Proposal for a

**Formal and Non-Formal Education Action Plan on
Civic Values and Life Skills**

for

United Nations Economic and Social Commission
for Western Asia (ESCWA)
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**Formal and Non-Formal Education Action Plan on
Civic Values and Life Skills**

Part of the ESCWA/UNESCO/UNFPA "Promoting Civic Values and Life Skills for Adolescents (12
to 19 years old) through Education in Iraq" Project

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Content

Foreword:

This CVLS Education Action Plan constitutes a *proposal* to implement CVLS education in Iraq within the framework of the combined ESCWA/UNESCO/UNFPA "Promoting civic values and life skills for adolescents (12 to 19 years old) through education" program. It is left to the representative of the Iraqi government to use or not use, modify or implement this proposal.

This plan has to be seen as the start of the long term process to put the next generation of Iraqi leaders in the position to serve their country as responsible citizens living peacefully together as the old generations in Iraq did over centuries. The wounds of those living today, which were produced by the war and more than a decade of ethnically motivated violence are to important to accept the position of the other and thus many individuals and amongst those decision makers, legislators and officials at the regional, governorate and district level are not in the position to reach out their hands and open their hearts. But for the sake of a peaceful and prosperous life of the next generation of sons and daughters of Iraq we all should make the largest effort possible to develop an education system that enables them to reach out their hands and open their hearts to their peers in order to create a new generation of Iraqi that will live to the standards set by the 2005 Iraqi constitution.

CVLS education cannot be seen without the context of general education which has always been highly valued in Iraq that was an "education nation" over many decades: The house of wisdom (Bayt al-Hikma) built in 825, is an institution that has been copied in both Europe and Egypt. Iraq has a long tradition of education and has always understood the interrelationship of education and welfare. This interrelationship of education and welfare does not only hold true for CVLS education but also becomes utmost critical these days. Welfare, esp. welfare based on economic development requires a society that focuses on its further development by making the best use of each of the society's members' talents and capacities. Whist civic values are the basis for making the best use of society members no matter to which part of society one belongs, life skills are the basis for the further development of talents that every human is born with - without life skills no participation in society, no higher education and no further development of a society are possible.

Iraqi welfare today highly depends on the natural resources the country is blessed with. However, the era of fossil fuels will come to an end - it is the responsibility of today's generation to enable the upcoming generations of Iraq to be successful without the means generated by fossil fuels. The upcoming generation will have to be successful in an increasingly globalized context and an economy, which is more and more based on knowledge dynamics. Therefor a look back into history - times when Iraq has been successful without relying on its natural resources - gives an idea of the potential of the country if only it manages to live together in a tolerant and peaceful manner with a generation of humble knowledgeable individuals seeking to further develop their country.

1. Background

The mutually reinforcing effects of three consecutive wars, international sanctions, security challenges and the resulting socio-economic hardships have undermined the human and institutional capacities of the education sector to deliver quality education as well as undermined the promotion of civic values and life skills, necessary for the evolution of Iraq's younger generations with regards to their culture, human rights values and even career development potentials - all of which are key to a stable long term development of a modern Iraqi society and state.

The political tensions, internal conflicts and brain drain resulting from the wars, sanctions and ethnic-sectarian problems have damaged the education system on the level of institutions, educators skills and capacities, gender balance and role of women as well as the continuous evolution of a education system based on modern curricula.

The survival strategies of families and whole regions have been confronted with the imperative of daily life, disappearance and deprivation of family bonds, emigration and destruction of solidarity. The conflicts of values, norms, frameworks, significant had immediate impact on the fundaments of socialisation of children, adolescents and adults.

Therefore we cannot ignore the malfunctioning of educational institutions which - confronted with the challenge of delivering their daily services to the Iraqi youth - are marginalising pedagogical questions, curricula reforms and the answers to the challenges of reconstructing a „reference system" of (new) values. The terrible experiences of division, pain, odysseys and atrocities have generated a psychosocial agony at all levels:

- in respect of family, of which the major proportion is single parents and without support. Also it is important to emphasise that today's young parents are themselves the victims of this long period of war, deprivation and violence.

- in respect of tribes, ethnic groups and regions confronted with new allegiances, models of socialisation, behavioural norms

- in respect of regions and ethic and religious groups and social actors of the civil society

The "Promoting Civic Values and Life Skills among Adolescents through Education in Iraq" project is designed in the prospect of supporting the educational system in Iraq in delivering quality education, both within the formal and non-formal settings through policy development and capacity building activities.

The project is expected to contribute to the reinforcement of a sense of "national identity", citizenship and to promote human rights and gender equality in Iraq among young people (age group 12-19), education providers and decision makers in the public sector and subsequently place youth on a better footing, enabling them to pursue their own educational, cultural and later on career development perspectives. More specifically, the project will generate the following outputs:

- Enhanced capacity for the development of an action plan on promoting civic values and life skills within education on the level of the national ministries that have a mandate on education

- Government and civil society capacity to design and implement education programs promoting civic values and life skills among adolescents in line with the action plan

- Strengthened adolescents' capacities to promote civic values/life skills among peers

- Institutional capacity at government level to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the programs

The „ Promoting Civic Values and Life Skills for Adolescents (12 to 19 years old) through Education in Iraq" project constitutes a major challenge for the generations expected to ensure the transition of the country towards peace and unity of the Iraq. This project aims for building the

cultural and educational fundament of a culture of citizenship, the respect for diversity and the living together of generations in view of assuring the future of the Iraq.

Beyond all differences and specifics (religious, social, ethnic, regional, cultural, linguistic) it is of major importance to formulate the common denominators of an Iraqi identity, rich in diversity and unified in the visions of one democratic and tolerant nation.

2. Action Plan development

The ToRs of the project contain a set of goals for the development of the Action Plan, which this plan shall deliver against. In order to do so the development process follows a set of basic principles, which are laid down in 2.2.

2.1 Action Plan goals

The ToRs of the project foresee the following two major goals for the Action Plan:
- The Action Plan is supposed to synthesize existing and present the most suitable mechanisms to mainstream civic values and life skills within the educational formal and non-formal curricula and settings and thus serve as a major advocacy element which shall achieve impact at the policy level
- The Action Plan is expected to devise a conceptual framework to develop the human capacity building modules that would benefit policy makers, education providers and managers, a target audience that would ensure future and sustained advocacy within the Iraqi public sector.

These goals are more technical in nature a do not describe the goals that CVLS education in Iraq should pursue. They describe how the Action Plan shall be used in order to successfully reach the goals of CVLS education in Iraq (see "Normative Framework" Section). This is coherent with the overall approach the project is pursuing: a capacity development approach targeting a state in which the Iraqi society is enabled to promote civic values and life skills by their own initiatives and means.

2.2 Action Plan development basic principles

Successful planning requires a set of 4 basic steps:

Step 1: Definition of the goals to be achieved
Step 2: Analysis of the current situation
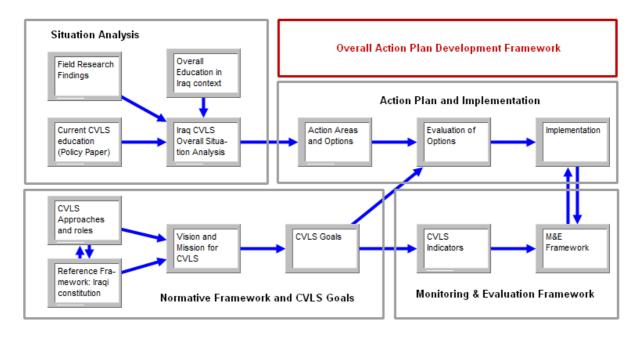Step 3: Development of possible options to go forward
Step 4: Selecting an option based on the performance in fulfilling the goals set in step 1

The goals for CVLS education in Iraq will be developed in the "Normative Framework" section of this document. It is important that all involved stakeholders will validate these goals. The Analysis of the current situation is based on the field research performed in Iraq during the first half year of 2011 during which focus groups, interviews and questionnaire work have been performed in 4 regions of Iraq (see report on field research). Additional input for the analysis of the current situation is provided by a policy paper on the current state of CVLS education in Iraq that has been produced in the framework of this project. Last but not least desk research on basic figures and actual developments in Iraq entered into the situation analysis section. The development of different approaches towards CVLS education in Iraq is based on a systemic analysis of the factors resulting from a comparison between the current situation in Iraq and what one knows as being CVLS education best practice. Alternative approaches to CVLS education will be selected in

function of their capability to fulfil the goals developed for CVLS education - this selection process again needs validation by the concerned stakeholders.

3. Overall Framework

The development of an action plan on promoting civic values and life skills for adolescents through formal and non-formal education has to be embedded in larger context or framework that combines a normative perspective on CVLS, with the analysis of the current situation of CVLS education in Iraq. Based on these two components the action plan can be devised which will work towards a state in which the Iraqi society is enabled to promote civic values and life skills by their own initiatives and means. The implementation of such a plan will only be possible if accountability mechanisms in form of efficient monitoring and evaluation systems are in place.
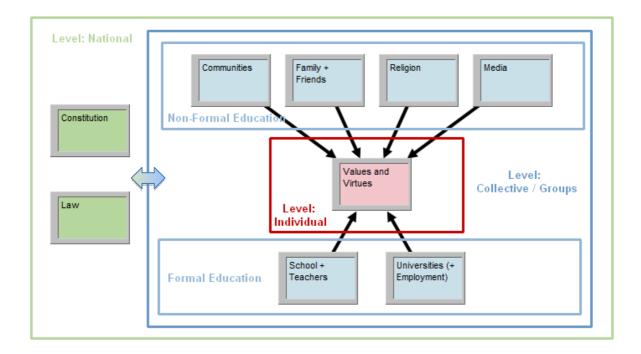
4. Normative Framework: Mission and Vision of CVLS Education in Iraq

The normative framework aims at developing a set of measurable CVLS goals based on a concise vision and mission for CVLS education. Such vision and mission can only be derived within a societal framework made out of individual values and virtues, social norms and codified norms as laid down in the Iraqi constitution. CVLS education has been implemented in a multitude of ways at different levels supporting a multitude of goals. A short overview on the different approaches towards CVLS education shall enhance the understanding on what role CVLS education can (and cannot) play for building the cultural and educational fundament of a culture of citizenship, the respect for diversity and the living together of generations in view of assuring the future of the Iraq.

4.1 Societal Framework

Looking at the societal framework as a basis for a CVLS educational vision and mission three concepts in particular are important: *values, norms* and *laws*. These are the foundations of the *political systems* we employ to allow us to live together in large groups. Whilst value systems are present within each individual, norms apply to groups and law to a society or nation as whole. It goes without saying that the three are not independent but closely interrelated - norms to a certain degree influence value systems. Norms from large groups get at a certain point codified as binding rules or laws and the law of course influences norms within certain social groups.

4.1.1 Individual Level: Values and Virtues

Values, which may be ethical, ideological or aesthetic, serve to guide personal behaviour. Individual values are embedded by nurture, schooling and experience, and form part of a more-or-less coherent system, learned and adapted over time. A value system is thus a set of coherent values applied relatively consistently by an individual, to maintain personal equilibrium, and perhaps to comply with community standards for admission to and membership of a group.

Certain values are physiologically determined and common to most humans; for example, the desire to avoid physical pain, to seek pleasure, and to acquire and retain sufficient assets for survival. Others, including those we consider ethical, are aligned with individual beliefs and more extensive, communal belief systems and thus vary across cultures and between individuals.

Research has shown that an overwhelming majority of youth recognizes the formative role families, school communities, teachers and wider communities with parents and teachers as principal moral educators who help carving out the one's own destiny.[1] This influence can also be derived from the field research carried out in the framework of this project.

The values of persons within groups, societies and cultures are largely common to their members, as they are transmitted through religious and secular schooling and reinforced by social norms. Values that are shared by the members of a group identify the objects, conditions and circumstances that its members consider important for their identity and survival. Values thus both derive from, and inform, the norms of a society or group.

4.1.2 Collective Level: Social Norms

Social norms are the explicit or implicit behaviours and cues applicable within a society or group, which are used to clarify and enforce appropriate, and discourage inappropriate, values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour. In discussions regarding the role of norms in shaping national identity and concepts of national interest, norms have been defined as collective expectations about proper behaviour for a given identity.

Deference to the social norms applied within a group enables one's acceptance by other members, while failure to apply them results in criticism, ostracism and sanctions, and may, if the violation is egregious or sustained, lead to expulsion. Within a group, norms promote coherent behaviour, allowing each member to predict the responses of others. Not surprisingly, social norms vary between groups, including social classes, and evolve over time, often differing from one age group to another.

Most individuals today belong to many social groups, some of which are [sub-] cultures, at the same time. Some of the normative behaviours expected of members in one of these groups may be different from those expected in another, and some of the norms of any group may be at variance with the personal values, and private behaviours, of an individual member when one is outside that group. As long as the contrast between the social norms of each group and the personal values of a member is not too great, however, an individual can reconcile the differences and extract and synthesize the benefits of membership. We are all capable of adopting a range of different personae, within certain limits.

While group identities and cultural differences are a reality, and contribute to the richness of humanity, our ability to co-exist in a highly connected and interdependent world requires respect for, and adherence to, a certain quantum of universal norms. The challenge thus lies in defining the norms that are common to all, while accepting the diversity of cultures and group values that enrich our collective experience.

The Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam, August 5, 1990, illustrates this normative communality, anchored in a distinctive cultural identity: *"Reaffirming the civilizing and historical role of the Islamic Umma which God made the best nation that has given mankind an universal and well-balanced civilization... wishing to contribute to the efforts of mankind to assert human rights,... believing that fundamental rights and universal freedom in Islam are an integral part of the Islamic religion and that no-one as a matter of principle has the right to suspend them in whole or in part... declare that... all men are equal in terms of basic human dignity and basic obligations and responsibilities, without any discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, language, sex, religious belief, political affiliation, social status or other considerations."*

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[1] Arthur, James (2010), p. 95

4.1.3 National level: The Iraqi Constitution as reference framework for Civic Education

Law is a system of rules (or codified social norms, violation of which attracts legal penalties), which is applicable to the whole of a particular society and is enforced through its institutions. The law seeks to facilitate relations between members of the society by clarifying their rights and responsibilities, balancing their interests, and regulating the behaviour of individuals and groups in accordance with that balance. The society to which the law applies is usually that number of persons physically present within the national territory of the lawmaker, and thus subject to the jurisdiction of its courts. There are a limited number of exceptions to the principle of national jurisdiction, including diplomatic and consular immunity, public international law (which includes human rights law), and the extraterritorial reach of certain taxation regimes.

The evolution of formal systems of law parallels the emergence and development of large societies, from shortly after 3000 BC to the present. As a societal or civilizational artefact, its evolution has resulted both in numerous branches, and more importantly, distinct systems of law, which are the product of the codification of the social norms of different societies, or civilisations, at different times, in different places.

In the case of Iraq the new Iraqi constitution represents the source of law and thus serves as a reference framework for the CVLS activities in Iraq. The Iraqi constitution in its preamble presents the values that civic education should promote:

"... so we sought hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder to create our new Iraq, the Iraq of the future, free from sectarianism, racism, complex of regional attachment, discrimination, and exclusion.

We, the people of Iraq, who have just risen from our stumble, and who are looking with confidence to the future through a republican, federal, democratic, pluralistic system, have resolved with the determination of our men, women, elderly, and youth to respect the rule of law, to establish justice and equality, to cast aside the politics of aggression, to pay attention to women and their rights, the elderly and their concerns, and children and their affairs, to spread the culture of diversity, and to defuse terrorism.

We, the people of Iraq, of all components and across the spectrum, have taken upon ourselves to decide freely and by choice to unite our future, to take lessons from yesterday for tomorrow, and to enact this permanent Constitution, through the values and ideals of the heavenly messages and the findings of science and man's civilization. The adherence to this Constitution preserves for Iraq its free union of people, of land, and of sovereignty."

The first articles of the constitution depict an Iraqi national identity

- Article 1 proclaims the Republic of Iraq as a *single federal, independent and fully sovereign state in which the system of government is republican, representative, parliamentary, and democratic.*
- Article 2 states Islam as the *official religion of the state* and guarantees the full religious rights to freedom of religious belief
- Article 3 recognizes Iraq being *a country of multiple nationalities, religions, and sects.*

The following articles govern the relations amongst Iraqis in terms of personal and to some degree collective rights:

- Article 14 underlines the equality of every Iraqi before the law
- Article 15 states the right to enjoy life, security and liberty and the application of the rule of law in case of deprivation of these rights.
- Article 16 guarantees equal opportunities shall be guaranteed to all Iraqis
- Article 17 is on the right to personal privacy (in the borders of non-contradiction with the

rights of others) and the sanctity of the homes.
- Article 20 grants the right to participate in public affairs and to enjoy political rights including the right to vote, elect, and run for office.
- Article 34 puts education as a fundamental factor for the progress of society as a right guaranteed by the state
- Article 38 guarantees freedom of expression, press and assembly/demonstration
- Article 42 grants the freedom of thought, conscience, and belief to each individual
- Article 45 strengthens the role of civil society institutions, and arranges the role of the clans and tribes in society
- Article 114 shares the competencies to formulate the public educational and instructional between the federal and regional authorities.

4.2 Civic Values and Life Skills education role and characteristics

Scholarship on education for citizenship and democracy has greatly expanded over the past decades. Looking at research on civic education demonstrates that the diversity of cultures, economies, and political systems is reflected in the differing traditions of civic education.[2] These different traditions or approaches in civic education have pursued a variety of purposes:
- Attempts to instil democratic attitudes in young citizens in eastern Europe after the fall of the soviet union
- Civic education programs fighting declining general political interest and foster participation
- Fight youth criminality
- Developing a European identity alongside with a national one
- Developing a national identity alongside an ethnic identity
- and many more

The variety of purposes civic education has been applied for brings along a similar variety of tools that civic education has focused on:
- Political education and literacy
- Community involvement
- Social and moral responsibility education
- Social cohesion - living together in diversity education

Last but not least the way civic education has been implemented differs:
- Specific CVLS curricula implemented
- CVLS content integrated into subjects matters of the general curriculum
- Approaches integrating CVLS education in every day life situations and decision ("living democracy")

Civic education programs revealed to be successful when purpose, focus area and implementation methods have been carefully but clearly decided and planned on. It is therefor of major importance to provide a clear picture of the exact purpose and focus of the "Promoting civic values and life skills for adolescents (12 to 19 years old) through education" program. Based on this, tools and implementation approaches can be selected in function of their support of the purpose. This purpose shall serve as a "mission statement" for CVLS education in Iraq.

4.3 Civic Education and Life Skills Vision, Mission, Goals

Before elaborating on the mission statement for the CVLS education in Iraq it is necessary to outline context of Vision, Mission, Goals and the Action Plan. The Action Plan is an instrument to

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[2] An excellent review of the research results on civic education is provided in Hahn, Carole: Comparative Civic Education Research: What we know and what we need to know, in: Citizenship and Teaching, Vol. 6, Nr.1

apply scarce resources (human, financial, technological and other) to achieve CVLS education goals. These goals - which are quantified and time bound - must be derived from CVLS educations' mission and must advance progress towards the achievement of its empowering Vision. The Vision is the aspirational future state of the country and should reflect the governments overarching aim in investing in Civic Values and Life Skills Education. Whilst the vision describes the overarching aim, the mission is a statement, which informs about the CVLS education institutions reason for existence.

In order to approach a set of measurable goals for CVLS education in Iraq it is needed to specify the vision that CVLS education is supposed to support. As already mentioned above, the only reference framework that can be used for CVLS education in Iraq obviously is the Iraqi constitution. Pars pro toto the following excerpts from the preamble shall be proposed to define the vision of an Iraqi nation that CVLS education shall contribute to:

"... so we sought hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder to create our new Iraq, the Iraq of the future, free from sectarianism, racism, complex of regional attachment, discrimination, and exclusion. ... We, the people of Iraq, who have just risen from our stumble, and who are looking with confidence to the future through a republican, federal, democratic, pluralistic system, have resolved with the determination of our men, women, elderly, and youth to respect the rule of law, to establish justice and equality, to cast aside the politics of aggression, to pay attention to women and their rights, the elderly and their concerns, and children and their affairs, to spread the culture of diversity, and to defuse terrorism."

With respect to the mission statement, the latter should inform how the institutions and stakeholders responsible for CVLS education will contribute to advancing the overall vision. In the case of the current CVLS project, the following mission statement for the Iraqi CVLS education system is proposed:

"*Stabilizing Iraq's society by promoting civic values and life skills among adolescents and youth*"

Based on the CVLS education vision and mission statement the goals for the Action Plan can be set as follows:

- *Enhance youth personal and social skills*
- *Access to education of vulnerable and marginalized groups*
- *Assisting young people to contribute to their own protection from abuse and exploitation*
- *Encouraging life-long professional development of educational staff*
- *Reinforce a sense of "national identity", citizenship and promote human rights - including gender equality*

It is important to note that the above mentioned goals need to be operationalized in the form of indicators in order to allow for the setup of a monitoring and evaluation system (see chapter 8) as a basis for introducing an appropriate level of (personal and institutional) accountability in the implementation of the Action Plan and long term further development of the CVLS education system in Iraq.

Looking at the development of many western societies the socio-economic changes of the last decades have been accompanied by a profound change in the type of institutions and social groups that influence the personal value systems - notably the influence of religion has largely declined. In many of said societies no clear alternative has emerged and instead a strong consumerist attitude has became apparent within which the individual perspective weighs more than the common purpose. Iraqi youth has probably not yet reached the same individualist and consumerist attitude as it has in some of the western societies. From a "timing perspective" there seems to be a window of opportunity to help youth in developing the values, virtues and characteristics of a citizen in line with the preamble of the Iraqi constitution as the uniting element

for all Iraqis and thus contribute to the stabilization of the Iraqi nation preparing the ground for a prosperous future.

4.4 CVLS education tools and mechanisms

Given the societal framework as described in section 4.1, the potential roles CVLS education can play outlined in section 4.2 and the vision, mission and goals for CVLS education developed in the prior section a first approximation can be made on the tools and mechanisms to be applied:

The ultimate target of all projects, programs and measures provided by the Action Plan will be the individual - it is the individual behaviour of every Iraqi (adolescent) that will contribute to achieving the mission of stabilizing Iraq's society as a whole. As we have seen from the societal framework individual behaviour is driven by individual values that are in turn informed by social norms established by the different social groups and institutions in the environment of an individual. This leads to the conclusion that the Action Plan will have to target on the one hand the collective level in terms of institutions and social norms defining both individual values (and thus driving behaviour) and the individual life skills an adolescent develops. On the other hand the national level with the Iraqi constitution and the law provide the orientation framework for all programs, projects and measures provided by the action plan.

4.4.1 Collective level - CVLS education toolbox

As stated above personal behaviour is driven by personal values and individual skills. It is therefor very important to understand the mechanisms and ways in which the social norms defined by the different social groups and relations that can be seen as an adolescents' role model and how they translate into individual values and consequently individual behaviour. Besides the different channels and mechanisms this influence is exercised it is at least of the same importance to analyse the scientific evidence on the importance and relevance of these different types of influence across the different phases of adolescence. A "toolbox" for CVLS education will need to target the different relevant social groups and communities in a way that their influence can be used to support CVLS education of Iraqi adolescents.

In international CVLS education there is a wide consensus about the relevant influential groups:
- Families
- Friends
- Schools and teachers
- Work environment
- Other communities: 3 subcategories: religion/religious institutions; political parties (including religious); NGOs/CSOs; local communities (including sports)
- The media (broader societal influence)

The field research carried out within this project has confirmed the relevance of these groups for Iraqi adolescents. The findings on the importance of each of the groups, if revealed from the field research, will be presented within the specific parts on the influence exercised by the different groups or institutions.[3]

Families and Friends

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[3] Most of the international research findings presented in this section are from two sources: The Sage Handbook of Education for Citizenship and Democracy and a report on the findings of a large (70.000 Responses) empirical study carried out in the UK (Arthur, 2010). Other sources include evidence from South Africa (Codesira) and Germany.

According to findings from international CVLS research the close family - first and foremost the parents - should be recognized as the primary institution in the formation and expression of character. The influence level of other family members beyond parents seems to decrease with the distance of the relationship. Furthermore, elder adolescents also often cite "family" as a value.

Friends in the sense of peers exercise influence on the values of an adolescent but to a significant lesser role and often later than the family. The influence of friends in later phases of adolescence can become more significant as friends provide a mechanism for moving young people beyond the values of their parents, as they grow older. Same as with parents, the concept of friends in the sense of friendship also represents a key value to adolescents, which again underlines the importance of friends and peers as influence sources. Even if the influence of friends proves to be less important than the one of families it has to be considered that - given the amount of orphanages and broken family environments in Iraq - the influence of peers can represent an import element for CVLS education: schools, but more importantly education in non-formal environments should open up opportunities for adolescents support their peers, demonstrate their values and thus "collect feedback" on their behaviour.

Schools and Teachers
It is generally agreed that the influence of school and teachers remains secondary to the one of parents and the close family. This general picture has to be seen under two aspects:

First, the influence of school as an environment in which adolescents grow up is nevertheless the second most important influence; however this influence is not constant over the timeline. School is in most cases the environment within which children start to interact with individuals outside their family environment and the influence of the institution, the teachers representing both the institution and themselves as individuals and last but not least the influence of peers are widely acknowledged. Attention has in particular to be paid to the transition from primary to secondary school as a very challenging period within which adolescents not only have to cope with a change of their environment (new school, teachers, peers, teaching methods) but also at the same time undergo the physical, biological, emotional, psychological changes associated with adolescence. The influence of the environment that school provides (the institution as such, the teachers and the peers) seems to gain importance during this phase.

Secondly, the above mentioned holds even more true for the case of Iraq due to the number of orphans, single parent households and economically weak parts of the population that cannot (or does not want to) afford education. For adolescents from these environments the influence exerted by schools and non-formal education institutions is way more important than on adolescents from "intact" environments.

Schools as institutions
Even secondary, the influence on virtues, values and behaviour of adolescents is non-negligible and for this mere reason schools need to consciously think about their role in CVLS education. A school seen as an educational institution implicitly represents by its organisation, its rules and the defined relations between teachers, administration and pupils a set of values, which is as such an influence on adolescents. Values in that sense are caught - not taught. In other words: the governance model of a school, the mechanisms by which decisions are taken, the way conflicts are solved will exert influence on the values and virtues that youth is developing.

Therefor it is important to ensure that schools provide an environment that lives up to the standards that CVLS education wants to "produce" in adolescents: a culture of leadership and collegiality based on agreed standards of conduct, fair and consistent rules for rewards and punishment and an overall high level of transparency. School headmasters will only be able to meet these standards if they can rely on the necessary backup within the superior administrative structures as well as the legal system. Furthermore headmasters will need support in setting up appropriate monitoring and evaluation systems (including self-evaluation mechanisms) that support a continuous development and learning process towards acquisition and maintenance of a

state that meets the standards expected from a school as a constituent element of CVLS education.

As with regard to the explicit influence of schools on values it has to be noted that the overall curriculum provides CVLS related content: Literature and textbooks address CVLS related questions, as history lessons do and courses in economy, too. A comprehensive approach within which CVLS related questions are addressed on the basis of the manifold opportunities the regular curriculum provides therefor seems more adequate. This way schools manage to provide pupils with the intellectual resources necessary to make informed choices and take responsible judgements on the one hand and the opportunities to express their views in practical contexts. Such approach implemented in a school environment that is perceived consistent and intact by the students will also prevent indoctrination, which is expressed as a common fear about schools and teachers exercising influence.

As to the role of teachers
Despite the fact that the influence of teachers on pupils values systems seems to decrease over time one must see the twofold role that teachers have by representing the school as an institution but also themselves as individuals. In light of the ideas outlined above it is crucial that teachers as representatives of the school see themselves as moral agents who demonstrate the type of behaviour that the institution wants to see from the adolescents. "*If pupils do not themselves experience such* (value based, remark by author) *behaviour in their interaction with teachers, a curriculum on citizenship or moral education may make little difference*" (Arthur, 2010, p. 62). So both, schools and teachers need to clearly see and accept their roles in the development of their pupils and teachers should /re)consider their role of *in loco parentis*, which against the background of the many orphans, single parents and economically less privileged families almost becomes a duty. However we have to ask the questions whether the current system allows teachers to successfully manage their role as agents *in loco parentis* at least for those that badly need it due to unfavourable circumstances.

The role of peers
There is a lot of evidence that the influence of peers is gaining importance over time and peers seems to be more important than the one exercised by teachers - especially after the transition from primary to secondary school. Young people engage with each other and the reactions of their peers serve as a feedback in a "trial and error" type of behaviour. The school and teachers in that sense provides the environment within which this behaviour unfolds, the role of school as an institution is to provide a clear values based framework that helps adolescents to orient themselves and teachers must act as facilitators in this process.

Schools and parents as "co-educators"
Another important perspective on schools and teachers is to look at the interplay between school and parents. Together both represent an overwhelming portion of the overall influence on the values of adolescents. This reveals the potential that a close cooperation between schools and parents offers for CVLS education and therefor the notion of school and parents as "co-educators" suggests that an action plan on CVLS education should feature elements which foster the dialogue on values between schools and parents identifying shared educational objectives and ways to reach those in order to unleash the potential resident in the relation between schools and parents. Such targeted support of the relationship between schools and parents is recognized as best practice in international CVLS education.

Universities and professional environment

The target group that this action plan aims at is not subject to influences exercised by universities and professional environments. Therefor the way in which especially universities exercise this influence is only relevant in an indirect form: Future teachers will be influenced by the value systems applied in universities as institutions and this influence will potentially affect the students

behaviour in their future professional environments as teachers. Therefor it is important to note that the same "role model function" displayed for schools as institutions applies to universities as well.

Parents in turn are influenced by the importance attached to values within their professional environments, which in turn will affect their perception of and the importance attached to CVLS education in school or non-formal environments.

The Media

When it comes to the influence exerted by media on the youth values and virtues the research performed up to date suggest two very important findings. The first being the fact that all reports affirm the existence of the influence of media on values of young people even so to a significant lesser degree than the influence of parents, family, school, peers and teachers. The second finding says that almost all age groups are more or less unaware of the influence of the media. This alarming finding highlights a particular low capability of critical thinking at least with respect to the content transported by the media. Therefor this action plan suggests less the utilization of the media to communicate CVLS content (unless technically required for distribution in areas that cannot be reached otherwise) but a distinct training on media reception techniques including the development of a common language that allows young persons to discuss values-related questions arising from the media and thus enhance their capacity of expressing values and develop critical thinking skills.

Religious and other communities

Communities provide an environment outside of the direct family context that is characterized by a set of common values and rules that allow for social interaction of a young person in an ordered context. Communities respond to human kinds' innate need of being connected, cooperate and pursue happiness. Positive community life experiences strengthen young peoples trust, loyalty and (self-) confidence. School based communities in this view constitute a kind of a bridge from the intimate family context to the larger one of civil society organisations.

Special attention has to be paid to the concept of volunteering which is ultimately attached to the theme of communities. Volunteering has proven to provide positive educational impact both for the communities and the volunteers. Whist the positive impact of volunteering to the communities does require further explanation the impact on volunteers is seen not only to improve life skills such as social and relationship skills, self-confidence, pride and career opportunities but also the development and expression of value systems.

Whilst in the western world we experience a decrease in social communities and an orientation of young people towards private and more individualistic (consumerist) activities it is interesting to note that in UK based studies respondents of Muslim faith were more likely to be involved in civic activities outside school. Religious practice in general is seen to provide a vehicle for young peoples engagement in communities and to a certain degree political engagement. This suggests that in Iraq the potential for civic engagement and volunteering can be an important cornerstone of CVLS education especially for those young people that cannot be reached by the educational institutions within the formal education environment.

The space that communities and especially volunteering work in communities offer for young people to interact with each other and with other members of society also must be seen from an additional angle: Especially in the case of unsafe public spaces such options to interact are important as they are the only alternative to a retreat of children into the home with predominantly private activities - more and more in the virtual world of the internet and computer play with negative consequences for the development of skills that can only be acquired in direct interaction with other individuals.

In this context the role of Internet for communities needs to be further analysed - two perspectives seem to be important:

First, it has to be understood that the internet can serve as a complimentary and valuable tool for communities to support their work: communication about what a community does and attraction of new community members, closer connection to the community members and coordination with other communities are just a sample of opportunities that the internet provides for communities. The Internet as such can be seen as valuable tool and it will be important for communities to learn and understand how they can use the Internet for their purposes.

Secondly one has to look at the role of internet-based communities. Internet-based communities are growing in numbers every day and the variety of communities to join is huge and it is clearly positive that internet-based communities offer possibilities for individuals to connect and interact. Especially in the field of specialized interests and for people in remote areas internet-based communities can be of high value. On the other hand one has to look at the type of interaction provided by internet based communities - further research is needed to explore how the interaction with internet-based communities can be compared with the direct interaction in real (offline) communities with respect to the opportunities that communities provide as described above. Besides this, there are two aspects to be considered when discussing internet-based communities:

- The interaction especially with highly specialized internet-based communities creates a certain "faulty connectedness" at the user level: community members feel connected to a certain degree but experience in reality that due to the level of specialisation this feeling of being connected simply does not apply to reality.
- The "anonymous world of the Internet" also allows a community with bad intentions (be they economical, psychological, political) to attract especially young people.[4]

Communities help creating the space needed for children to develop into citizens - therefor this action plan proposes to foster the participation of young people in communities, both in a passive mode as "members" but also in an active mode of volunteering for communities. The variety of communities and the possibilities to engage include:

- Work with disadvantaged groups
- Helping the elderly
- Work with ethnic or other minorities
- Mentoring children
- Youth clubs
- Sports clubs
- Engaging for a proper environment

The Islamic identity characterising the Iraqi society is clearly a good basis for the establishment of a culture of communities including options for young people to volunteer in these communities. Same as for the approach proposed for schools, the mechanisms for CVLS education through participation and volunteering in communities is predominantly seen in the creation of opportunities to think about, exercise and express values rather than distinctly teaching values. The example of the Al-Ahly fan club in Egypt being in the front lines protecting the demonstrators on Tahrir Square is another good example of how communities create opportunities to demonstrate and stand in for values.

The Action Plan therefor advocates to support civil society organisations such as youth and sports clubs, associations for disadvantaged groups, elderly people or minorities as well as environmental groups, human rights groups, women's rights groups etc. by:

- Strengthening the legal and economic position of NGO's and civil society organisations

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[4] At least in western societies radical internet-based communities in combination with the increase of computer-based simulation games (esp. so called ego-shooter games) are suspicious of creating a mind-set entirely disconnected from and severely hostile towards society.

- Ensuring the provision of tools and mechanism to manage civil society organisations including the necessary support in managing the administrative challenges the organisation are facing
- Supporting the interconnection, experience exchange and coordination between civil society organisations
- Supporting the organisation in a targeted use of the internet for their purposes
- Helping organisation leaders to apply values based education mechanisms in governance and decision making processes in order to comply with the standards expected from young people

Religious communities and the role of religion and faith in CVLS education

Research carried out in the UK revealed that pupils from Muslim communities - as opposed to their Christian peers who in majority show more or less negative attitudes towards religion - placed a high value on religion both as a source of identity and a moral guidance. The same research revealed that students holding religious beliefs and engaged in religious practice - Muslim, Christian or other - were more likely to be involved in their local community, took more interest in politics, showed higher level of self-understanding and a greater commitment - also in terms of charity - to society.

Despite the perceived decline of religious belief and the secular orientation in large parts of the western world it has to be noted that religion in many parts of this world remains a particular strong source of identity and heavily influences the communal life of young people. Religious identity in this sense seems to compete with citizenship identity. This holds especially true for Islam, which only in the last decades emerged as a competitive source of political identity with the development of what is called "political Islam" or "Islamism". From a sociological point of view this emergence is caused by socio-economic factors related to the failure of the promises of modernisation. From a more philosophical point of view the hermeneutic open-endedness of Islam (and all other religion) is empowering inspiration of generation after generation by a continuous process of (re-) interpretation of the Qur'an into the modern world and thus filling the void left by the perceived failure of modernisation.

Citizenship education is a "western" conception largely dominated by and founded on secular constructs - as Cricks puts it: "*Citizenship is secular, on historical and philosophical grounds.*" From the perspective of a faithful and believing person - no matter of what religion - this position requires a form of *mental dualism*, which cannot be presupposed: such person would be supposed not to apply its religious virtues and values when taking a decision that is related to citizenship, e.g. voting. Such dualism is a fiction not only against the background of the development of political Islam but also with respect to the intensity and "thickness" of the values that religious tradition embodies as opposed to the relative recent values connected with being citizen. Citizenship that encourages active public engagement and responsibility in a democracy therefor cannot be wholly secular concept.

Arthur (2008) argues that ultimately religion with its aspect on the communal well-being is at the basis of early civic education approaches and stands in for a more close or integrative relationship of religion and citizenship education. Following this logic the competition of religious and political identity dissolves into a concept of "dual citizenship" that explicitly makes use of the complementarity of the two sets of values or as Arthur (2010) puts it: *A persons' identity as a citizen co-exists with their religious identity*. This concept of a "dual citizenship" opens new perspectives, which are very relevant for CVLS education - this holds particularly true for the republic of Iraq with its Islamic identity and the research findings on pupils engaged in religious practice volunteering and participating in political debate support this. Therefor this Action Plan recommends an inclusive CVLS education approach characterised by:
- Acknowledging and active examination of the role of religiously inspired social criticism
- Deep concern with social justice, inequality and power related questions

- Examination of the diversity within and hermeneutic qualities of Islam: Understanding historically different interpretations of Islam alongside with debates of doctrinal positions between the different strands of Islam
- Comparison of the innate value systems of Islam and the Iraqi constitution alongside with the active promotion of a culture of volunteering being innate to the existing religious communities thus putting them as role models for this important aspect of CVLS education.

4.4.2 National Level - strengthening CVLS education

An Action Plan on CVLS education addressing schools, families and communities cannot operate in an empty space but needs strong roots within the legal framework, the commitment of the national and regional administration both on the institutional and on the level of dedicated individuals. Relevant areas are the legal system, the financial framework for CVLS education as well as the national education strategy and a national strategy for CVLS education research.

National Level - backing up CVLS education

The national level with the Iraqi constitution as orientation framework and the detailed law system as a source of codified social norms does not play an entirely passive role as a "lender of last resort" for CVLS education. The law needs to provide the necessary "backup" for CVLS education in Iraq. Whist the right to education is already guaranteed by the Iraqi constitution and law a more detailed legal basis for CVLS education could be established: The school law of North Rhine-Westphalia may serve as an example for many other German "Laenders" (parts of the federal system) as well as other nations by providing sections governing CVLS education. § 2 of the school law of North Rhine-Westphalia states: "Pupils are empowered to participate responsibly in the social, societal, occupational, cultural and political life as well as manage their own lives". Some schools in Germany go as far as having CVLS related skills evaluated in their school certificates.

At this point the twofold relationship between the CVLS education and the legal basis becomes apparent: CVLS education shall support behaviour that conform with the constitution and the law, in turn the law shall support CVLS education by providing the needed legal basis. However, the described relationship only reflects the more formal aspects of the national level. On a more pragmatic level it becomes evident that a formal backup by a more detailed anchoring of CVLS education in the Iraqi law system on a national, regional and local level will only be of help if taken serious in terms of accountability and responsibility. One very important side of the "accountability medal" is the provision of sufficient financial and human resources to responsibly implement the programs, projects and measures foreseen in the action plan. Even so the available financial and human resources are to a certain degree part of the Situation Analysis carried out in the framework of the program they shall be discussed in this section: the situation analysis not only reveals budget shortage for CVLS programs (and education in general) but also the low priority level associated with CVLS education. There is no difference between the two findings as budget figures are a simple translation of priorities into a governments program.

National Level - CVLS education priority and budget

No figures are available on dedicated resources for CVLS education in Iraq over the last decades. If one takes the overall spending on education as an indicator for the budget available for CVLS a major decrease in budget can be discovered.

It has to be very clearly pointed out that without an important increase of the available budget for education in general and for CVLS education in particular, no significant progress will be made. Teachers salaries and qualification, school dropout rates, the availability of proper schools, textbooks and access to modern IT are a direct function of the available budget.

In the light of the above one must say that success and failure of the National Action Plan for Civic Education will to an important degree depend on the priority that the Iraqi government assigns to CVLS education. This opens the door of an overall strategic context: whilst Iraq counts among the countries with the largest oil reserves in the world, which puts Iraq in a relatively comfortable position regarding the financing of the nations reconstruction. However, the climate change discussion already today eludes the end of the era of fossil fuels and thus the necessity for Iraq to invest in new economic domains. Education and life skills in turn will be key to the countries success of building up successful new economic branches.

This Action Plan is also supposed to serve as an advocacy document for decision makers. Education in general and specifically CVLS education are the prerequisites for an economical success and political stability of the future Iraqi nation. Therefor a process must be set up to understand the budgetary implications for the implementation of a CVLS education strategy and identify the needed monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure that the budget is efficiently spent. This process is crucial to the success of the Action Plans implementation.

National Level - National Education Strategy and Research on CVLS education

A CVLS educational strategy cannot be seen as dissociated from the overall activities with regard to curricula development in Iraq. The integration of the CVLS educational content for example can be performed either by developing distinct CVLS content that is taught in separate CVLS lessons or through a systematic integration of CVLS relevant content into the general and sub curricula. Therefor a coordination process will have to be launched on the basis of a commonly agreed CVLS action plan.

A strategy on promoting civic values and life skills operates in a culturally specific and, more importantly, dynamic environment. Through these lenses, the present Action Plan can only be seen as a starting point that will have to be amended through research on CVLS education in Iraq. A lot of scientific evidence in CVLS education in general and also in this paper is based on research carried out in non-Arabic countries. Therefor the reproach could be made that conclusions for an Iraqi CVLS education action plan cannot be drawn from this evidence. Even if this holds true to a certain degree, these reproaches need to be seen in the following light:
- First of all, the fact that a large portion of the research has not bee carried out in Iraq, calls for a national research strategy on CVLS education in Iraq. It is only on evidence from Iraq that an agreed action plan can be amended with over time. Therefor this Action Plan has to provide guidance for setting up a national research strategy on CVLS education in Iraq, which needs to be well coordinated with the activities to be performed in the monitoring and evaluation section.
- Secondly, the mere fact that the sources of evidence that international CVLS research provides are not from comparable environment does not automatically bring forth a gene non-applicability of the totality of the findings. However, the findings have always to be seen with a critical perspective in terms of applicability in the socio-cultural and economic context of Iraq.
- Last but not least, the research performed in the framework of this program (see section 5 of this document) provides interesting material that can be used to complement the findings from the general CVLS education.

5. Situation Analysis

The development of this Action Plan is based on three major information sources:
    Policy paper analysing the current state of CVLS in Iraq
    Study on successes and failures of CVLS education

Field research (focus groups, questionnaire, interviews) assessing Perceptions of Civic Values and Life Skills among Youth and selected Iraqi educators, school administrators and concerned public sector officials

Other supporting material: desk research on CVLS education, interviews with international experts[5]

The information provided by the described mechanisms will enhance the understanding of the current situation and especially allow for an identification of the most important factors that need to be addressed by an Action Plan. Both, the policy paper as well as the field research report provides a deeper insight into the findings - for the sake of clarity the subsequent sections are limited to the major findings of each instrument. The main results of the study on successes and failures have been used in section 4 of this document in order to understand international best practice on CVLS education. However the results of this study will be continuously used throughout the project implementation in order to identify success models within the further development of the plans various components.

5.1 The current state of the Iraqi CVLS educational system

A separate policy paper on current approaches to integrating civic values and life skills into formal and non-formal education in Iraq has been produced. This paper highlights the current conditions of education in Iraq and describes the specific CVLS situation. The following a very brief summary of the papers' findings - the interested reader is invited to visit the full paper.

General conditions (selection)
- Missing school buildings
- General availability of funds
- Life conditions, especially in rural areas
- Security conditions
- Generally poor level of teacher qualification
- Generally poor teaching methodologies (esp. separating academic content from real life applicability)

CVLS specific situation (selection)
- Low priority of the subject
- Lack of practical application
- Specific teacher qualification
- Partially poor curricula
- Potentially too many stakeholders involved
- Level of content partially too academic
- No integration of the social environment (no communication school-parents)
- Absence of a vision for CVLS education
- Lack of monitoring and evaluation

5.2 Major results from field research

The Field research assessing Perceptions of Civic Values and Life Skills among Youth and selected Iraqi educators, school administrators and concerned public sector officials has been performed in 4 Iraqi provinces by the means of focus groups, interviews and questionnaires. The goal of the field research was to develop and make available baseline data on public perceptions of civic values and life skills within Iraq. More specifically, the assessments intended to generate a deeper understanding of the existing perceptions on the concepts of civic values and life skills held

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[5] Within this material on report is to be highlighted (Arthur 2010) which presents the results of the so far largest empirical study on character education in the UK with more than 70.000 responses

by youth on the one hand, and education providers, school administrators and public sector officials on the other.

Youth Focus Groups Findings – main outcomes

Main youth outcomes on Democracy and Human rights

- This paragraph reflects youth deep awareness and knowledge of democracy and human rights concepts and practices, despite having some criticism and rejection of this approach, due to the current practiced traditions and cultures, namely in the rural areas;
- Contradictions and confusion between the concepts of human values and the social and political trends, adding to this, youth rejection of the duplication of ''discourse'' and the absence of institutional credibility. This clearly reflects the Iraqi youth political and social awareness, which will eventually enable them to play a crucial role in reform and development process;
- The emergence of some opinions requiring youth to clarify those concepts, in a society where the roles and tasks of political, social, educational and religious institutions prove solid and in harmony;
- Very few schools and educators dispose of activities or practices, encouraging and activating democracy and participation in the educational framework.
- It is worthwhile to mention that families in Iraq, namely in the urban areas, deeply influence democracy practices, and that is under the umbrella of practiced traditions and cultures. Furthermore, we can notice that mothers also have an important role to play in supporting and developing girls' self expression and opinions.

Main outcomes on Citizenship

- Youth developing feelings for Iraq, especially under threats of dividing the country and the absence of security. This reflects youth sense of belonging to Iraq, a sense that could be used in order to strengthen the national Iraqi identity;
- Lack of trust in institutions, especially by religious groups and displaced people; lack of sense of belonging;
- Raised awareness on Iraqi identity; youth rejection of sectarianism, riots, disorder; youth demand to (establish political and religious discourse, aiming at unity and citizenship and rejecting divisions and separation);
- The sense of citizenship and belonging to one Iraqi identity is threatened today; youth reflected this reality through their continuous rejection of ethnic identities, which divide and control the Iraqi society. It is important to work through educational channels in order to strengthen and establish National patriotism, and also re-shape an Iraqi national identity representing all groups of Iraq.

Basic outcomes on Equality

- Iraqi youth has a certain acceptance concerning gender equality and female participation in the public and social life. This tendency is stronger in the urban areas, taking into consideration the society's traditions and customs;

- All opinions reflected by participants during the discussion session stress on the importance of role played by family, in crystallizing youth thoughts and ideas on gender equality issues. Civic education should thus take this into account.

- There are some contradictions between equality issues, customary laws and society's realities namely in the rural areas. Civic education thus risks to become compromised and will eventually lose credibility when conveying the message esp. in the case of girls

suffering from societal pressures, based on gender equality.

- It is also noted that tribal areas (of one sect or group) are often closed to new concepts, including women rights and equality, looking at them as a threatening factor against their traditions and families;

- All unanimously agreed on the crucial role played by the mother in the family; this could be considered as an entrance to establish a participatory culture and gender equality within the family.

Main outcomes on Tolerance

- Reflect a peaceful cohabitation culture and the acceptance of the other; both concepts were thoroughly discussed amongst youth, despite the negative influence of war and displacements. This could be considered as a good basis to build a new generation who believes in tolerance and cohabitation;

- Through the various discussions amongst youth, one can notice the deep psychological damages they suffer from, which necessitates a good amount of 'care and attention' as a basic phase to build self confidence and tolerance in all Iraqi Governorates;

- The spread out of insularity phenomena and self-closure due to the lack of security and stability;

- It is noticed that people are more tolerant in mixed ethnic areas –Baghdad and Erbil-, respecting traditions and other individuals;

- All opinions reflected the importance of justice in establishing tolerance and cohabitation, as a key element towards building the citizenship and democracy of Iraq's future.

Main outcomes on Communication and Expression of self

- It is noted that there are some differences between traditional, urban and mixed environments especially when it comes to openness and communications with others. Youth coming from urban backgrounds proved to be more open, despite the traces of war and instabilities. The later influenced the level of friendships from outside of the family; however it didn't influence youth behaviors of openness and acceptance of others.

- We can say that at all levels, the mother's role remain influential, being the closest to her sons and daughters. Relationships with fathers on the other hand, are still restricted by obedience; all together fall in a social structure, where conflicts against radical transformations in authority, values, traditions and customs remain clearly evident.

- Youth openness to other ethnic groups and religions, according to the social environment and the current traditions they live in.

- It is noticed that at all youth levels, there's an eagerness for dialogue and meeting new people especially through virtual websites; it is thus important to focus on those new channels as a mean for raising awareness and civic education.

Main outcomes on Negotiation and Discussion

- Youth identified main obstacles facing interaction with others, as lack of security and social traditions and customs, which force restrictions and limitations on youth, mainly on girls;

- Traditional culture prevailing in rural areas (Thi Qar), lead to restricting the role of schools, mainly girls schools, to only educational purposes, versus mixed schools (in Erbil);

- Student's /teacher's relationship is based on the concept of obedience and fear of punishment, which hinders communications within schools.

Main outcomes on Critical thinking

- Youth critical thinking is developed through life experiences and practices rather than through lessons and awareness programs. During the discussions sessions, youth proved to have a great deal of awareness as well as a high level of critical thinking.

- The role of educators and independent teachers should be activated in order to raise youth awareness on civic and democratic values.

Main outcomes on Competition and Teamwork

- Lack of financial resources, schools' poverty and overcrowded classes are considered as obstacles facing the establishment of social work culture, notably in rural areas;

- Civil society's organizations facing difficulties in conducting awareness sessions in schools, due to the centralized system which doesn't allow schools to initiate any cooperation along with civil society's organizations;

- Obedience concept controls the relationship between teachers and students, which hinders the participatory approach in practicing those values and establishing life skills;

- It seems that students' elections are targeted towards appointing divisions representatives and facilitating communication amongst students, rather than being an awareness process in itself.

- The strict administrative instructions are considered as a main obstacle, which isolates schools from their environment, thus reducing the cultural, scientific and economic interaction

Findings of the Special Focus Groups

Main outcomes from Parents' point of view

- Compared analysis between parents' opinions and youth opinions related to critical thinking, showed that the new generation of youth, and mainly girls have different opinions from their parents; such were reflected in rejecting certain realities or doubting in the meaning of obedience. This proved that youth are more open and tolerant than their parents;
- Social and tribal traditions and values still reign in some traditional areas such as (Thi Qar), where raising children is based on preserving the traditional structure of the society and identifying the social roles of girls, as future mothers, and boys, as future heads of families;
- The urban areas like (Erbil) stressed on the diversity of opinions and the sources of values; this laid down the basis of dialogue and participatory approach within the closed family (parents and children), namely tackling realities and new developments which serve at empowering youth integration skills in the society;
- Concerning gender equality, all analysis (boys, girls, parents and educators) illustrated the difficulty of convincing parents of the gender equality concept between boys and girls; it also illustrated parents' difficulty in accepting the right of women in deciding their own destiny. Women (mothers and daughters) suffer still from social limitations and traditions, which do not allow them to freely express themselves;
- It is noted that respecting the principles of dialogue and respecting each individual's opinion within the family, will enable youth to acquire skills such as taking initiatives and giving them freedom of expression. On the other hand, relationships built on the principle of obedience and fear from parents, and absence of dialogue within the family (the tribal

family), oppress youth and limit their opportunities in taking initiatives and enjoying freedom of expression;

- Most of parents do not take part of school activities, whether cultural or being members of school boards etc.. Most of the times, they ignore education programs and they negatively evaluate school curriculums, especially civil education material;
- Absence of civil societies specialized in supporting parent's role in educating their sons and daughters, as well as in executing civil society programs.

Civil Society Organisations Interviews findings

- All organizations agreed on the fact that civic education curriculums do neither match Iraq challenges nor the society's realities. All concerned people considered this topic as dry and difficult to understand, due to the big amount of used terminologies, especially those used in the elementary education, which makes it hard to understand the lesson and practically apply it in life;
- Civil society organizations interviewed in Erbil and Baghdad and Salaheddin, confirmed that civil education material is mostly marginalized and not considered as a basic educative material in most of the schooling stages;
- Interviewed parties assessed teaching methods of civic education material as traditional and dry, since they remain as lessons within school curricula, limited to elementary stages. Teaching methods also remain restricted to written lessons, which push students to memorizing them by heart, instead of understanding and applying them;
- Despite of the importance of associations' role played in the field of education and raising awareness on human rights and human values principles, there is a clear lack of coordination between those associations and schools, thus, the majority of those activities are being organized outside the schools although they target empowering youth on life skills issues. There should therefore be a coordinated work amongst, schools, centers and organizations;
- Civil Society organizations in the Iraqi society, especially those working outside the educational system, are still considered as premature; they need to coordinate their activities along with the Ministry of Education. It is also noted that many Iraqi civil society organizations have a strong cooperation and coordination with Arab and International organizations. This advantage should be used to strengthen and support youth civic values programs and life skills, on various levels;
- All organizations insist on the important role played by religious institutions and activists in raising awareness on tolerance, cohabitation, women's role in society and gender equality issues.
- All participants agreed on the important role of media in all fields, whether cultural or religious or others, in establishing citizenship and democracy strategies, as a top priority of the State and of the civil society.

Recommendations: Educators Focus Group findings

- It was noticed through the discussions with teachers and school directors that the educational institution faces an overall crisis from all angles, whether financial or moral and especially regarding their curricula. This crisis does not allow executing any activities enhancing group work and inflicting scientific and cultural competition amongst youth. All participants agreed that education in Iraq necessitates radical reviewing to be conformant to the main society transformation. All also agreed that education has a strategic crucial role to play in society.
- Participants also analysed obstacles and difficulties, addressing as well a set of suggestions confirming the importance of reviewing first, education main task within a future vision perspective, as it is essential in building capacities, and thus coordinating

amongst the various ministries and civil society and families, in order to establish democracy and cultural practices parallel with building the new democratic Iraq.

- Assessing civic education goals and curricula reflected the education sector's main problems as well as the education functions in Iraq. This leads to reviewing the basic needs and preparing education tools which enable achieving the strategic goals and future vision of the education institution in Iraq in order to establish an open society where human values reign. Education institution should also anchor life skills for youth, in a way where school, family, university and society become a haven for peaceful cohabitation, dialogue, citizenship and creativity, becoming a democratic model of values.

Civic education should not be limited to schools only

One should recognize that the means and methods used in teaching critical thinking and civic awareness among youth are not limited to civic education programs, nor to working in the field of civil society organizations, or religious education and preaching, counselling, or family education, or media, even if all these parties have a high degree of modern education. This is due to the fact that globalization regarding humanitarian principles and values, education, culture and family, politics and religion are intertwined within the system. The constant evolution requires clarity of vision and developing a strategy adhered to by all parties and stakeholders about the common factor of the humanity principles in the formation of youth and the distribution of roles and tasks of each party within the scope of common goals, following a clear plan adopted by everyone, which takes into consideration the rapid transformations in the field of communication and methods of education and awareness.

Activating the role of parents /teachers councils as well as the role of civil society organizations

Activating the role of parents /teachers councils will enhance the participation of family and society in establishing ''an open mature culture'', which will eventually lead to applying life skills, values and behaviours in the society. It also goes without saying that the role of civil society organizations should also be activated mainly in civic education within schools, as these organizations could provide support to teachers who will eventually involve students in extra curricula activities which could be expensive for schools to organize.

General recommendations

A set of "practical recommendations and procedural mechanisms" that emerged from the various discussions and analysis of the status of civic education material in the educational system, are described in the following points:

- The practice of democratic education: and the education of democracy, being a method and a tool to verify real democracy, where youth (boys and girls) can learn the foundations and practices of democratic action in schools and educational institutions. This could only be available if the State and ministries coordinated with civil society in order to establish democracy practices aiming at opening up to the social, cultural and institutional surrounding.
- Training and preparing the education system and teachers on the skills of dialogue, discussion, and teamwork: encourage entrepreneurship and be attentive to the concerns of youth.
- Discuss participatory programs with civil society organizations; open schools to be a place of cultural, scientific and social interaction in the various areas, enabling education to become a primary actor in the establishment of democracy and the principle of doctrine and behaviour and transactions.
- Activating team work and the role of groups in schools: team work in education within a particular group helps students become more open, it also helps them to grow and acquire knowledge and benefit from other's experiences, which would eventually help them to get rid of

selfishness and protect themselves against living in isolation or having a sense of fear and lack and inferiority.

- Activating an active education system: which contributes to the reduction of aggressive behaviours and eliminate negative attitudes of learners, and reduces the indoctrination style of teaching. Activating the education system will loosen the rigid educational system, which is based on discipline, commitment and punishment to become a positive, effective and valid institution. There is no doubt that the partnership with NGOs, will help in creating activities to support programs and curriculum aiming at educating youth on the meaning of democracy; this can also be done by activating the parents/teachers boards in order for them to participate and support the educational process in a participatory manner along with the community.

- Activating the school life: with the Goals of creating an open democratic society, based on the elimination of class, social and sexual differences.

- Update curricula: and developing them so that they open up to human rights cultures and human values.

- Devote to decentralization: to enable institutions open up to engagement with civil society organizations regarding democratic rehabilitation of the educational institution.

5.3 Desk research results

General aspects on the history of the Iraqi Education System
Iraq has a proud and long history of civilization and culture, being birthplace of law and writing and having once been highly praised and recognized as one of the best education systems in the region. However, the cumulative effect of three consecutive wars, international sanctions, security challenges and socio-economic hardships severely damaged the Iraqi education system.

The Rise of education system: 1970-1984
A new period of economic and social changes started as a consequence of Iraq getting his share of the Iraqi oil. This lead to increased expenditure on education and also a raise of awareness for the importance of education. The following economic boom with an increased public income lead to the further development of education. Iraq launched a successful program against illiteracy and therefore has been 1982 awarded a UNESCO prize for having eradicated illiteracy and was classified by UNESCO as free from illiteracy by 1985.

By 1984, major accomplishments concerning access to education, literacy, gender equality and education budget had been achieved. Some of them are:

• Gross enrolment rates rising over 100%
• Almost complete gender parity in enrolment
• Illiteracy among 15-45 age group declined to less than 10%
• Dropout/Repetition rates were the lowest in the Middle East and North Africa [MENA] region
• Spending in Education reached 6% of Gross National Product [GNP] and 20% of Iraq's total government budget
• The average government spending per student for education was ~$620

In this period also many promising activities had been started to adopt international trends in education: integrating modern textbooks, new methods of examination, training programmes for teachers, installing education technologies, implementing recreational activities or building relationships between education and labour.

The Decline and Crisis Years: 1984-2003
With the 1980s a disastrous period of consecutive wars (Iran-Iraq War, Gulf Wars) and international sanctions, security challenges and following socio-economic hardships came. As a result, the educational system further and further debilitated and declined, the whole educational infrastructure being destroyed, the educational institutions and curricula detrimented. That also

had a deeply negative impact on teachers' skills and the capacity of education managers, decision-makers and legislators to render quality education and ensure a continuous evolution of the education system. Decreased public resources were spent on military and the education budget suffered from a growing deficit over the years.

Concerning access to education, literacy, gender equality and education budget the former achievements were negated, the Iraqi education system turning out to become one of the weakest. Some of the outcomes of the weakening system were:

• The share of education in the Gross National Product [GNP] dropped to almost half, resting at 3.3% in 2003
• As Gross Income declined, resources for education suffered
• Education came to assume only 8% of the total government budget
• Government Spending per student on education dropped from $620 in the 'Golden Years' to $47
• Teacher salaries dropped in real terms, from $500–1000/month to $5/month in 2002-2003
• Gross enrolment in primary schooling dropped to 90%
• The gender gap increased [95% Male, 80% Female]
• The dropout rate reached 20% [31%Female, 18%Male]
• The repetition rate reached a figure that is double that of the MENA region, 15%, and 34% for secondary schools

Following 2003
2004 the UNESCO described the prevailing picture of Iraq after the conflict of 2003 as one of acute shortages and urgent needs. Most of the education institutions required physical rehabilitation, furniture, equipment and materials for the teaching of science, technology, other practical subjects, and replenishment of libraries. In-service training for teachers, who had long been cut off from the outside world, including access to international journals, textbooks as well as Internet communications, remained a prerequisite for the introduction of innovative practices and changes into the education system. Teacher trainers needed to be exposed to the nature of active learning, student-centred education, and practice in critical, creative and caring thinking as a foundation for responsible citizenship. The curriculum, likewise, had been static and limited by political constraints. Renewal of curriculum and textbooks turned to be an urgent challenge, with a need for updating, especially in the sciences and technology, and infusion of the values of peace and human rights, respect for others, active citizenship and democracy.

Following the invasion of Iraq by America in 2003, the Coalition Provisional Authority with help from International organizations undertook the complete reform of Iraqi Education System. The immediate target of Coalition was to remove Baathist ideology from teaching institutions, increase in salaries of educators and strengthening of teaching and training programs. After the change in political power in Iraq, the number of students attending schools became more than 6 million. This number included children from kindergarten to twelfth grade. Six years of compulsory education became a must for all and everyone in Iraq. A new curriculum framework was drafted based on a new educational philosophy, defining a common curriculum model that is standards- and competency-based and integrating the principles of democracy.

Current status
In spite of considerable improvements, the education system in Iraq still needs major efforts in modernization. According to UN humanitarian coordinators Iraq faces considerable challenges to improve access to education and guarantee that girls and boys have equal opportunities. Resources should be increased to ensure that education, from early childhood care and mainstream schooling to literacy and life skills for youth and adults can be adequately provided. Iraq has increased the budget allocated for education from 7.2 per cent in 2008 to nearly 10 per cent 2010, but much more needs to be done to meet the 2015 target of 100 per cent enrolment in primary schools in rural areas, one of the eight Millennium Development Goals and one of the six internationally-agreed targets of the UN-backed movement „Education for All" (launched in 1990).

Many of the educational institutes still require physical rehabilitation, furniture, equipment and materials for the teaching of science, technology, other practical subjects and replenishment of libraries. Teachers have to be trained in new methods, to improve the quality of teaching. The prevalence of classical teaching methods that focus on lectures and memorization has to be supplemented by stressing analysis, deductive skills and the spirit of initiative and creativity.

The learning environment in Iraq was reported by UNICEF in 2010 as influenced by poor safety, family poverty and reluctance to allow adolescent girls to attend school. The report quoted female students referring to their schools as 'unwelcoming, unpleasant, dirty, poorly maintained with filthy lavatories and no drinking water.' A significant under representation of girls in primary schools is to be stated. Overall, Iraqis' perceptions of education have deteriorated during the past few years. In 2004-2005, over 70% of Iraqis had a positive perception of local schools. This dropped considerably to 43% by March 2007, but had risen once again to 63% by February 2009 (Inter-Agency Information and Analysis Unit 2010).

Some of the improvements are:
· Increase of spending on education from 7.4 % 2007 to 9,6 % 2010 of the national budget
· 3,600 schools being rehabilitated and 12,000 new teachers recruited
· A strong focus on girls' increased provision and access to learning resources
· Strengthening national education strategy
· Restoring equitable access to primary, secondary and tertiary education
· Development of the physical infrastructure and right-sizing teacher-students ratios

According to Geopolicity 2010 areas still to improve are:
· 12,522 school buildings short of requirements
· The shortage in schools has increased from 25% to 30% since 2004
· Setting a national education policy to shape the education sector strategy
· Administrative restructuring
· Unifying education laws

6. Action Plan Development

General approach

The basic logic that this Action Plan follows analyses the differences or deviations between the current state and situation assessed in the Situation Analysis component of this project and a CVLS "state of the art" situation described in section 4.4 of this document which is based on desk research and the "Study on Successes and Failures" developed as an input for this project.
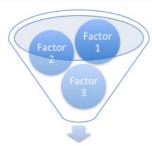
When analysing the driving factors it has to be discussed which factors a CVLS Education Action Plan is able to address. Some of the factors represent issues, which are clearly "external" or out of reach in the sense that they cannot be addressed directly with an intervention that would be in scope of this plan. Also, many of these deviation or (hindering) factors that todays CVLS education suffers from are relevant for (and also affecting) the overall educational system. Poverty for example is a factor that limits CVLS and education in general - however poverty cannot be addressed directly through a set of actions that would be in scope of this document.

In order to be effective a strategy fostering CVLS education of Iraqi adolescents will have to find mechanisms that will function *despite* the existing unfavourable conditions of the overall system - by implementing these mechanisms some of the unfavourable general conditions will be addressed as well, however this is not the primary focus of the Action Plan. Poverty, for example, according to practically all economic research available, can only be effectively reduced by access to education.
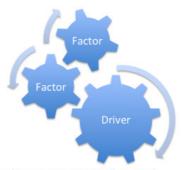
Other factors found are relevant for the overall education but will need to be addressed: If one looks for example at the decreased economic and social status of teachers, it reveals evident that this factor can at least be partially addressed by (lobbying for) an increase in the share that education holds within the overall budget. Therefor this action plan classifies as "external" factors that cannot be directly addressed but which the Action Plan has to take into account in a sense that strategy works "despite". Everything that lies within the options and possibilities and thus the authority of the Iraqi government is subject to this concept.

Two types of "filter" mechanisms are used to prioritize the findings from the overall situation analysis. The first filter concerns the deviation of the findings to best practice as known from international CVLS research as described in section 4.4. Such analysis will identify those factors that the Action Plan must address because they either hinder or harm the implementation of CVLS education or identify specific areas where CVLS best practice does not apply to the situation in Iraq.

Filter 1: Deviation from Best Practice

Factor 1
Factor 2
Factor 3

Relevant Factors

Factor
Factor
Driver

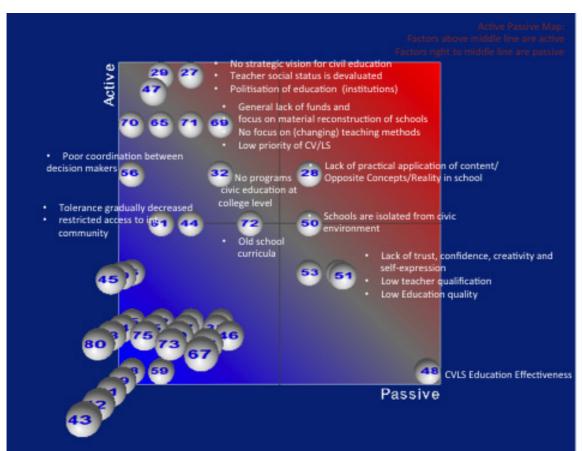Filter 2: Systemic Analysis and Idenfification of driving factors

The second filter concerns the interrelatedness of the factors identified. The research revealed a large number and variety of factors that are all but disjoint. An action plan development cannot ignore this interrelatedness but in contrary has to use it in order to better understand the dynamics of a given situation. Therefor the action plan development has applied by a systemic approach, which examines the operational dynamics of the social and structural dimensions of society or

group. A systemic analysis includes, but is not limited to factors that represent the dynamics of power, voice, inclusion or exclusion, and consequent benefit or profit, harm or loss. Using the constructs raises the level of the analysis beyond personalities and blaming, and focuses objectively on ways that systems may be improved.

The systemic analysis of the factors provided by field research, policy paper and other research revealed key factors that the Action Plan must address because they are factors that have a major influence on the overall system and thus a leverage effect. By this means the number of factors that the Action Plan must address can be reduced to a manageable set. The focus is on those factors that will provide the maximum impact on the current situation in order to comply with the efficiency criterion of applying scarce human, financial, technological and other resources to achieve the best possible benefit.

6.1 Factors that a CVLS Education Action Plan must address

Based on the process detailed in the previous section the systemic analysis resulted in the following picture:

Screen: Result of systemic analysis with active factors in the upper and result factors in the lower right quadrant

Top Active Factors - factors that are most influential on the overall situation (levers of change)
- No strategic vision for civil education
- Teacher social and economic status is devaluated
- Politisation of education (institutions)
- Low priority of CV/LS
- General lack of funds (also due to focus on material reconstruction of schools)

- No focus on (changing) teaching methods /
- Poor coordination between decision makers
- No programs civic education at college level
- Tolerance gradually decreased
- Restricted access to int. community
- Old school curricula

Pivotal Factors - factors that are both, influenced by and influential on others
- Lack of practical application of content/Opposite Concepts/Reality in school
- Schools are isolated from civic environment

Results factors - These factors cannot be addressed directly in a CVLS Education Action Plan but will change when active factors are addressed properly. Attempts to "directly" invest in these areas would be undermined by the influences from the active factors mentioned above.
- Low education quality
- Low qualified teachers
- Lack of trust, confidence, creativity and self-expression
- CVLS education in Iraq effectiveness

"External" Factors - Factors that cannot be addressed directly, but that have to be taken into account as environmental factors
- Orphan children / Divorce
- Early marriage of girls
- Poverty

6.2 High Level Assessment

In a first approximation to a CVLS Education Action a consistent approach needs to be defined which defines the basic principle that CVLS education in Iraq applies in order to contribute to the agreed goals of Civic Education in Iraq:
- *Enhance youth personal and social skills*
- *Access to education of vulnerable and marginalized groups*
- *Assisting young people to contribute to their own protection from abuse and exploitation*
- *Encouraging life-long professional development of educational staff*
- *Reinforce a sense of "national identity", citizenship and promote human rights - including gender equality*

There are two basic mechanisms that one could apply:

A top down "institutional" approach:
CVLS education as implementation of an amended legal framework, which imposes (and monitors the implementation of) new governance models for educational institutions that live up to the standards that are required by the Iraqi constitution. The implementation of such values based governance models induces an overall change in educational institutions towards the application of the civic values within the institutions and thus takes a practical approach of teaching civic values and life skills through the day to day life practiced in formal and non-formal education institutions.

"Traditional" bottom-up approach
The notion "traditional" is used to describe a more narrow and focussed approach that consists in developing teaching material on CVLS and the implementation of said material with the means of trainer training, teacher training and teaching adolescents the contents commonly seen as being the ones helping adolescents to understand what it means to be a good citizen and how to live a

successful and happy life. The teaching of these values to adolescents then induces overall change in educational institutions and society.

Based on the vast experience in the implementation of this type of programs such approach would comprise the following steps:

- Establish set of quality criteria and associated monitoring instruments for CVLS programs
- Establish "map of CVLS" activities in Iraq based on the information that the policy paper and the successes & failures developed in the framework of this program provide and identify "white spots" based on a comparison with best practice approaches from the various countries where these programs have been implemented.
- Scan and quality-rate existing initiatives and programs
- Select programs filling "white spots" and fitting into overall architecture (CVLS map)
- Identify success models to be leveraged / mainstreamed
- Test full approach in the model regions selected in the framework of this program
- Evaluate pilot programs and amend full approach
- Implement trainings of trainers and teachers
- Establish monitoring and evaluation tools as the basis of a continuous learning process
- Implement programs in schools

This Action Plan takes up the position that the "top-down, institutional" approach will be superior and more consistent with respect to reaching the goals as defined - particularly when taking a long-term sustainability perspective. Amongst the reasons for this choice are:
- The active factors (politisation of education institutions, decreased tolerance, traditional teaching methods) revealed that a CVLS educational approach does not only need to target the adolescents as learners but also the institutions and individuals that provide the framework within which adolescents exercise values.
- International research shows that values are "rather caught than taught" which again expresses the need for an environment that allows for exercising CVLS concepts rather than just "learning" them.
- A consistent legal backup of the program will enhance chances for vulnerable groups to protect themselves from abuse and exploitation and exercise their rights minorities.
- The current situation of teachers in Iraq requires a broader approach to restore the social and economic status of teachers rather than "just" qualifying them to deliver CVLS Education lessons.
- A "bottom-up"-type program without institutional changes will often result in a perceived difference between concept taught and those concepts that are encountered in real life. From research it is known that such differences create confusion particularly within adults resulting in refusal of the concepts and values taught.
- From both the policy paper as well as the field research one can conclude that there is no "one size fit's all"-approach for CVLS education in Iraq. The differences between the different areas in Iraq in terms of socio-economic development and welfare, educational resources and equipment, ethnic and religious perspectives or cultural roots are too important for a singular program implemented over all Iraq to be successful. The top-down institution-based approach seems to be more promising in terms of the customization possibilities.

6.3 Addressing the Factors

Active Factors

Factors: Politisation of education institutions and decreased tolerance
The field research revealed that education institutions are under the influence of politics impacting institutions, management, values and culture of schools and resulting in more and more mono-

ethnic or mono-religious schools. Also a decreased level of tolerance has been found, e.g. an increased judgement of persons (esp. women) in function of their appearance. This tendency clearly undermines the ideals as stated in the Iraqi constitution and as such works against all goals that CVLS education has set. Therefore the constitutionally granted status of Iraq free from sectarianism, racism, complex of regional attachment, discrimination, and exclusion should be further developed into a rigorous and effective, operational anti-discrimination law in order to prevent that politically and/or religiously motivated pressure in the education system can be exercised.

Factors: No strategic vision for civic education / low priority of CVLS / lack of budget
As detailed in the normative framework section of this document, a CVLS Education Action Plan needs to be rooted in a clear Vision-Mission-Goals Framework that the plan is supposed to contribute to. This document proposes such a framework in section 4.3 which will have to be agreed upon by the Iraqi institutions. Therefore this factor can be concerned as being addressed with this document.

The diagnosed low priority of CVLS education and the lack of budget for CVLS education (and to a certain degree the lacking strategic vision) are clearly two sides of the same medal. The portion of the overall available funds a government associates to a task - in this case CVLS education - clearly reflects the priority that such task has on the government level which again triggers down via the administrative process. The implementation of this Action Plan will require investment in CVLS education. The importance of this budget can only be assessed in a further detailing of the activities to be performed in each pillar of this action plan. It will be within the responsibility of the decision makers at government level to take the decision on the implementation of this project as a whole or parts of it. It will be within the responsibility of the project teams to develop the most cost effective approaches within their area of work in order to reassure the decision makers of their decisions taken.

Factors: Decrease of social and economic status, qualification and motivation of teachers, no focus on changing teaching methods and restricted access to international community
The quality of education, be it CVLS or general education, depends to a large degree on the qualification and motivation of the teachers. The research has brought forward that the teachers social status has been devaluated during the past decade, both from an economic and a social perspective. As already outlined in the section on budgetary restrictions the fact that a teacher cannot live upon his salary as a teacher and therefor often holds a secondary employment highlights the importance that is attached to education in general. Therefore the decline in economic and social status of teachers goes hand in hand. It is only when teachers are able to live from their employment as teachers and education is recognized on a broad basis both in government and administration but also by the Iraqi people as such, that teachers as educators can deliver the required educational quality. Last but not least the international isolation of Iraq for decades has outdistanced Iraq teacher education from international standards.

Basically this plan provides the following principal starting points to restore teachers' social and economic status, increase teachers' motivation and ultimately education quality.

- Teacher salaries: Obviously the "easiest" way to restore the economic status of teachers is an increase in salary. However the field research has shown that even today there are highly motivated teachers despite unfavourable conditions, which seems to hold true esp. for female teachers. Therefore, an increase in salary should be linked to teacher performance in adopting new educational approaches, care-taking of vulnerable groups, integration of CVLS education elements in their classes. The legal basis and the criteria for performance based teacher remuneration need to be developed within the framework of this project.
- Teacher training: Lifelong professional development of educational staff counts among the objectives of this project. Especially when linking teacher remuneration to performance adequate qualification opportunities need to be provided for the existing teachers. CVLS Education and modern pedagogical concepts need to be integrated in teacher training both

at university level and for on-going (lifelong) development of existing educational staff. These professional development programs have to be developed and implemented in close collaboration with the international educational community - partnership building in teacher training needs to be key component of this Action Plan.

- Integration of educational staff in general and CVLS curriculum development and training activities will help restore teachers motivation and leverage teachers as agents of change in the Iraqi educational system. Increased visibility through national (or regional) competitions with prizes for best practices in CVLS Education could contribute to the motivational component

Pivotal Factors - factors that are both, influenced by and influential on others

- Lack of practical application of content/Opposite Concepts/Reality in school
- Schools are isolated from civic environment

Factors: Lack of practical application of content/Opposite Concepts/Reality in school /Old School Curricula

The field research has shown that adolescents criticized the lack of practical application of what they are being taught in school, which is mostly based on old curricula. Also many of the concepts they are confronted with do not match with the reality they meet in their day-to-day lives. This range of factors and findings obviously touches the question of general curriculum development in Iraq, which is not in the scope of this Action Plan. However, the lack of practical application is something that has to be taken serious from a CVLS point of view.

Civics education has to provide opportunities for young people to apply values and exercise skills they acquire or as *James 2010* puts it: *"We need to provide more opportunities to enable young people to explore and express character and virtues both within and outside school. We need to create more accessible and engaging resources for young people to explore notions of character and value."* With respect to the formal environments in schools, Arthur (2010) specifies more precisely: *"Schools need to give more curricular time to character education, allowing young people to consider who they are and who they want to be, not only to what they might know. There are natural opportunities to do this across many curriculum subjects, particularly in the arts and humanities."* E.g.: Instead of focussing on history as a purely chronological narrative, which does not result in concepts and ideas that are generalizable (and thus does not help understanding the contemporary world) history lessons should contextualize the differing perspectives and values of people in the past which will help students to better understand contemporary differences or conflicts and thus develop a better understanding of the broader societal contexts of historic events.

It shows that the activities associated with developing and implementing distinct CVLS education content and curricula are progressing slowly due to the fact that curriculum development as such is time-consuming and due to the fear of indoctrination often blocked and jeopardized. Secondly the implementation through the entire chain of teacher training etc. is long - especially against the background of the shortage of adequate teachers. Therefor this action plan suggests to switch from an approach that develops distinct CVLS content to a more sustainable approach of integrating CVLS education as a duty for every teacher within the regular curriculum and the opportunities of day to day school life to explore values based decision making etc.

Therefore this Action Plan proposes:

- limit civics education to its strict limits but with a high degree of practical application connected to the real life of the civil society (see also the concepts outlined in the section "isolated schools")
- to interact with the current development process of the national curricula in order to identify space for and integrate CVLS related content into the curricula currently being developed.
- enable teachers to identify CVLS related content in the general curriculum as opportunities for CVLS education

Factor: Schools isolated from civil society and families

Research has shown that schools currently are almost completely isolated from civil society: Civil Society Organisations do not see opportunities to work with or within schools and informal education institutions which is also linked to the relatively weak status of CSO's in Iraq. Parents, esp. those with a more traditional background and in rural areas have no contact to schools and are very reluctant particularly with respect to CVLS concepts. From international CVLS best practice it is known that the interaction of schools with civil society in general, civil society organisations and particularly with parents in formal and non-formal environments and both in the form of curricular as well as extra-curricular activities contributes massively to the success of CVLS education. Therefor this action plan proposes the following elements:

- Fostering the interaction between schools and civil society by
  o establishing the legal and administrative basis for such interaction,
  o strengthening the legal situation and management capacities of CSO's and
  o interacting (visiting, inviting) closely with civil societies institutions and individuals (legislators, police, firefighters, lawyers, representatives of political parties, religious leaders etc.) as practical examples within CVLS education lessons
  o establishing national and regional competitions that allow CSO's to showcase their contributions to society
  o establishing coordinative structures for civil society
- Establishing a "co-educatorship" agreement between parents and schools / non-formal education institutions by
  o the introduction of Home-School-Agreements that clearly assign rights and responsibilities of parents, schools and teachers in the educational process
  o the continuous demand of parents to participate in curricular and extra-curricular activities (school boards, but also parents presenting their professions to adolescents and many more)
  o a campaign that stresses the importance of education in general and CVLS education in particular for the future success and wealth of adolescents and the society in general

"External" Factors: Orphans, single mother/father families, early marriage of girls, poverty

These factors have a certain impact on the CVLS education but are not within the range of this Action Plan. This plan cannot change the fact that there are orphans and poverty in Iraq. However, there are two aspects to be mentioned:

- One of the requirements of this action plan is inclusiveness and a special focus on vulnerable groups. Orphans and single fathers/mothers, poor adolescents and early-married girls clearly count among this group of vulnerable adolescents. Therefor this plan will need to provide "extra care" for these groups within all components or pillars in order to assure that these vulnerable groups benefit from the implementation of this plan. Teachers for example should focus their activities "in loco parentis" on these groups, which need it most. Also mentoring programs both in formal and informal environments can play an important role in explicitly addressing the needs for vulnerable groups in focus of this program.
- The vulnerable groups mentioned above will also benefit in an indirect manner from the implementation of this plan. The effects of this plan and the overall activities to increase education quality on the national and regional level will help to fight poverty in the long term. An enhanced understanding of individual rights through CVLS education in combination with a legal framework allowing to easier exercise those rights will help protecting vulnerable groups.

6.4 Action Plan Details

The CVLS Education Action Plan is divided into three basic sections which are actions to improve CVLS education within the formal education channels, mainly schools, improving CVLS education within the non-formal education institutions and civil society and a component which embraces crosscutting elements such as the media or leveraging agents of change.

Legal amendments
As already pointed out the "backup" of the legal system will be critical to most if not all actions and measures planned in this document.
- Establish legislations and procedures guaranteeing effective anti-discrimination as enshrined in the 2005 constitution
- Values-based schools: Rules and Regulations on school governance and participation of students, parents and teachers in school governance
- Law governing home-school-agreements
- Legal basis for teachers remuneration based on performance
- Legal basis for civics teachers associations
- Strengthening the legal basis of civil society organisations
- Legal basis for institutionalization of NGO's in implementing extra-curricular activities
- Systematic assessment of necessary legal backing for every project component

Formal education channel components:
- Implementing values-based school governance and participation
  - Participation of students, teachers and parents in school governance
  - Values-based conflict management and decision making
  - CVLS education implementation as change program for quality schools
  - Develop quality criteria and (self-) evaluation tools for schools
- Mainstreaming / identifying CVLS related content in(to) general curriculum
  - Limiting civics lessons to the necessary and with practical application that connect adolescents to civil society institutions (Court, police, fire fighters, army, social workers, social institutions etc.)
  - Making use of opportunities provided by the general curriculum to exercise CVLS education
- Release schools from their isolation
  - Home-School-Agreements to involve parents in school life
  - Use civics lessons content to interact with civil society: Visiting local administration, police etc. to develop a sense of public service in students
  - Opening schools to civil society organisations activities both curricular and extra-curricular
- Restore teachers social and economic status
  - Motivate teachers to become agents of change
  - Link teachers salary increases to performance with regard to the needed change
  - Values based education and civics as subject in teachers' education at university
  - Involve teachers in curriculum development and school governance

Non-formal education environments
- Establish values-based governance structures in non-formal educational institutions
- Enable civil society to take an educational role for adolescents
  - Training courses for civil society organisations in management, strategic planning, policy making, project implementation and monitoring/evaluation mechanisms
  - Leadership trainings
  - Enhance coordination among civil society organisations esp. through the Internet

- o Strengthen and support youth clubs in opening further to other societal structures and develop values-based procedures
- Key role of Volunteering in the development of life skills and a sense of public service
  - o Promote concept of volunteering in formal and non-formal environments
  - o Actively use religious communities as role models for volunteering and for the infusion of concepts and values of citizenship and tolerance among young people

Crosscutting components
- Media
  - o Enable both adolescents and civil society to use the Internet for their purposes
  - o Use the Internet to promote CVLS
  - o Include training on use *and* critical reception of Media (Mass media and Internet)
- Identify and leverage agents of change
  - o Young leaders as peer educators
  - o Female teachers reported to be very engaged
  - o Mothers
  - o Religious leaders and civil society
- Systematically integrate Iraqi institutions and universities into international (CVLS) education community in the areas of:
  - o Curriculum development and teaching methods
  - o CVLS education research
  - o M&E in education
  - o Media & participation (e.g. eavi)
  - o and many more
- Enhance coordination mechanisms
  - o Among decision makers
  - o Between CVLS education and other national (education) strategies
  - o Between civil society organisation and educational institutions
  - o Between Iraqi institutions, organizations and the international community in order to build sustainable strategic partnerships
- Enhance visibility of CVLS education and the concept of volunteering
  - o National and regional competitions and prizes and media coverage
  - o Development and implementation of a media strategy
  - o Through religious communities
- Inclusiveness: mainstream the situation of orphans, early-married girls and adolescents from poor environments throughout all components of this program in order to make sure that these groups de facto benefit from the implementation of this Action Plan.

Monitoring, Evaluation, continuous Learning and Knowledge Management
This component will be described in more detail in Chapter 8 of this document.

Sustainability
Whilst it is foreseen that this CVLS Education Action Plan will be implemented through a program/project mechanism it is necessary to prepare for the institutionalization of CVLS education as a major component of this project. A sustainable integration into the Iraqi institutions that will allow for a seamless continuation of the *process* started with this project is important. This Action Plan is a flexible instrument that needs to be firmly and sustainably implemented on the one hand side, but also to be altered in order to react on the results' evaluations, changes in the environment or other new, unforeseen developments. The legal backup provides the firm anchoring of CVLS education and the M&E component will allow for continuous learning and improvement. In order to achieve the needed institutional sustainability the program will make sure to
- Institutional Arrangements
  - o Roles & responsibilities
  - o Processes
  - o Coordination
  - o Merit-based appraisal systems

- Leadership
  - Management Tools
  - Vision and Mission
  - Communication
  - Outreach mechanisms
- Knowledge
  - Continuous learning
  - Knowledge Management
  - Technology
- Accountability
  - Audit systems
  - Participatory planning
  - Feedback mechanisms
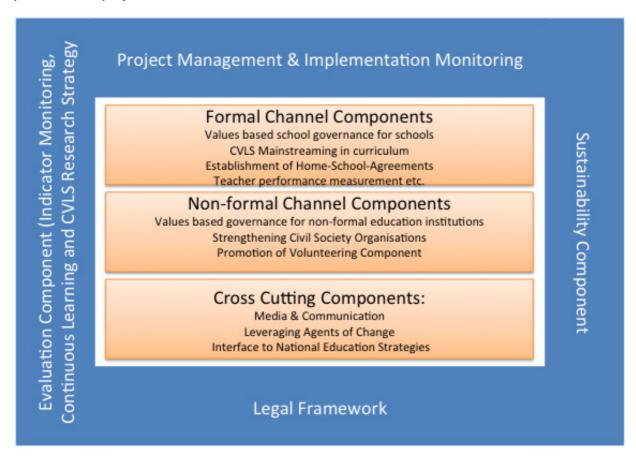
7. Implementation

7.1 Program Structure

As described above, the project is structured into the content components
- Formal channel components
- Non-formation channel components
- Cross cutting components

and the framework components
- Legal backup framework
- Monitoring & Evaluation Framework
- Sustainability Framework

which are coordinated by a strong project management, which will closely monitor the implementation of the project. These project components will deliver the basic structure for the implementation project.

The content components will be further split up into sub-components for better manageability. However the output of the project components will be "packages" for either channel (formal, non-formal, cross cutting). Each sub-component will develop the following deliverables:
- Legal amendments needed to back up the component/subproject
- Sustainability: institutional arrangements needed for the transfer from a project structure to a sustainable structure within the Iraqi administration:
    o Processes
    o Roles & Responsibilities
    o Performance Management / Appraisal
    o Coordination mechanisms
- Resource requirements: human, financial, technical

- Inclusiveness: Clear mechanism to include/benefit vulnerable adolescents into the component or subproject, namely orphans, early-married girls, adolescents with poverty backgrounds
- Flexible & participatory implementation approach including piloting phase
- Interface management (to other subcomponents, components, projects, programs) and coordination
- Partnership building mechanisms: clear vision how the project and the Iraqi institutions will be able to benefit from the international community
- Monitoring, Evaluation, continuous learning mechanisms and knowledge management

7.2 Program Phases

As for the implementation phases the high level phasing can be seen as follows:
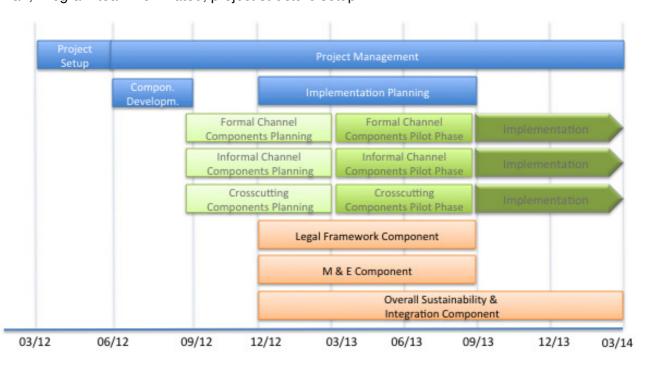
Project Setup Phase
During a preparatory phase (project setup), the following activities will be accomplished:
- Agreement on
  - Vision, Mission, Goals for CVLS Education in Iraq
  - Related indicators
  - Program components
- Coordination with other national programs (eg. literacy strategy, nation curriculum strategy, PSM etc.) in order to understand whether certain components could fall within other programs or this program could integrate components from other programs
- An initial program management team is nominated (program manager, steering committee, project office) which will perform the following activities:
  - Project team roles & responsibilities
  - Communication Structures
  - Project Monitoring Approach
  - Procedures incl. escalation mechanisms

Who: MoE with support by ESCWA
When: until June 2012
Phase deliverables: Agreed CVLS Education Action Plan, Coordinated CVLS Education Action Plan, Program team nominated, project structure setup

Components Development Phase
The first phase will be dedicated to the further development and refinement of the programs components:
- Definition of scope for each component and sub-component
- Identification of project team for each component / subcomponent
- Initial participatory planning workshops with each project team

Who: Program management team
When: July to September 2012
Phase deliverables: Refined program structure, sub-teams defined and nominated

Components Planning Phase:
Once the components of the project are developed the project teams can start with the planning of their individual components while the overall program management team assures the coordination between the teams.
Who: Subproject teams
When: October 2012 to Feb. 2013
Phase deliverables: Legal amendments plan, sustainability plan, resources requirements, Inclusiveness plan, implementation approach, interface management approach, partnership building plan, M&E plan.

Framework components phase
After an initial planning phase the framework component teams can start working based on the input from the content component project teams. The phase consists of aggregating the inputs of the subprojects teams in the areas of legal framework, monitoring & evaluation and overall sustainability and institutional integration on a project-wide basis in order to package the requirements.
Who: M&E component team, legal framework component team and sustainability team
When: Jan. 2013 to June 2013
Phase deliverables: Project-wide legal amendments, M&E and sustainability plans

Component piloting phase
After the initial planning phase the project teams will pilot their components in selected regions and integrate the experience from the pilot activities into their components approach.
Who: Subproject teams
When: October 2012 to Feb. 2013
Phase deliverables: Amended subproject plans - Legal amendments plan, sustainability plan, resources requirements, Inclusiveness plan, implementation approach, interface management approach, partnership building plan, M&E plan

Overall sustainability and integration concept phase
The overall program management coordinates closely with the component teams in order to plan for the final implementation of the components and the handover to the administrative institutions. This includes the aggregation of the subprojects plans at the levels of formal institutions, non-formal institutions and crosscutting components.
Who: Program management team
When: Jan. 2013 to March 2014
Phase deliverables: Implementation plan, component packages

Implementation phase

During the implementation phase the transition of activities from a project structure to the Iraqi institutions will be performed.
Who: Entire project team
When: October 2012 to Feb. 2013
Phase deliverables: Iraqi institutions, schools, non-formal education institutions, civil society organisation and youth capacitated to carry out CVLS education in Iraq.

8. Introducing accountability through Monitoring and Evaluation

This section depicts a further detailing of the M&E component described in the prior section. Monitoring and Evaluation are necessary steps in order to understand if (and why) progress has (not) been made with the implementation of a project. Also M&E is the basis for amendment of the Action Plan and thus critical element for a continuous learning process.

8.1 Monitoring, Impact Assessment and Evaluation

This section explains the basic framework for monitoring and evaluation to be applied within the implementation of this Action Plan. It basically illustrates three different elements needed in order to understand project or program success (or failure).

Monitoring Action Plan implementation

Project management needs to monitor the execution of the Action Plan, which constitutes the input of the CVLS education program. The proper implementation of the project and all of its components and subcomponents needs to be monitored and documented in a transparent and easy accessible format in order to support the project manager to steer the overall project activities and to understand the quality of implementation of the different components. Most project management tools offer monitoring components that allow for the documentation of implementation steps on component, sub-component level all the "down" to the level of single activities.

Execution monitoring is a vital part of the project management activities, as long as CVLS education in Iraq is carried out within this project structure. Without anticipating the decision to be taken during the project, a continuous input monitoring will have to be carried out even after closure of the project. It will be within the responsibility of the M&E and the Sustainability component teams to define where and how input will be measured once the program institutionalisation has taken place. However it is advisable to allocate the input monitoring close to or within the same entity that will take care of the impact monitoring.

Assessing impact based on project goals

The success of the Action Plans' implementation in the sense of producing the desired results can only be measured on the basis of a set of indicators that show the degree to which the goals are reached. Indicators can only be developed based on a set of agreed goals. In order to enable the M&E team to develop a detailed set of indicators and identify the relevant data sources, a high-level agreement on the basic indicator structure during the project setup phase is needed. Once this agreement has been reached the M&E team will further detail the indicators and develop - in close coordination with the national statistics administrative structure - a data acquisition plan and define the data acquisition instruments for those data that are not available today. This process needs to start early in order to establish proper baseline data before the implementation of the project.

The level of detail the indicators need to show has to be decided upon by the concerned stakeholders: Whilst the level of detail needed to understand the overall success and failure of the Action Plan is not very important, the identification of specific sources of success and failure might require a more detailed level. Besides the M&E component team as primary stakeholders other concerned parties are universities that carry out CVLS related research and the international CVLS education community who in turn can contribute remarkable experience on a methodological level regarding data acquisition and analysis.

To illustrate the logic of indicator development the following examples can be used as a primary input for the development of a high level set of indicators:

Goal: enhance youth personal and social skills
Indicators:
- personal skills:
    - Skill 1: critical thinking
        - %age of boys disposing of critical thinking skills
        - %age of girls disposing of critical thinking skills
        - %age of adolescent from urban environments disposing of critical thinking skills
        - %age of adolescent from rural environments disposing of critical thinking skills
        - etc.
        -
    - Skill 2: X
        - %age of boys disposing of Skill X
        - %age of girls disposing of Skill X
        - urban/rural
        - per governorate
        - boys urban vs. rural
        - girls urban vs. rural
        - etc.
    - Skill 3 ...
- social skills:
    - Skill 1: Discussion
        - %age of boys disposing of Skill Discussion
        - %age of girls disposing of Skill Discussion
        - urban/rural
        - per governorate
        - boys urban vs. rural
        - girls urban vs. rural
        - etc.
    - Skill 2.

Goal: Access to education of vulnerable and marginalized groups
Indicators:
- proportion of vulnerable and marginalized groups/individuals having access to education
    - %age of early married girls having access to education
        - Governorate 1
        - ...
        - Governorate 18
    - %age of orphans having access to education
    - %age of adolescents from poor environments having access to education

Goal: Assisting young people to contribute to their own protection from abuse and exploitation
Indicators:
- statistics on young people being abused
- statistics on young people being exploited
understand that statistics will go up first because of raised awareness on abuse and exploitation and only then can go down as the programs start to work

Goal: Encouraging life-long professional development of educational staff
Indicators
- data on staff development and training
- data on staff qualification

- data on performed staff self-evaluation?

Goal: Reinforce a sense of "national identity", citizenship and promote human rights - including gender equality
Indicators
- data on national identification
- data on citizenship attitudes and behaviour
- data on youth attitudes on human rights and gender equality

Evaluation

The evaluation of success and failure can only be done on the basis of both information:
- Input monitoring: quality of project implementation
- Impact Assessment: Indicators reflecting the advancement with respect to the program goals

The evaluation of the programs success then can be derived from the following very basic logic:

	Indicators show positive impact	Indicators show no/negative impact
Program executed properly	Program success	Program irrelevant
Defaults in program execution	Program irrelevant	Implementation defaults

Based on this primary assessment more detailed questions can be explored, for example the development of individual indicators: Analysing why the program led to a positive development with respect to one goal but not with respect to another etc. Based on these quantitative and qualitative judgements more other information sources (e.g. self evaluation results) can be consulted or additional research activities (eg Focus groups) can be carried out.

8.2 Setting up Monitoring, Impact assessment and Evaluation

Based on an agreed set of agreed goals and high level indicators the M&E team needs to perform the following steps:
- Refine and detail the indicator set
- Identify and build strategic partnership with international CVLS education research institutions
- Agree on data acquisition methods in cooperation with international partners
- Identify staff needed to acquire and maintain data
- Identify data sources (also international)
- Identify available data and data currently not available in coordination with national statistics authorities
- Plan for data acquisition/collection on non-available data
- Plan reporting format, periods etc.
- Carry out initial data acquisition
- Establish baseline and share with partners
- Plan for recurring data acquisition
- Plan for institutionalization of data acquisition and analysis

8.3 Learning from Monitoring and Evaluation - continuous process

Evaluation of success based on input monitoring and impact assessment is the basis for continuous learning and thus the sustainability of CVLS education implementation in Iraq. Learning from successes and failures of the Action Plan implementation on both levels
- Identification of Action Plan strength and weaknesses
- Identification of project implementation defects

helps to adjust the program in order to increase the overall success rate. This learning process needs to be shared and closely coordinated with a national CVLS education research strategy to be carried out by Iraqi universities as well as with international CVLS education research institutions. It is of major importance to refine the data acquisition and evaluation methods e.g. by introducing modern self-evaluation instruments in Iraq. M&E never is an end in itself - all concerned stakeholders should have access to the results and integrate them in their activities:
- Formal and non-formal education institutions in order to enhance their CVLS education programs
- Universities to amend teacher education
- The international community to better support other countries that are less experienced in CVLS education (intergovernmental learning)