in July 1996 and the Program Support Document was signed between the Government of Lebanon (the Ministry of National education, Youth and Sports - MNEYS, and the Center for Educational Research and Development -CERD), UNESCO, and UNDP in May 1997. The total project budget amounts to \$1.8 million, contributed by UNDP (\$600 thousand) and cost sharing from the Government of Lebanon (\$1.2). The program was initially prepared to end in June 1999. It has been extended to 2001" ²

1. Objectives of the program:

The focus of the program was set at achieving the following objectives ³

- 1.1. Promote a mechanism for national coordination and planning among concerned national and international partners;
- 1.2. Support the development of multidisciplinary skills of members of the education sector, notably decision-makers, planners and administrators;

¹ Terms of reference of the external evaluation ² Idem.

³ Idem

- 1.3. Improve institutional capacities of the sector through upgrading the

educational programs, textbooks, evaluation and skills of teachers;

- 1.4. Mobilize additional resources to develop the sector and to put in place a monitoring and evaluation mechanism of the system and its impact on primary education, notably in poor and disadvantaged regions in the country.

2. Components:

The components of the program have somewhat evolved through time with focus changing according to priority actions determined in the work plans. At the time of the evaluation, the program was made of six main components ⁴:

- 2.1. School mapping and educational facilities;
- 2.2. Educational management information system;
- 2.3. Reform of curricula and textbooks;
- 2.4. Training of teachers and of decision-makers both in MNEYS and NCERD;
- 2.5. Education for children with special needs; and
- 2.6. Monitoring and Evaluation.

III. The external evaluation

1. Context

Terms of reference posed the context of such an operation as follows:

"UNDP increasingly emphasizes the need for adequate monitoring of programs and projects. Existing UNDP monitoring tools were utilized during the implementation of this program. Several documents (a project Performance Evaluation Report, Progress Reports, Tri-partite Review Report) provide some relevant information on the achievements of this Program. However, an in-depth external evaluation is needed as

this program has a budget of more than \$ 1 million and therefore requires a mandatory evaluation as specified in the Programming Manual of UNDP".

"Furthermore, the recent recruitment of a Technical Coordinator for the Program whose terms of reference specify that he shall not only prepare and execute the project strategy but also identify needs, monitor changes and progress and provide suggestions for further actions also support the need for an evaluation of the program".

"The results and recommendations of the evaluation will help the three partners, UNDP, MNEYS/NCERD, and UNESCO, review the actual design of their

intervention and identify new focuses for the program. This need for evaluating the program's achievements is also significant to different efforts aiming at resource mobilization for further activities in the field of education."

⁴ Idem

"The preparation of a General Education Project to be financed through a World Bank loan could also benefit from this evaluation, as well as programs supported by other donors, in the field of education, as subsequent projects shall learn from the experience of earlier ones. Finally, the outcome of this evaluation will serve to assist UNDP Lebanon Country Office in directing its activities in the sector of human and social development and sustainable livelihoods."

2. Objectives

The Terms of Reference assigned to the external assessment the following five objectives:

- 2.1. Assessment of the extent to which the objectives of the program interventions have been achieved;
- 2.2. Assessment of the impact of Program activities in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability in supporting the Lebanese Government in its reform of the education sector;
- 2.3. Exploration of the difficulties and constraints faced in program implementation;
- 2.4. Examination of the implementation mechanism set up for the execution of the program;
- 2.5. Examination of the extent to which UNDP, UNESCO, And MNEYS/ CERD played a catalytic role in resource mobilization.

3. Method:

A team of three external evaluators⁵ was appointed to carry out this technical mission. The three experts were well informed about the basic elements of the project after having listened to a double briefing given by UNESCO Office representative ^b, and the project coordinator.

The team undertook the following:

1. Hold three meetings among its members in order to design a common evaluation strategy able to converge members approaches and build a pertinent evaluation framework.

2. Distribute tasks and on team members, and draw a list of persons to meet and interview.
3. Proceed to gather, from the documents⁸ provided by the different partners and beneficiaries, the data that might be useful as indicators for evaluation, and define the nature of impacts⁹ the mission is seeking for.

⁵ Mrss N. WEHBE, Abdo KAAI, and Abdulwahab SHMAITULLY

⁶ Mr. Ramzi SALAME

⁷ Mr. Habib Hajjar

⁸ See list of documents investigated by the assessment team in the annex (A).

4. Interview concerned officers¹⁰ from different involved institutions and corps.
5. Survey all kinds of actions taken by different partners under the umbrella of the assessed project.
6. Determine the difficulties and/or obstacles hindering the implementation of the various components of the project.
7. Interpret collected data on the grounds of balancing the equation time/achievement with quantity/quality.
8. Hold two meetings among its members in order to prepare the de-briefing.
9. Debate the most relevant way to expose results in the external assessment report"

4. General Results of the assessment

Instead of exposing conclusions of the assessment operation in a linear way, which should mean proceeding by splitting up the results of the assessment carried out on each of the six components of the project, the evaluation team opted for a much more compact way of displaying results. It consists of using one table showing different kinds of performance achieved in each component realm. By using tables, the team aims to display the whole component landscape in one shot.

Within each component, the team tried to check the extent to which the project objectives have been fulfilled. Actually, the team questioned each objective, within each component, in terms of mechanism of implementation initiated, difficulties encountered, achievements performed and impacts brought to light. Relevant specific recommendation or recommendations will follow the analysis of each component.

Empty squares mean that no sign has been detected concerning the relevant question.

⁹ while it is possible to count and list some tangible impacts, it is more difficult to realize the existence, however true, of another diffuse and long-term detectable impacts which are generally qualitative and built-in.

¹⁰ See list of persons interviewed by the assessment team in the annex (B). ¹¹ A consensus about using descriptive tables was attained.

TABLE 1- Component 1: School Mapping and Educational Facilities

Process	Output	Capacity Building (Training)	Capacity Building (Institutionalization)	Planification/Coordination
Implementation Mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O Training abroad (IIEP). O Recruitment of International Experts (Dupetit, Caillods, Porte). O Animation of 3 national seminars by Mr. Dupetit (Inter. Expert). O Animation of training session by Ms. Caillod (Inter. Expert) for 30 persons. O Preparation of a workshop on school entry planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> U Ad hoc group of 3 persons is working on school mapping. It seems that the word <i>UNIT</i> was intentionally avoided for administrative reasons. O Recrutement of local professionals to make the inventory of existing school facilities and to develop norms for buildings and equipment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O Organization of a sensitization seminar on coordination and cooperation grouping representatives of MNEYS, CERD, CDR, Mohafazat, Ministry of Public Works, Council of the South, and other partners and beneficiaries. 	

Difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O Behavioral resistance to the rationalization of the decision-making basis in terms of school buildings in spite of the reconciling explicit speech. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O Absence of official status for the acting school mapping group. O Lack of qualified personnel to follow-up the recommendations and actions. O CDR is, by the law, the Official Planification Corps for the whole Lebanese Public Sector. The establishment of a School mapping Unit, could be seen as a duplicate institution. O Creation of new Unit is almost impossible within the present administrative structure, because of the constraints imposed by the recruitment policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O Lack of convinced personnel. U Absence of legal framework for coordination. O Lack of institutionalized communication. O The Council of the South is not yet taking into account the data collected and/or produced by the school mapping group.
Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O 4 professionals trained at IIEP (for 1 year each). O Representatives of various partners sensitized as regards the various aspects of school mapping. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O Usable data for school mapping collected. O School facilities inventory established. O Norms for buildings and equipment developed and adopted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> U Effective and efficient coordination between MNEYS, CERD, and CDR, and regional educational directorate, at a satisfactory level.
Impact		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O School mapping group has gained the Minister's confidence by the Government and has succeeded to play a consultative role to the Minister. O More fluent circulation of data between central and regional levels. O Daily use by the Minister of information produced by School mapping project is breaking the overflowing of political interference in matter of school building. O Rationalization of the Minister decisions in matter of school building distribution over regions, areas and villages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O Cooperation has been pragmatically established, in matter of data exchange between MNEYS, CERD, and CDR, strongly supported by the Minister. O Norms and guidelines are used for future investments (European Community and Arab funds for development) in school building.
Resource Mobilization	<p>Q World Bank to finance school buildings and equipment through its PEG (General Education Project) as a continuation of LEB/ 96/005. Other donations were received by the Government to build new schools.</p> <p>J Differences of vision, approach and expectations between the donors are becoming blurred due to the existence of national norms and guidelines.</p>		
Remarks	<p>U Survival of school mapping group is depending of the person of the minister. The present Minister willing is the real driving force behind the noticed coordination in the domain of exchanging and/or using data collected and/or produced by school mapping group.</p> <p>Q Big need to base a functional mechanism for this unit within the MMES YS/ CERD and the CDR.</p>		
Specific recommendations	<p>a Institutionalize the School Mapping Group working at the CERD into a Unit.</p> <p>0 Reinforce and Formalize the articulation between the Group or Unit, the CDR, and the Council of the South .</p> <p>C3 Institutionalize the working methods and procedures concerning school facilities (buildings and equipments) and disengage the project from school mapping and educational facilities.</p>		

TABLE 2- Component 2: Educational Management Information System (EMIS)

Process	Outputs	Capacity building (Training)	Capacity building (Institutionalization)
Implementation Mechanism		D Field training for technical staff. Planification/Coordination	D Providing basic material (computers and softwares).

- Enhancing the role of regional educational administration in data collection.
- Recruitement of international experts (Coussement, Cassidy).
- Building mechanisms of cooperation between CERD and regional Directorates of Education (MNEYS).

Difficulties

- Lack of technical personnel at the regional level. Q Failure of several attempts of recruitment of even one or two technical staff (until the 15th of March 2000)
- Lack of cooperation (resistance) from middle management staff.

D Resistance to systematization D Lack of technicians. a the work is carried on in a very unsophisticated way D Lack of information culture. D Lack of experience in terms of information treatment and circulation. Most of time, information is short-circuited.

- Resistance of CERD middle management staff to decentralization.
- Lack of experienced and technical staff in the regiona bureaus.

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Achievements

- Available limited technical staff trained.
- Computerized usable and reliable database built up.

Cooperation is painstakingly ensured between CERD and the regional Directorates of Education in data collection and storage.

Impact

D Introducing technology is facilitating regional data collection and data entry procedures.
D Convinced by the operation outputs, the Ministers council recently (16/3/2000) agreed to appoint 18 technicians for EMIS Pro am in the re ions.
D OMSAR agreed to allocate a part of the World Bank Loan for providing computer machines to regional directorates of education. In fact, USA \$ 250,000 were drawn by OMSAR from the World Bank Loan in order to finance this operation. D World Bank is planning to integrate EMIS in PEG project.

precision,
utilization.

D Increasing awareness among regional personnel about the importance of data circulation and

- Generalization of this operation is under way, implying close cooperation between CERD and the Directorate of Education.

Resources Mobilization

Remarks

D Slowness of exploitation and publication of the collected data.

Specific recommendations

D Undertake the training of the newly appointed technicians.

D Train the professionals and decision-makers on the analysis and use of data.

TABLE 3 - Component 3: Curricula and Textbooks

Process	Output	Capacity building (Training)	Capacity building (Institutionalization)	Planification/ Coordination
Implementation Mechanism	<p>3 Recruitment of international experts: - Zammouri-)2 missions - Newton -) 5 missions - Foulon 4 3 missions</p> <p>Q Recruitment of national experts. 13 National seminars and workshops conducted by the experts.</p>	<p>O Frequent attempts to set up a mechanism generating systematic and comprehensive policy and procedures in curriculum development and textbooks production.</p> <p>3 Recruitment of national experts on environment curricula.</p>	<p>O Stting up a coordination network between CERD, MNEYS, UNESCO, and the private sector, especially at first stages of the project.</p>	
Difficulties	<p>a Resistance to new orientations in curriculum development and textbooks production..</p>	<p>a Differences in visions and conceptions between the international experts and CERD concerning policy orientations.</p>		
Achievements	<p>O Qualifications of numerous nationals from public and private sectors upgraded in book production techniques.</p>	<p>(3 Environment issues integrated in the new curricula and textbooks.</p>	<p>(3 Cooperation established between public and private sectors in curricula development.</p>	
Impact	<p>D Technical skills used in curriculum development, editing and textbooks production.</p>			

Resource Mobilization	Cr Curriculum development was essentially done through CERD own resources; while textbook production still follows the old system with CERD producing the so-called national textbooks to be used in the public schools and some private schools, and the private ones of technical assistance textbooks efficiently in private schools.
Remarks	13 It was roughly proved that technical assistance is not the main card to play in this domain. Policy dialogue seems to be primordial for such an operation. El It is important to mention the lack of institutionalized cooperation with the concerned faculties and units at the various universities, as well as with the French Cooperation which was very active in this domain.
Specific recommendations	Cooperation which was very active in this domain concerning the elaboration and production of textbooks. Intensify the "burgeoning" efforts concerning the evaluation of curricula and textbooks.

TABLE 4 - Component 4: Training of teachers and decision makers

Process	Output	Capacity building (Training)	Capacity building (Institutionalization)	Planification/ Coordination
Implementation Mechanism		J Study tour abroad for a group of decision-makers. a Preparation of a program for the training of Headmasters. [a Preparation of a workshop for the training of middle-management personnel on	(J Recruitment of international consultants to design schemes for distance education of teachers.	
Difficulties		111 Resistance to new methods and procedures. a Low absorption capacity of educational structures.	(J Contradictory visions about schemes for the training of educational personnel. El Lack of qualified and experienced human resources in alternative delivery systems. (J Slowness in decision making and lack of financial resources for the implementation of distance education centers and the development of training materials.	
Achievements		(J Study tour realized.		
Impact				

Resource Mobilization	a CERD could not yet mobilize extra-budgetary resources for the training of educational personnel. Given the high cost of such an operation, the CERD has solicited the World Bank to finance the next stage of this operation. French cooperation was also put on this track.
Remarks	j As emergency measure, CERD has proceeded with the acquaintance of educational personnel with the new curricula by very short seminars and workshops conducted at large scale. In-depth training could not be implemented due to shortage of human, financial and time resources.
Specific recommendations	J In view of the high cost of training large numbers of educational personnel, the project should concentrate its effort on the development of a policy and a strategy for the re-deployment of teachers and the pre-service and in-service training of personnel in view of the new needs of the system, particularly the introduction of new subject matters in the curricula (economy, social studies, technology, etc...) and the provision of quality basic education for all, particularly pupils with special needs.

TABLE 5 - Component 5: Education of children with special needs

Process	Outputs	Capacity building (Training)	Capacity building (Institutionalization)	Planification/ Coordination
Implementation Mechanism		J Organization of a specialized conference at national level. p Continuous substantive and organizational support provided to technical committees composed mainly of national professionals.	J Recruitment of Intern. Expert (McBride) and national consultants. a Attempts to involve deeply and directly the MNEYS and CERD. EJ Building a conceptual framework.	J Nomination of a follow-up committee to the national conference involving representative of all stakeholders from the public sector , NGOs and the UN system.
Difficulties			J Low involvement at the first stages of the operation and lack of sustainability in terms of actions taken by the MNEYS and CERD in this domain. CI Resistance of some NGOs to changing orientations.	a Different partners are working at different paces.
Achievements		J Effective participation and commitment of various partners coming from NGOs and the private sector.	EJ Success in maintaining a constant flame of commitment and enthusiasm among different partners, especially among NGOs representatives.	a Meetings, which are held systematically, are still attended by a very big number of volunteer partners. Useless to remind everybody that is not a current phenomenon in Lebanon.

Impact	<p>(J Generating a deep awareness of equity towards the persons with special needs among profane people.</p> <p>a Building, slowly and surely, a social culture prevailing constant community action over intermittent and partial one.</p> <p>a Preparation of a second conference which should</p>	<p>EJ Upgrading the awareness of NGOs concerning the necessity to recognize the right of people with special needs, not only to have a special card allowing them to present themselves to the Ministry of Social Affairs counter, but also, and above all, to integrate normal schools and to enjoy equal</p>	<p>(J Coordination between the public education sector, the concerned NGOs, and the two concerned Ministries (Social Affairs, and Health). The inclusion of concerns relating to the education of children with special needs into the educational system.</p>
Resource Mobilization	<p>a Successful mobilization of NGOs participation. held at national level.</p>		
Remarks	<p>0 This is an example of bottom-up policy making approach to be encouraged in other domains such as the reduction of regional disparities or the enforcement of compulsory</p>		
Specific recommendations	<p>0 Intensity the involvement of CERD and the Directorate General of the Ministry in the planning for the provision of services to the children with special needs. Use this example to enlarge the bottom-up approach in policy making to other educational domains.</p>		

Process	Outputs	Capacity building (Training)	Capacity building (Institutionalization)
Implementation Mechanism		<p>O Recruitment of Intern. Experts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bollon - 5 missions - Henry - 1 mission 	<p>O Recruitment of national experts.</p> <p>O Informal attempts were made to convince CERD</p>

TABLE 6 - Component 6: Monitoring and Evaluation

Planification/Coordination

Difficulties

O Definition of concepts.

- National seminars and workshops conducted by the international experts. O Live daily evaluation.

- Evaluation culture and practices are tainted with prejudgements.
- Monitoring and following up are not yet part of educational culture and practices.

management to convert part of

practice configurations.

- Evaluation is not yet considered as a serious essential affair.
- Apart final summative examinations, there is no provision for instructions (within the rules and regulations) to the educational personnel about daily evaluation.
- O Establishment of a coordination group. Involving CERD and the Directorate General of Education.

Research bureau into
evaluation unit with a main

mission consisting to
constantl evaluate the
different components of the
educational system and
reform.

O Lack of professional
evaluation consideration when

O Absence of integration

the curricula were elaborated and the textbooks developed.

Achievements

- National professionals trained in the systematization of evaluation procedures.
 - Operational list of competencies and evaluation guides drawn up for 'each discipline in each cycle.
- Impact

CI Performing a breakthrough in the cognitive system managing evaluation models.

- Putting national trainers, trainees and field actors in contact with new theories, approaches and practices.

O A very sparse acceptance by administrative and technical staff, and by field actors of questioning their practices.

O Awareness at the CERD and the Directorate General of the seriousness of the problem of evaluation.

Resource Mobilization

- _ The French Cooperation has manifested its willingness to contribute to this component.

Remarks

Specific recommendations

- It is a need to develop a culture of self-evaluation and external evaluation in addition to continuous internal evaluation, within the CERD.

CI Attempts to convince CERD to implement a monitoring scheme of the curricula reform have not yet given satisfactory results due to lack of vision, structural constraints, and lack of qualified and available personnel.

- Serious and consistent advices were given to the evaluation *ad hoc* committee in CERD pushing it to fight for setting up a legal framework able to grant a systematic annual implementation of a students achievement study.

O Support curricula and textbooks evaluation and the monitoring of the reform. O

Support the elaboration of official examination procedures and methods.

- Articulate the support provided by the project in these matters with the efforts of French Cooperation.

TABLE 7 - Project Management

(Executing Agency: UNESCO)

Dimension
Observations
Assessment

Human Resources devoted to the Program and Governance set-up

Steering Committee

UNESCO Beirut Office Professionals Technical Coordinator Technical Assistant Technical Teams
Support Staff

After a period of regular work, the Steering Committee did not meet since the appointment of the new President of CERD (January 1999). UNESCO Beirut Office has been involved in the monitoring and implementation of the program activities, in terms of personnel and time, beyond what is usually expected from an executing agency. No Project manager was appointed before October 1999. The technical assistant who acted as a manager for close to 2 years was not able to devote full time to the project in part for medical reasons and in part because of his other duties at CERD. Although technical committees worked quite well, involvement of the Ministry's middle management staff in the various components of the project has been marginal and resulted in lack of ownership of the program from their part.

Management Tools

Work plans

Budget revisions Consultants' reports Progress reports Tripartite reviews Internal evaluation

In general, there were delays in the production of work plans, budget revisions, and progress reports due to the relative inexperience and lack of working time of the person who acted as manager of the project from the start of the activities until recently; which resulted in an accumulation of problems to be solved by the newly appointed manager. Other tools were efficiently performed and used.

Difficulties

Weak National absorption capacity. Lack of seriousness and sustainability of the beneficiaries' actions, reactions and involvement.

Absence of coordination and visions alignment between the beneficiaries themselves.

Most of officers representatives of beneficiaries do not have enough power to share efficiently, on behalf of their managers, the decision-making or initiative-taking process, with their committees partners.

The program is progressing painstakingly amidst an unprepared and sometimes hostile environment.

The absence of a pro-active administrative reform of the public sector as a whole and a long standing bureaucratic mentality hinder the efficiency of the program's interventions.

Achievements	- Through the leadership of the executing agency, a breakthrough has been achieved in various areas of intervention of the program, namely school mapping and school facilities, EMIS, and the education of children with special needs. Other areas still await for a significant change.	- The achievements do not adequately ¹ reflect the efforts exerted by the executing agency and its various agents and collaborators. In particular, much efforts have been devoted to textbooks production without significant change. Results in the monitoring and evaluation area are only burgeoning. Training of educational personnel still awaits real breakthrough.
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Resource Mobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - World Bank was successfully driven to finance the acquisition of computers for EMIS purposes. - World Bank PEG program was largely built on the activities and achievement of LEB/ 96/005. - The French Cooperation is considering close coordination with the program. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNICEF has joined the program in some interventions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Difference of vision, approach and expectations between the donors is the main reason of delay of understanding over the complementarity in matter of joint projects' financing. - Veiled competition between donors might be the reason of losing some financing partners.
Remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall implementation of the program has suffered from the lack of highly competent technical coordinator and manager from the outset. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The efforts devoted by the executing agency regular personnel could not compensate for the lack of a highly qualified full time technical coordinator and manager.

IV. General Conclusions

The thorough examination of the achievements, impacts, and difficulties of program implementation according to the four objectives of the Program and its six main components reveals the following 12:

1. Concerning the achievement of the objectives:

- 1.1. To paraphrase the internal evaluation report¹³, we shall say: Generally speaking, the project is progressing towards its objectives rather well, but with different paces and a lot of difficulties.
- 1.2. Almost all objectives drawn were somehow accomplished concerning two components: School Mapping and EMIS. In these two areas skills of members of the education sector have been upgraded, institutional capacities have been greatly improved through the mainstreaming of the results of the program activities in the education sector, basic mechanisms for coordination have been set and are working with minimum interferences, and resources have been mobilized, particularly through the World **Bank**.
- 1.3. Most of expected short-term objectives of the component " Education of children with special needs" are in their way to be accomplished. In particular, the original attitude previously adopted by the MNEYS and CERD relaying on the letter of the law content which relegates the destiny of children with special needs to the Ministry of Social Affairs is changing rapidly.
- 1.4. Concerning the three remaining components (Curricula and textbooks, training teachers and decision makers, and monitoring and evaluation), it will be fair to say that nor consistent results deserve to be highlighted. Although several attempts were

launched and time and resources were devoted, little tangible results have been achieved to this date. The program did not yet play a significant role in these areas.

- 1.5. In terms of institutionalization, except the above mentioned cases of school mapping and EMIS, the program failed creating a dynamic able to activate the process of work in public sector institutions concerned by its various components.
- 1.6. The Program has tried to tackle components of the educational system that respond to national development needs and priorities. However, due to the many difficulties and constraints it has faced, it did not operate a real breakthrough except in the areas mentioned above. It may be just to say that the objectives of the program were too ambitious, particularly in view of the following: low absorption capacity of the national institutions, resistance to change, and time limits.

¹² Due to the short period of time allocated to external assessment mission, conclusions should be considered with care, taking into account that a fair part of the data was collected through open interviews.

¹³ Written by Mr. Habib HAJJAR, before his appointment as a coordinator for the assessed project.

2. Concerning the impact of the program in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability:

- 2.1. Positive impacts are again observed in the three areas where tangible objectives have been achieved, namely School mapping and facilities, EMIS, and the education of children with special needs. In these three areas, capacity building has taken or is taking place, there is clear participation of Government officials in the design and implementation of the activities, international and national expertise is supported and used by the Government, and sustainability is quite assured.
- 2.2. As to the other components, it should be said that each constitutes a particular case. In fact, as can be seen from the tables above, not much effort was devoted by the program to the training of educational personnel. Thus no major impact could be seen. At the same time, one could not speak of efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. This is not the case for textbooks where significant time and resources were mobilized with almost no impact at all in any term. The absence of political will to reexamine textbook production schemes lays at the ground of this wastage of energy and resources. Finally, as for monitoring and evaluation component, the scheme recently developed should be thoroughly examined in order to ensure its efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.

3. Concerning the difficulties and constraints that faced program implementation, the evaluation has identified several factors hindering the smooth implementation of the program activities and its performance. These factors have been regrouped

into three main categories: (a) conceptual factor; (b) structural factor; and (c) Administrative and management factors.

3.1. Conceptual Factor: The project was written in a very fuzzy way: vague and woolly terms were used to make it easier to shield any possible structural change in its body. To be clearer, we do say that foggy formulation could serve, should the occasion arise, to suit new needs. However, in the absence of clear objectives, and precise expected outputs and indicators of success, one cannot properly judge the efficacy of the activities undertaken nor the efficiency of the program.

3.2. Structural factors:

3.2.1. The absence of official planning institution within the governmental administrative structure¹⁴ is likely to disorient public sector agents. Educational field actors need to be guided by a political options framework. Therefore, high Lebanese authorities should dictate such kind of advisory framework in a way to help educational experts and

is The CDR is the planification authority by the law. No serious plans in the field of education were published or elaborated by this institution until now.

r:

decision-makers to elaborate a global vision helping them to pilot the whole Lebanese Educational System.

3.2.2. The partners' priorities are not always concordant. Since importance criteria are not the same, and since Lebanese Government officers are developing the sensation of being offended by the presence of foreign experts (this is not a banal detail), it becomes very difficult to avoid a vision conflict between partners. Most of technical decisionmakers experienced experts' advices and suggestions as interference in their own job.

3.2.3. Most of technical tasks are implemented by parallel bodies having no administrative, financial or technical relationship between themselves, i. e. CERD, the Directorate General of Education, and the CDR. And every partner has its own work culture and approaches and complains about the interventions of others which it considers as outsiders.

3.2.4. The basic Infrastructure of decision-making is weak: difficult access to the appropriate information at time, bad circulation of information, rigidity of most of regulations, etc...

3.3. Administrative and management factors:

3.3.1. Along the project implementation, frequent changes in high decision-makers (minister, CERD president, and general director of the MNEYS) were carried out. Therefore, the implementation process witnessed several

interruptions and revivals. In addition, due to a long vacancy in the coordinator post, most of initiatives were paralyzed more than 5 months because of mastermind absence. When a new coordinator was appointed in October 1999, he was compelled to take up his function without any handing over of power. Hence, the detected delay of implementation could partly be explained by a long vacancy of the coordinator post.

3.3.2. Although the Steering Committee meetings were not as efficient as they should have been, their interruption for more than a year has deprived the program from a useful forum for brain-storming and testing ideas, and from an umbrella of national ownership of its orientations and activities.

3.3.3. A long bureaucratic tradition and the absence of accountability measures for several years have encrusted most of the technical staff in MNEYS and CERD in a general attitude of resigned, careless "apparatchik", reluctant to any change, abiding to the law of least effort, and unwilling to engage in any initiative. Thus, the program has difficulty mobilizing the immediate stakeholders to its various components.

3.3.4. The middle management personnel, in the public sector, seem to be addicted to centralized ways of work. It seems not to be a question of power delegation but rather a question of apprehension of empowering persons (at the periphery) that were depending on them (at the center). In such context, institutionalization appears as the most redoubtable enemy to those who are used to monopolize power and decisions.

3.3.5. Lack of qualified personnel, often underpaid, in the public sector in general (those who are professionally qualified are in great demand by private sector), the policy of the present Government not to hire any new public servant, and the absence of strategy for the re-deployment of the supposedly teachers surplus are all factors playing against the institutionalization of many of the components of the program.

4. Concerning the implementation mechanism:

4.1 At the outset, it should be said that the interruption of the meetings of the Steering Committee since January 1999 has lead to focusing all planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the activities of the program around bilateral relationships between the executing agency and the various partners. Despite the efforts exerted by the executing agency leadership to ensure coordination among stakeholders, the absence of the Steering Committee from the scene has impoverished the potential of the program to ensure national ownership of its objectives, strategies and operations and has limited the circles where nationals could participate in and accompany the progress of the program. Consequently, it is not clear

today whether a Technical Coordination Team exists or not. In fact, there is several technical working groups; but coordination between them and with the various stakeholders is left to the Director of UNESCO Office and the Technical Coordinator of the program which is bearing a very heavy burden outside what is normally expected from the holder of such position.

- 4.2. As mentioned above, the program is progressing amidst a very difficult environment, particularly in terms of absorption capacity and resistance to change. This has lead to constant strains on the executing agency, its leadership and personnel. Thus, repeated delays were noted in complying with UNDP rules and regulations. And it seems that the executing agency has put its priorities in pushing the program to the maximum of its performance over compliance to bureaucratic rules.
- 4.3. As evident from its various components, the program has tried to tackle, with more or less emphasis and success, the essential components of the reform of the Lebanese basic education system; that is it has tried to adopt a program approach (at a scale pertinent to its object) rather than a project approach. However, it has not yet succeeded at least where it could. For example, it has not dealt

with nor affected the deployment and re-deployment of educational personnel, although persistent information is circulated to the effect that there is a surplus in public sector teachers and a need to operate a geographical re-deployment as well as re-deployment accross duties and responsibilities. Also, as mentioned above, change in the socio-economic basis of book production could not be effected. However, two main areas of intervention promise to have impacts in the social sphere, that is the mainstreaming of the education of persons with special needs in the education system, and the recent interest manifested by the program to examine the regional disparities in the provision of basic education starting with two disadvantaged areas, namely Baalback-Hermel and Akkar-Denneyieh.

5. Concerning Resource mobilization:

- 5.1. The education sector in Lebanon receive each year financial resources and technical assistance from several multilateral and bilateral donors (UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, EU, Arab regional and bilateral funds, the French Cooperation, etc...). It seems unrealistic to aim to fully coordinate between all these resources and *a fortiori* to channel them through a common pipeline. It should however be noted that even minimum coordination is not achieved between UN agencies or between donors intervening in the same area. The program has

- made several attempts to this effect with more or less success.
- 5.2. The most notable success in resource mobilization concern the involvement of the World Bank in the education sector through its General Education Project (PEG) which has heavily relied on the personnel, activities, and outputs of the program during the various stages of its elaboration (without giving it proper credit).
 - 5.2. Other examples of resources mobilization concern UNICEF and the French Cooperation who are starting to engage in joint ventures with the program.
 - 5.3. Finally, huge human NGOs resources were mobilized around the component concerning the education of persons with special needs.

VI. Recommendations

As specific recommendations have been set for each of the components of the program, the following recommendations focus on the major issues to be tackled should the program seek the achievement of its objectives with efficacy, efficiency, and sustainability.

1. Reforming Educational Personnel:

Since the main difficulty faced by the program is related to conceptions, attitudes, and habits, we recommend to submit the Total

management staff of MNEYS and CERD to condensed Transformational Management workshops in order to develop common language, and change minds, approaches and climates. The projected workshop on the preparation of school entry is a good example of what is needed to ensure that the efforts exerted within the framework of the program reach the *raison d'être* of all educational systems, i.e. quality education and quality of school life for all pupils.

Concomitantly, strategies should be developed to submit the Total personnel of MNEYS and CERD to condensed recycling workshops in order to improve and/or change skills, reflexes and devotion, and make the best use of each one's potential.

2. Enhancing National Ownership and Coordination:

Another big issue appears as needing decisions at the highest level. It concerns the relative lack of real national ownership of the various components of the program. In fact, the program appears to work almost behind closed doors, whereas various initiatives taken by international organizations other than UNDP and UNESCO, by bilateral donors, and various national bodies (such as the Educational Inspectorate, the National Commission for UNESCO, NGOs) to support the educational reform are kept out of its scope or even done

without any coordination or concertation with the program.

The recently appointed Committee on the Educational Strategy and Follow-up of the Reform seems not to have tackled any issue related to the program nor it has dealt with the absolutely necessary concertation between the various initiatives undertaken to support the educational reform. Moreover, there is serious doubts about the capacity of this Committee to achieve the objectives it was set for.

Therefore, we recommend to revive the Steering Committee of the Program after re-examination of its composition to include all major stakeholders and actors from within and outside the educational system, revision of its mandate and working rules and procedures in order to make it an efficient body supported by various technical groups. This will necessarily expand the national ownership of the program, help standardizing concepts and language, keep all partners informed about what is going on, increase the participation of stakeholders at all stages of conception and implementation leading to collegiality of all actions and the reduction of the feelings that others are intruders interfering with one's program of activities, make coordination easier, and, above all, lead to more sustainable achievements.

3. **Basing Actions on a Clear Vision:**

As for the Workplan of the Program, it appears that the vision developed by the new Technical Coordinator stressing the need for the Program to be focussed on (a) Access of all to basic education, and (b)

the provision of Quality education to all, deserve full support. It is only in such context that the various components of the Program make sense and have legitimacy. Thus, in view of what has been achieved, the following recommendations are made:

- 3.1. Support to school mapping and school facilities should be redirected from elaborating norms and procedures (at CERD level) to the implementation of these norms and procedures within the General Directorate of Education and, specifically, at the regional level with due attention to regional disparities.
- 3.2. Support to EMIS should also be re-directed to ensure the sustainability of data collection and entry and, as importantly to the training of educational personnel on the analysis of data and the use of the results for decision-making.
- 3.3. As a neglected area of the right of all to quality education, the component concerning the Education for children with special needs should continue to be supported as long as it is needed to lay solid ground for the institutionalization process, to perfect the network of coordination and cooperation, and to improve the personnel capacities to take charge of it.

3.4. Monitoring and formative evaluation of the educational reform should become a major component of the program with the view of the improvement of curricula and textbooks and, above all to the improvement of the quality of education.

3.5. As training of educational personnel is quite expensive and beyond the reach of the Program, efforts should be devoted to the development of a national strategy for the re-deployment of educational personnel in order to make the best use of their talents, qualifications, and experience and of training programs that could be implemented by the national authorities with the assistance of the various donors active in Lebanon.

4. Involving All Stakeholders:

Finally, in all the above mentioned endeavours, the Program should seek to involve as many stakeholders as possible, including but not limited to UN agencies, multilateral (WB, EU, l'Agence de la Francophonie, etc...) and bilateral donors (e.g. the very active French Cooperation, the British Council, etc...), as well as national bodies, such as the municipalities, the private sector of education, the various types of NGOs, particularly those which are active in the provision of educational services and those which provide support to the families for the schooling of their children.

Annex I

Dail ro am of the assessment mission

Day and Date	Activities
Thursday 9/3/2000	D Team members meeting. D Briefing about the project (Coordinator: Mr. H. Hajjar) D Meeting the UNEDBAS Officer Program (Mr. R. Salame) and the Project
Friday 10/3/2000	D Meeting (Interviewing) the former project coordinator (Mr. K. Stephan) D Meeting (Interviewing) EMIS responsible in CERD (Mr. M. Neïm) D Meeting the president of CERD (Mr. N. Frayha) D Team members meeting. D Failed attempts to meet the bureau of statistics in CERD (Mr. N. Constantin)
Monday 13/3/2000	D Meeting the Project coordinator(Mr. H. Hajjar). D Meeting (Interviewing) the General Director of the MNEYS (Mr. T. Halabi) D Meeting (Interviewing) School Mapping project in the CERD (Miss H. Menhem) D Meeting (Interviewing) the national consultant before the MNEYS for education patrimony inventory (Mr. G. Najm) D Meeting (Interviewing) the national consultant for educational equipment
Tuesday	D Meeting the Project coordinator(Mr. H. Hajjar). standardization (Mrs...)

14/3/2000	<p>D Meeting (Interviewing) UNDP Program Officer (Mr. R. Meyer.</p> <p>D Meeting (Interviewing) UNICEF Program Officer (Mr. A. ZE1N)</p> <p>D Meeting the UNEDBAS Director (Mr. V. Bellah)</p> <p>D Team members Meeting.</p> <p>D De-briefing in UNDP director (Mr. Y. de San) office.</p>
Wednesday 15/3/2000	<p>D Meeting the Project coordinator(Mr. H. Hajjar).^A</p> <p>D Meeting (Interviewing) the director of educational facilities in CERD (Mr.Younes)</p> <p>D Meeting the chief of French cooperation department in the French Embassy in Lebanon (Mr. Y.A. Corporeau).</p> <p>D Meeting (Interviewing) the Minister of Education Advisor (Mrs. L. Barakat)</p>
Thursday 16/3/2000	<p>D Meeting the Project coordinator(Mr. H. Hajjar).</p> <p>D Failed attempts to meet the bureau of statistics in CERD (Mr. N. Constantine)</p> <p>D Meeting UNDBAS Officer Program (Mr. R. Salame)</p> <p>D Team members Meeting.</p> <p>D Meeting (Interviewing) the Minister of Education Advisor (Mrs. L. Barakat)</p>
Friday 17/3/2000	<p>D Team members Meeting.</p> <p>D Drawing of the assessment report structure.</p> <p>D Writing the basic draft of the assessment report.</p>