THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO

Building the Capacity of Faculties of Education:

Case Studies of a TEMPUS Journey in Peer Learning and Transformations in Teacher Education

Foreword and Conclusion by Malak Zaalouk (Project Leader)

Editors: Malak Zaalouk, Ronald Sultana and Pete Bradshaw

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FOREWORD
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This is the second of two volumes produced within the context of a three-year TEMPUS project entitled "Capacity Development of Faculties of Education CDFE in International Approaches to Teacher Education". This foreword is not an introduction to the volume in the academic sense of the term, but rather a brief statement by the project's coordinating institution and Primary Investigator (PI) about the purpose and spirit with which the project w as designed.

For some years, education has been high on the agenda of heads of state, policy makers and civil society, on the international, regional and national levels. Most reforms have emphasised the importance of teachers and, more specifically, the critical impact that teacher preparation is proven to have on student learning (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Research also suggests that, in addition to teacher preparation, the quality of learning largely depends on Continued Professional Development (CPD) (OECD/WB, 2014). Moreover, preparing and empowering educators through lifelong learning is a complex undertaking that includes induction and mentoring at entry point into the profession. It is a long learning journey that starts with university preparation but continues through the career development path of each professional. It has various configurations, but most importantly is seen in school and in partnership with universities. The best CPD programmes highlight what great instruction looks like through curricula and pedagogy, impart educators with the knowledge and capacity to deliver exemplary instruction, build practical skills through professional development opportunities, support educators with good mentors and coaches, select and develop good instructional leaders who focus on instruction

and creating learning communities, and enable educators to learn from each other (Barber and Mourshed, 2007). Many international task forces and initiatives have been established in the last fifteen years to support teachers at the heart of educational reform in Europe and elsewhere (UNESCO, 2014; Twining, et al., 2013; Haigh, et al., 2013).

In recent years one of the lead bodies for the Arab region, the League of Arab States (LAS), developed visions and strategies to promote quality educational reform and research. These two concerns have featured in every single Arab Summit meeting since 2006. In fact already in 2005 a department for education and scientific research was created at LAS to support the new policy direction. In 2006, LAS and various other regional bodies, such as the Arab League Education Culture and Science Organization (ALECSO), the Arab Bureau for Education in the Gulf States (ABEGS), the regional offices for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the regional office for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) joined hands in a partnership to enhance the quality of education in the Arab world (League of Arab States and UNICEF, 2010). The partnership chose teachers as their entry point for the purposes of bringing about reform. Several studies were conducted and compiled to further understand the status of teachers, their training and performance in the region. Studies on Arab universities have highlighted the fact that these relatively recently established institutions work in very complex contexts, and that although their numbers are rapidly proliferating they face considerable challenges with regard to the quality

of their programmes, autonomy and governance (Mazawi, 2005; ElAmine, 2014; Al-Hroub, 2014). More specific studies on faculties of education clearly pointed to the fact that the Arab world in general suffers from weak professional development programs. Curricula in university faculties of education are not updated and do not emphasize innovation, critical thinking, reflection, research and problem solving. There is a weak link between theory and practice, and on-the-job CPD is very limited (Zaalouk, 2013). The situation is further aggravated by the low status and salary accorded to teachers (Farag, 2010; Herrara and Torres 2006).

During later stages of the joint initiative on teacher enhancement led by the LAS, UNICEF, and the Middle East Institute for Higher Education (MEIHE) at the American University in Cairo (AUC), there have been many positive achievements in terms of advocacy and the production of a guiding framework for teachers' professional development. Since 2008, the initiative has been developing the capacity of two regional centers of excellence to enhance the professional development of teachers: one in Egypt – the Professional Academy for Teachers (PAT) and one in Jordan – the Queen Rania Teachers' Academy (QRTA). The advocacy from the regional teacher initiative overwhelmingly led by LAS, UNICEF and MEIHE, has made teacher preparation and enhancement a priority in all countries in the region. Moreover, other agencies have joined the reform attempts. The World Bank has launched the Arab Regional Agenda for Improving Education Quality (ARAIEQ) in partnership with ALECSO, UNESCO, the World Economic Forum, INJAZ al-Arab (a regional NGO) and QRTA in 2012. One of the main pillars of the initiative is 'Teacher Policies and Professionalization'.

Reforms have been attempted, but many more efforts are clearly needed in the way of internationalization, cultural exchange and learning within borderless communities through the acquisition as well as the production of both explicit and tacit knowledge. In October 2012, the MEIHE was awarded a -36month project entitled "Capacity Development of Faculties of Education CDFE in International Approaches to Teacher Education" (Project number -530614TEMPUS--1-2012-1EG-TEMPUS-JPHES). The project (abbreviated to CDFE) focused on building the capacity of selected higher education institutions. It focused on learning from good practices from the European Union (EU) in three strategic areas: action research, practicum and Continued Professional Development. In so doing, the project harmonized pre-university with higher educational reforms. It aimed at making the work of faculties of education relevant and integral to school-based reform. Through a collaborative network between faculties of education in some EU countries and some selected partners in the MENA/Arab region, the project aimed at enhancing the capacities of faculties of education in the latter. The project essentially aimed at rendering university faculties of education relevant to school and society. The goal is to strengthen the partnership between universities and schools through the organization of practicum, action research and Continued Professional Development. Schools are social institutions constituting the work place of future teachers. Effective teacher recruitment, employment, deployment and retention should begin with quality practicum during teachers' university years, followed by strong mentorship and professional development programmes during the early induction years, and continued lifelong learning through research during the mature years of teaching. Learning resulting from this project feeds into two regional centers of excellence: the Queen Rania Teacher Academy in Jordan (QRTA) and the Professional Academy for Teachers in Egypt (PAT) for sustainable capacity building of higher education institutions across the region.

The project partners constituted a total of 14 institutions from the United Kingdom (3),

Sweden (1), Malta (1), Lebanon (2), Palestine (2), and Egypt (5). The following institutions were involved: The American University in Cairo as lead member; the University of Malta; the Institute of Education, now part of University College London; the Open University; the University of Leicester; Stockholm University; Université Saint Joseph; the American University of Beirut; Birzeit University; An Najah University, Assiut University; the University of Alexandria; Helwan University; and the Professional Academy for Teachers. The consortium of institutions in the partnership was carefully selected to ensure that expertise in all three strategic domains of intervention was covered. The University of Malta and several of the Egyptian universities who had begun some reform processes, such as the University of Alexandria and Helwan University, were chosen for their strength in the area of practicum. For Continued Professional Development, Leicester University, the Institute for Education in London and to some extent Bir Zeit University, An Najah University and Assiut University were selected. The Open University as well as Leicester University, the American University in Cairo, the American University of Beirut, and Université St. Joseph were selected for their expertise in the area of action research, while Stockholm University was chosen for its strengths in mentorship, educational research and documentation. Finally, partners such as the Professional Academy for Teachers (PAT) had a special status with the purpose of disseminating and sustaining results system-wide. The Queen Rania Teacher Academy in Jordan (QRTA) was also viewed as a complementary partner and an additional conduit for the dissemination of results. QRTA focuses on creating school networks; it performs activities aimed at sustainable continued professional development of teachers, the empowerment of novice teachers and the establishment of regional communities of learning, which will focus on teaching, evaluation, and the improvement of educational and learning processes. QRTA hosted a project called the Arab Regional Agenda for Improving Education

Quality (ARAIEQ), which supports and endorses policies related to professional development, and which is part of the Arab Coalition for education improvement. From a programmatic perspective, QRTA is diverse in its approach to programmes, responsive to research findings and allows for true participation from local and international partners. QRTA has a twinning arrangement with Teachers College, Columbia University. Meanwhile PAT's strategic directions, include: building partnerships with research and training institutions on the local, regional and international levels; reinforcing the bond between the Academy and faculties of education as well as research institutions and teacher professional development units within schools; providing capacity building to the teacher professional development units in schools; conducting training programs; and conducting action research within schools which will develop the teachers' research skills. PAT has managed relations with Cambridge University in the past and certain German higher education institutions as well as the General Teaching Council for Scotland.

The approach taken during the CDFE project was largely that of "internationalization", which I would like to distinguish from globalization in that the partners stressed the well-established tradition of international cooperation and mobility to enhance the quality of learning but were very careful to respect context and the individuality of nations. The learning was collaborative and respectful with a belief in education as a public good (de Wit, 2010). The project did not regard internationalization as an aim in itself but as a means through which to achieve reform and common developmental goals (Qiang, 2003). While globalization is the reflection of the hegemony and domination of a particular economic order which feeds largely on competition and disparity, internationalization in the context of this project allowed learning to be mutual and based on a two-way exchange of ideas. Moreover it did not focus on elite stakeholders, which would aggravate inequalities, but strived

to be highly inclusive, allowing students to learn alongside faculty during the various exchange visits and the entire journey, and institutions at the periphery of the periphery to learn alongside the more globally established ones. While contexts differ greatly between and within countries and schools, meaning that international collaboration was not without its tensions, the team members managed to create a community of learners that upheld the value of learning very highly, while they dealt with each other with the greatest of respect, reciprocity and fairness. Innovative and diverse forms of collaboration were established while safeguarding local concerns. This project truly affirmed the values of the internationalization of higher education and promises to make room for a new generation of global citizens able and willing to advance social and economic development for all and promote humanist ideals as distinct from the pure economic benefits sought by the proponents of globalization (Altbach and Knight, 2007; Hudzik, 2011; International Association for Universities, 2012). Working with the CDFE team was both a joy and an honour.

In the early stages of the project each of the partner institutions was required to go through a reflective self-assessment exercise to produce a baseline study reflecting where they stood with regard to school–university partnerships, how they organized and conducted their practicum and field learning experiences, what action research if any they were involved in, and finally, how they participated in offering and supporting continued professional development. Select institutions were then tasked with producing three analytical reports and a handbook on global good practices with regard to university school-partnerships, practicum, action research and continued professional development. From the early stages of the project it was clear that the method of "tracking measures" was being adopted as opposed to simple performance measures or indicators. The benchmarking was established from the start so that, through regular monitoring,

institutions could collect information on how they were faring on an ongoing basis and be measured against precise and explicit targets as outlined by the baseline and analytical reports (de Wit, 2010). The learning was further enhanced by a large mobility exchange set of programmes where country teams visited one another. This served many objectives amongst which was the transfer of tacit knowledge, cultural exchange and understanding, empathy, team building, and hands on experience. A total of 120 individuals were able to engage in North/South learning as well as South/South learning and enrichment. The programmes included lectures, discussions, exchanges, school and education institution visits. The exchange visits were always accompanied by reflection and assessment. In addition, institutions committed to developing their improvement plans as an iterative process following each visit and opportunity to learn. These plans were taken very seriously.

Mid-way through the life of the project a conference entitled "Transformations" was held in Cairo. It was at this point that it became apparent how seriously the Institutional Improvement Plans (IIP) were being taken and what a powerful community of learners and practitioners was being established. Each of the partners shed light on their learning journey and the steps actually implemented and the amount of mutual support, encouragement and collaboration was very impressive. Another important landmark was a strategic planning meeting between partners, which also took place in Cairo, during which the lessons learned in all three areas of focus were seen to be embedded in the potential regional centers of excellence PAT and QRTA for dissemination and sustainability. Again, these were moments of impressive collaboration, respect, generosity and commitment to global citizenship. Deliberations were multi-lingual and the learning multi-directional.

During the life of the project many groups within the broader team developed collaborative

research and published articles and papers about their findings. The initiative offered an empowering learning environment by creating mentoring relationships. It ensured that both faculties and schools become engaged in critical research methods. Qualitative research became more valued. Technology was introduced as a significant tool of capturing learning moments and relationships. Each participant from the south was equipped with video cameras to use, not just for regular documentation but for critical reflection and pedagogical reform. The initiative emphasized the value of action research and participatory training and workshops in school-based reform and in the potential relationships between schools and faculties of education. In specific situations new pedagogical relations between faculty members and school-teachers empowered both to reverse existing power relations and eliminate malaise between school and university. It encouraged faculty members to be more grounded in practice and school-teachers to be better framed and equipped with the kind of theoretical knowledge that would allow them to view their work in school in a broader societal context. The initiative offered plenty of space for dialogue, not only between faculty and school but also among various faculty members who were discovering one another in a new context for the first time even when they came from the same country or institution. Peer learning and dialogue were provided. At each juncture of the project, including annual management meetings, dialogue among all partners, as well as between faculty members and students during actual learning experiences was encouraged. These meetings marked significant planning and learning moments.

This second volume, produced by a collaborative effort of the CDFE team and entitled Building the Capacity of Faculties of Education: Case Studies of a TEMPUS Journey in Peer Learning and Transformations in Teacher Education, is divided into three parts, one each on Egypt, Lebanon, and Palestine. Each part addresses a number of

higher education institutions in turn: the part on Egypt covers five institutions, while Lebanon and Palestine cover two institutions each. The parts included in this volume are based on summaries of the complete case studies for each of the nine institutions included.

The most remarkable feature of the case studies presented is that they were carried out collaboratively in every possible way. During one of the management meetings the team agreed to a template for each of the studies. This template included a common section providing the national context for each of the three countries involved, background about each of the participating institutions, and, for each institution, a section on the lessons learned in the three areas of action research, continued professional development, and practicum. The latter encompassed the baseline as well as success stories of the learning journey, followed by a reflective account of the challenges encountered. Finally, each case study concluded with suggestions for ways forward in light of the CDFE project. The complete case studies provided substantial research pieces deserving to be published in their original form. This volume provides the reader with summaries of each of the case studies.

A review peer committee was established to provide structured comments to all the case studies and summaries. The review committee will be considered as editors to the volume. Editing support was also provided by Ms. Nadia Al-Naqib for which I am truly grateful.

The case studies were successfully completed despite cultural and language barriers. They depicted profound changes at all levels: the individual and personal; the institutional; and at the national and regional policy levels. Although the breadth and depth of the change varied among partners, all of them agreed that it had been an authentic learning journey. Those institutions that adhered to the improvement plan tool seriously,

appeared to have benefited the most and used the tool as an intervention in itself.

Most of the changes were clearly observed around the reform of the practicum. Institutions were moving towards the creation of clear guidelines for practicum; an increase in the period of field training and teaching; adherence to extended block placements in schools; and the strengthening of school–university partnerships. Assessment instruments were developed, and action research was incorporated into the practicum experience. Mentorship was being introduced to the practicum equation and finally, assessment measurements and tools were developed.

Action research was gradually being accepted and was observed to be taught at the graduate and undergraduate levels as part of research methodology courses. The area of least change was that of continued professional development. Although some very interesting progressive moves were introduced, such as the establishment of professional schools in some cases, this is still an area that will need more in the way of cultural transformation.

The transformations depicted in the case studies were made possible due to a number of factors. The most important were: the participation of deans and institutional leaders in all the project's phases; adherence to the improvement plans as an effective tool of reflection and transformation; the transfer of direct, clearly expressed and tacit knowledge during the well planned exchange visits, the project's strong collaborative ethos, entailing collective ownership of all its activities; the deep respect for diversity and profound cultural exchanges made possible through bilingual communication; the powerful impact of south to south exchanges for learning and peer support; the incremental sequencing of the various work packages and activities, which ensured that the learning was profound and sustainable. Many of the initiatives and activities undertaken found their

way up to the policy level, which help ensure that they are sustainable with high probability.

Various methods of recording the experiences were employed, such as the improvement plans, evaluation forms after every activity, the reports of every workshop and meeting, and the videos and photographs of all the exchanges and events. The various reports and audiovisual materials were incorporated into the volume in some fashion. Field work was also eminently conducted. It is worth mentioning that any of the photographs in both the first and second volumes were shot by the project participants and that permission to take the photographs was always obtained from the subjects themselves or the leaders of the institutions visited.

The Challenges encountered in the journey are only an invitation to future collaboration and sustained efforts towards aspired to transformations.

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List of Acronyms

AfDB .... African Development Bank
ANU .... An-Najah National University
AR .... Action Research
ARAS .... Action Research in All Schools' Project
ASU .... Assiut University
ASU-FOE ..... Faculty of Education at Assiut University
ATF .... Arab Thought Foundation
AU .... Alexandria University
AUB .... American University of Beirut
AUC .... American University in Cairo
BOT .... Board of Trustees ('stakeholder governance' group for schools)
BSc .... Bachelor of Science
BZU .... Birzeit University
CAPMAS ...... Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics
CAPES .... Certificat d'Aptitude pour l'Enseignement Secondaire
CCIMD .... Center for Curriculum and Instructional Materials Development
CDFE .... Capacity Development in Faculties of Education in International Approaches in Teacher Education (EU-funded TEMPUS Project)
CELRT .... Center for English Language Research and Teaching
CERD .... Centre for Educational Research and Development
CESDAU .... Center for Education for Sustainable Development (CESDAU)
CIA .... Central Intelligence Agency
CIQAP .... Continuous Improvement and Qualification for Accreditation Project
CTPD .... Continuous Teacher Professional Development
COP .... Communities of Practice
CPD .... Continuing Professional Development
CSR .... Cooperating School Representative
CV .... Curriculum vitae
DOE .... Department of Education
EBR .... Employment-based route
ECTS .... European Credit Transfer System
EFA .... Education for All
EdD .... Doctor of Education
EGP .... Egyptian Pound
ESC .... Educational Services Centre

ESD .... Education for sustainable development

ESP .... Education Support Program (Division of PAT)

EU .... European Union

FLDC .... Faculty and Leadership Development Center

FOE .... Faculty of Education

FSEdu .... Faculté des Sciences de l'Education

GDP .... Gross Domestic Product

GII .... Gender Inequality Index

GSE .... Graduate School of Education

HDI .... Human Development Index

HE/HEI .... Higher education/institution

ICDL .... International Computer Driving Licence

IDP .... Institutional Development Plan

IIP .... Institutional Improvement Plan (developed to support the work of the CDFE project)

ILE .... Institut Libanais d'Educateurs

INSET .... In-Service Education and Training

IOE .... Institute of Education, University of London

ISCED .... International Standard Classification of Education

ITE .... Initial Teacher Education

ITT .... Initial teacher training

LMD .... Licence-Master-Doctorat

MDG .... Millennium Development Goals

MEHE .... Ministry of Education and Higher Education

MEIHE .... Middle East Institute for Higher Education

MENA .... Middle-East and North Africa

MOE .... Ministry of Education

MOHE .... Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE)

MoEHE .... Ministry of Education and Higher Education

MPI .... Multidimensional Poverty Index

NAQAAE ..... National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education

NCEEE .... National Center for Exams and Education

NCERD .... National Center for Educational Research and Development

NGO .... Non-Governmental Organization

NIET .... National Institute of Education and Training

NQT .... Newly qualified teacher

OECD .... Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

P .... Practicum

PAT .... Professional Academy of Teachers

PD .... Professional Development

PG .... Practicum Guide

PGCE .... Postgraduate certificate of education

PhD .... Doctor of Philosophy

PLC .... Professional Learning Community

PLO .... Palestinian Liberation Organization

PNA .... Palestinian National Authority

PNUD .... (UNDP) United Nations Development Programme

PTC .... Teaching Committee

QTS .... Qualified Teacher status

RTTI .... Readiness to Teach Index

SCITT .... School-centred initial teacher training

SMEC .... Science and Mathematics Education Centre

STEM .... Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

SU .... Stockholm University

SUPI .... The Schools-Universities Partnership Initiative

TAMAM .... Tatweer Al-Mustanid ala Al-Madrassa

TEMPUS EU .. Transnational European Mobility Project for University Studies

TLC .... Teacher Learning Circles

TOT .... Training of Trainers

TP .... Teaching Practicum

TPD .... Teacher Professional Development

TOT .... Training of Trainers program

UCL .... University College, London

UK .... United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland)

UNDP .... United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO .... United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

UNESS .... United Nations Educational Support Strategy

UNICEF .... United Nations Children›s Fund

UNRWA .... United Nations Relief and Works Agency

US .... United States

USAID .... United States Agency for International Development

USJ .... Universite de Saint Joseph

UOM .... University of Malta

VLE .... Virtual Learning Environment

YMCA .... Young Men's Christian Association

01

EGYPT

CHAPTER (1)

EGYPT EDUCATIONAL
CONTEXT

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1. Egypt´s Development Context and Development Priorities

On 25 January 2011 a revolution broke out in Egypt to rectify what the Egyptian people perceived as rampant inequalities, corruption, stagnation and unemployment. The massive mobilization on Tahrir Square resulted in the downfall of the Mubarak regime, which was followed by numerous attempts to reach what the revolution strived to achieve, namely dignity, freedom, social justice and economic prosperity. A major landmark in that journey was the ratification of the 2014 constitution. Egypt ratified a new constitution by referendum in 2014, marking a positive development in several areas, including education and training. Within this framework, the Ministry of Education set out a new vision for education which states that:

The Ministry of Education (MOE) in Egypt is committed to providing high quality pre-university education for all as one of the basic rights of the Egyptian citizen. This is carried out in a decentralized system based on community participation. In addition, the MOE aims to prepare citizens for the knowledge society, especially in a new era based on democracy, justice and equal rights for all and a vision aspiring for the future[1].

One of the most important gains to the Egyptian education system accruing from the new constitution is the stated allocation of 4 percent of the Gross National Product (GNP) to the educational sector, which is supposed to gradually increase to comply with international standards. The constitution also makes provisions for investments in higher education in the order of 2 percent of GDP as a starting point and 1 percent for scientific research.

1.1 Egypt´s Development Context

The Arab Republic of Egypt is situated in the north-east of Africa and the Asian Sinai Peninsula, and borders on the Mediterranean and Red seas, the Gaza Strip, Palestine, Sudan and Libya. Most of the country is desert with less than four percent of its area comprised of arable land.

Egypt is one of the largest and most populous countries in Africa and the Arab world. Its annual population growth rate of 2–2.5 percent (see Figure 1), has resulted in a population some 60 percent of which is under 30 years of age (CAPMAS, 2014).

Figure 1: Population growth 2009-2013 (in millions)
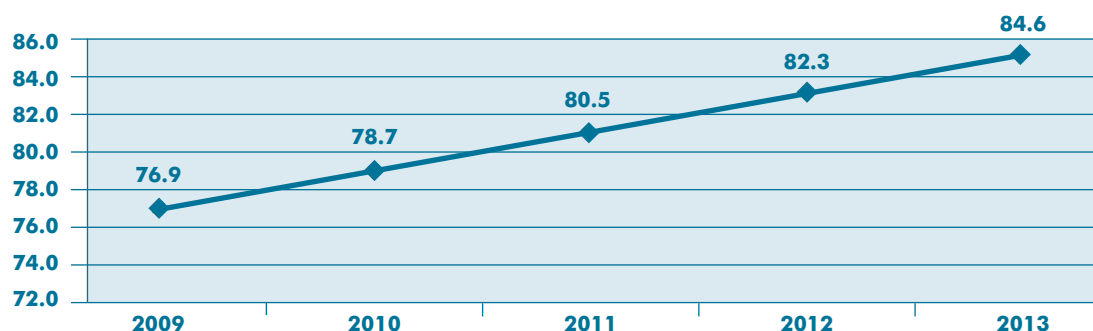
Source: (CAPMAS, 2014)

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(1) www.moe.gov.eg/

School in Egypt

More than 40 percent of Egyptians live in urban areas, mainly in Cairo and Alexandria (CAPMAS, 2014). Muslims constitute 90 percent of the population; approximately 9 percent of the population is Coptic Christian; and the remaining 1 percent is made up of other Christian denominations (CIA, 2015).

1.1.1 Political Governance

From the eighteenth century, Egypt was under the influence of European powers, mainly France and Britain. It officially became a British protectorate in 1914 and then a kingdom dependent on the British in 1922. After the 1952 Revolution, Egypt acquired full sovereignty and changed from a monarchy to a republic with an elected president and a bicameral legislature. Between 1981 and 2011 it was ruled autocratically by President Hosni Mubarak. He stepped down in 2011 following the eighteen-day uprising against his rule which began on 25 January 2011. General elections to the People's Assembly took place in late 2011 and were won by the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood and the Al-Nour Party affiliated to the Salafist movement. In the presidential elections that followed in June

2012, the FJP candidate Mohammad Morsi was elected president of Egypt, taking just over 50 percent of the vote compared to just under 50 percent for his rival Ahmad Shafik. However, widespread popular dissatisfaction with Morsi's rule led to his overthrow by the people of Egypt and the military in June 2013. Army chief Abdel Fattah al-Sisi was subsequently elected president of the republic a year later. Despite signs of economic progress, security remains a challenge in Egypt, particularly in the Sinai peninsula.

Egypt remains a state-based country, one characterized by a highly centralized form of government. It is divided into twenty-seven governorates and although responsibility for local development nominally lies with the governorates, the central government retains tight control over the local government system (UNESS Country Report, 2009).

1.1.2 Economic Growth

The Egyptian economy currently suffers from two major factors wrought by recent events: continued political instability following the January 2011 uprising and the slowdown in growth that has afflicted the world economy since the onset of the 2008 economic crisis. The January 2011 uprising and the ensuing political unrest severely affected the country's socioeconomic health, leading to inflation and a decline in foreign investments. The Egyptian economy depends mainly on services, agriculture, media, petroleum exports, and tourism, all of which were negatively impacted as a result of the uprising, particularly the tourism sector. Also affected were revenues from the Suez Canal, petroleum exports, and remittances from Egyptians working abroad due to both political instability and the global economic downturn (AfDB, OECD, UNDP, 2014). Economic growth has now been low for several years (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Changes in annual GDP growth[2]
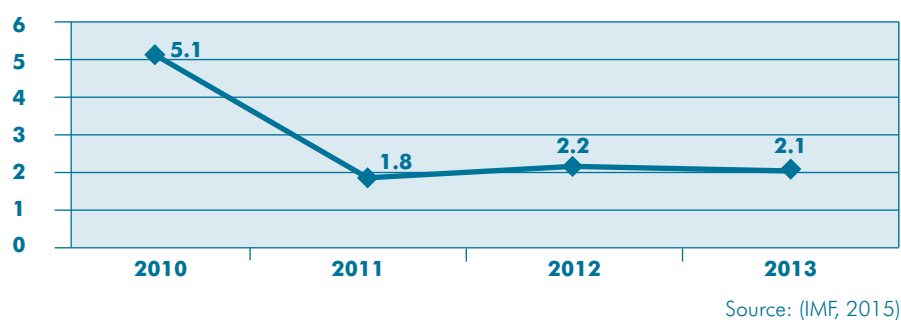
Many measures have been undertaken recently to foster a higher and more inclusive economic growth rate, including a reduction of energy subsidies and greater investment in infrastructure, especially schools and hospitals. Egypt´s 2014 constitution stresses the role of education and health in social and economic development and mandates increased public spending on these sectors to match international levels of expenditure. It is hoped that increased investment in human capital and infrastructure will help boost economic activity and provide more equal access to job and business opportunities for all.

1.1.3 Human Development

Egypt ranks 110 out of 187 countries in the 2014 Human Development Index (HDI), up from 112 in 2012. In addition to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) targets, other objectives in the long-term development vision already reflected in the 2005 Egyptian Human Development Report were to eradicate illiteracy, to accelerate the decline in fertility, to create new jobs, to eliminate the disparities in development between Upper and Lower Egypt, and the provision of potable water and adequate sanitation. Table 1 shows that there have been significant improvements since 2000 in life expectancy, in the expected and mean years of schooling, in GNI per capita, and in the HDI (UNDP, 2014).

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(2) Annual percentage growth rate of GDP at market prices based on constant local currency.

Table 1: Improvement of selected HDI indicators (2000–2013)

	Life Expectancy at Birth	Expected Years of Schooling	Mean Years of Schooling	GNI per capita (2011 PPP$)	HDI value
2000	68,6	11,9	4,7	7853	0,621
2005	69,5	12,3	5,5	8506	0,645
2010	70,5	13,0	6,4	10387	0,678
2011	70,7	13,0	6,4	10333	0,679
2012	70,9	13,0	6,4	10390	0,681
2013	71,2	13,0	6,4	10400	0,682

Source: (UNDP, 2014)

1.1.4 Poverty

Egypt's growing population continues to place a burden on limited resources. Based on the current population growth rate of 1.6 percent, the total population is expected to exceed 100 million by 2030. This poses numerous development challenges considering that 26.3 percent of Egyptians live below the poverty line (UNDP, 2015). The most vulnerable are children (age 0–17). In 2012–13, 9.2 million children were living in extreme poverty (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Individuals living in poverty (percent) 2012–2013[3]
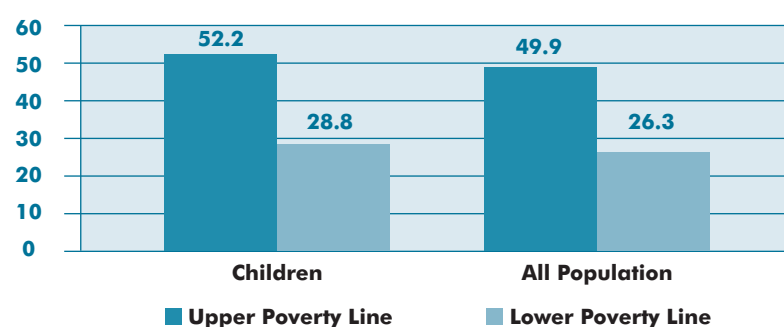
Source: CAPMAS, UNICEF Egypt (2015)

(3) The lower poverty line in 2013 was EGP 3920 per person per year (EPG 10,7 per day). The upper poverty line was EGP 5066 (EGP 19,9 per day) in 2013 according to in the Household Income, Expenditure and Consumption Survey carried out by CAPMAS.

Most of them live in the rural regions of Upper Egypt but urban governorates also account for a large number. These numbers reflect the country's prolonged economic stagnation since 2011. Poverty is related to the high rate of unemployment. The unemployment rate grew to 13.4 percent in 2013–14 from 9.2 percent in 2010 (see Figure 4). Unemployment is particularly high among women and youth. Approximately, one-sixth of youth in the labour market were unemployed (15.7 percent) in 2012, with the burden of unemployment falling particularly on young women and the highly educated. The unemployment rate among young females was more than five times that of young males in 2012: 38.1 percent versus 6.8 percent. Rates of youth unemployment also tend to rise with each additional level of educational attainment. In 2012, the youth unemployment rate was highest at the tertiary graduate level with 34 percent, compared to only 2.4 percent among youth who were educated to lower than primary level (Barsoum, Ramadan, and Mostafa, 2014).

Figure 4: Changes in unemployment rate[4] (2010-2015[5])

Source: IMF (2015)

Moreover, as the Human Development Report (UNDP, 2014) points out, income levels tell only one part of the story. The Multidimensional Poverty Index[6] (MPI) of Egypt shows us that individuals living above the poverty line may still suffer from deprivation in education, health and poor living conditions. In Egypt, 8,9 percent[7] of the population are multi-dimensionally poor while an additional 8,6 percent are at a level of near multidimensional poverty (UNDP, 2014). Further, the country's persistent regional divide reflects an alarming situation in Upper Egypt. The observed economic disparity between Lower and Upper Egypt can be explained by lower overall growth, slower rates of job creation, and higher population growth in Upper Egypt. The 2005 Egypt Human Development Report has already pointed at such a trend. The incidence of poverty in Upper Egypt was significantly higher than in other regions. Poverty and growth disparities reflected differential access to education, health and public services. There was a clear need for increased investments and efforts to address these regional disparities (UNESS Country Report, 2009).

Egypt´s future stability will remain challenged unless reforms and strategies are implemented to generate jobs to absorb the estimated 600,000 to 700,000 new entrants to the labor market annually and reduce unemployment rates (Barsoum, Ramadan, and Mostafa, 2014).

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(4) Percent of total labor force
(5) Estimated data by the International Monetary Fund for 2015
(6) The Multidimensional Poverty Index identifies multiple deprivations in the same households in education, health and living standards.
(7) Data refer to 2008

1.2 Egypt´s Development Priorities

When Abdel Fattah El-Sisi became president in June 2014, he announced a wide range of reforms, introducing new taxes, increasing selected taxes, and reducing energy subsidies. As a result of the reforms, economic growth is projected to almost double from its 2014 rate of 2.2 percent to 4 percent in 2015. The budget deficit is also expected to decline to 11.3 percent of GDP in 2015, compared to 12.8 percent in 2014, and 14 percent in 2013 (World Bank, 2015). Egypt has also benefited from large-scale exceptional financing from Arab Gulf states, namely Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait. These countries have committed around 20 billion USD to Egypt. In March 13–15, 2015, during the Egypt Economic Development Conference (EEDC), the Government outlined its economic reform programme, designed to restore fiscal stability and drive growth, and attract domestic and international investors across key sectors (World Bank, 2015).

2. Egypt´s Educational Context and Development Priorities

2.1 Egypt´s Educational Context

Egyptian society is young; the median age is about 25 (CIA, 2015). According to the Egyptian Census Egyptian children aged 0–14 number 27 million, putting about 17 million children at compulsory-education age (CAPMAS, 2014). This trend makes education a very urgent and crucial condition for the development of the country. Illiteracy, despite the continuous efforts of the state and multilateral international institutions, is still at a relatively high level; about 26 percent of Egyptians are illiterate (World Bank, 2015). For comparison: In 1985–1990, 56 percent of the population was illiterate (UIS, 2012). Thus, Egypt has achieved significant results in combating illiteracy to date.

Sources of knowledge and information have also improved much in recent years; for example more than one quarter of the population now has access to the internet (UNDP, 2015). The language of instruction at all levels of education is Arabic. However, language schools run by governmental and private education sectors offer the government curriculum in English, German, French or other languages. Policy-makers in Egypt have for some time realized the need to restructure the education system to make it more responsive to the needs of a growing population and a competitive economy. As a result, education has become one of the government's highest priorities, with reform attempted at all levels: primary and secondary education, Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), and higher education. Development and competitiveness dialogue is closely intertwined with educational development discussions and the role of employers in that process. This connection is reflected in national education policies and strategies, such as the TVET Reform Strategy, the Torino Process Policy document and the Higher Education Strategy (Amin , 2014).

2.1.1 The Egyptian Education System

Compulsory education lasts 9 years (the 6–15-years age group) and covers a two-cycle basic education: 6 years at the primary stage and 3 years at the preparatory stage. The latter stage can offer a general or vocational programme. The pre-primary level comprises nurseries and kindergartens. However, only kindergartens are considered a direct preparation for school education.

Secondary education including general, middle-level technical and vocational, lasts for 3 or 5 years depending on the level of technical education offered.

2.1.2 Educational Financing

The Egyptian state runs schools free of charge at all levels of education. According to the constitution, the basic education level is compulsory. In 2011–12, nearly 11 percent of total government expenditures were allocated to education, or around 52 billion EGP. In 2012–13 this expenditure increased to 12 percent, reaching 64 billion EGP (CAPMAS, 2014).

Although the expenditures are considerable and continuously increase, they are still not sufficient to satisfy the country's educational needs, whether qualitatively or quantitatively. The education sector's share of GDP is about 3 percent, which is quite low by international standards. The Global Education for All meeting in 2014 suggested that governments allocate 15–20 percent of their public expenditures to education (UNICEF, 2014). Therefore, donations of citizens and local foundations are also a notable source of supplementary funds for the development of school networks. Moreover, reforms and enhancements of the Egyptian school system are financially supported by a range of international agencies, including the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, Ford Foundation and USAID. There is also a large number of private institutions which provide their schools with their own sources of funds and/or fees from the parents.

2.1.3 Access to Basic and Pre-University Education

Egypt has one of the largest education and training systems in the MENA region and in the past few decades, the country has achieved significant progress in terms of educational enrolment; the total enrolment in pre university education is 17.7 million students, of whom 2.95 million are enrolled at secondary level, and where 55 percent of those enrolled at secondary level are in technical industrial, agricultural and commercial education (see Table 2). Egypt has also made great progress in closing the gap between male and female enrollment. Recent trends are shown in Figure 5.

Table 2: Schools and students at pre-university level by type and level of education (2011–2012)

Education Level	Schools	Enrolment		Total
		Male	Female	
Pre-primary	8,928	457,955	416,775	**874,730**
Primary	17,249	4,999,044	4,645,412	**9,644,456**
Preparatory	10,372	2,107,054	2,051,791	**4,158,845**
General Secondary	2,780	612,364	712,076	**1,324,440**
Industrial Secondary	924	530,628	306,424	**837,052**
Agricultural Secondary	185	137,127	32,607	**169,734**
Commercial Secondary	783	236,970	384,412	**621,382**
Community Schools	4,624	15,383	85,794	**101,177**
Schools for Disabled	882	23,501	13,707	**37,208**
Total	**46,727**	**9,120,026**	**8,648,998**	**17,769,024**

Source: (CAPMAS, 2014)

It is equally important to note that several attempts have been made to address both access and quality of education. Since its inception in 2003, the Egyptian School-Based Reform has served as a landmark in sustained concerted efforts to provide an education of quality for all. At the ministry level, Law No. 82/2006 established the National Authority for Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation (NAQAA). It targets important integrated quality areas, such as quality assurance processes and mechanisms including the development of standards and indicators, the development of national qualification frameworks as well as performing school and university accreditation. (Chinapah et al., 2009).

It should be noted, however, that despite efforts made to successfully reduce the gender gap in primary education there are still some 320,00 children out of school (UNICEF, 2014), and that the number of primary age girls who are out school is still greater than that for boys. Significant progress has been made over the years at the secondary education level. The gross and net enrolment ratios have been increasing steadily and the gender gaps have closed, as shown in Figure 6. In article no. 20 of the 2014 constitution, greater emphasis is given to technical and vocational education than in previous constitutions.

Higher Education

Higher education in Egypt dates back to 988 AD with the foundation of Al-Azhar University, which is regarded as the world's oldest university still in operation. Two main routes are available to students once they have passed their final secondary school examination – university education (whether public or private) or vocational training institutes

Higher education in Egypt has made remarkable progress. In 1952, there were only five universities in the country: Al-Azhar, three governmental and one private (the American University). Today, Egypt has 35 universities, 19 of which are public and the remainder private; 8 public technical colleges and 121 private higher institutes (Amin, 2014). Their total enrolment has reached some 1.8 million students as illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3: Student enrolment in higher education (2011–12)

Type of Institution	Number of Students Enrolled
Middle Technical Institutions (2012–13)	24,249
Higher Institutions (2012–13)	79,569
Public Universities	1,627,339
Private Universities	75,956
Total	**1,807,113**

Source: (Amin, 2014)

There is a rapidly growing demand for higher education as a result of demographic growth in the higher education age group; increasing access at the pre-university level; and the social image of higher education graduates. Moreover, enrolling in a higher education programme is often perceived as the only way to acquire the core skills necessary for the labor market as well as a higher income. These factors have resulted in a doubling of the gross enrolment rate over the last 25 years, especially between 1982–83 and 2002–03, when the gross enrolment ratio (GER) jumped from 16 percent to 24 percent for the 18–23 year age group, with 2.2 million students enrolled in higher education institutes. Another increase occurred between 2002–03 and 2006–07, when this number rose to 2.5 million students with a corresponding GER of 27.3 percent (EACEA, 2010). The GER[8] was 30 percent in 2012 (World Bank, 2015). Public expenditure on university education as a percentage of expenditure on education as a whole was 21.4 percent in 2011–12 and 2012–13 (CAPMAS, 2014). Male enrolment in governmental and private universities is higher than that for females (Figure 7).

Teacher Education

Primary school teachers must hold a qualification from a university faculty of education. Secondary school teachers are trained in university faculties of education (FOEs) for four years and in higher teacher-training colleges. Both preparatory and secondary level teachers follow the same course, which leads to a bachelor's degree. Graduates who hold a four-year university degree can also teach at secondary level after following a one-year postgraduate course at the faculty of education where they are awarded the General Diploma. Teachers of technical education are trained at special faculties. Higher education faculties are required to hold at least masters in the field of education.

2.1.4 Challenges in Education

Infrastructural Constraints

The investment in school infrastructure cannot keep pace with the rapid increase in numbers of the students resulting from a growing population. As a result, classrooms are overcrowded, often having 40–50 children (Figure 8). Such high classroom densities together with poor facilities are not conducive to learning. To manage such pressures, many schools operate in shifts with most students attending for just part of the school day (Loveluck, 2012).

Teaching Quality and Dependence on Private Tutors

A lack of qualified teachers also represents a problem for Egypt´s education system, and is coupled with the relatively low social and economic status awarded in Egypt to the teaching profession. The lack of good-quality state-provided schooling has led to the emergence of an informal educational sector, where private tutoring essentially fills the educational gaps left by the formal schooling system. CAPMAS suggests that over 60 percent of investments in education are spent on private tutoring (Osman, 2011). This leaves a large group of students marginalized, since students may not succeed at school if parents cannot afford the costs of private tutors. Private tutoring also affects teaching quality, as teachers in many cases reduce their efforts to accommodate the needs of students

Poor Teacher Preparation

A major constraint in Egypt is teacher preparation in faculties of education. Minor changes have occurred in teacher education programmes since 1952. The traditional programmes' structure is still dominant; the overall breakdown of programmes

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(8) The total enrollment in tertiary education (ISCED 5 and 6), regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the total population of the five-year age group following on from secondary school leaving.

is as follows: 20% pedagogy; 75% academic subjects; 5% languages. Curricula at universities are not updated and lack innovation, critical thinking, reflection and problem solving. According to the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study TIMMS, MOE results in 2010, around 68 % of pre-school and primary education teachers in Egypt were considered qualified (Zaalouk, 2014, p. 7). Moreover the culture of professional development and teacher preparation is weak and continuing professional development is very limited (Zaalouk, 2013, p. 213). Finally Egyptian teachers suffer from poor salaries and low social status.

Egypt´s teacher education reform was put on the agenda in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Global and national actors called for less theory, more practice-related content, more field-based experiences and the use of active-learning methods by professors and pre-service teachers. Major reform initiatives included the "Faculty of Education Enhancement Project" and the "FOEs Project (Ginsburg and Megahed, 2011). CDFE is a renewed and serious attempt to make a difference.

School in Egypt

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EGYPT

CHAPTER (2)

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
IN CAIRO

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The American University in Cairo
The Institutional Context

The American University in Cairo (AUC) was founded in 1919. Its establishment was inspired by the demand for teaching staff at pre-university American schools in Egypt. Hence, since its foundation, it has included a faculty of education and a faculty of arts and sciences. Although, the Faculty of Education (FOE) was discontinued in 1961 and degree-offering dropped, non-credit courses and contracted training programmes continued to be offered by the Center for Adult and Continuing Education, established in 1924. Today AUC is one of the leading private liberal arts universities in the region. It is an independent, nonprofit institution offering English-language professional undergraduate and graduate education to students from Egypt and abroad. The university's mission statement emphasizes the AUC's commitment to teaching and research of the highest quality and to the provision of an exceptional liberal arts and professional education in a cross-cultural environment.

The university offers programmes in a wide range of disciplines. It offers a total of 35 bachelor's degrees, 43 master´s degrees, and doctoral degrees in the applied sciences and engineering in addition to a wide range of graduate diplomas. In the United States, AUC is licensed to grant degrees and is incorporated by the State of Delaware[1]. The Egyptian and American faculty of AUC, research and outreach work make the university an important and influential element of the educational, social, and cultural life of Egypt and the Arab world.

In 2008, the university moved to its current purpose-built, state-of-the-art campus in New Cairo.

Overview of the AUC's Academic Programmes

Academic programme enrollments number at over 5,600 undergraduates and 1,280 graduate students (Fall 2014). Adult education serves more than 16,000 students per year in non-credit courses and contracted training courses through the School of Continuing Education (SCE). AUC students are mainly from Egypt while 7 percent of the students are nationals from around the world. The university awarded its first PhD degree in 2014. AUC is the first university in Egypt to have received accreditation from Egypt´s new National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Education (NAQAAE) at the institutional level. Many of the universities´ programmes have received specialized accreditation.

AUC provides education through its six schools: Liberal Arts; Business; Global Affairs and Public Policy; Humanities and Social Sciences; Science and Engineering; and the Graduate School of Education.

The Graduate School of Education

The Graduate School of Education (GSE) was formally authorized in 2009 by the American University in Cairo's Board of Trustees and the Egyptian Supreme Council of Universities. An overarching aim of AUC is to address educational challenges in Egypt and the Arab world through ongoing efforts for educational reform and to capitalize on new developments and best practices. This mandate has necessitated ongoing flexibility, a high degree of tolerance for change, innovative initiatives and constant negotiation with stakeholders.

The complexity of working within the academic context, and developing research and innovative outreach activities resulted in the creation of a

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(1) AUC operates within the framework of a 1975 protocol with the Egyptian government

number of initiatives to address these challenges. These include a graduate degree programme and non-degree, postgraduate offerings.

The graduate degree programme provides academic training, mentoring of students through involvement with faculty research, and exposure to the international academic community through conferences and internship opportunities. The non-degree, postgraduate offerings focus on providing professional development opportunities for practitioners – whether teachers or administrators – as well as individuals who are interested in developing new skills for a career in education through Professional Educator Diploma programmes. The Principals Academy, which started in 2011, addresses pressing issues for educational leaders, in addition to providing opportunities for networking with other educational leaders.

Professional Educator Diploma Programmes

The Professional Educator programme was piloted in 2007 and achieved a total enrolment of 620 in 2014/15. Students in the professional educator diploma programmes are enrolled in six areas:

- Teaching Early Years Learners
- Teaching Adolescent Learners
- Integrated Technology for Classroom Teachers
- Educational Leadership
- Education for Diverse Learners
- Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM)

The programmes include on average six courses each that cover theory and applied topics, with the exception of the diploma for educational leaders, which includes five courses. The courses can be completed within three semesters as a fast-track

option or in four semesters as a regular option. Students are awarded diplomas upon successful completion of all the courses.

International and Comparative Education MA Programme

Since its establishment in 2010, the Master of Arts (MA) in international and comparative education programme has been developing students' analytical skills for the understanding of the social, political and economic elements of education and to create graduates who can become agents of change for education at all levels. The programme currently enrolls 76 students and consists of six core subjects and four concentration areas. The core subjects include:

- Foundations of Educational Research
- Social Foundations of Education
- Introduction to International and Comparative Education
- Human Development and Learning Theories for Classroom Teachers
- Foundations of Instructional Practice for Classroom Teachers
- Capstone Project

Finally, students have to apply their skills and knowledge in a capstone project within their chosen concentration area. Students can select one of four concentration areas: Teaching and Learning, Educational Leadership, International Education Development or Policy and Higher Education. Courses within each concentration area include a variety of topics. Students have to take a minimum of two courses. Both the Teaching and Learning and the Educational Leadership concentrations offer a course on action research as a derivative of the CDFE TEMPUS project. The course equips students with knowledge

of research tools that can be used to improve teaching and learning in schools. Other courses across the concentration areas tackle issues that are critical for education today, for example, teacher recruitment and selection practices within different schooling systems in Egypt; effective communication among urban and rural school leaders; teacher perspectives on homework; citizenship education; art education in Egypt; dropout prevention in Cairo slums; and methods of evaluating teachers.

Principals Academy

The Principals Academy provides opportunities for school leaders to continuously develop their school leadership skills and enhance student outcomes. It has a two-tiered approach to educational leadership, with one tier devoted to supporting and strengthening practicing principals and a second tier devoted to the development of those aspiring to become principals.

The Middle East Institute of Higher Education (MEIHE)

MEIHE is a complementary institute of GSE and focuses on the development of teachers as empowered agents of change and on strengthening the links between pre-university education and higher education. MEIHE mediates between school-based reform and the reform of faculties of education. It addresses education on various levels, such as research, capacity development, coordination and institutional building. The institute is designed to be a research and knowledge hub for the intellectual and professional development of teachers in the MENA region through the organization of workshops and conferences and the implementation of research projects. It places great focus on partnerships with internal and external and global institutions and

the development of programmes that empower teachers to become agents of change through their continuous professional development.

MEIHE´s specific goals include (AUC, 2013):

- Creating knowledge around educational policy and practices, based on collaborative action research in education.
- Capacity building of other institutions for improving higher education, becoming a laboratory for innovative concepts such as outreach, mentorship, educational leadership and teacher professional development.
- Supporting the establishment of other centres of excellence in the region.
- Creating a research and cultural forum for the professional development of teachers in the region through seminars and workshops.
- Partnering with global institutions to develop programmes that empower the professional development of teachers.
- Internationalizing higher education with special reference to FOEs through coordination, linkages, twinning, collaborative research, standard setting and exchange programmes with other FOEs abroad.

Since its establishment, several agreements have been signed between MEIHE and other partners to facilitate teacher professional development, school-based reform and action research. For example, in 2011, MEIHE signed an agreement with the League of Arab States and UNICEF to focus on teacher professional development and building centres of excellence. The initiative strengthened the capacity of the Professional Academy for Teachers (PAT) and the Queen Rania Academy for Teachers (QRTA) to enhance teachers´ professional development. MEIHE also

signed a strategic agreement with the National Agency for Quality Assurance and Education Evaluation (NAQAEE).

MEIHE has also signed an agreement with the Save the Children organization in Egypt and secured funds for its ARAS (Action Research for Accredited Schools) initiative, which began in 2012. ARAS fits well within MEIHE's mission, namely to synergize the works of FOEs and schools. The institute´s aim has been to create a collaborative partnership between schools and FOEs for school-based reform. Equity and decentralization are central to Egypt´s strategic plan for the improvement of pre-university education. Around 4,000 schools have been accredited so far by NAQAEE out of a total of 47,000 schools. The accreditation was based on the self-evaluations of schools and the production of improvement plans. The objective of the ARAS has been to conduct a collaborative action research on a sample of accredited schools to identify the issues that schools have been dealing with since their accreditation. At a later stage of the project, the scope has been expanded to include all schools. The strategic objectives of the project include the development of synergies and partnerships between FOEs and schools, capacity development of FOEs with an emphasis on graduate programmes, strengthening school-based reform and the establishment of quality assurance units in schools. ARAS has strengthened MEIHE´s partnership with the Egyptian Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education and allowed for a close collaboration with schools and FOEs.

Moving beyond regional borders, MEIHE pursued partnerships with regional and European Union universities. In October 2012, MEIHE was awarded the TEMPUS grant for three years. The project aims at developing the capacity of FOEs in international approaches to teacher education and involves 14 partner universities from the region and EU countries. Research conducted in countries of the League of Arab States (LAS) since

2006 indicates that FOEs have much work to do in terms of teacher preparation, the curriculum and pedagogy. There has been an absence of a standard-based integrated vision relevant to the needs of schools and children. Graduates of FOEs receive limited and poor practical training, and the time spent in the FOEs does not allow pre-service teachers to have any kind of organized and extensive exposure to school life. Also, the studies pointed out another gap, namely the lack of institutional educational research and particularly, action research that would support school-based reforms and improvements.

Capacity Development of Faculties of Education in International Approaches to Teacher Education (CDFE)

The TEMPUS project aims to build the capacity of selected FOEs and higher education institutions in the MENA region by introducing them to international good practices from the EU and MENA in three strategic areas: practicum, continued professional development of teachers and action research.

The following sections on practicum, continued professional development and action research capture the learning experiences and outcomes in these three strategic areas of CDFE.

Practicum

The practicum experience is an immersion in classroom life that provides prospective teachers with opportunities to develop new understandings of the dimensions of teaching. The role of the supervisors, and the ways in which they interact with student teachers, is an important aspect of this process. In the case of AUC, practicum is included exclusively in the diploma programmes designed for continued professional development.

Participants in the diploma programmes in Teaching Early Years Learners, Adolescent Learners and STEAM tracks have school-based supervised teaching practice and fieldwork for one term. During supervised teaching, a mentor supports the students, systematically observes them in the school setting and provides them with constructive feedback. There is also a facilitator who helps the students foster a so-called Critical Friendship Group, and each student needs to conduct peer observation sessions as well. These activities are then documented in a standardized way. Finally, the course is completed with an oral group discussion and a written reflection by each of the students. These focus on how the supervised teaching practice has had an impact on classroom and professional activities.

Participants in the Educational Leadership Diploma undertake a longer, two-term, school-based internship. It starts with the development and implementation of an internship plan that will include the activities students will be involved in. Possible activities include chairing standing committees or special task forces, coordinating school-level initiatives, submitting planning proposals at school level, monitoring, analyzing and reporting student outcomes, participating in school-parent-community groups and related outreach efforts, supervising teachers and others, and addressing school effectiveness and equity of access and outcomes. The supervised fieldwork courses have the following grades: exceeds expectations, meets expectations and doesn´t meet expectations.

Transformation through Learning Experiences on Practicum

In 2013, as part of the TEMPUS CDFE project, a baseline study was conducted on the views and expectations of participants in the diploma programmes. The survey results clearly indicated that the supervised teaching practice has been a crucial element of students´ studies and provided them with the opportunity to apply what they have learned theoretically. This is well reflected in the following opinions of students on practicum/internship:

"The Internship course this semester was a great course; the best, as the number of activities were made less and the instructor was considerate and took us through the process step by step."

"Yes, the supervised fieldwork we covered in the diploma programme did improve my teaching. I learned a lot observing others teach as well as from the feedback I got from my observers. I used what I learned from this course with my teachers at work as well."

Opinions also highlighted the fact that the relationship with schools was not institutionalized but rather, established informally by the diploma instructors who visited the schools where the students were carrying out their teaching practicum. Thus, establishing an institutional partnership between GSE, government authorities and schools was a main focus for development. There were also suggestions to have instructors spend more time in the field with students:

"If the School of Continuing Education could formally approach schools on how to ensure the implementation of new techniques and methodologies; and how to assist graduates in putting new skills and knowledge into practice on their respective campuses – or at inter-school level – this would further expand the benefits of these diplomas, i.e., provide some kind of after-training service to schools, especially those schools where many teachers have completed the courses and possesses the know-how."

"About 21 teachers from my school took the diploma (different specializations) and the enthusiastic teachers have improved their teaching performance; teachers in Educational Leadership led an initiative to redefine school mission and vision. I personally conducted Critical Friendship Groups in my department in Middle School and shared and implemented many of the techniques and methodologies learned in the diploma with my staff."
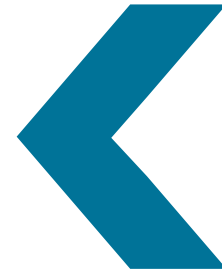
Students recommended that establishing and maintaining institutional partnerships with schools would strengthen the diploma practicum for teachers and internships for leaders and also promote a mutually beneficial relationship between the GSE and schools. Some students remarked on the use of English as the only language of instruction in the programmes, since this excludes many Egyptian educators.

Throughout the CDFE project, faculty members benefited from international visits and interactions with project partners as well. Common challenges were explored, such as, for example, the limited availability of resources at schools, logistical and administrative challenges in the organization of practicum, professional standards that are in danger of being ignored due to extreme teacher shortages, as well as the high ratio of students to supervisors. Also, the practicum is often too short and there is a lack of integration between schools and universities at several institutions. Another major challenge is the gap and tension between theory and practice, i.e., the academic and the practical aspects of teaching. Reflective practice can bridge this gap.

In this regard, AUC has taken its cue from the University of Malta, where there is a systematic and theoretically informed observation approach that bridges theory, practice and research through authentic learning situations. Reflective practice is a major part of the practicum. For example, evaluation booklets are used, which keep track of the student teachers´ development based on the year in which the student is enrolled.

Also, micro-teaching and reflective seminars were brought in as examples to improve the links between theory and practice. In terms of assessment, participants highlighted good practices, such as gradually increasing student teachers' responsibilities towards more independent instruction, as practiced at Stockholm University (SU). At SU, practicum takes place over 4 years and is handled by school-based mentors and faculty supervisors. Here, a digital administrative tool for placement allows faculty to track the progress of their student teachers and to geographically identify their placement in schools.

AUC faculty members concluded that more observation sessions are essential in the diploma programmes and that the culture of continuous self-reflection of students during the practicum period should be nurtured. Also, a larger pool of mentors on practicum is necessary, and clear and well-structured criteria for mentors and mentorship need to be established. AUC has been pursuing the development of partnerships with schools and the creation of a community of practitioners for some time. Hence, borrowing some ideas from Malta, such as setting the criteria for teacher assessment and the structure of the practicum visits with the active involvement of both the schools and the MOE, seemed useful.

The exchange visits and stakeholder inputs on practicum allowed AUC to develop a better understanding of what can be introduced and supported at partnering FOEs in Egypt. Since the baseline study, improvements in new materials, and new structures have been developed, and new practices introduced, for example, teaching evaluation booklets were designed for the diploma students and piloted in 2014. In 2014–2015 AUC implemented a database for students in order to follow their progress and identify their geographical placement in schools.

AUC is also determined to develop partnerships between schools and AUC through advocacy. Several memorandums of understanding (MOU) have been signed during 2014 with various schools.

Continued Professional Development (CPD)

CPD is provided at AUC through the Professional Educator Diploma (PED) programmes, at the Principals Academy, at the School of Continuing Education (SCE) and at the Center of Learning and Teaching (CLT).

The PED programmes are designed for educators, school owners, government supervisors and nongovernmental organization educators who wish to improve themselves and their schools. Many participants are also seeking to change careers and teach with their professional degree. Students enrolled in PED programmes come from diverse backgrounds, which enriches classroom discussions and discoveries.

In the Principals Academy, participants are trained through seminars, workshops, conferences and networking and use their experiences to move their schools forward and to enhance their students' performance. The programme combines the academic focus of educational leadership with a strong research component and builds a strong network of school leaders.

The School of Continuing Education (SCE) and the Center for Learning and Teaching (CLT) offer a variety of programmes for professional development and collaborate with the GSE in serving educators in Egypt and the Middle East. The SCE offers educational and skill-development programmes and courses including certificate programmes, noncredit term-length courses and variable-length customized courses to fulfil

the continuing education needs of individuals and organizations in Egypt and the Middle East. These are provided through nine group offerings: Career and Skills Development, Language Enhancement, Translation Diplomas, IT and Computer, Teacher Training, Art and Culture, Youth, Tailor-Made Programmes, and Evaluation Testing and Assessment.

CLT promotes excellence in teaching, including the effective application of technology to the teaching and learning process. The centre provides a variety of programmes, services, workshops and lectures, including orientation for new faculty, a bi-weekly newsletter, instructional design consultations, and the Student Technology Assistant programme, which provides one-to-one training and support for faculty who want to innovate their teaching through the use of diverse instructional technologies. CLT is also a strong advocate of academic integrity on campus and contributes to its enhancement by administering a plagiarism detection software, as well as conducting dedicated workshops for both faculty and students.

Transformation through Learning Experiences on CPD

The TEMPUS baseline study captured PED students´ perceptions, views and suggestions on CPD and revealed that students in the programmes were generally satisfied with the courses. The programmes offer many good practices that students can employ in the classrooms and schools, such as the use of reflective journals, peer conferencing, critical friendship groups and the relationship with colleagues and faculty that in some cases was described as a mentoring one.

However, participants also voiced feedback on how the diploma programmes could be improved. They also raised the concern that the use of English as the only language of instruction excluded many Egyptian educators from the CPD programmes. Some participants suggested improvements to teaching and learning strategies and recommended more homogeneous class groups composed of participants with similar professional experiences, school backgrounds and levels of English proficiency. Moreover, irregular class schedules that were often not communicated to students as well as an excessive number of participants per class was remarked on by some interviewees. Nonetheless, all participants said that they would recommend the diploma programmes to their colleagues and they described their experiences as useful and enjoyable:
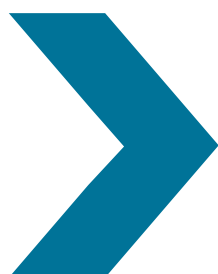
"I have encouraged all my colleagues to enroll in this diploma as I found it most useful and enjoyable. Our instructors were all very supportive, encouraging and understanding. The classes, projects and assigned readings were all informative and practical. It was a great learning experience." (AUC, 2013)

School in Scotland

Similarly, participants in the Principals Academy workshops reported positive learning experiences. They found that the collaborative work with a diverse group of leaders had provided them with valuable opportunities for cultural and knowledge exchange. They also raised the issue of English as the only language of instruction as well as the lack of marketing of the programme.

Faculty members benefited from international visits and interactions with project partners on CPD. They have, for example, attended a great number of lectures in the UK on various forms of continued Professional Development CPD including lectures on mentoring, coaching and human rights in education, online CPD and school-based CPD and its monitoring. Faculty were exposed to a new technology called "IRIS" for CPD in schools and attended a lecture on aims-based curricula relevant to the current debate of curriculum change in the UK. They were also introduced to the various forms of CPD, such as the Postgraduate Certification in Education (PGCE), Teach First, BA in Education, School Direct, graduate teacher programmes, registered teacher training and the Overseas Trained Teacher Programme. They highlighted learning experiences, such as the use of innovative methods in school-based CPD through learning walks, observations, corridor talks, networks, coaching, mentoring and school exchanges. Faculty members also learnt during their visits of innovative CPD projects, such as team and peer networking, sabbaticals, online courses, drama, and dance and outdoor courses. Moreover, participants learned how mentoring is conducted in schools and universities. Mentors in the UK context, for example, play an important role in the development and training of novice teachers. They have specific skills to support teachers' self-learning and reflection and provide advice:

In Sweden, participants learned about the recent national programme on CPD called "Lärarlyftet" for the enhancement of teachers, which is run by various universities with a great emphasis on mathematics. Participants explored partnership institutions for CPD during their visits and learnt that most teachers and school principals in Sweden were supported and educated through courses at the university, particularly on mentorship, and a great part of CPD is school-based.

While some of the lessons from international contexts can be adapted to the local Egyptian context, others are not suitable or more challenging. Teaching online is, for example, a common means of CPD at the Institute of Education (IOE) at the University of London. This form of teaching is challenging in the Egyptian context, as such courses are not yet fully recognized. Although the MOE does equate education degrees from online programmes with those obtained through regular programmes, the cultural preference is for the latter. At AUC this is changing, as there is a growing number of online components in the courses on offer, although the extent of their use is still far less than that in the UK. As a practical outcome of the CDFE project, AUC submitted a proposal to the Egyptian British Society for the implementation of a modular blended, school-based CPD approach in partnership with Cairo University.

Similarly, mentoring is a relatively new and innovative concept for public schools in Egypt, but despite this, it has been well accepted within the framework of the Action Research for Accredited Schools (ARAS) project. This project aims to create partnerships between FOEs and schools, which has been a challenging issue, especially because FOEs fall under the Ministry of Higher Education, while schools fall under the Ministry of Education. Collaboration between these two ministries is therefore a prerequisite for effective partnerships between schools and FOEs. More information on ARAS is provided in the chapter on action research.

AUC faculty commented that the implementation of innovative approaches to CPD (corridor talks, learning walks, action research and so on) might meet some resistance at FOEs, since such approaches encourage students to become agents of change, who in turn might challenge current approaches and systems. Resistance could be encountered at school level too and for the same reason. This could be overcome with the help of mentorship for students, to help them defuse what resistance they may encounter to their work and initiatives.

An important improvement has been the introduction of training for PED instructors through yearly retreats that provide professional

development on various topics such as plagiarism, research and the use of educational tools or allow instructors to share their syllabuses and teaching experiences.

Another area of improvement is the use of the appreciative inquiry process for CPD. This approach has a strong focus on what is working in an educational context, it thus highlights the strengths of a particular community of learners, understands what empowers people most and attempts to scale and mainstream the approach. This method of inquiry relies heavily on participant voice and a high sense of ownership for any success. Professional development programmes also need to be appropriate to the schools' community and culture and to accommodate the needs of the students. The above-mentioned problem of English-language-only instruction has been addressed by having both Arabic and English speakers participate in the courses while presentations are translated into Arabic. Some leadership seminars are conducted entirely in Arabic.

AUC faculty members felt that the innovative approaches learned through the exchange visits could be instrumental in advocating for school-based reform and teacher professional development in Egypt. The good practices learned could be used for the benefit of all stakeholders, such as the relevant ministries, FOEs and schools. Furthermore, they also agreed that it was necessary to promote a culture of mentorship at FOEs in Egypt, including AUC, and to advocate for strong FOE-school partnerships:

"Bridging the gap between universities and schools is a core objective of this project. Hence, piloting partnerships with schools is an essential step for further collaboration. In addition, the creation of a well-thought and structured mentorship is a central objective for the American University in Cairo. Building the foundation for it, beginning with the different aspects of the practicum experience, is highly important. Moreover, improving the position of AUC to allow it to offer national institutions and schools a country-wide blended CPD programme could constitute a revolution in the country´s reform endeavors."

Thus, the AUC's strategic improvement objectives focus greatly on various aspects of and approaches to mentorship (see "Introduction of a Mentorship Programme at AUC led by MEIHE" below).

Action Research

Action research has been a point of focus at AUC since January 2012 when the MEIHE started the Action Research on Accredited Schools- later to become Action Research for All Schools- (ARAS) initiative for a period of 3 years. It contributed to MEIHE´s desired vision of serving as a hub for educational research, innovation, transformation and institution building, with a focus on academies, FOEs and schools. The initiative also strives to contribute to policy-making through evidence-based research:
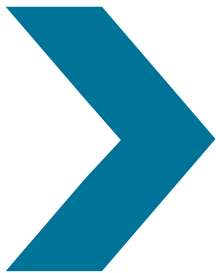
"Strengthening the tradition of action research in Egypt as a means of bringing about change, fostering evidence-based policy making, strengthening university civic engagement, professional development and school-based reform and building the capacity of the Professional Academy of Teachers." (MEIHE, 2015)

The ARAS and TEMPUS projects are mutually supportive initiatives and the synergies between them have been conducive to the enhancement of action research at AUC. TEMPUS defines action research as a process that assists educators in assessing needs, documenting the steps of inquiry, analyzing data and making informed decisions that can lead to desired outcomes. Educational practitioners are increasingly responsible for making decisions in schools and they are being held accountable for student achievement results. Through action research, practitioners can address issues in the school context and make a change.

Action research relies on a collaborative effort among teachers, supervisors and researchers to improve learning environments. It is instrumental for the continuing process of professional development where teachers not only pose questions but also seek their own solutions. There are therefore close links between action research, CPD and practicum. Action research is centered on the idea that teachers and practitioners in schools should be enabled to grow in their professions and to acquire knowledge that is necessary for the advancement of their practice. Action research seeks to democratize relations between stakeholders and embrace transformation in academia through collaborations among teaching staff, students, and other stakeholders.

ARAS has passed through several phases of implementation. First, MEIHE established important partnerships with the Supreme Council of Universities, the MOE, PAT, NAQAAE and four other FOEs. In the pilot phase, which began in November 2012, a training programme was offered to participants from Assiut, Aswan, Helwan and Minya. This was preceded by the design of the research framework. In the first expansion phase, in April 2013, an additional five governorates were targeted. Funding organizations such as Save the Children and Ford Foundation entered as partners into the project and this synergy proved to be extremely fruitful due to the focus on wide target groups.

One target group of ARAS was graduate students (both PhD and MA). They were selected from the participating faculties and offered training to conduct action research in their own governorates. Students spent six months observing, participating, and assessing performance at the schools in close collaboration with local communities, school administrators, teachers and students. They collaboratively identified prevailing problems and offered practical solutions as well as tested the appropriateness of their application. Finally, students have used the results of their collaborative efforts and reflections on their experiences of problem identification and solution for research towards the attainment of either a master's degree in education or a PhD from their various faculties. The project has also been very successful on the policy level where both ministries of higher education and pre-university education willingly adopted this approach.

Transformation through Learning Experiences on Action Research

Action research workshops brought together the expertise of educational practitioners and the grounded theoretical background of the academics. Teachers, school leaders, heads of educational directorates and academics worked together on the most pressing issues faced by schools in Egypt. This approach strengthened the partnership and synergies between FOEs and schools under the ambit of the MOE and had a positive impact on participants' learning experiences.

The transformation and satisfaction of trainees were evidenced in daily assessments of the training workshops (MEIHE b, 2015). Participants commonly remarked on their experiences as follows:
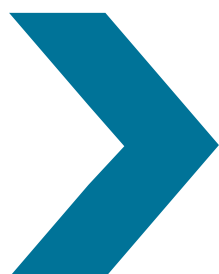
"I became another person after the ARAS training workshop."

"With minimum resources we can still improve our educational institutions and develop the teaching and learning techniques."

"I liked the interaction between trainers and trainees; they were more like mentors. It was a real professional development experience."

Reports also give accounts of some difficulties encountered. For example, theses supervisors were in several cases not supportive, or unaware of action research technicalities. Others were not convinced of the impact of action research on educational reform. Thus, it was also imperative to reach this group, as one interviewee explained:

"Because there is a huge resistance in the Egyptian FOEs, they believe that action research is an inferior form of research, . . . they think it is only to be used for professional development. It should only be used by professors or teachers at schools who try to improve their practice. So we had to raise the awareness of faculty and thesis supervisors on the importance of Action Reserach ." (Zaalouk, 2015)

AUC faculty members benefited from international visits and interactions with project partners on action research in the CDFE project as well. Through the international exchange visit to Stockholm University, they became inspired by the ideas of lesson study and learning study techniques to be used in action research training. The concept of lesson study describes a model for teachers to reflect on their own teaching practices. A group of teachers work together to plan and analyze teaching during one lesson.

School in Scotland

A lesson study cycle typically includes two or more versions of the same lesson. First, teachers design a lesson together. Next, one of the teachers teaches the lesson while the others observe and take notes of what is happening in the classroom and among the students. Finally, the teachers discuss and revise the lesson based on the observations. Another teacher then teaches the new, revised lesson and again, the others observe. After the class, the teacher group reflects on and discusses the lesson and the results are shared with colleagues in reports or in open lessons. Learning study is another version of the lesson study and includes three or four versions of a lesson in the cycle of planning, execution and evaluation. The difference between the two study methods is that in a learning study, teachers use theories of learning and variations theory as tools with which to plan and analyze teaching and learning. The concepts of learning study and lesson study have been successfully integrated into the ARAS project training material.

Moreover, the MA programme in International and Comparative Education has started a new course on action research as of the spring of 2015. The course has been leading students into a self-reflective systemic inquiry on their own practice. It identifies and teaches four types of action research: collaborative, critical, classroom and participatory. Students explore and use core concepts and findings from action research literature and design an action research project including identification, selection and application of data collection and analysis methods. Students in the course also keep an action research journal of reflections and observations in their educational settings and participate in an online community of practice.

Introduction of a Mentorship Programme at AUC led by MEIHE

The most significant outcomes of the CDFE project have been the birth of a university-wide mentorship programme initiative that is later to be rolled out to other universities and schools in Egypt and the region. As the first step, AUC would like to expand the initial areas of the CDFE project and implement a comprehensive and effective mentoring system with institution-wide programmes. The concept of mentorship is strongly related to the improvement of the three strategic areas of the CDFE TEMPUS project – practicum, CPD and action research. MEIHE refers to mentorship as a reciprocal voluntary, professional, emotional and personal relationship between a mentor and a mentee that results in the acquisition of knowledge, the advancement of the mentee's career, networking, professional development and role modeling. It provides the mentee with emotional, psychological and intellectual support from an experienced and knowledgeable person.

The introduction of the mentoring system at AUC is especially important in light of the re-location of the university's campus in 2008 from downtown Cairo to the suburban New Cairo, which resulted in the loss of the previously tight campus community owing to the long commuting times required to and from the New Cairo campus.

Mentorship can assist in the socialization process of new faculty and affording faculty members emotional support, especially if they feel lonely or alienated. Thus, the aim of the initiative is to encourage departments to immerse their newcomers in support programmes and provide them with a sense of community. In order to be effective, a successful mentorship programme requires administrative support, structures and policies to facilitate it. It is also important that it is incentivized and recognized in some ways, for example in faculty annual reporting forums or through formal acknowledgement of best mentors on an annual basis.

AUC plans to develop and implement the institution-wide mentorship programme over a period of four years. The initiative was catalyzed and led by MEIHE, however, it will involve the Center of Teaching and Learning (CLT), and the Provost's Office, which is also the focal department for the mentorship programme. The clients will include faculty, tenure track professors, new professors of practice, adjunct instructors and academic leaders. The implementation plan has four stages: conceptualization, design and development, implementation, and evaluation.

Currently, AUC is in the phase of conceptualizing the programme and conducting baseline studies and surveys. One survey conducted in 2015 among selected AUC faculty revealed that most of their departments had informal mentorship systems in place, while a few respondents indicated that they had both formal and informal systems in place. These systems most commonly involve students in graduate programmes and faculty who guide them through their thesis writing process in the final year. One department mentioned the availability of collective mentoring in the form of brown bag seminars and various intradepartmental clubs that involve both faculty and students. Another respondent indicated the availability of an informal mentoring system where each new faculty member meets an assigned mentor, who introduces them to the practical components of AUC teaching requirements, including research, research grants, conferences, syllabuses, resources, teaching and learning tips, and shares his or her experiences with their mentee. For new faculty there is a mentoring review after their first year of service whereby the chair of the relevant department assesses the situation.

Respondents emphasized the importance of identifying who exactly needed mentorship and who should be a mentor. Everyone has different mentorship needs and one solution does not fit all. By the same token, departments have varying needs and it is therefore reasonable to assume that a single mentoring system will not work across all departments.

A very important aspect emphasized by respondents was that mentorship should not be based on hierarchical relations but on a collegial atmosphere and an egalitarian culture. In fact, some were concerned about the challenges of implementing a mentorship system in what is a traditionally hierarchical environment and emphasized that it requires a change in culture and mindsets. Another respondent mentioned that senior faculty members shied away from training new faculty members on modern teaching tools and practices since they were reluctant to admit that they were unfamiliar with them.

Moreover, central to mentorship is a strong human connection that cannot be forced, which was why one respondent recommended the creation of institutionalized structures that encourage mentorship, instead of forcing people to participate in mentoring. Brown bag lunches, clubs and events that bring together people with common interests can enable the creation of such connections.

Finally, most respondents agreed that incentives were necessary to engage faculty in mentorship activities and that not only mentors but mentees may require incentives as well. Incentives can include allowances for mentors, exemption from certain teaching or administrative tasks or career promotion.

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01
EGYPT

CHAPTER (3)

ASSIUT UNIVERSITY
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Institutional Context

Established in 1957, Assiut University (ASU) was the first university in Upper Egypt. Today, it offers programmes through 16 faculties and institutes in science, engineering, agriculture, medicine, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, commerce, education, law, physical education, nursing, special education, social services, arts, and information and communication technologies. It also runs the South Egypt Cancer Institute, a hospital, a veterinary hospital and 80 acres of farms (Assiut University, 2014).

The current number of registered students is 69,478. ASU grants diplomas, master's and PhD degrees at graduate level. Currently, 2,925 graduates are registered for diplomas, 2,058 for master´s degrees and 1,373 for PhDs. The university has so far accomplished a great number of research projects (188) in a variety of fields, of which 59 dealt with higher education development. Other research projects cover agriculture, environmental protection, industrial development, economy, and architecture (Assiut University, 2014).

The Faculty of Education

The College of Education in Assiut was established in 1957 by the Ministry of Education, initially with just two faculties: one each for male and female teachers. Teachers were trained to teach science, mathematics, English and French for preparatory and secondary schools. The college was affiliated to the Ministry of Higher Education from 1961 until 1966, when it became part of the university as the Faculty of Education (FOE). Today, the FOE offers bachelor's, master's, PhD and diploma programmes in Arabic (Assiut University, 2015).

The FOE´s current strategy addresses the development of graduate programmes and the encouragement of both student participation in scientific innovation and a strong relationship between scientific research and community service. As one of its distinctive roles, the FOE is committed to community service and the development of the surrounding environment in Upper Egypt. Through the Center for Public Service it offers a wide range of services, such as counselling, training programmes for graduates and professional development courses and programmes in educational leadership. In order to provide solutions to practical issues in education and improve practices, the FOE has been carrying out studies and research that have greatly contributed to the development of the education system in the province of Assiut. The FOE also issues a scientific journal semi-annually to disseminate research results (Assiut University, 2014).

The FOE has grown immensely since its establishment. Its first cohort of graduates, in the academic year 1960/1961, numbered just six students, who graduated from three different departments. At present, there are more than 2,700 undergraduate and over 8,300 post-graduate students (Assiut University, 2014) and they are enrolled in 14 departments.

The organizational structure of the FOE consists of an academic and an administrative system under the leadership of the Dean, who is assisted by the Vice-Dean for Education and Student Affairs, the Vice-Dean for Graduate Studies and Research, and the Deputy Dean for Community and Environmental Development. The academic structure incorporates the faculty board and the boards of four academic departments.

Overview of Academic Programmes

According to its mission, the FOE seeks to achieve educational leadership and excellence in preparing professional, creative and highly qualified teachers who can successfully keep abreast of technological developments and recent trends in education. It aims to be a centre that promotes educational, scientific and technological knowledge and research as well as their application in teaching and learning. The work at the FOE is structured in four departments (Assiut University, 2014):

- Department of Curriculum and Teaching Methods
- Department of Educational Foundations
- Department of Educational Psychology and Mental Health
- Department of Child Education

Undergraduate Programmes

The FOE offers 16 educational programmes at undergraduate level:

- Arabic language teacher of Islamic Studies
- Social studies
- Geography
- Social studies: history
- Biological and geological sciences
- Psychology
- French
- English
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Mathematics
- Kindergarten teacher preparation
- Basic education mathematics teacher

- Basic education and Arabic language teacher
- Basic education and teacher preparation materials and social programme
- Basic education and science teacher
- Basic education, English teacher

Graduate programmes

The FOE offers the following educational programmes at graduate level:

- General Education Diploma programme, one year full-time study
- General Education Diploma programme, two years for education professionals
- Professional Diploma in Education programme for holders of an educational qualification or General Education Diploma.
- Special Diploma in Education programme for holders of a Professional Diploma in Education
- Master's programme in education for holders of a Special Diploma in Education.

The General Diploma in Education aims at preparing students who have graduated from non-educational colleges to work as teachers in the stages of pre-university education. The Professional Diploma prepares graduates of colleges of education in a specialization of disciplines. Special diplomas in education are available in specializations such as Foundations of Education, Comparative Education and Educational Administration, Curricula and Teaching Methods, Educational Psychology, Mental Health and Child-Rearing. The Special Diploma programmes prepare students in the basics of educational research in the disciplines of the education department and they are also an entry requirement for the master's degree.

School in Scotland

PhD in Education Programme

Assiut University grants doctoral degrees in education in the following specializations:

- Foundations of education
- Comparative education and educational administration
- Curricula and teaching methods
- Educational psychology
- Mental health
- Child-rearing

Specialized Centres

A wide array of educational services is offered for local and regional communities through the specialized units and educational centres of the FOE. These are presented briefly below.

The Centre of Special Education

Through Professional Diploma courses, this centre prepares graduates who can effectively communicate with people with special needs. It also provides services in designing e-learning for special education in schools and universities, including e-learning software and professional e-testing services. Therapy services and guidance for disabled people are available through psychiatrists and staff members who are specialized in psychology and psychiatry. Through its printing services in Braille the centre also provides books to other universities and social institutions.

Educational and Psychological Research Centre

Since its establishment in 2007, the centre has provided educational and psychological therapy for all ages. It offers career advice to students, while counselling services in clinical, pedagogical, marital, family, youth and special needs therapy are available as well. The centre manages symposiums and scientific conferences locally and regionally and promotes research in the field. Subdivisions include therapy provision, training, media relations, research, and master and doctoral thesis supervision.

Its training unit provides a great variety of specialist training for working with the mentally disabled, autists, and the deaf and blind. There are courses that deal with speech therapy, learning disabilities, behavioral disorders, intelligence assessment, talent discovery, and so on. In research-related courses, students can learn the use of statistical methods for data analysis in psychological, educational, and social research by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences SPSS software. The unit also holds symposiums on adolescents, autism and learning disabilities, and speech therapy among other subjects.

Talent Centre

The mission of the Talent Centre is twofold: (1) to prepare trained experts who can successfully discover talented children; and (2) to train a new generation of trainers who are equipped with knowledge on scientific developments in this domain. The centre provides training to psychiatrists on contemporary psychological testing and measurements with a special focus on fourth and fifth grade students. It aspires to prepare a team of psychiatrists to implement programmes for primary students.

International Cooperation Unit

The International Cooperation Unit promotes international relationships in the field of education, coordinates agreements for scientific collaboration, manages scholarships, and promotes sabbaticals and the exchange of researchers. Recently, it has also been looking into opportunities to publish a scientific journal in the field of education and social research.

Community and Environmental Services Unit

This unit offers courses in information technologies, languages and teacher skills development among others.

International Computer Driving License (ICDL)

The course teaches in- and pre-service teachers how to search for and use new information sources for skills development. Successful graduates receive a certificate, which is necessary for teacher promotion and a condition for the awarding of master's and doctoral degrees. The centre has provided 25 courses since its establishment.

English/French Language Skills

The courses aim to support both in- and pre-service teachers in keeping up with the latest developments in the field of language. Successful graduates receive a certificate. So far 15 courses have been provided.

Training Courses for Teachers of Science and Mathematics in English

Since the FOE's programmes are conducted primarily in Arabic, the aim of these courses is to develop the skills of mathematics and science teachers to become specialists in teaching their subjects in English. The centre trains graduate teachers for two months through specific programmes that lead to a certificate, which is the condition for employment at private language schools and experimental schools. The centre has so far provided 10 courses since its establishment.

The centre also promotes lifelong learning and raises awareness of students and staff about their role in community service. Their role is to form associations with the local community, governmental, non-governmental institutions and international organizations.

Information Technology (IT) Center

Since its creation in 2013, the IT Center has created an e-library, implemented a website for e-learning courses and designed courses on Instructional Technology for students. Currently, there are 24 e-courses available in the field of education and psychology. Online courses in the field of education are available in areas such as Building Foundations of the Curriculum, Computer Education, Education Media and Technology, Programming, Documentation of Educational Research, Technologies for Learning and Application in the Curriculum, etc. (Assiut University, 2015). The centre also provides support for technology-enhanced teaching and trains staff on the use of technological tools in education and is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the technology infrastructure, the administrative information system at the FOE, email communication and the faculty's electronic portal.

The TEMPUS CDFE Project

Consistent with its strategic objectives, the FOE has become involved in the TEMPUS project on "Capacity Development of Faculties of Education in International Approaches to Teacher Education" (hereafter, CDFE). The project aims to build the capacity of selected FOE and higher education institutions in the MENA region by introducing them to international good practices from the EU and MENA in three strategic areas: practicum, continued professional development of teachers and action research.

The following sections capture the variety of learning experiences and important outcomes in these three strategic areas. It builds on official documents of the university, project reports, exchange visits, conferences, workshops and improvement plans. The exchange visit reports are based on the observations and learning experiences of the FOE representatives at the Université Saint Joseph (USJ), the American University of Beirut (AUB), the University of Malta (UOM), Stockholm University (SU), and the Institute of Education (IOE) at London University. Furthermore, the study captures personal accounts about the journey undertaken by the project members and the FOE. It draws upon discussions and group interviews with the ASU-CDFE project members and stakeholders at the FOE, undergraduate students, in-service teachers in graduate courses as well as school leaders, school teachers and students at four schools in Assiut.

Practicum at the FOE

"Teaching practice is considered the core of educational preparation through which a teacher practices his/her role, tests his/her abilities and ensures adequate performance. It is the true and realistic test of the academic courses studied. There must be a real practical training where students can experiment with the ideas they have studied and relate theory to practice" (fourth-year student, FOE).

Practicum at the FOE is organized for pre-service teachers in undergraduate courses during the third and fourth years of study. Students are assigned in groups of 6 to 8 for a full school day per week of practice in secondary schools. During their second year, they gain experience in micro-teaching sessions, which prepares them for a forthcoming methodology course and practice teaching.

When conducting practicum, students are supported by an academic and a school supervisor, who provides professional guidance and assesses the teaching process. The role of the school supervisor is threefold: 1) to provide regular, on-site observation of student performance; 2) to help students develop lesson plans with an activity-based approach; and 3) to assess student performance based on pre-established teacher performance standards and to engage with the students regarding their teaching experience and their progress. The academic supervisor regularly visits his/her assigned schools and ensures that the practicum is going according to plan. He or she discusses the problems students have encountered and suggests ways to overcome the obstacles. The school administration deals with any problems that might hinder the practicum process and presents monthly progress reports on pre-service teachers in the schools.

For the assessment of practicum, school supervisors can award 40 points on a 100-point scale for acquired skills, lesson planning, presentation and evaluation. School principals assess students on a 20-point scale; the basis of the evaluation is student participation in school activities and school examinations. Academic supervisors participate in the evaluation of the student performance with 40 points.

When selecting the schools, the FOE opts for accredited schools with a large student base and experience in supervising. However, the big number of practicum students makes it necessary to allocate students to non-accredited schools as well.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Lessons learned throughout the CDFE project were rich and mostly connected to the practicum structure, supervisor´s skill development, the

connection of theory and practice, assessment and the use of technologies as well as the collaboration of the FOE with schools.

Intensification of Practicum

As practicum is a principal component in the preparation for the teaching profession, the time assigned for practicum should allow sufficient immersion in the school life and practical teaching. However, the recent increase in the numbers of students in teacher training programmes has placed great pressure on the FOE in terms of distribution, coordination, supervision and evaluation (University of Assiut, Faculty of Education, 2013). Students, staff and CDFE project members highlighted challenges in this regard and pointed to the need to intensify the practicum experience of pre-service students. Some practicum students at the FOE expressed it as follows:

"When we go to schools, unfortunately we practice teaching for half an hour . . . we have to practice teaching for the whole day to benefit from going to school.

The number of student teachers in each group in the practical training does not allow (us) to have enough experience. We can reduce the number of student teachers in a group to have more opportunities to teach."

Students´ need for an intense practicum experience was also expressed in their written reflections on their experiences. The analysis of these reflections shows that the time allocated for practicum was a frequently raised issue.

Experiences at the American University of Beirut (AUB) and the University of Malta (UOM) were inspiring to the FOE in this regard. Both institutions divide practicum into two stages. Even in their

first academic year students begin to observe the work of school teachers, take notes and analyze the teaching. During the second stage, students prepare lesson plans themselves and discuss them with the supervising class teacher, colleagues and university supervisor before conducting teaching. One CDFE project member remarked:
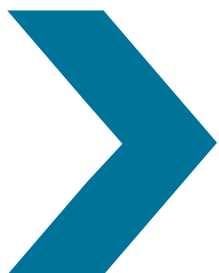
"One of the bright things in Malta is that the practicum starts already from the start, when the student is enrolled. But here [the FOE], it starts in the third year. It would be very beneficial if we started from the beginning because they will become teachers and they should be practising from the beginning."

One important observation from the exchange visit at AUB/UOM also stressed that during practicum, pre-service teachers are perceived not merely as students but as essential and full members of the schools who contribute to the work of the school in all areas. At AUB, practicum is extended even to master's and doctoral students who have practicum in their specializations.

Another important observation from the exchange visit at the University of Malta (UOM) was that students spend a whole semester of practicum at a school joined by their academic supervisor. The relationship between the supervisor and students at UOM is a very close one:
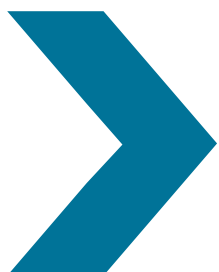
"We observed that there are many good points in the practicum in Malta. Every student goes for a whole semester continuously with the supervisor from the faculty and this supervisor attends with the student all the time. But it is different in Egypt. In Malta, the classes are small. So what we can do is to divide the students in smaller group"
(CDFE member at the FOE).

Improving Supervision

Another crucial component of the practicum is the quality of the guidance and support that students receive from academic and school supervisors. CDFE project members stressed that the monitoring of students' practicum by their academic supervisors has been limited and that the practicum benefited students very little. (University of Assiut, Faculty of Education, 2013). Similarly, some students said that they had difficulty trusting their school supervisors because they felt that they lacked preparation and knowledge or they maintained too tight a control, which prevented them from developing their own teaching style. Moreover, the connection between the theory and practice of teaching, that is, between course contents and real-life situations, should be stronger.

The provision of competency and skill development for supervisors, which is the practice at Université Saint Joseph (USJ), served as a model for the FOE. USJ offers diplomas on educational supervision, and graduates of the programmes are entitled to advise and supervise in teaching. In the same way, accounts of the exchange visits have also pinpointed the necessity of identifying the roles of the schools and the academic supervisors in the practicum process.

Another component of a successful practicum learning experience is the opportunity to share and discuss issues and challenges student teachers face in the schools. The importance of creating learning communities for students was highlighted by the CDFE team. For example, students at USJ have set up a Facebook page where they share their practicum experiences. A faculty member described a similar approach he observed at the IOE in London, noting that learning communities are also useful for bridging the gap between theory and practice:

"Personally, I benefited from this project by linking the theoretical part in the teaching method course with the practical aspects in practicum and prepared a Facebook page for presenting theories, strategies and videos."

Another approach to connecting theory to practice was seen at AUB, where microteaching is strongly linked to practicum. During microteaching sessions students create certain teaching designs. Later, when in the field, they practice and further develop the designs based on their real-life experiences. The improvement plan of the FOE embraces this approach and emphasizes the need to foster school-based practices.

To increase the quality of supervision, further recommendations have included the establishment of a diploma programme for educational supervision and the definition of criteria for the selection of educational supervisors.

Use of Technology and Modern Teaching Methods

Several practicum student respondents indicated that they would like to use more technology at the university and in schools to make teaching more engaging. The need for good-quality, up-to-date teaching materials and techniques were stressed. Teaching should focus more on activities instead of rote learning; it should involve conversation, communication and be centered on students. This matter is especially relevant in light of the problem of overcrowding in classrooms in Egypt, which sometimes hold as many as 50–60 children per class, presenting a real challenge to many student teachers.

Stockholm University (SU) offered ideas on how to use technology to enhance the management of practicum with the use of online services:

"In Sweden we saw how technology is used for practicum like registering online and doing things online through the website. We imitated this and so we have it now on our website as well. Students can register, have an ID and password and can attend group lectures, which physically include massive numbers. They can now attend them online" (CDFE project member)

Assessment of Practicum

The main learning outcomes of the CDFE project at ASU are also connected to the assessment of practicum. Most importantly, the idea of a student portfolio was highlighted. One of the faculty members explained his experiences from the visits:

"I liked the idea of assigning a certain portfolio, a technique for follow-up and assessment. Each student teacher has a portfolio and he or she does all formalities during the school day, as if s/he is a real teacher. At the same time it is not necessary to have supervisors monitoring them all the time; through reviewing the portfolio they can see how things are going."

The portfolio documents include the experiences of student teachers as well as the reports of the school and the academic supervisors. This could be an e-portfolio as well, as seen at UOM. During practicum, the class teachers provide an evaluation of the student performance, while the university teacher uses a so-called observation card to assess the students. The observation cards break down the teaching process into measureable components and items, such as classroom management, teaching strategies, and personality traits, as explained by one of the FOE members who participated in the CDFE project:

"It is a balanced way of assessment that doesn't neglect any parts or components of teaching. I am fascinated by the way this is implemented. I have

noticed that there are many aspects, underlying items, specific details that can be measureable, for example, classroom management, strategies of teaching, assessment, personality traits. These aspects include many concrete items. Currently we are trying to develop a form similar to it and issue it by the practicum unit in our faculty of education."

Accounts of the exchange visits by other CDFE project members also recommended the introduction of other types of assessments of the practicum – peer evaluation and self-assessment:

"I have seen it in Lebanon that the teacher takes them (student teachers) in the classroom and they present the material, then the teacher discusses the material with them. The teacher is just leading the session and students evaluate themselves."

"As a result of our visits and our observations of teaching practices we strongly suggest that student teachers should be taught how to assess him or herself and others with co-participants and colleagues."

Transforming Practicum

The FOE has set comprehensive goals for reforming practicum, based on the rich learning experiences of the CDFE project, which are formulated in a final improvement plan on practicum.

Improving the Learning Environment

Reform initiatives on practicum specifically address the practical orientation of some of the undergraduate courses and the development of teaching and learning processes. Particularly, courses such as Educational Psychology, Teaching Methodology, Educational Technology, and Curriculum Planning and Design need to be

based on real classroom examples, practices and school-based activities. The FOE is adopting and actively promoting new approaches for learning such as lifelong learning, online learning, blended learning, inquiry-based learning, reflection and collaborative learning. These practices include more engaging learning approaches and frameworks that link theory to practice and engage prospective teachers in relevant teaching-learning activities. As the first step towards these objectives, the FOE has started to build an encouraging learning environment, including effective use of existing facilities, such as software programmes for presentation, online communication and encouraging learning communities.

Connecting Students with Web 2.0

A direct outcome of the learning experiences of the CDFE project has been the establishment of Online Communities of Practice (COP) using Web 2.0 tools such as Facebook. The community includes English specialists and language lovers who have already studied or are currently studying English as a foreign language at the FOE. The main goal is to reinforce and foster English language learning through the exchange of knowledge, useful learning strategies and practices, which should eventually improve mastery of the English language. Another COP is organized through a blog where students reflect on and share their experiences and practice their digital literacy skills. The current number of members engaged in the forums is 89.

Online Information System for Practicum Students

Another important reform that emerged from the CDFE project is the implementation of a website where students can register for practicum. The online platform allows them to check their score distribution, the names of their assigned supervisors and the location of their practicum schools. The system makes it possible for students to select the schools in which they would like to have their training practice, thereby cutting down on their commuting times. At the Department of Curriculum and Methods of Teaching, students can now also access and attend a variety of lectures online, which is important in view of their large numbers.

Improving Funding and Strengthening Partnership with MOE

The CDFE project members at ASU see the need to increase the hours assigned for teaching practicum, while they also point out that changes in the current practicum system require funding and a change in regulations. Most notably, the lack of funding for the change of the practicum programme was mentioned, partly attributable to the increasing numbers of students. The remuneration of supervising teachers at schools is an obvious challenge, as current funds are scarce. The reform plan aims to increase the practicum incentives for supervising teachers at schools. Funding issues can be solved by the reallocation of resources or by attracting additional funding from the EU and other sources. It is important to note that, in addition to financial limitations, there is also resistance from some teachers and supervisors to the introduction of a new practicum system. One concrete outcome of the project has been a research proposal on developing practicum in Egypt put together by the FOE to be submitted jointly with Stockholm University to the Swedish Research Council. The improvement of supervision is in the pipeline, as the FOE strives to introduce standard-based supervision procedures at schools and university alike.

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The improvements, as envisioned in the CDFE project, require, first and foremost, a new protocol between ASU and MOE (Assiut University, Faculty of Education, 2014). Therefore, ASU-FOE is working on strengthening its partnership both with MOE and with schools.

Continued Professional Development (CPD) at the FOE

Continuing Professional Development CPD for teachers at the FOE is offered in the form of intensive training sessions for teacher career advancement. Courses are provided at the Public Service Center at the FOE and cover International Computer Driving License (ICDL), English and French language skills, and training for science teachers and mathematics teachers in English. These are intensive short courses that are carried out under the supervision of specialist professors.

The FOE also provides graduate level courses that require the availability of an undergraduate diploma in education. These include General Education Diploma programmes, Professional and Special Diploma programmes and master's courses. Students who take these courses are practicing teachers or other education stakeholders who wish to improve their knowledge in a chosen field.

The FOE also seeks to expand the ways in which CPD is presented and delivered, to include online learning and blended learning formats.

Both pupils in schools and students in university said that they would like to have teaching that is engaging, and hence updated with technologies and new content. They pointed out that they would like to see a more balanced evaluation of their skills and less focus on written exams, increased communication and closer relations with their teachers, assessment of thinking skills, and the use of practical learning materials.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

International experiences of CPD as observed by the CDFE team have been stimulating for the FOE in many ways, especially in approaches to creating strong partnerships between university and schools and providing comprehensive training programmes for career advancement.

University-school Partnerships

CPD at IOE provided a good example for ASU of a strong university–school partnership. The strong ties enable real-life practices to find their way back to university and inform CPD courses. Learning can take many forms, both informal and formal. One ASU project member expressed his experiences this way:

"In London, they call it Continued Professional Development (CPD) and not Teacher Professional Development (TPD). This is a very important point. We learned that it is a partnership with the schools

and university. And therefore school practices can be cycled back to university or the education institution to inform the courses and the teaching process. The other thing is that schools can be completely responsible for CPD. Also we learned that formal discussions and conversations between teachers have a very important role in CPD. Informal conversations too, in the break time and in informal meetings are as important. Everybody is sharing their experiences."

The activation of CPD units at schools in Egypt would help strengthen the links between the FOE and the schools. While schools have already established CPD units, these need to become more active and engaged in CPD activities.

Comprehensive Training Programmes for Teachers and School Leaders

Another important outcome of the international exchanges was the idea of establishing a designated CPD unit at the FOE to cater for teachers, school leaders and other education professionals. Inspired by international experiences, the FOE seeks to establish a matrix of training programmes that would form the requirements for teacher appointment and promotion. Furthermore, summer conferences could deal with various issues of teaching and learning and the use of technology in education. Programmes should also include a diploma for educational supervision and a diploma specifically for school principals as is the case in the CDFE participating universities in Lebanon.

The FOE envisions that the selection of school leaders in future will require the attainment of a specialized diploma, rather than teaching experience alone. The FOE has a department for education administration, but it is teachers who are enrolled in its courses and there is currently no legal requirement for a school leadership diploma.

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Transformation of Professional Development

A great number of improvement areas for CPD have been identified by the CDFE team. Many of these are significant changes in comparison to current practices and require a long-term plan as well as strong collaboration between the FOE, the MOE and schools.

Forming Strong Partnerships between the FOE, MOE and Schools

One of the most important focus areas of the CDFE project has been the building of strong partnerships with educational stakeholders. There are already great examples of these emerging partnerships. The FOE´s efforts resulted in lectures at the ASU delivered by school principals and other education practitioners. This proved to be an excellent way of fostering the relationship between school and university and bridging the gap between theory and practice. Other examples include the provision of CPD for educational administrators and MOE professionals on a yearly basis with the involvement of schools, and the partnership between the FOE and a language school in training teachers and parents.

E-learning for CPD: Technology for Teaching and Learning

The FOE has already introduced 24 e-courses for its students since 2013, including one for CPD. The course is entitled "Educational Technology and Its Application in the Curriculum" and addresses educational supervisors. It introduces the participants to technological teaching aids, their use in solving educational issues as well as the modern role of the teacher in technology-enhanced classrooms. Moreover, participants can acquire skills in designing and producing contemporary teaching aids, learn about the use of audio and video materials in teaching, computers, internet and e-learning.

Currently, new courses are being designed, and will be available for educational stakeholders. Further reform initiatives aim to expand CPD with specialized training programmes in different subject areas to incorporate modern teaching approaches, methods and techniques. The FOE plans to announce awards and prizes for outstanding teaching performance and encourage teachers´ CPD.

Action Research at the FOE

Action research relies on a collaborative effort of teachers, supervisors and researchers to improve learning environments. It is instrumental to the continuing process of professional development, where teachers not only pose questions but also seek their own solutions. Action research is centered on the idea that teachers and practitioners in schools should be enabled to grow in their professions and to acquire knowledge that is necessary for the advancement of their practice. On a similar note, graduate students need to develop a new practice for both individual and institutional transformation. Action research seeks to democratize relations and embrace transformation in academia through collaborations that embrace teaching staff, students, parents and other stakeholders. Thus, there is a close link between action research, CPD and practicum.

The FOE sees the significance of action research in its capacity to inform policy makers about actual situations, challenges and achievements and to support the implementation of policies for improved teaching-learning in schools:

"Usually, all of our research depends or relies on classical approaches and produces books in the library just for other researcher to carry on. But it has never solved a problem and decision makers never come back to us and consult us about changing policies. Policy makers have no connection to us and therefore the only way is to conduct practice oriented research to make people understand that we have tangible problems and tangible direct result" (Senior Faculty, CDFE project team member).

"We have top-down processes, policy makers imposing things upon us; the other way around is not implemented. So we need to inform them, write reports and inform them about real practices in the schools. Based on this, they can improve the curriculum design, educational policies and give financial support based on the request" (Junior faculty, CDFE project member).

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Discussions with the project members and in-service teachers have revealed some challenges in introducing action research at the FOE. There is a strong orientation towards experimental design at the FOE and action research is a departure from the prevailing research approaches. As one young faculty and CDFE project member said:

"Here, teachers need a practice-oriented approach, smaller scale studies that they can conduct within their schools to improve their practices and performance and to set certain standards for learning and to improve the whole learning process. We need practical studies and

we try to compare these with our traditional experimental design. And we discovered that action research is completely different from experimental design because it is practice- and problem-oriented and it´s about sorting out real classroom problems. It´s about teachers´ practices inside of schools. This is about teachers as researchers and this is a new concept."

Due to its cyclical nature, this form of research can be time-consuming. Yet another challenge is the idea of co-participation, which requires changes in mindsets:

"In action research you have co-participants. It is completely different, very unusual and hard to change it within a year or so because we have a long tradition of experimental design, especially in the curriculum department" (CDFE project member).

"While working on this approach we found many issues in the college itself, because our mentality is still experimentally oriented. To change the design is very difficult for some professors. Because it includes many cycles of experimentation, evaluation, re-designing, these many cycles may be exhausting to researchers. Therefore, we are thinking about a certain model or adapted model of action research. We have presented a paper on this refined model based on the Egyptian context" (CDFE project member).

During a group discussion, master's students currently conducting action research as part of their studies at the FOE through the Action Research for All schools (ARAS) project led by the Middle East Institute for Higher Education (MEIHE) at the American University in Cairo (AUC), pointed out the issue of school teachers' workload and their consequent reluctance to join the research projects. Some students see that providing some kind of incentive to participating school teachers could be helpful. Others overcome

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this by scheduling meetings and using the time available in teachers' schedules and other project stakeholders to coordinate their work well in advance. Coordination with school heads is also important for gaining access to resources and obtaining the required administrative support.

Transformation of Action Research

The improvement plan of the FOE (Assiut University, Faculty of Education, 2014) addresses the need to introduce action research to its departments; while the strategic plan at the FOE stresses that there should be a stronger orientation towards using practice-oriented research approaches such as action research.

Research Seminars

The CDFE project team members were much inspired by their experience in Malta. UOM provides action research symposiums and meetings for faculty, researchers, and teachers where they explain the research paradigm and discuss implementation in schools. Similarly, the FOE will hold research seminars at their departments to introduce new approaches and provide hands-on examples of them. As few researchers are working on action research projects currently, it is important that they have the opportunity to share their ideas and experiences with others.

Integration of Action Research in Practicum, Master's and Doctoral Programmes

Students are already being introduced to basic research design in their second year of undergraduate studies during microteaching courses. They learn how to identify a research problem, phrase research questions, and assign research objectives. They are therefore equipped with a basic idea of how to identify problems in their teaching by the time they go on to practicum in their third and fourth years.

Action research has also become part of CPD in master's programmes at the FOE, where in the service teachers acquire required skills to implement action research to solve their schools' problems. As the FOE is currently updating its internal regulations, it is also considering making action research a requirement for graduation.

This would mean that graduate students at the FOE would have to complete an action research project in order to receive their diplomas.

Another direct impact of the CDFE project has been the introduction of action research in a doctoral course called "Research Issues and Concepts" at the FOE. There are currently 21 students enrolled in this course.

Research Journal

The FOE plans to launch a new research journal in the field of education and action research to disseminate action research results produced by faculty and schools. The journal will be launched following approval by the new FOE administration.

Action Research in Schools

While the action research approach is still a relatively new one in the schools visited by the CDFE team, examples show that there is an emerging interest in finding practical solutions to issues and in improving teaching-learning processes through action research. One school leader said that she was supportive of highly motivated teachers conducting action research and was prepared to provide extra resources (specifically, time) for that purpose. Some of the school teachers in the same school said that they would like to work more closely with the FOE on action research, while another teacher has already conducted research that focuses on educational leadership issues.

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EGYPT

CHAPTER (4)

ALEXANDRIA UNIVERSITY

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Institutional Context

In 1938 the nucleus of Alexandria University, then known as Farouk University, was established in the form of two faculties – the arts and law. The faculty of engineering was established in 1941, and other faculties were subsequently added to it. In 1952 it was renamed Alexandria University AU. Since then the number of faculties and high institutes has grown to 22 to include faculties of education, medicine, commerce, science, and the fine arts. Other faculties were established in several areas in the country, several of which became universities in their own right, including Tanta, Kafr Elsheikh, and Damanhour universities. AU also has several branches in the region, including Matrouh in Egypt, Southern Sudan, and Chad; plans are also underway to start a branch of AU in Basra, Iraq. At the current time, AU offers programmes to 150,000 undergraduates and 20,000 graduates.

AU's Faculty of Education (FOE) was founded in 1969. Its stated mission is the training and development of professional teachers and the development of a concise body of knowledge that leads to the continuous improvement of educational practices. The FOE has 14 departments and offers programmes at both undergraduate and post-graduate level. At post-graduate level, it offers a general diploma in education for graduates of other faculties, as well as a professional and special diploma in education; it also offers a master's in education from any other department at the FOE, and a PhD in education. The FOE has about 240 faculty members, 180 demonstrators and assistant lecturers, and over 15,000 students (9,000 undergraduates; 3,800 post-graduates, and 3,500 open education students).

Continued Professional Development (CPD)

CPD is initially introduced as an integral part of some courses in the university's undergraduate programme, while post-graduate programmes offer separate courses and more intense work for CPD.

As a result of CDFE, a protocol was developed between the FOE and the District of Education in Alexandria to provide professional development services for school teachers. It is, however, hard to identify schools' training needs and this in turn impacts on the design of effective training programmes.

The Educational Services Center (ESC)

The ESC was established in 2005 with the explicit aim of improving teachers' performance, providing professional development for employees in the field of education, and providing technical and consultative support in the area of CPD to educational institutes, both locally and regionally. About 3,000 trainees are enrolled in the centre annually and it has to date run about 100 training workshops and programmes. Subjects covered include classroom management, educational supervision, accreditation and quality assurance in schools, ICT and learning disabilities. These services are offered to FOE graduates, graduates from other faculties, managers and agents, students, educational institutions, and others.

The Center for Education for Sustainable Development (CESDAU)

CESDAU grew out of a European Commission-funded project ran during 2010–2013. Project goals included establishing 7 so-called Centres of Excellence in Egyptian universities to deliver training activities for education for sustainable development (ESD); development of ESD teaching resource kits and innovative teaching methodologies for students aged 10–14; developing a Training for Trainers (TOT) programme for Egyptian university professors; and developing a virtual platform for networking and exchanging knowledge in the field of ESD between universities, schools, society, and other stakeholders.

A Centre of Excellence was established at the American University in Cairo and at Cairo, Suez Canal, Alexandria, Fayoum, and Zagazig universities. The CESDAU was accredited by PAT in 2015.

The Teaching Practicum

There were two main foci for developments in the area of practicum at AU.

1. Constructing a New Guide for the Practicum

Prior to CDFE, the FOE had participated in the competitive "Strategic Plan" project; this was part of a larger USAID project entitled "The Faculties of Education Reform Project (FOERP)", which ran during 2004–2006. This project focused on the development of the practicum programme and included a number of important initiatives, such as the development of the Practicum Guide. The Practicum Guide was issued in 2006. It provides essential information and guidelines for the student teachers and the supervising team. It includes a number of tools for assessing the progress of student teachers and other tools for student teachers' own self-evaluation, as well as a "Code of Student Teachers' Rights and Responsibilities".

According to the AU improvement action plan that emerged from the CDFE project, the development of the new Practicum Guide will take the following phases:

A review of the components of the existing Practicum Guide by a team of faculty members and graduate students. This has in fact already been achieved.

- Conducting a needs assessment study to identify the needs of all practicum stakeholders. The needs assessment has already been achieved.
- Analyzing the good practices related to practicum evaluation booklets and the code of ethics that regulates the practicum. This component has been achieved.
- Identifying the components, and planning the general structure of the new Practicum Guide. The team has managed to achieve this.
- Preparing the first draft of the new Practicum Guide.
- Collecting feedback from stakeholders.
- Making the guide available to all stakeholders.

A number of challenges have been identified that may significantly impede progress. These include the financial support for publication of the Practicum Guide and routines and regulations that could impede its production and dissemination.

2. Developing a Mentorship System for the Practicum

The structure of supervision during practicum is based on collaborative work among three distinct parties: the Faculty of Education of Alexandria University (FOE), the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the schools' principals. The three parties work together to provide support and guidance to the student teacher and to assess his/her progress. However, due to the limited numbers of FOE faculty members relative to the number of student teachers, sometimes only MOE supervisors work with student teachers in schools. The school principal, FOE faculty members and the supervisor are responsible for the mentoring and assessment of the student teachers. The school principal is responsible for 20 percent of the assessment grade whereas the faculty member and MOE supervisor share equally in 80 percent of the final grade. The assessment is based on appraising the quality of student teachers' work (formal and informal teaching activities) and participation in school activities. A student teacher's portfolio is also considered an important part of the evidence of his/her progress.

As a result of being exposed to the CDFE experience, AU presents two key justifications for implementing a mentorship system in the practicum programme

- The large number of student teachers in each school allocated for hosting practicum, which may compromise the achievement of the programme goals.
- The limited number of faculty available for supervising practicum duties, which may impact on the feasibility of mentoring.

The role of mentor in the AU's practicum programme would be as follows:

1. Making a strong commitment to direct, develop and share leadership and management responsibilities with the student teachers in the schools hosting the practicum.

2. Developing a schedule for the student teachers so that the leadership and management opportunities are clearly provided.

3. Communicating with all staff regarding the responsibilities and role the student teacher will be undertaking during the practicum experience.

4. Evaluating student teachers at the end of each semester and discussing assessment and grades with the student teachers.

In addition to the above responsibilities, mentors should:

- Encourage and support the acculturation of the student teachers.
- Prepare and implement a joint mentorship growth plan with the student teachers.
- Maintain a relationship with the student teachers consistent with the Code of Professional Conduct This is currently being prepared by AU.
- Model and demonstrate effective teaching strategies.
- Observe and provide feedback to the student teachers.
- Assist student teachers in identifying personal strengths and planning for further professional growth.
- Support the student teachers with curriculum and instructional planning.

Strategies Now Underway to Develop the Mentorship System:

- Coordination between MOE and the practicum office in the FOE. A protocol of cooperation between MOE and FOE has been signed.

- Choosing a sample of teachers who meet the selection criteria to act as mentors from the schools allocated for hosting the practicum.

- Developing a training programme for mentoring. The training will provide opportunities for developing the trainees with the required knowledge and skills to conduct the lesson study approach with their student teachers.

- Selecting five schools in which the mentorship system will be piloted.

- Conducting awareness-raising sessions for stakeholders involved (e.g., teachers, supervisors, and so on).

- Implementing the mentorship system in the selected schools.

- Following up and collecting data to reflect on the effectiveness of procedures and outcomes.

Key challenges in this area have included the difficulty in accessing public schools due to the MOE's changing regulation and paper work, resistance to change on the part of faculty members and the heavy workloads of teachers who could be potential mentors.

The difficulties faced by AU in 'reinventing' the practicum system, in large part, from the sheer volume of student teachers involved in practicum in any one year. Up to 2,000 students may require placements in around 140+ schools and this means that any individual school may host a significant number of students as part of the AU's practicum programme. The liaison between schools and the FOE is effectively managed by the Practicum Bureau of Alexandria University, but the reality is that student teachers often do not receive as many visits from faculty as they would like, nor do they experience significant amounts of classroom experience in which they might take sole charge of a classroom.

Within the very positive response from the student teachers that the team talked to, these latter two issues were the main points of concern. The student teachers wanted to have more classroom experience in their practicum, in which they could plan and deliver lessons as more independent practitioners. This would require an increase in the amount of time that the student teachers spent in their practicum schools, which in turn was governed by agreements between the MOE, the FOE and the schools. The student teachers also wanted more focused feedback on their teaching than the current system allowed, in order to develop more reflective attitudes to their work.

The FOE had therefore decided on a gradualist approach to this issue, successfully re-negotiating the protocol governing the practicum with the MOE that gave support to the FOE's goal of improving the practicum in Alexandria Governorate. The two-pronged approach – of developing a new Practicum Guide and piloting a mentoring system for the practicum – should allow the partnership between the MOE, FOE and schools to be developed in fruitful ways that will benefit the student teachers' experiences of the practicum and prepare them more effectively for full-time teaching.

At all stages of the project, AU has consulted with the important stakeholders in the practicum and ensured that their views have been heard and, where possible, acted upon. By focusing on building a culture of partnership, the plans are much more likely, in the opinion of the team, to lead to fruitful engagement, particularly in face of any resistance to change that might undermine the changes proposed. At the same time, the need to engage with all stakeholders must also mean that overall progress in completing and delivering the plans for change must still have some way to go.

Continued Professional Development

In recent years, teacher professional development has come under close scrutiny in Egypt. Participation by the AU in the Tempus Project pointed to different perspectives and practices in this area among partners from different countries. Concerns about the nature and quality of teacher professional development programmes in AU's Faculty of Education highlighted the need for more flexible, on-going and innovative professional development programmes if quality learning is to take place.

Among the shortcomings that characterize teacher education programmes in AU are centralized, out-dated structures that ignore the social constructivist nature of teaching and learning, the demands on teachers' time, and the absence of inclination and incentives. All CPD services are currently offered via face-to-face programmes, workshops and short training events. As outlined in the AU baseline report (2013), the area of CPD is still underdeveloped and faces a number of challenges.

There have always been informal efforts and initiatives by individual faculty members in the area of CPD. These took different forms, such as participating in projects and providing voluntary training and consultancy services for the Training and Quality Units in schools. One of the biggest challenges is the absence of a culture of CPD among faculty members and school communities, the inability of schools to identify their training needs and a lack of facilities and qualified trainers.

At AU there were two main initiatives in the area of CDP:

1. The Reconstruction of the Educational Services Centre (ESC)
2. Launching a Website for CPD

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1. The Reconstruction of the Educational Services Centre (ESC)

The ESC was set up with the goal of improving the quality of education in Alexandria Governorate. It aimed to provide technical and educational support for professional development, both regionally and locally, and to develop resources. This was an ambitious project, since cooperation protocols had to be agreed across a number of institutions as well as with a number of local schools. Between 2005, when it was established, and 2013, the ESC trained 11,328 people, providing qualifications across a wide range of subjects, for example, in education, quality assurance and accreditation, students with special needs, teaching science and mathematics in English, and ICDL.

A difficult challenge emerged when it came to assessing the impact of the training undertaken through the centre, as measures to assess levels of satisfaction among participants and improvement of teaching in schools had not originally been put in place. The Evaluation Study's main findings (Alshamy 2013) were that the ESC's programmes did not provide the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for teachers to the extent that they contributed to improving the quality of education. The evaluation also showed that the programmes were of greater benefit to novice teachers than they were to more experienced teachers.

To address this issue the study recommended that the training programmes be updated and communication improved through activating the ESC website and using more up to date technology. It also recommended a database be kept to facilitate analysis of feedback from stakeholders and survey customer satisfaction. To support these initiatives the centre would require well-trained administrative staff. This study helped to provide a clear starting point and strong direction for future developments in CPD, which the team in Alexandria have taken forward and been creative in thinking through strategies to address the remaining challenges.

Hence, there have been several achievements in developing the ESC:

- Forming a committee to lead the reconstruction procedures of the ESC.
- Evaluating the work of the centre in the past.
- Conducting an analysis of all impact and evaluation reports of the ESC as well as analysis of the work and structure of the CPD+ Centre, University of Leicester. During their study visit to the University of Leicester in the UK, the Alexandria team had visited the CPD+center which is attached to the faculty of education. The centre acts as the FOE consultancy service to schools. It is commissioned by schools to support the continued professional development of their staff and teachers. It customizes its programs to meet the needs of schools. Its entire activities focuses on school based learning and development.
- Identifying general themes for the development of the centre, including training content to include new programmes and topics such as quality assurance and accreditation, special needs and the development of teaching methods.

Despite efforts to reach this target some important challenges remain, such as:

- The limited availability of resources and time needed to implement training programmes.
- The need to prepare a certified team of trainers for the implementation of the centre's programmes.

2. Launching a Website for CPD

A key pressing issue in the FOE has been the need to transform continued professional development practices to ensure creating opportunities for learner success in a rapidly changing world, driven by the power of social networking technologies. There is a paramount interest among educators in seeking new routes through which professional growth is enhanced. A crucial need for more systematic, self-paced, decentralized, relevant, differentiated and up-to-date medium for quality professional development is evident so that teachers are adequately prepared to meet the diverse needs of their learners. The shift towards distance learning (DL) and social media tools is becoming pervasive in CPD contexts across the world and Egypt is no exception.

The use of online tools and mediums presents a promising mechanism for addressing the needs of the large population of pre-service and in-service teachers at AU. Most importantly, they provide great opportunities for enabling and energizing CPD as free services are incorporated. The wide variety of network-mediated resources, tasks and practices will allow teachers to build and maintain a professional learning community that is supported by their online instructors. The online services are meant to cater for teachers' professional development aspirations in different content areas while allowing them to maintain control over their individual pace, space and identity through flexible access to differentiated,

constructivist pedagogical tasks. In essence, using online tools will enhance the partnership between the FOE and MOE.

Strategies

Launching a website for teacher professional development activities involves the following strategies:

✓ Forming a team (staff members and ICT coordinator) to establish the website.

✓ Launching and piloting it.

✓ Establishing a system for monitoring and follow-up.

✓ Raising teacher awareness in Alexandria of this website.

✓ Providing teachers with up-to-date resources through uploading varied materials (e.g. videos, lesson plans, journals, etc.).

✓ Selecting representatives from the MoE and FoE to form the partnership committee.

✓ Assigning roles and responsibilities to the selected committee.

✓ Administering a needs assessment survey to determine teachers' CPD needs.

✓ Implementing exploratory case studies to promote CPD using social networking tools in light of the data collected.

Achievements

Three initiatives have been proposed by AU Tempus team to promote teacher professional development through the use of online tools and mediums. The initiatives are as follows:

- A website for maintaining CPD practices across various content areas.
- Online case studies (in progress) that aim at analysing and collecting in-depth data about the formation and management of online professional development communities.
- The partnership protocol between the FOE and MOE (signed).

Challenges

- Encouraging teachers in schools to use online resources in their teaching or for CPD purposes. A recent survey showed that only 5 percent of teachers used such resources to further their own professional development.
- The communication of CPD courses through distance learning can only be successful if the network server reliably supports this mode of delivery. IT communication is extremely difficult, mainly because the server is not located within AU but is hosted elsewhere and also because there is a lack of IT resources within the institution to administer the website.
- Lack of Internet services and quick wifi connections in some places in Alexandria affects teachers' participation and motivation negatively.
- Inconsistent and tense formal relationship between the MOE and FOE.

Ways Forward

- Uploading more authentic materials to enrich the website and meet teachers' diverse needs.
- Conducting more comprehensive surveys to address further CPD needs according to the stage and specialization.
- Assessing the impact of the website on promoting CPD best practices.
- Implementing the partnership protocol to facilitate and enhance the relationship between the FOE and MOE.
- Analyzing and reporting data collected from the online case studies.
- Conducting further research studies to promote the use of online mediums in CPD.

Using the Institutional Improvement Plan has encouraged the Alexandria team to consider their strategy for enhancing CPD and setting up a website to promote the work of the centre. The team has been rigorous in analysing the problems that are preventing progress and the misconceptions surrounding uses of ICT. A key development in progress is a case study demonstrating the use of a social networking tool, 'Edmodo' to set up and develop a Professional Learning Community (PLC). The aim of using this platform is to provide more meaningful shared learning experiences and initial feed back shows satisfaction levels were improving.

Initiatives undertaken through the TEMPUS project by the Alexandria team have therefore, been significant. They have been encouraged to move forward more rapidly with work that was already on-going.

Action Research

Embedding action research in teaching programmes and encouraging its use for CPD has been one of the most difficult challenges of the whole TEMPUS project faced by the Alexandria team.

The FOE's undergraduate programmes do not offer any courses directly related to action research, and although its post-graduate programmes offer a number of research methods that introduce students to action research, there is historically little interest in action research at the post-graduate level. Action research is similarly absent from FOE projects and activities.

This began to change when the FOE participated in the AUC-led "Action Research in All Schools" (ARAS) project at the beginning of 2013. Both the study visits and the exchange visits in which the AU TEMPUS team participated shed light upon different patterns of action research and its effectiveness to improve learning and teaching through a partnership between the university and different schools.

Strategies for supporting action research inside schools included developing and implementing a Training of Trainers (TOT) programme in action research. The workshop was successfully conducted and certificates of completion were distributed in October; co-ordinating with the MOE in Alexandria to select a number of schools to participate in the training programme; training teachers at schools on action research; and supporting the dissemination of action research findings through teachers' conferences and other channels. As a result of these strategies, AU has made several achievements, including:

- Coordination with the MOE in Alexandria was ensured through the setting up of a protocol of cooperation for training teachers in schools on action research.

- Preparation of a Training of Trainers (TOT) programme in action research. This includes a trainer's guide, a trainee's guide, worksheets, presentations, and an agenda.

- Selection of the participants who enrolled in the first phase of the TOT program in the light of specific criteria (e.g., having at least 5 years of teaching experience; having a Special Diploma degree; working in a governmental school, and so on). The first implementation of the programme began on 28 February 2015 and included 32 participants.

Challenges of Implementation

Nonetheless the culture of action research is still weak in both the FOE and in schools, presenting AU with a number of difficulties:

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- Many teachers work under difficult conditions such as heavy workloads and poor school facilities.
- Many teachers lack the skills of conducting action research; this is due to the absence of research method courses in the FOE undergraduate programmes.
- Action research is not yet used in the teacher promotion system (although this was suggested by the ARAS team led by the American University in Cairo); as a result teachers lack the motivation to conduct action research.

Challenges within the FOE include:

- A lack of sufficient conviction about action research among faculty members in different educational departments in the FOE.
- Faculty is overloaded with duties so they do not have enough time to conduct action researchLack of resources and financial support.
- The effect of routine and rules that sometimes hamper a full partnership between university and schools.

Transformations and Ways Forward

Despite the challenges faced, the Alexandria team has made great strides forward through participation in the ARAS project, which has raised awareness of the importance of action research for both faculty and teachers in schools. It has encouraged the role of teachers as researchers and the number of applicants who wish to take part in the ARAS programme have increased. It is through this programme that some of the most innovative developments have emerged, such as connecting ARAS members through a Facebook group, the use of Video Conference training as well as face-to-face activities and meetings. It is also hoped that the project will facilitate the formation of learning communities among the teachers who take part in ARAS.

It is planned that after completion of the TOT programme, each trainee will train teachers in schools. FOE personnel will help the teachers who have been trained inside schools to identify the most important challenges they face through their work and to write a research plan to overcome these problems. Moreover, AU will provide technical and logistical support for teachers to implement and document action research in schools, while different mechanisms to disseminate the results of action research around different schools in Alexandria will be developed.

While no student has yet submitted a final thesis through the ARAS project, the presentation of initial case studies has been undertaken (Noaman, 2013). The detail presented in these initial case studies demonstrates the value that is to be gained in terms of accelerated Professional Development from taking part in AR.

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EGYPT

CHAPTER (5)

HELWAN UNIVERSITY

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CONTENTS

PART I. Introduction

This is a summary of the report constituting an organisational case study description of the Faculty of Education of the University of Helwan, Cairo, Egypt. The report was compiled with the objective of signposting and delineating changes effected in the Faculty of Education for the purpose of improvement during its participation in the CDFE project.

The case study summarized here focuses on Helwan University and contributes to the TEMPUS-funded project "Capacity Development of Faculties of Education in International Approaches to Teacher Education" (CDFE), led by the American University in Cairo. For the full report, we drew on a series of sources and activities that were produced during the lifetime of the project, including baseline reports, conferences, study visits, analysis of promising practices, as well as scholarly exchange between 14 universities and educational institutions from the global North and South involving Egypt, Lebanon, Malta, Palestine, Sweden and England. All these activities focused on three central aspects in the formation of teachers, namely the practicum in initial teacher education (ITE), continuing professional development (CPD), and action research (AR). All three aspects highlighted the possibilities of – and potential for – partnership between Faculties of Education and schools in improving teacher effectiveness, and in reforming educational practice.

a. Institutional Context: Helwan University

The University of Helwan was founded in 1975. Its Faculty of Education was established by Law in 1981 and 1982, and the faculty began admitting students in the academic year 1982–83. Its first cohort of students graduated in May 1986. The faculty aims, in its own words, at:

"Providing high-quality educational and research services to prepare teachers, specialists and researchers in different educational fields and contributing to the development and enrichment of educational institutions according to local, regional and global requirements".

It has departments in the Foundations of Education; Comparative Education and Educational Administration; Educational Psychology; Mental Health; Curriculum and Teaching Methods; Education Technology; Kindergarten; and Technical and Industrial Education. The faculty offers degrees in education at the following levels: BA (three degrees); diploma (three degrees); master's (one degree); and PhD (one degree).

b. Contributors to the Report

The people who have enabled the production of this report included the following:

HELWAN, EGYPT: two lecturers in education; one demonstrator. The first lecturer was co-ordinator of the CDFE project in Helwan, and had main responsibility for CPD including her roles as executive coordinator of the protocols in CPD and coordinator of the training committee in the Quality Assurance Unit; she was also mentor and supervisor for practicum and action research in Helwan. The second lecturer was responsible for the practicum aspect of the project, as well as mentor and trainer in CPD and action research.

The demonstrator was at the Comparative Education and Educational Administration Department, Helwan, and oversaw the action research used during teachers' training in practicum. He was studying towards his MA degree.

IOE, LONDON: three lecturers and two doctoral students. Each of the IOE lecturers took responsibility for focusing on one of the three areas, practicum, CPD or action research. Both the doctoral students contributed to all aspects of the report design and construction.

c. Faculty of Education Programme of Visits during the Case Study, Provided by Helwan's Team

A rich series of opportunities was provided by the Helwan team for the IOE team during the case study. The team was escorted to a series of schools, both public and private, where the team talked with and observed students and teachers; the university campus, where the team met university faculty; and CPD training in a range of venues, all in Cairo although not necessarily within Helwan.

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PART II. Achievement of Faculty Aims in Relation to the Three Areas

A. THE TEACHING PRACTICUM

Introduction: Faculty Situation prior to the CDFE Project

Prior to the CDFE project Helwan University's Faculty of Education (FOE) ran a teacher training programme, but it was weak in terms of the mentoring that student-teachers received from faculty staff and school staff. Faculty and school staff similarly lacked guidance in how to support student-teachers. Moreover, evaluation processes were rudimentary and did not emphasise the most valuable aspects of student-teacher learning. Also, due to the growing number of student-teachers, there is a shortage of schools to accommodate them all.

Practicum sessions were observed in El Sadat Preparatory School, Helwan, and an International Integrated School. Student teachers were observed and interviewed about their experiences, presenting their suggestions for continued improvement to the new processes and procedures which have been put in place.

University-Schools Partnership

Since the Helwan FOE's participation in the project, several transformations have been observed. Most crucially the faculty has worked extensively to develop a university–school partnership. Schools across Cairo have been approached to be a part of the Teacher Training Programme, and a partnership agreement called a protocol has been drawn up. All schools in Cairo are now expected to engage with the development of student-teachers. Schools and students work within a framework called the National Standards for Education, created by university staff. Schools that have student-teachers can become accredited and in the case of private schools, they can recruit new teachers from among their trainees. Helwan FOE cooperates with the Ministry of Education (MOE) for the provision of security permits to allow student-teachers to enter into schools. It also tries to ensure that the person responsible for practicum in Helwan FOE has ties to the MOE, to facilitate placement of student-teachers.

Professional Development (PD) Schools

The partnership has consequently meant the development of PD schools that can serve as training centres, not only for student-teachers but for experienced teachers as well. The limited number of teachers in universities able to supervise the growing number of student-teachers on placement in schools makes the training of teachers from within the schools vital. In one school, Helwan FOE offers CPD to the teachers involved in working with the student-teachers. Here, school teachers are expected to implement training plans to help the student-teachers from Helwan FOE plan lessons during the practicum; meet with the student-teachers to discuss lessons; and use the new portfolio system (see below). They are also trained in how to grade the students. Meanwhile the FOE gives the school feedback on the training plans and asks them about their needs. Senior teachers in this school enjoyed seeing what the student-teachers were doing and felt their own work was enhanced as a result.

Development of the Portfolio for Practicum

The Helwan FOE team aims to develop student-teacher portfolios as a means of systematic and objective practicum assessment and of offering the student-teachers' opportunities for self-reflection. The aim is for the portfolios to:

- Enable the student-teacher to know and be aware of what is expected of him/her during practicum.

- Help the school to provide the student-teacher with all the facilities to help him/her in achieving the goals.

- Help both school supervisors and university supervisors provide objective guidance to, and evaluation of, the student-teacher, in part by ensuring that the different supervisors follow the same criteria for evaluating the same student-teacher.

- Provide the student-teacher with worksheets for self-evaluation for each and every task or activity expected from him/her.

This portfolio acts as a tool for applying and evaluating pre-service teachers through action research. Student-teachers are encouraged to critically reflect on every lesson and write down what happened in the lesson, what was good or not so good and what the solutions might be to any problems encountered. The portfolio includes their lesson plan, what teaching strategies they want to use, and then their own reflections. Experienced teachers also make a written report of their lessons.

The Helwan team learnt that in Sweden, Stockholm University prepares an e-portfolio for every student-teacher to inform the school about certain assignments that must be fulfilled to complete graduation. Also in Stockholm University the visitors observed and were introduced to an

on-line system of organizing all the data around the running of practicum including information about schools and student teachers. Good organization and administration of practicum, through a comprehensive and open system is therefore essential. Helwan suggested it assign a committee to plan and set the guidelines for designing an information system, a portfolio and student-evaluation sheets before training faculty supervisors and school-teachers on how to use them.

Peer Support and Mentoring

Student teachers spoke very openly about wishing to implement some less traditional ways of teaching but that this was not always easy. The challenge is for the university to work with the students and the experienced teachers who are working with them. Online forms of communication, such as Facebook groups are being introduced for student-teachers. Student-teachers who participated in a Facebook group set up by the Helwan faculty member in charge of practicum felt that it was one of the most successful methods of engagement they had encountered, giving them a sense of community and solidarity, and providing records of change in their practices. This reflective habit helps student-teachers perform far better during their practicum and later, as fully fledged teachers.

Now that Helwan University has many partnerships with schools, the Helwan FOE demonstrator provides student-teachers with pre-service training followed by meticulous supervision and regular meetings in the school and university. They brainstorm solutions to problems and combine reading literature on action research with finding practical solutions within the schools.

Similarly, the Helwan faculty member in charge of practicum has developed a system for working with student-teachers directly. Should this system

be rolled out, it would mean standardization of practice across schools in Cairo. It includes an induction process where student-teachers are given a tour of the school to allow them to meet staff and teachers and observe classes. It also involves the Helwan faculty member helping students prepare their lessons and providing post-lesson evaluation and mentoring to the students. This is the kind of mentoring and evaluation that experienced teachers in the schools will undertake themselves once a full peer-mentor model is adopted across schools in Cairo. Helwan therefore now has in place the beginnings of a comprehensive system for practicum.

The student-teachers observed during the Helwan case study felt that, in particular, their mentors allowed them to experiment with new ideas. One student felt that she and her peers were being challenged more and that this made her feel more empowered, as she was allowed to try out new strategies. Finally, in the lessons observed, experienced school teachers are in the classroom as the student-teachers teach, but there are also two student-teachers, with the second student-teacher providing useful feedback to the first.

B. ACTION RESEARCH

Introduction: Faculty Situation prior to the CDFE Project

In their Baseline Report, the Faculty of Education recognized the importance of action research for promoting and realizing their set aims. In particular, they stressed the flexibility action research provided as an approach for: accessing and solving everyday problems in schools and classrooms by teachers and/or head teachers; achieving teachers' professional development; providing a method for individual and collaborative problem-solving within educational communities; and, very importantly, tracing change within social contexts and communities.

Strategic Decisions and Changes in Faculty Arrangements during Phases of the CDFE Project

Before joining the CDFE projects, the Faculty of Education had participated in two initiatives aimed at familiarizing its members with action research. These two training programmes were organized by the Middle East Institute for Higher Education (MEIHE) at the American University in Cairo (AUC). These training sessions, followed by the cumulative effect of the CDFE exchange visits to England, Malta and Sweden, have all had a strong impact on introducing action research into Helwan University. Helwan University now offers a diploma in action research, and action research is being used by student-teachers as a tool for problem-solving within classrooms.

Helwan's demonstrator at the Comparative Education and Educational Administration department defines action research as "a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of (a) their own social or educational practices, (b) their understanding of these practices, and (c) the situations in which the practices are carried out". He acknowledges that action research is not only a problem-solving tool, but a problem-posing one as well. He strongly believes that in order for teachers to help their students to learn and seek knowledge, the teachers themselves need to be thus qualified: they need to be reflective practitioners, good researchers, and problem solvers, and cooperative, ethical actors interested in informing educational theory through their practice. According to this demonstrator, action research is the most efficient way to make a teacher a qualified researcher and a problem solver, owing to its cyclical repetitive nature, which mirrors the daily tasks of teachers in schools. The cyclical model he uses is composed of three steps, broadly speaking – Look: gathering information; Think: analytical information; and Act: taking action. These repetitive cycles need to occur at

the planning stage, then the instruction stage, and finally in the evaluation stage.

The demonstrator believes that students benefit from action research through improved understanding and greater powers of critical thinking, personality skills, ways of using and applying information and knowledge, and the ability to modify information to suit different situations. At the same time, teachers gain a deeper understanding of teaching and learning theories, up-to-date information, reliable and contemporary teaching methods, problem-solving skills, improved performance, theory-building skills, and good classroom management, while documenting their own professional growth.

When asked about action research during their two-week block practicum, student-teachers generally felt that they had been given a golden opportunity at the particular stage in their career to put into practice what they had learnt at university. They were enthusiastic, not only about their tutors but about their chance to participate in this new way of learning.

Since the project, Helwan FOE has started to train groups of student-teachers to practise action research in teaching and they now talk about how to plant the seed of the idea in other schools. Action research is being used by student-teachers as a tool for problem-solving within classrooms, thereby addressing real-life class issues, and is seen as a way of linking theory to practice. Interviewed during the CDFE project, one third-year student-teacher on his first year of practicum in a school, said:
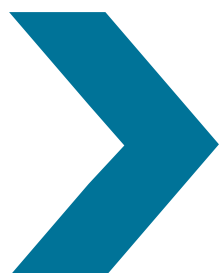
"We want to change the way we were taught ourselves. We are happy to work with experienced teachers to learn from them, but like to learn innovative pedagogies as well. Overall, the school has a very positive experience with student-teachers. We would like more practice in the classroom and less theory. We wished we were exposed to practice from Year 1 rather than waiting until Year 3".

Mr. Adel, a lecturer at Helwan University, is using action research as a tool to teach student-teachers innovative practices during their practicum and in CPD. He strongly believes in action research, since it uses methods of systematic and collaborative thinking, not just problem solving:
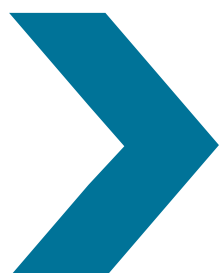
"I visit teachers in the classrooms, and I give my notes on observations to them, and discuss it with them. In the beginning, I did not talk about action research. The more important thing is to understand how to observe the difference in behaviour in children, for example that some are not involved, others are hyperactive, and initially they missed all that. They said the day went 'okay'. So, the action research was needed to make them think systematically, to make them think in a rigorous way, and acquire some organisation skills, such as being self-reflective, to help them structure the way they teach and find solutions".

He routinely helps student-teachers brainstorm ideas to find solutions collectively to the problems they have identified. The pupils in the schools saw a remarkable difference in Mr. Adel's student-teachers' teaching methods during the second semester, where they used action research as a tool, compared to the first semester, where they used traditional teaching techniques.

Challenges faced by Helwan University in Implementing Action Research

Resistance on the part of Helwan faculty members is regarded as the biggest challenge, both to change and to action research per se as a research method. It is seen as a helpful classroom intervention but not as a comprehensive research approach. Many Helwan faculty members find action research time-consuming and considerably more strenuous than collecting quantitative data. The Helwan FOE is traditionally experienced in quantitative analysis and some traditional qualitative analysis but not in innovative research methods like action research. One Helwan faculty member considers that action research can be transformational and that it develops reflective practice of student-teachers, however he believes this approach is appropriate only within the confines of the classroom.

"In the case of a dyslexic student for example, you try to use activities and interventions which would allow the child to improve. However, there are some other faculty in Helwan University who resist AR in all its forms".

Another challenge lies in school bureaucracies which make it difficult to promote collaborative work of the kind required by those action research methods used at Helwan. Yet another challenge is the lack of professors experienced in action research thus limiting the exposure students can have to this research method.

Other challenges lie in the complexity of certain action research assessment tools as well as routine and lack of time. The practicum period within schools is so short that student-teachers may not have the time to experiment with new research methods.

C. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

Introduction: Faculty Aims at Outset of CDFE in Relation to CPD

There are multiple frameworks for CPD at both the national and university levels in Egypt. Every university has a faculty and leadership development programme (FLDP), through which assistant lecturers and other university staff receive support for their development. This led Helwan FOE to focus on constructing a specific, distinct platform for the provision of CPD, one with appeal to all possible stakeholders,

namely, school leaders; academic innovators; the community at large; FOE staff; student-teachers; and educational policy-makers. CPD was regarded as a collective effort for reform and improvement and this outlook was subsequently evident in all the FOE's issued documents during the CDFE Project and its implementation plans. The FOE saw CPD as a means towards several aims:

- Preparing specialists and professional leaders in educational areas and providing them with CPD.
- Enhancing educational thought and practice
- Disseminating awareness of educational issues through lectures, conferences, and seminars.
- Serving the community through training programmes and workshops dealing with areas that are related to the faculty mission.
- Co-operating with the university's faculties in preparing university staff, providing other community service and improving the quality of life.

CPD Training in Schools

Head teachers informed the project participants that every school has a training unit which organises a programme of CPD for teachers. For example, CPD sessions on strategic planning and inclusion were carried out in the training unit of El-Sadat School. The teachers who attend training, 'cascade' it to others in the school. However, no evidence of this process was seen in practice.

Helwan's newly established protocol with policy-makers and the link with Cairo educational directorate now assign primary, preparatory and secondary schools to work in collaboration with Helwan University, to achieve:

- Professional development for school-teachers and leaders so that they are fully qualified to supervise Helwan's student-teachers.
- Application of the most recent teaching strategies through practicum.
- Support for school development through applying action research.

Helwan FOE is committed to ensuring professional development for school teachers and principals by providing access to the professional trainers to lead workshops and to providing the materials for the training. Cairo educational directorate is, in turn, responsible for assigning the dates of the training programmes in collaboration with Helwan FOE, nominating the trainees and facilitating their attendance in coordination with their schools.

The Helwan team described the impact of having dedicated Professional Development Schools as follows:

- Reduction of the gap between the theories discussed in the Faculty of Education's educational courses and the practice in schools, including practicum.

- Direct training of 96 teachers on the effective orchestration of inclusive education.

- The organisation of workshops and training sessions for 100 educational leaders and school principals on "Strategic Planning" which helped them to develop strategic plans for schools and administrations and to help in the accreditation of schools.

Helwan also made visits to schools to provide CPD. In one case study, a Helwan faculty member ran a training session on time management for 20 teachers in a private school in Cairo. The teachers found it useful to participate in group-work and to see new ideas being modelled which they

could use in their own classrooms. They said they would benefit from training sessions on how to use games and technologies in the class to make their lessons more inviting to students, as well as from experienced teachers in their own schools who could run training workshops and from more peer observation visits across all departments of the school.

Private School Participation in Practicum

A new and radical practice had begun in Helwan. Private schools were beginning to reach out to government schools by inviting them to join them for their CPD sessions and in providing practicum for government school trainees. This was an idea learnt during the CDFE visit to Sweden. In one case study of CPD among school principals sited in privately funded premises, the principals said that the formats for training they found most useful included workshops; group discussions; worksheets; collaborative activities; and concluding whole group discussion. In another district, private schools had funded a room where CPD for government school teachers and head teachers could take place.

Channels of Communication between Helwan FOE and Schools

Helwan did not have formal or regular meetings with schools and communicated with them online, using e-mail and Facebook. Nonetheless, the Helwan team analysed teachers' feedback and recommendations for solving problems and enhancing the CPD activities. The Helwan faculty staff responsible for practicum and her colleagues who had similar responsibilities provided CPD training sessions in schools.

Integrating Initial Teacher Education and CPD under the Umbrella of "Lifelong Learning"

This seemed to be an area on which future developments could focus and there was some lack of differentiation in people's minds between practicum, action research and CPD. In some ways, this confusion was a bonus. However, it was felt that practicum was gaining much more focus than CPD or action research. Despite the obviously impressive results Helwan's initiatives were producing in terms of student-teachers' teaching, it was felt that experienced teachers might also be involved in action research, including larger collaborative projects, on a more systematic basis that did not depend on lecturers' goodwill and energy.

How the Transformations Conference (held in AUC, Cairo, September 2014) Fed into Transformations in CPD

The conference transformed the way Helwan FOE thought about the scope and duration of CPD training. It began to see that CPD applies not only to practising teachers, but to principals, leaders, administrators and faculty staff as well. It also found that continued professional development needs to be seen as an on-going process that encompasses formal and informal learning experiences that enable all staff in schools to think about what they are doing, enhance their knowledge and skills, and improve ways of working. Remarking on those members of her faculty who provide practicum training and CPD in schools, Helwan's faculty staff responsible for CPD said that:

"Learning happens on both sides: for the university staff, to be aware of the reality inside schools and their problems; and for the trainees to have more experience on how to apply theory".

School in Egypt

PART III. Ways Forward: Strategies to Move Ahead towards Goals Identified within the Project

This section outlines ways forward in three domains: schools; Helwan FOE; and the MOE. We recognise throughout, however, that in practice the three necessarily depend on each other. All the suggestions are the result of the combined wisdom of both CDFE teams: Helwan FOE and the UCL, IOE.

Ways forward in Practicum

Schools need to…..

- Consider extending periods of practice in schools. Student-teachers, when interviewed, said that they wished for an education course that was more practical and less theoretical. They felt that longer times in schools would help with continuity and relationship building, which would in turn help with behaviour management. They observed that they needed more help with behaviour management and how they could be more assertive in the classroom, including voice projection and the use of body language. Third-year students on their first year of practicum said:

"Classroom management was the most difficult challenge on the first day".

"Since there are big classes, we need to raise our voice to be heard and for students to focus".

"In university, we learn that in order to achieve classroom management, we have to make pupils like us and be creative to attract their attention, using innovative teaching methods so that the children will like us and if they like us they will listen to us more. They warned us before the practicum, that we would be faced with reality and they tried to prepare us for that reality, but perhaps not enough. They warned us that we would have large classrooms, but it is one thing to know that and another thing to know how to deal with it".

- Train and support every single mentor, whether classroom teachers or more senior teachers in schools, in how to have a coaching/mentoring style post-lesson conversation to support the student with critical reflection leading to problem solving.
- Continue with developing more teachers as mentors.

Helwan FOE needs to…..

- Use current student-teachers in the future for further development of practicum in Helwan Faculty of Education.
- Listen to students' reflections.
- Encourage each school in Cairo to appoint a senior teacher to be trained as a mentor, who could mentor all experienced teachers in using Helwan's system. The Helwan faculty staff responsible for practicum could oversee it.
- Explore the relationship between improving the quality of the students' teaching and their perception of the grading process.
- Develop an induction process for student-teachers.
- Provide students with more systematic opportunities to publicly evaluate lectures as well as the school experience.
- Give more attention to teachers of students with special needs.
- Prepare and publish a practicum education guidebook. Helwan FOE is in the process of forming a team to set out the guidebook's main compoments, part of which will involve a review of foreign experiences of setting practicum education. Once this is done, a number of faculty staff will be selected to write and edit the content.

Ministry of Education needs to…..

- Provide experienced teachers with incentives to work with student-teachers.
- Invest more financial resources in the training of student-teachers in schools. This is the only way more university staff can be involved.

Ways forward in Action Research

Schools need to…..

- Invite school supervisors for a week's training on action research at Helwan University, so that they gain the same perspective on action research as the university supervisors. Together, they can then help student-teachers to work on action research effectively within schools.
- Invite more schools to observe the successful results of implementing action research as a tool to improve practice in classrooms

Helwan FOE needs to…..

- Continue to promote action research as a tool, but also begin to promote it as a viable research methodology within the faculty of Helwan University, which would then have a positive impact on introducing action research to students within the university.
- Promote innovative methods of research such as action research within the faculty council, in order to allow for more flexibility if students would like to use action research in their MA or PhD theses.
- Train more lecturers on action research through workshops and seminars so that they can deliver more courses on action research and create a new research culture around it.
- Introduce closer supervision of student-teachers who do use action research to ensure the quality of their research.
- Continue the successful collaboration between the Helwan faculty staff responsible for practicum, Helwan's faculty staff responsible for CPD, and the Helwan demonstrator at the Comparative Education and Educational Administration department in terms of their efforts to implement action research in schools.

- Helwan FOE could plan a series of training workshops for in-service teachers in co-operation with the MOE, so that they can help student-teachers work on action research more effectively within the schools. Already prepared are worksheets about the application of action research, which are to be included in the aforementioned practicum education guide.

- Promote a research-based assignment that uses action research as a method which the students begin in their second year through the data they collect in practicum; they then submit in their final year.

- Collaborate in action research projects through research teams who participate in solving school problems and in the dissemination and application of FoE MA and PhD research results.

- Promote a culture of action research among FOE members themselves

Ministry of Education needs to.....

- Promote action research through the MOE and the Supreme Council of Universities, who would recognize action research as a tool for improving practice within classrooms, but also as a research methodology.

- Collaborate to disseminate the culture of action research among experienced teachers, through the protocol with Cairo educational governorate.

Ways Forward in Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Schools need to.....

Develop a focus on the classroom-based learning and development of experienced teachers in schools in order to have a beneficial impact on all teachers in the school, including pre-service teachers. CPD of experienced teachers in schools was the least emphasised aspect of teacher learning among the three strands of practicum, action research and CPD. This was in part due to the enormous emphasis placed on training for student-teachers. The case study visit came at a critical time for some teachers, who now train their colleagues inside their schools. The schools nonetheless have a limited number of mentors. Helwan needs the support of the Professional Academy of Teachers (PAT) to accredit principals and teachers as trainers and mentors.

The following targets still needed to be achieved:

- Training principals and head teachers to be CPD mentors in classrooms.

- Developing CPD for individual experienced teachers and further developing the existing plans for schools.

- Using action research in CPD for all teachers, not just student-teachers.

- Involving all stakeholders in CPD to meet their needs.

To meet these targets, some of Helwan's own suggested solutions include:

- Provision by schools of more workshops for in-service teachers.

- Recognition by stakeholders that teachers' work is complex, demanding and ever-changing.

- Teachers' realisation that by becoming mentors, they can improve their own development. This was seen as an important development if CPD was to be systematically and successfully implemented.

- In general, more emphasis on developing and supporting teacher mentors in schools was required. Extended action research projects for mentoring teachers, inquiring into this particular practice, could be an excellent way of moving forward.

Helwan FOE needs to …..

Identify areas for further development including a more systematic means for establishing the basis for CPD sessions, since CPD was not systematically provided for to all teachers in all schools. There is a need for building Teaching Learning Communities, such as a network among experts at the Helwan FOE, UK FOEs, and Cairo school teachers for the exchange of professional experiences of CPD. This was a way forward favoured by the faculty staff.

Ministry of Education needs to…..

Clarify the role of the Professional Academy of Teachers PAT. There was very little mention of the Professional Academy for Teachers in Cairo. More work is clearly needed to carve out and exemplify the developmental work of this body.

One area that clearly needed attention in schools, the faculty and the Ministry was concentrating on human rights and specially child rights through CPD activities and giving attention to democracy and participation.

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EGYPT

Professional Academy for Teachers

CHAPTER (6)

THE PROFESSIONAL ACADEMY
OF TEACHERS

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The Institutional Context

The Egyptian Ministry of Education (MOE) proposed the formation of a Professional Academy for Teachers (PAT) in 2003. It was intended to serve as a centre of excellence for teachers and educational administrators to enable them to engage with educational reform and international trends. The context for this was the historic decline in the status of teachers from the Nasser era, which had included a significant loss of skilled Egyptian teachers to other Arab countries, and weak systems of both pre-service teacher preparation and in-service professional development (Zaalouk 2013, 213).

Following a review of international systems carried out at the ministry's behest, PAT was formally established by Presidential Decree 129 in 2007; it began operating in 2008. Its main inspiration was the Ontario College of Teachers, which licenses, governs and regulates the teaching workforce in Ontario, Canada. Crucially, it was envisaged that PAT would be designed according to an empowerment model that would "be owned by teachers, support the professionalization of teachers . . . give teachers a voice in public debate and transform them from workers and/or civil servants into full-fledged professionals" (Zaalouk 2013).

PAT is a public body which reports directly to the Minister of Education rather than to the Ministry of Education itself, a constitutional arrangement that makes PAT an independent entity rather than a part of the Ministry of Education. PAT's headquarters are in the capital city of Cairo and it has branches all over the country.

Main Roles of PAT

- Issuing teaching profession certification
- Planning and reviewing standards of continued teacher professional development and promotion
- Accrediting of professional development and all training services providers
- Supporting educational and pedagogical research and assuring its application

Despite the important role that PAT plays in teacher education, it has faced a number of challenges, not least of which is the sheer number of teachers that PAT has to serve, a target of almost 1,600,000 teachers. This places heavy constraints on its budget as well as the quality assurance process. Moreover, PAT had to begin its operations with a number of problems that existed prior to its birth, such as a shortage of qualified trainers, out-of-date databases of teacher training programmes and a lack of effective communication with teachers.

It should also be noted that PAT's remit is teachers in all sectors of education; this includes teachers in state, private, and al-Azhar schools. However, this full remit has not as yet been realised, and PAT's work has been restricted to the state sector only. This is particularly problematic in a society that had seen a rapid growth in private sector schooling, including both religious (Islamic) schools (Sayed 2006) and private international schools catering to middle-class elites (Zaalouk 2013).

School in Egypt

Teacher Certification and Induction Scheme

After graduation, teachers are placed in state schools, where they work for the government on a contractual basis. This represents their probation period, which lasts for over two years. Teachers are placed in schools according to geographical region and based on statistics of teacher scarcity and abundance. Teachers on government contract are of two kinds: FOE graduates (in which case they do not need to obtain a teaching certificate) and graduates of any relevant discipline, for example, mathematics, science, etc. (in which case they join the FOE for one year to complete a diploma in education.

During their probation period, teachers are observed by a subject supervisor and school principals four times per year at least. Mentors or senior teachers are responsible for providing technical and academic support throughout the two-year probation period. Towards the end of the period, teachers have to successfully complete a PAT training course, after which they can apply to PAT for their teaching certification.

Teacher Promotion and Continuing Professional Development

PAT offers a range of in-service training, including both general pedagogy and subject matter courses. This variety helps achieve two targets: giving teachers opportunities to get promoted and also guaranteeing their continuous professional development.

Teachers are eligible for promotion if they:

- are certified teachers
- fulfil the interim period between titles (i.e. 5 years)

- pass a package of training courses
- achieve 'efficient ' level in their last two annual appraisals
- hand in a portfolio with evidence of professional development

Accreditation

One of the main aspects of PAT's operations is awarding official accreditation to teacher training services all over the country. This includes organising trainers, training materials, training centres and external reviewers. The committees that oversee this work are made up of university professors, external reviewers and experts in the field.

Lessons Learnt from CDFE

As a result of visits undertaken during the course of the CDFE project, the PAT team drew up a series of targets:

- Design training programmes for supervisors and mentors to support and assess pre-service teachers during the practicum. PAT currently engages in teacher professional development as its main role; it already runs mentorship programmes for assistant (early career) teachers and has begun to train some teachers to be mentors. It nonetheless feels it can modify its existing programmes to develop supervisors and mentors to supervise both pre-service and early career teachers. At the same time it would like to develop criteria for assessment of pre-service teachers alongside the FOE staff. It would therefore like to work more closely with FOEs and to become more involved with the development and assessment of pre-service teachers.
- Implement an e-portfolio as a tool for CPD

for assistant (early career) teachers. The aim is to develop these teachers' International Computor Driving License ICDL capacity and use of technology in the classroom.

• Establish a protocol of co-operation including developing a code of ethics between PAT and FOEs to integrate CPD programmes for teachers. The PAT team are keen to work with FOE staff so that the training for pre-service teachers is integrated more smoothly with the ongoing training (CPD) for early career teachers, with the aim of helping teachers to understand the synthesis of theory with practice.

These three targets remain aspirations rather than actual achievements. This is because they are heavily reliant on PAT and FOEs forging closer links with each other, and this, perhaps inevitably, will involve a significant amount of cultural change in the institutions to trigger change at the policy and practice level. After the visit to Leicester, a number of colleagues from PAT (and other Egyptian partners) commented on the relatively equitable relationships they had observed between schools and FOEs, which they felt was conducive to effective collaborative working and shared learning. These colleagues compared this with the Egyptian context, where there were significant cultural barriers to building such relationships. Participants also noted that teachers in Egypt were more 'professionally conservative' than their counterparts in both England and Malta; this is undoubtedly a key issue to be addressed in the Egyptian context.

A recurring theme in PAT's visits to Northern partners related to the challenges in building a 'teacher-led' model to professional development. Research over recent decades has provided compelling evidence to suggest that the most effective teacher professional development (and consequently the most effective and sustained school improvement) occurs when it is driven by the needs of teachers as determined by teachers' self-identified needs (e.g. Lieberman, 1995; Frost, 2012).

Steps Taken since CDFE

PAT has successfully undertaken the considerable task of training and certifying almost every teacher in Egypt. The next step will entail addressing the cultural barriers to strengthening relationships between the well-established FOEs and PAT if genuine and constructive partnerships between the two are to be developed and sustained.

Since the beginning of the CDFE project, PAT has seen a renewed focus on its original purpose of being a centre of excellence for CPD at the national and local levels, providing professional development and in-house expertise in technical and developmental support. This has been built upon with the recent arrival of a new director and deputy director, with a strong emphasis placed on teamwork by the new leadership team.

The accreditation programme began in 2012. Teachers are accredited once they have completed a 5-day training programme which leads to an increase in salary. New teachers who have completed their pre-service training since 2012 may be certified (accredited) straight away if they were excellent in college. Otherwise these new teachers are given a temporary two-year contract and are given the opportunity to be certified two years after they start teaching.

A UNESCO report (UNESCO-IBE 2012) notes PAT's agenda as including delivery, monitoring and evaluation of

• Accreditation of training centres
• Certification of at least 1,000 trainers in each area of specialisation
• Professional development of Ministry of Education supervisors and school managers
• Accreditation and regular updating of training programmes

PAT has sole responsibility for the accreditation of trainers (who are required to be experienced and effective teachers themselves), and the target of accrediting 1,000 trainers has been far exceeded – at the time of writing a total of 4,636 trainers have been accredited.

Additionally, PAT has been responsible for the development of:

- 133 accredited trainer programme packages
- 47 accredited training centres throughout Egypt
- 128 Quality Assurance reviewers

This is a significant success and PAT is currently undertaking an analysis of the number of trainers in each area of specialisation for future planning.

PAT has an electronic portal (www.pat.edu.eg) and a Facebook page. Teachers, trainers and reviewers all have access to the website (which is administered by the Ministry of Education). Every teacher in Egypt has an access code which allows them to use this website to access their own training record, and also track whether they have been nominated for training in the future; they can also use the portal to submit requests for future training. However, the impact and 'reach' of this portal is difficult to evaluate since PAT do not have access to monitoring data tracking usage; the portal is part of the Ministry website which contains complete teacher records, but PAT only has limited access, which does not extend to data about teachers' own use of the portal in relation to their professional development needs.

It is clear that PAT has made progress in supporting teacher development in the country. Their accreditation programme has offered a pathway to promotion that involves teachers considering different approaches to teaching and their work also appears to have raised the status of teaching in the country.

The Current Work of PAT

PAT has moved on from its original purpose, and has become more closely involved in the quality assurance of CPD, and also increased its focus on developing the professionalism of teachers. This refocusing has been the result of a determination to develop strategically in the light of findings from international developments in educational research, particularly in the fields of teacher professional development (Villegas-Reimers 2003; Little 2012) and school improvement (Borko 2004; Hargreaves & Fullan 2012).

In addition, PAT sees itself as a centre for providing technical and advisory support for the integration of pre- and in-service teachers. There are two central departments: one for the standards and accreditation of CPD, and the other for certifications and promotions. There is a conscious move away from running training programmes to checking the quality of said programmes. The training programmes are extremely popular because promotion depends on teachers passing them.

Consequently, PAT is successfully certifying trainers who have completed any of the 133 accredited training programmes designed through PAT. As stated above, to date, 4,636 trainers have been certified. Training packages have been written across a range of different subjects according to PAT's vision of identifying training needs of teachers at individual, institution and whole country level.

Each school in Egypt has a training and quality unit that works with the lower levels at the MOE. A coordinator at each unit cooperates with the MOE, and PAT works with and monitors the coordinators at each unit. The coordinators are responsible for identifying the professional development needs of the teachers in their schools and organising training at one of the 20 branches of PAT

across the country. Teachers are encouraged to participate in action research projects at local level in teams and will in the future have access to training in action research at one of the branches of PAT or at PAT.

Accreditation of Teachers

Components of the Professional Development programmes and the mechanism of accrediting these components:

- Trainers
- Training materials
- Quality Assurance reviewer

The process of accreditation uses a paper book guide, certified in 2011/12. Written in co-operation with a previously run programme and a number of experts, this is used to support the accreditation of trainees using national standards of educational categories. The expectation is that the guide is regularly reviewed in the light of international standards. There is a focus on the standards used to accredit trainers. There are 40 different categories of trainers:

- Pedagogy
- Pedagogic basics
- Social workers at school
- Early childhood
- Specialised subject areas
- IT trainers
- Vocational
- Financial decentralisation
- Specific institutions
- Community education

Egypt has three categories of teachers in public schools:

Assistant teachers, once they have studied on a programme concerning the basics of pedagogy they are promoted to:

Teacher, once they have studied on a programme concerning assessment, behaviour management and learning and teaching strategies they are promoted to:

Senior teacher, once they have undertaken training on emotional intelligence and professional learning communities they can be promoted to: *Lead senior teachers and Expert teachers.*

As a teacher is promoted their teaching load decreases and they take on the role of evaluation of other teachers. Those who are promoted to leadership can take one of three routes: *Supervisor, school principal, or administrator.*

A significant limitation in preparing the PAT case study was the lack of accurate and comprehensive quantitative data. For instance, it would have been useful to include detailed statistical evidence about the numbers of teachers in each of these categories – not just at the national level, but at the regional (governorate) level as well. This might have enabled the PAT team to make some interesting observations about the different impact of PAT at local, national, and regional levels. It is uncertain as to whether the MOE has statistical information of sufficient sophistication to support such evaluation; furthermore, even if such data is held, PAT does not as a matter of course have access to it; in order to get access to quantitative data it is required to submit a formal request to the Department of Statistics at the MOE.

A draft report by the OECD/World Bank review team states that "in spite of the challenges faced, PAT has made significant progress in

the accreditation of Professional Development providers, carrying out needs assessments among teachers and other professionals, testing and licensing of very large numbers of teachers" (Dewidor, 2012).

Project to Train Teachers with a Visual Impairment

These teachers need to hold the standards but cannot attend the School of Education due to their disabilities. The PAT team have developed a course that addresses pedagogy, development of learners, learning theories, etc. The programme started in 2012 with 18 teachers who are visually impaired. These 18 teachers have contacted 87 more visually impaired teachers. The visually impaired teachers report feeling more confident after taking the course and this has also helped them to appreciate theory and practice; some have shared the training materials with their colleagues at school. The training programme has been published on Facebook

Accreditation of Trainers

PAT can accredit any trainers in any specialisation as long as they meet the required criteria, and in doing this PAT draws upon the expertise available from universities and the MOE, as well as that of its own staff. However, there does appear to be a lack of clarity about exactly what these criteria are. Existing indicators can be seen to be worthwhile as a threshold of the minimum requirements for those judged suitable for becoming accredited trainers, but they do not in themselves provide a clear framework for assessing the quality of trainers, particularly their potential to be effective trainers.

The trainer selection and accreditation process is complicated further by the 'administrative' criteria that are applied, in addition to the 'technical' requirement of attending and passing the training course. In order to be eligible to apply to become a PAT trainer, teachers simply need to reach a certain career level rather than meet any particular aptitude or expertise criteria; since teachers' career progression in Egypt is also determined primarily by longevity rather than performance, this appears to be a significant constraining factor on enhancing the quality of PAT's training provision. There is currently no opportunity for teachers of outstanding quality, but who do not meet the formal criteria, to be identified (either by PAT or by their schools) and put forward for training, representing a significant missed opportunity.

Standards for the quality of PAT training have been established, although PAT is currently undertaking a review of the standards to be expected of their trainers. When PAT began operating, it was under considerable pressure to meet the rapidly expanding demand for training, and so a degree of flexibility in the criteria for trainer accreditation was necessary. The positive impact of this is evident in the rapid expansion of training activities, but inevitably this needs to be set against the risk of variability of trainer quality and so inconsistency of training experience. As a result, and despite the fact that the demand for training is still rising rapidly, PAT has recognised the need to place a greater emphasis on the quality of trainers and training. They have, therefore raised the bar in terms of the criteria for accreditation of trainers and of the standards they expect of training delivery.

One indicator of this shift in emphasis has been the closer attention paid to ensuring sufficient trainers are recruited (and accredited) to meet demand for specific types of training (for instance, expertise in learning technology, in student assessment, or in particular areas of the

curriculum). When PAT has identified a need for a specific kind of trainer with particular expertise and skills, it advertises for these trainers (specifying the expertise they are looking for) on their website. The applications from potential trainers are scrutinised by committees in the PAT branches who check they meet the required criteria. They contact those applicants who meet the necessary requirements and these applicants are invited to undertake a training course (see below for details of training programme). To complete successfully they are required to give a presentation in front of a committee (which consists of FOE and PAT accreditors). If the applicant achieves a high enough score they will be accredited as a trainer. There are three grades of trainers: A, B and C. The trainers are each certified for three years after which they must apply again under different criteria.

In order to become a PAT trainer, the applicant has to take a generic Training of Trainers (TOT) course, which consists of 4 days of 6 hours per day. The teachers undertaking this training must have taught for at least 10 years and bring in their own subject expertise. Once trained, the trainers keep a portfolio and undertake refresher courses to move through categorisations A, B or C. Trainers are also observed by a reviewer. Apart from the official training and refresher courses there does not appear to be opportunities for sharing of good practice between trainers. The MOODLE platform used by PAT is not yet ready to host electronic CPD or dissemination of good practice. PAT has had aspirations for hosting conferences for trainers to allow them to continue their own professional development, but financial constraints have meant that this has not as yet been possible.

The Department of Standards and Professional Evaluation is a department of the MOE whose responsibility is the design and review of standards for education. There is a clear recognition by PAT that current training materials need to be reviewed and improved, as well as further review and revision of the standards for certification and training of new trainers. Much work will be needed to achieve this, including the development of new training materials and of the review of 'trainer assessment resources' (observation sheets, and so on used to assess teachers) in light of MOE expectations and in line with international standards.

It has been proposed that there be a cycle of design and review undertaken internally but reviewed externally; this review process would require input from faculties of education to support PAT in designing new standards, resources and protocols, and ideally some form of partnership between FOEs and PAT to further develop the underpinning of training practice by principles of enquiry-based professional development.

The Action Research in All Schools (ARAS) Project

The ARAS project involves PAT and the American University in Cairo (AUC). PAT has accredited the ARAS training package. The ARAS training package has been tried with master's and doctoral students in 5 tranches (25 participants per tranche). These students then become trainers in action research and this is a practical way of strengthening links between FOEs and schools with PAT as facilitator. PAT hopes to establish a programme of visiting scholars, where school-teachers are seconded to teach at FOEs.

PAT Regional Branches

PAT has branches throughout Egypt, many of which started out as centres for in-service training prior to the establishment of PAT. In-service training centres still have a role in training non-teaching staff such as school administrators and

bursars and these centres have no connection with PAT. However some centres also deliver In-service Education and Training (INSET) to teachers in which case they work under the umbrella of PAT for INSET. There are currently twenty centres throughout Egypt that serve as joint PAT–INSET centres and four new centres which serve only as branches of PAT.

It appears that branches of PAT in the provinces find it easier than PAT's main office in Cairo to work with the FOEs and the MOE. This may be a legacy of their origins as INSET centres before PAT was established. In common with other PAT branches, the Fayoum branch has a contact person in the Fayoum FOE and in the MOE office, and there is a good rapport between them. The good relations between PAT's branch offices and FOEs are a model that clearly enhances the work of PAT at the local level, and it is therefore hoped that this may be replicated at the national level.

Main Challenges Encountered

A draft report by the OECD/World Bank review team (UNESCO-IBE 2012) notes that CPD in Egypt fits largely into the traditional mode of in-service provision, that is, short one-off courses of lectures, seminars and qualification programmes with little or no follow up. The report goes on to note that, "the envisaged level of collaboration and co-operation between Faculties of Education and the Professional Academy of Teachers in all aspects of teacher education have not materialised. Delays in this regard are hampering much needed reforms in Pre-Service Training, In-Service Training and Continual Professional Development".

The same report recognises that PAT was selected in 2011 to become an Arab regional centre of excellence for professional development, and refers to a small-scale survey of 147 teachers who participated in PAT programmes over a 3-year period, rated the courses as satisfactory (an average of 3.9/4.0 on a 4 point scale). However the participants in this study identified a number of recommendations to improve the training:

- The importance of conducting a needs assessment related to teachers' areas of specialisation
- The selection of trainees best suited to meet these needs
- The need to focus on practical teaching issues
- The scheduling of INSET / CPD programmes during school breaks and holidays when teachers are free
- The need for continuity of Professional Development and follow-up support for implementation of the lessons learned.

In our discussions with teachers, some commented that it was not easy for teachers to acknowledge needing training in some aspect of their practice since this is seen (possibly due to deep-rooted cultural expectations) as admitting to a 'weakness'. If this is a widespread cultural issue, then this could indicate a limitation in the reliability of evaluation data, namely a possibly significant under-reporting of teachers' professional development needs.

During the CDFE project it was noted that student teachers came to FOEs with relatively low academic qualifications (in comparison to other professional graduate programmes, e.g., medicine and engineering). The consequence of this could be a relative lack of motivation amongst student teachers – although there is no systematic evidence regarding this, other than a number of very small-scale studies, which although known to PAT staff are not available publically or in English).

As is the case with many professional development initiatives, financial constraints provide a significant – and persistent – challenge. PAT has been extremely successful in enabling 343,000 teachers to have access to training and promotion at a cost of EGP 11 million. At first sight this appears to be extremely cost-effective (EGP32 per 'training activity'), perhaps largely because of the devolved model, by which much of the training is delegated to local centres and schools (with PAT responsible for financial oversight/distribution of the money according to 'local needs'). However, this does raise a concern about how this devolved delivery is monitored, particularly the work of the school 'training units' responsible for CPD. While in some instances there is clearly commendable activity at school level, there is significant variability across the system. Some of the teachers we met during the case study visit were scornful of the quality and training units at their schools. Because of this, teachers often had to look for their own CPD programmes, particularly if they were seeking promotion. Thus, resource constraints can impact on quality (and quality assurance rigour) as well as scale.

The training units exist but the teachers in charge are also working and so have little time to identify and support the professional development of staff. It was suggested by one of the teachers we interviewed that if professional development was to be taken seriously, the person responsible for leading the training unit in the school needed to be a senior colleague who carries credibility "like a principal, with the appropriate qualifications".

There is also an issue about identifying teachers' professional development needs at local level and then communicating these to PAT. If the teacher in charge at the unit does not have the time or resources to identify professional development needs, then the training programmes designed at PAT may not be suitable at local level.

The training programmes themselves are not under scrutiny. A report published in 2012 by the OECD/World Bank highlighted the success of PAT's training programmes and accreditation of teachers in numbers, but questioned the quality, relevance and impact of these programmes. Because teachers are only promoted after passing a number of programmes, many undertake the training as a mechanistic exercise rather than valuing the whole learning experience and recognising their role in their own CPD. The teachers do not see themselves as agents of change, rather as individual practitioners seeking promotion; this instrumental view of CPD limits its potential for sustained improvement in practice.

Other Challenges Encountered

1. Relationships between PAT and FOEs

A persistent theme of discussions of teacher education in Egypt during CDFE activities over the life of the project has been of the lack of clear connections between different stages of teacher development, in particular, between pre-service teacher education and in-service CPD. Fundamentally this is because these different stages of what should be a continuous 'learning journey' are almost entirely the responsibility of different organisations with no coherent oversight of the complete process; pre-service teacher education is delivered by the Faculties of Education while CPD is provided by PAT and its regional branches. This disconnect is most obvious in respect of the pre-service training practicum experience, which means there is insufficient focus on developing partnerships between schools and FOEs that will allow for the quality and practical value of the practicum to be enhanced through effective and relevant CPD for teachers.

2. Teacher Shortages

In Egypt there are almost 2 million teachers but there are shortages in certain subjects. Attracting high calibre candidates for pre-service teacher education is a significant problem in Egypt, and this is particularly the case for STEM subject teachers. This, of course, is an almost ubiquitous problem globally; right across the industrialised north it has long been recognised as one of the most challenging obstacles to building a high-quality teacher workforce, and so, in turn, in producing high quality educational outcomes (OECD 2005; 2011).

3. Status of Action Research

A key lesson learned by all the CDFE partners has been of the potential benefits of developing a professional culture in which action research (or 'professional enquiry') is seen as a primary means of both teacher development and school improvement (Somekh and Zeichner 2009). As a result of CDFE it became clear that this offered opportunities for enhancing the status of CPD by embedding action research in programmes, thus making explicit its direct relevance and impact on improving the learning and teaching practice in schools. However, it was also clear from a number of MENA partners that universities and school cultures do not fully recognise the value of action research, and this inhibits further development of this potentially valuable area for development. This is not just an issue in MENA institutions; it is a phenomenon commonly experienced in European FOEs as well.

4. Cultural Barriers

PAT has encountered a high level of resistance amongst teachers to continued professional development, much of it related to cultural factors. For many teachers, CPD is seen as an unnecessary burden on their time with little or no perceived benefit. There is also anecdotal evidence to suggest that older teachers may be unwilling to accept the credentials of trainers younger than themselves. Whilst this represents a genuine challenge for PAT, there is also no doubt that both these problems could be mitigated if the purpose of the training was made more explicit. This would necessitate a greater focus on ensuring training courses led to appropriate and relevant learning outcomes and meaningful assessment protocols. This would in turn enable teachers participating in training courses to have more confidence in the effectiveness of the training, and so also give greater credence to the expertise of the trainer.

Ways Forward

To date there has been no systematic evaluation of the impact of CPD taking place in Egyptian schools, and consequently of the effectiveness of PAT in coordinating CPD strategy, and of its training and accrediting of trainers and the rigour of its quality assurance of CPD provision. There is, therefore, an urgent need to evaluate PAT's impact at a system level. This evaluation could draw on existing data from other national agencies; for instance, there would be considerable benefit for a comprehensive multiagency review that examined data on pupil outcomes in Egyptian schools alongside PAT's data on CPD provision.

PAT needs to look at how to evaluate the training programmes in such a way that a cultural shift can begin. Training needs to be seen as of value for a teacher's own development and not just for promotion. Thus, action research and reflective

practice can begin to be discussed as a long-term process rather than something that must be implemented with immediate results.

The training programmes need to meet the needs of local teachers, and PAT has to find a way to train subject-specific trainers that focus on practicum. The majority of the teachers we met during the case study visit (and in other CDFE activities) expressed dissatisfaction regarding the quality and value of many aspects of their pre-service training, but particularly about their practicum experience. They also felt that their pre-service training had lacked sufficient input on the 'application of pedagogy'.

Even though many teachers had undergone a number of CPD training programmes, there is a strong sense that these are often seen as isolated experiences with little or no direct impact on their teaching; this would suggest the need for more coherent CPD experiences spread over time, with support and evaluation continuing beyond specific programmes to maximise the impact on teachers' competence, confidence – and morale.

Even where teachers expressed positive views about the content of training, it nonetheless appears that the learning that results is viewed in isolation from their wider professional practice. While the participants complete a training day, there does not appear to be any systematic follow-up to look at the impact CPD is having on professional practice. Creating a forum in which participants are encouraged to reflect on their practice after the event would help ensure that any developments as a result of participation in the programme are prolonged and sustainable.

The CPD courses provided by PAT (centrally and through local branches), beyond the 'learning gains' resulting from the course content, have

also created valuable opportunities for teachers to meet during their sessions. If more can be done to harness the full power of these opportunities for building professional relationships, this would appear to offer the potential for significant progress in fostering a more collegial, collaborative culture of professional development. Much has been made during various CDFE activities of the potential benefits of using Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) or social networking sites; this might be a fruitful area for PAT to explore further. If their CPD participants are encouraged to contribute to (possibly with initial contributions being a stipulation of the course) participants are more likely to see the value of a community approach to development and continue to develop these connections long after finishing the course (Dabbagh and Kitsantas 2012).

Another recurring theme during CDFE project meetings has been that of a disconnect between pre-service teacher education and in-service CPD. However, the CDFE project has created a space for some fruitful relationship-building between PAT and FOEs; the successes of the project, and the shared approach to institutional improvement planning that has been central to this success, suggests that these relationships can be sustained, and built upon, beyond the life of the project. If this is a case, it could create opportunities for PAT's work in schools to support the development of more effective relationships between FOEs and schools, which in turn is likely to have a positive impact on the practicum experience for student teachers. Similarly, closer relationships between FOEs and PAT may allow for more effective coordination of CPD provision.

The lack of credibility afforded to action research as a valid, rigorous form of professional enquiry is partly culturally rooted, but also a feature of a history of disconnect between schools and FOEs (and so between pre-service and in-service teacher education). One of the most encouraging outcomes of the CDFE project has

been the strengthened relationships between FOEs (responsible for pre-service training) and PAT (responsible for in-service training) and also the universal acceptance of the potential value of action research for teacher development and school improvement.

The Institutional Improvement Plan (IIP) targets which the PAT team identified would provide a good platform from which to undertake these improvements, especially if PAT can use its regional branches to develop relationships between the organisation and FOEs. The targets in brief were:

- Design training programmes for supervisors and mentors to support and assess pre service teachers during the practicum.

- Implement an e-portfolio as a tool for teacher professional development for assistant (early career) teachers.

- Establish a protocol of co-operation including developing a code of ethics between PAT and faculties of Education to integrate CPD programmes for teachers.

It is clear that developing the relationship with the Faculties of education is going to be an important factor in undertaking the aims of PAT over the next few years, not just in the development of schools-FOE partnerships for managing the practicum. We consider that both PAT and FOEs have much to gain by collaborating and that building on the relationships with the PAT branches would be a viable way to begin this process.

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02

LEBANON

CHAPTER (7)

LEBANON'S EDUCATIONAL
CONTEXT

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Introducing the Case Studies

The two case studies presented in this report focus on the Université Saint-Joseph (USJ) and the American University of Beirut (AUB), and contribute to the TEMPUS-funded project "Capacity Development of Faculties of Education in International Approaches to Teacher Education" (hereafter, CDFE), led by the American University in Cairo. They draw on a series of sources and activities that were produced during the lifetime of the project, including baseline reports, conferences, study visits, analysis of promising practices, as well as scholarly exchange between 14 universities and educational institutions from the global North and South involving Egypt, Lebanon, Malta, Palestine, Sweden and the United Kingdom. All these activities focused on three central aspects in the formation of teachers, namely the practicum in initial teacher education (ITE), continued professional development (CPD), and action research (AR). All three aspects highlighted the possibilities of—and potential for—partnership between faculties of education and schools in improving teacher effectiveness, and in reforming educational practice.

The CDFE project is based on the notion that the exchange of experience between professionals working in the same field is conducive to a deeper understanding of the issues involved, and to the development of new insights, capacities, and tools that improve practice. While contexts differ greatly between and within countries and teacher training institutions and schools in the global North and South, project partners generally found that they shared similar concerns and faced similar challenges. Exchanges between colleagues from the different institutions, as well as observation of each other at work, were therefore often most productive, as experiences and mind sets were inflected through different cultural and institutional contexts, helping participants become more aware of practices that had established themselves as routines, and to be more reflexive about them.

This summary first provides background information on Lebanon's education system. It then moves to focus specifically on each of the two institutions which participated in the CDFE project, AUB and USJ. For each university, a description is given of its faculty/department of education, providing an insight into the range and extent of its work, but concentrating in particular on those aspects that are directly related to initial and in-service teacher education, and the institution's partnership with schools. This is then followed by a summary of the developments and transformations in both understanding and practices in the three areas of the CDFE project, practicum, action research and continued professional development.

Lebanon's Education System

As a country, Lebanon is perhaps best described in terms of the diversity of its multi-faith communities, where religion often serves as a proxy for, and expression of political, civic and cultural affiliations and identity. Religion also often serves to distribute students across a wide array of denominational schools, such that the Lebanese educational system is quite unique, with 71% getting their formal education in the non-state sector. The remaining 29% (amounting to 275,655 students) attend public schools, which often suffer from teacher shortages and from infrastructural problems.

Only one out of the 42 higher education institutions in Lebanon is public—namely the Lebanese University, which enrols 38.3% of all higher education students (n=73,698). This partly accounts for the low enrolment in tertiary education, which has stood at a stable +46% up to 2012 (Soueid et al., 2014, p.22), but which is bound to deteriorate giving increasing tuition fees that low-income households can ill afford. The TVET option has also proved increasingly

attractive given that graduates from this sector often have a quicker and smoother access to the labour market than their university counterparts. Here too, however, it should be noted that as much as 75% of the over 76,000 students in the Vocational and Technical Education sector are to be found in private, often fee-paying institutions.

Part of the non-state education sector caters for Palestinian refugees through the services offered by UNRWA, which counts some 450,000 refugees (10% of Lebanon's population), 53% of whom live in 12 refugee camps in which 69 schools cater for 32,350 pupils. The flood of Palestinian and other refugees from war-torn Syria has made the already complex situation even more intractable. Formally registered Syrian refugees amount to over 1 million, or almost a quarter of Lebanon's population, with the actual numbers being much higher.

Lebanon's education system bears the marks of the country's diverse population and long history of foreign intervention. Primary and secondary schools still follow the French system, while colleges and universities are largely based on the American model, with the Université Saint-Joseph and the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik being notable exceptions given their roots in the French academic tradition. Lebanon's education system also reflects the strong influence of Islamic and Christian traditions that have shaped, and continue shaping it today. Approximately 70% of the country's population is Muslim (mostly Shi'ites, Sunnis and Druze), while Christians (Maronites, Greek Orthodox, and Catholics) make up the remaining 30%. Conflict between and within the different denominations has led to four civil wars between 1840 and 1975, two of which took place since the establishment of a Lebanese independent state in 1943. The most recent conflict, which was only brought to an end thanks to the Taef Peace Agreement in 1989, claimed the lives of over 100,000 citizens, with the civil war causing serious damage not only

to the educational infrastructure, but also to the country's ability to mobilise education to build a sense of common identity and unity.

As Frayha (2010, p.93) notes, educational development has to take place within a deeply divided society "in which ethnic-cultural identities, religious conflict, and class stratification come into play in a significant way and the question of a 'unified' curriculum emerges as a central yet contested concern". Efforts to ensure that the post-war educational system would facilitate harmony between the different groups, besides bringing curricula and teaching methodologies in line with the most current thinking and in response to the needs of regional and global labour markets, include the adoption of a 'Plan for an Educational Renaissance' in 1994, a 'New Structure for Instruction' in 1995, and a new curriculum between 1995-1997. More recently, a National Education Strategy (Lebanese Association for Educational Studies, 2006) set out a vision for the future of the sector, highlighting the challenges of equity, access and quality of education for all, the role of education in building unity and harmony nation-wide, and in promoting wealth creation in a knowledge-based economy, all of which require efficient system governance. This guided the articulation of a sector development plan by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE, 2010) for the years 2010-2015.

It is beyond the scope of this study to provide a detailed outline of the success or otherwise of these initiatives. It must be said from the outset— and before considering the issues that Lebanon has to face—that the country has notched up several achievements in the education sector. Just under 90% of adults and over 98% of youths are literate, with Beirut being named the World Book Capital in 2009 in acknowledgement of its initiatives in promoting books and encouraging cultural diversity and dialogue (Frayha, 2009).

Furthermore, Lebanon enjoys one of the lowest ratios of students to teachers in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, and worldwide. The regional average student-teacher ratio was 21:1 in 2007, while it is 25:1 globally. The figures for Lebanon are 14:1 for primary schools, and 9:1 for secondary schools (World Bank, 2010)—though these do not reflect the current ratio given the influx of Syrian refugees in public and UNRWA schools. The country has signed up to several international conventions, signalling a clear commitment to respecting the right to quality education for all. This translates into a consistently expanding budgetary allocation to the sector, with public expenditure reaching 1.6% of GDP (USD 641 million), and expenditure on private schools reaching 4.4% of GDP (USD 1783 million) in 2011 (Soueid et al., 2014). It should be noted, however, that despite expanding allocation, public expenditure is still low when compared to other countries in the region, and the public education sector is still greatly dependent on external donor funding. As already noted, the Syrian crisis has had a major impact on the country, putting a strain on educational resources, facilities and services that other countries can barely begin to conceive.

Despite the many political challenges that the country has had to face, it has nevertheless managed to school a good number of its children, and is close to reaching the second Millennium Development Goals in education. Gross enrolment rates in primary, intermediate and secondary education have improved, reaching 86.3% in 2012, though it should be noted that the rate for upper secondary have deteriorated to 62.6% for the same year (Soueid et al., 2014, p.7). Considering and comparing both gross and enrolment rates, Soueid et al. (2014, p.7) conclude that progress achieved throughout the years should not mask the fact that as many as "7 in 100 children may remain uneducated for several decades in the future". Girls outdo boys when it comes to enrolment at practically all levels of education, tertiary institutions included.

Repetition rates have also dropped at both primary and intermediate levels. However, despite such progress, it must be pointed out that the dropout rate, while improving for primary education (from 10.7% in 2009 to 6.7% in 2012), deteriorated for the intermediate level (from 14.9% to 17.3% for the same years; see also Bloem, 2013, especially pg. 12).

Key Challenges for Education

Four inter-related challenging issues stand out especially powerfully, and while they are common to several countries in the MENA region, they take on a particularly challenging character in the context of Lebanon:

1. The issue of equity in access to quality education is a challenge that troubles most if not all education systems. In Lebanon, however, the problem assumes proportions that are especially significant and complex, with achievement gaps between institutions and between different sectors of the population being very wide depending on the socio-economic, ethnic and religious origins of students, the types of schools they attend, and whether they are Lebanese citizens or refugees. There are significant regional disparities in education attainment according to the socio-economic development of the region (Frayha, 2009), with higher illiteracy rates in the more deprived areas such as the Bekaa (14.45%) and South Lebanon (12.25%). The widest divide is between private and public schools (Soueid et al., 2014, p.18), with the former generally being fee-paying, attracting a particular clientele, offering better teachers and infrastructure, and outdoing the latter across a whole range of attainment areas, as witnessed by both local assessment exercises and international comparative studies. Indeed, the TIMSS 2011 study revealed that Lebanon has

the widest achievement gap between students of the lowest and highest quintile among Arab countries, especially in mathematics, with the difference in learning outcomes patterned according to whether students attended private or public schools (Salehi-Isfahani et al., 2014). Out of every 1000 students sitting for the baccalaureate exam, nine from the public school sector passed on their first attempt, compared to 255 from the private schools (PNUD, 2009, p.132 – cited in Frayha, 2009). Furthermore, the private school sector is freer to innovate and respond to student needs and parental expectations and aspirations, while the public schools are often stymied in their efforts by a centralised system that acts as a brake on change, rather than as a facilitator of initiatives.

2. The issue of the language of instruction further entrenches inequality in Lebanon's education system. Key school subjects are taught in a language that is not the learner's mother tongue, with 51% of primary and secondary schools (1416 institutions) using French as the second language of instruction, 26% (717) using English, and 23% (653) using both English and French (Soueid et al., 2014). Mathematics and sciences—success in which controls access to Universities and to the more lucrative economic sectors—are taught in English or French, despite laws regulating and limiting their use after Lebanon gained its independence in 1943. As Jurdak (2011, p. 24) notes, the use of a foreign language "adds one more filter since the socially and economically disadvantaged have less opportunities to learn a foreign language and practice it in their home milieu. Consequently, mathematics and science taught in a foreign language tend to discriminate educationally and economically against students coming from low socioeconomic classes".

The problem of the language of instruction, however, goes beyond the use of a foreign language. Arabic, besides being taught as a language, is often (though not always) the medium of instruction for civics, history and geography. The Arabic that is taught and that is used to teach is an academic and classical variant that is perceived as distant from students' everyday lives, effectively acting as yet another linguistic obstacle to learning. To this must also be added the presence of a large number of Syrian refugee children in public schools (see f.n.5), whose dialectical Arabic differs not only from classical Arabic but also from local dialects. Language of instruction has therefore become such a major issue that CERD has launched a training programme with over 4000 school teachers specifically focusing on the use of language in instructional contexts.

3. The complex mosaic that makes up Lebanon's society renders educational leadership and effective policy making particularly difficult. Differences in values, as well as contrasting views as to the nature of educational experiences that young people should be offered, leads to situations which make "the approval and implementation of urgently-needed forward-looking educational policies a tedious job which normally ends in consensual policies that continue the status quo in one way or another" (Jurdak, 2011, p.26). As Frayha (2010) notes in his gripping reflections on his involvement in the introduction of a new national curriculum for Lebanon in 1997, the fact that the country has adopted a confessional political system, where political and administrative power is divided in pre-determined ways according to quotas shared among different religious groups, often leads to situations where sensitivities end up in the impasse of paralysis.

Partly as a result of such 'confessional politics', one's sense of identity is not around an imagined national community as much as

around religious-cum-political affiliations, with education becoming a site where such fragmented identities are expressed and reinforced rather than connected to a larger national 'project'. Several higher educational institutions have in fact been established by confessional groups, often without any quality control on the part of the government, leading Jurdak (2011, p.26) to conclude that here, as in other matters, "weak political will renders the government's role in education more as a referee than a decision maker".

4. Finally, a factor that is central to this case study concerns the qualifications and training of the teaching corps in Lebanon. Out of the 42 universities and colleges in Lebanon, 13 offer teacher training either as a first degree (three to four year courses, generally preparing primary school teachers) or as a post-graduate diploma on top of a major in other areas (targeting prospective secondary school teachers). The government is one of the service providers in initial teacher education through a degree programme at the Lebanese University, and through sub-degree courses offered by the national Centre for Education Research and Development (CERD) and the Ministry of Technical and Vocational Education. Soueid et al. (2014, p.15), drawing on CERD statistics, indicate that while 48% of primary and secondary school teachers (n=40,473) are in possession of a first degree, and 6% have graduated with a Masters (n=5,434), as many as 26% (n=22,269) only have a school-level qualification. The latest CERD statistics (2015) indicated that 63.3% of teachers have a first degree or higher. However, up to quite recently, 22% of all teachers were uncertified (World Bank, 2010).

This of course has implications for the quality of instruction across different schools, with some only employing fully trained teachers with either a teacher's qualification or a first degree in a curricular area followed by a teacher's diploma, and others being content with content knowledge either at degree level or below. The scope for pre-service and in-service teacher education is therefore vast. Currently, 1.9% [n=3,753] of all higher education students across Lebanon's universities are following a major in Education and Teaching—compared, for instance, to 27% [n=51,973] in Business and Economics (CERD, 2012).

Major weaknesses in teacher education programmes identified by Farah-Sarkis (1997), Freiha (1997), BouJaoude (2000), Fathallah (2002), BouJaoude & El-Mouhayar (2010), and the World Bank (2010) are ones common to several other university-based programmes internationally, including:

[a] low admission standards,

[b] a deficiency in the levels of general education and cultural capital of prospective teachers, a deficiency which is not adequately addressed by the educational experiences on campus,

[c] insufficient importance given to the practicum, to which less than 25% of course time is generally allocated,

[d] an overly academic and technicist orientation to teacher preparation, where the relation between theory and practice does not come together in ways that promotes the development of a reflective practitioner,

[e] faculty staff that are often distant from the realities of school life,

[f] inadequate preparation of future teachers to cater for the special learning and other needs of students, and

[g] brief or non-existent induction programmes to support and mentor beginning teachers. To all this should be added the lack of research evaluating the teacher education programmes on offer, something that BouJaoude and El-Mouhayar (2010) draw attention to.

Learning from Comparing

As with all social action, it is of course difficult if not impossible to establish a direct causal link between the CDFE project and initiatives in the different institutions. Members of university faculties and national institutions are exposed to a range of stimulating ideas through their scholarly research and their local and international networks, such that initiatives and innovations can be traced back to a number of sources, each of which, individually or collectively, could help explain why a particular course of action rather than another was adopted.

Having said that, project participants often referred to lessons learnt from CDFE colleagues and experiences, directly attributing to them changes in thinking and acting. At times such 'lessons' resonated with notions that had been developed in other contexts, but which were reinforced due to the experiential nature of the learning afforded by a project that gave a premium to observing practice.

Furthermore, the complex nature of educational innovation and change needs to be highlighted in order to draw a distinction between what actors say they are doing, and what they actually enact in their practices. Social actors are more likely to change the way they speak about teaching and learning, rather than actually transforming the way they behave, and the way they organise educational experiences. Modifications in the 'discursive ecologies' of teacher education are, however, not to be dismissed as merely superficial or necessarily illusory. Rather they are here seen as potentially representing an important first step in the direction of authentic change, and therefore worth recording and analysing.

The journey towards change that is captured in these case studies therefore highlights intention and achievement, challenges encountered and frustrations managed, or even overcome. The case studies represent a reflective account about the ups and downs of the path travelled by the different institutions throughout the life of the project, ending with an indication of the way forward beyond that. In what follows, the 'changing mind-sets and transformative practices' reported and/or observed at USJ and AUB, in relation to the teaching practicum, continued professional development of teachers, and action research, are reported as faithfully as possible. A more complete picture can be obtained by perusing the full report, where the contexts in which such change is played out.

School in Lebanon

02

LEBANON

CHAPTER (8)

UNIVERSITY OF SAINT JOSEPH

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The Institutional Context

The Université Saint-Joseph of Beirut (USJ) was founded as a private Catholic University by the Society of Jesus (a.k.a. Jesuits) 140 years ago, in 1875. Supported by funds from Catholic contributors in England and the Americas, it initially followed the model of the Gregorian University in Rome by specialising in philosophy and theology, with the courses being grouped together under the Faculty of Theological Studies when the French School of Medicine was created at the USJ in 1883. Strong connections were established with France, particularly through the links of the Syrian Jesuits to Lyon, and despite the fact that the French government at the time was going through a period of anti-clericalism, it nevertheless decided to support the new University, both through regular injections of financial aid, as well as by recognising the qualifications of USJ as equivalent to those in France.

The French government's support also provided the required political weight to tip the Ottoman authorities in the region in favour of the new University, a support that earned it the recognition of the Ottoman powers in the region. Indeed, as from 1898, qualifications in medicine and pharmacy were endorsed by two entities, i.e., the French state and the Ottoman. In time, the University, besides becoming a reference point in the region for its work in the medical and pharmaceutical fields, also became a magnet for orientalist scholars specialising in history, geography, archaeology, and Semitic languages, with an impressively stocked Bibliothèque Orientale serving their needs, and with a Faculty of Humanities taking its embryonic shape as the Faculté Orientale in 1902.

Despite the vagaries of time, and the changing fortunes of different political powers in and around Beirut, other faculties were established, including those of Law and Engineering. Further

developments saw a growing number of Lebanese students attending the different courses, with women being admitted to some of the faculties in 1925. By the 1940s, an increasing number of staff were Lebanese, with the process of indigenisation also slowly entrenching itself in the certificates issued directly by the USJ, which have international currency.

Given its historic ties with France, the USJ's main language of instruction continues to be French, though it actively encourages the use of Arabic and English. Despite its denominational character, USJ recruits students from across the different religious and ethnic affiliations in the country, and prides itself on its openness to diversity, as witnessed, for instance, by the setting up of an Institut d'Etudes Islamo-Chrétiennes.

Presently USJ is organised around 13 faculties and a range of research institutes and schools, and caters for around 11,000 students in its five campuses in Beirut, together with outreach centres in Sidon, Tripoli and Zahlé. The Faculty of Educational Sciences and the affiliated Lebanese Institute of Educators share responsibilities for educational studies and research, including the pre-service and in-service training of teachers. The former was founded in 2002, with five departments catering for around 360 students. The latter started out as a small independent institute in 1956, but became integrated within the USJ in 1978.

Together with the Lebanese University, USJ adopted the Higher Education Model (Licence-Master-Doctorat, or 'LMD' model of the Bologna Process) as well as the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) in 2003, facilitating the internationalisation of the university and the granting of equivalence to its programmes of study.

Faculty of Educational Sciences

The Faculté des Sciences de l'Education (FSEdu) caters for students from across all Lebanon, reflecting the rich diversity of ethno-religious groups as well as the different types of schools in the country. It strives to respond to the educational challenges facing Lebanon by creating a shared educational culture among its students, by promoting pedagogical expertise through its initial teacher education programmes and the training of educational leaders, and by fostering strong links and partnerships with schools, particularly through action research projects that respond to developmental needs of education communities. The commitment to partnerships is also signalled by the presence of a Consultative Committee that gathers representatives from different private schools and from Ministry of Education. The Faculty also contributes towards improved teaching across the University by offering pedagogical training to lecturers.

FSEdu's departments/units are in charge of:

a. The 'Licence d'Enseignement', a 40 ECTS course training complementary and secondary school teachers;

b. The Certificate of Teaching for Secondary Education (CAPES - or Certificat d'Aptitude pour l'Enseignement Secondaire), an 80 ECTS course on top of a first degree, which trains future teachers for intermediate and secondary schools. It provides recruits with knowledge of content area in the various subjects of the National Curriculum, offers courses in methodology and pedagogy, and ensures professional learning through the practicum.

c. The professional Masters, a two-year course on top of a first degree, where students can follow one of two options: the first on School Management, contributing to the professionalization of the roles of school leaders; the second in Subject Coordination and Pedagogic Support;

d. The research Masters, offering a 120 ECTS pathway for those wanting to be trained as researchers in the educational sciences, thus fostering methodological expertise and evidence-based policy development;

e. Developing and implementing new technologies in education, and ensuring their integration in classroom teaching to further enhance learning effectiveness—a task entrusted to the 'Unité des Nouvelles Technologies Educatives' of the Faculty;

f. Enhancing teachers' continued professional development (CPD) through the provision of pre-scheduled and customised training programmes, as well as through expertise in the auditing and evaluation of educational establishments. This department is in charge of a one year University Teaching Diploma, and also of a 4-year doctoral programme in education. It also offers a 14 ECTS diploma in pedagogy that trains higher education staff in the use of appropriate teaching pedagogies.

The Lebanese Institute of Educators affiliated to the FSEdu

The Institut Libanais d'Educateurs (ILE) was set up in 1956 with the explicit mission of catering for initial and continued teacher training, to support and pilot pedagogical reform, and to promote education research in pre-primary and primary schools and in the field of special and remedial education. Affiliated to the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences in 1978 and to the Faculty of Educational Sciences in 2003, it actively contributes to the development of education in Lebanon, offering a range of research and

training services to the state, as well as to private educational entities. It has four departments, one for preschool and primary education, one for special education, one for post-graduate studies, and one for continued professional development.

The ILE offers a six-semester (180 ECTS) undergraduate degree in educational sciences, with students having the option to focus on preschool and primary education, or special education. The same options can be taken at a Teaching Diploma level, which is one year longer than the BA. Students can continue their studies leading to a Masters in the area of their choice. All the Institute's courses are offered in the afternoon, with the practicum being organised in the mornings.

Key characteristics of the ILE include a stress on placing students at the centre of all training programmes, where personal and professional development takes place hand in hand with the inculcation of values and dispositions that make a person fit for teaching. Furthermore, across the ILE programmes there is an emphasis on alternating theory with practice thanks to a rich variety of practicum experiences, on ensuring that training is readily accessible to both students and already practising teachers, and on an active pedagogy that takes into account the learning needs of individual students thanks to a highly developed tutoring system.

Changing Mind-sets, Transforming Practices at USJ

The Teaching Practicum

Throughout the course of the CDFE project, and despite the strengths of the practicum models implemented at the Faculté des Sciences de l'Education (FSEdu) and the affiliated Institut Libanais d'Educateurs (ILE), faculty staff benefited from the opportunity of observing other approaches to the practicum either during study visits, or during encounters with project partners where experiences and practices were shared. Both during interviews with FSEdu/ILE staff, as well as in documents produced by them throughout the lifetime of the project, a number of areas were identified as meriting a re-think, and possibly change. The most important of these are presented below.

- A key area targeted for improvement by the USJ team concerns the quality of relations between university-based tutor, school-based mentor, and the intern. The roles of the different persons involved in the practicum are notoriously complex, as activities could include several of the following: observation, giving feedback, coaching, encouraging, modelling, and assessing. Some institutions try to keep some of these roles separate, as they feel that the summative assessment aspect of the task potentially interferes with the mentoring aspect. The latter requires a relationship of trust and even a sense of complicity between novice and mentor/tutor, which some feel might be jeopardised if the same person will ultimately be the examiner, deciding whether the intern has reached the required standard, with the decision potentially having serious implications for the student's future.

- While USJ staff do offer training to mentors, interaction with CDFE project partners as well

as visits to some of the partner countries led to a deeper awareness of the complex and often distinct roles that tutors and mentors must play, and that this called for more advanced forms of training so that the quality of mentoring and coaching could be improved. Staff also felt that it was time to raise the question as to whether, in Lebanon, the role of mentors should be professionalised, their work acknowledged and, as in the case of what was observed in England, they are given enough time in their school schedule to better support student teachers.

- Reflections on role specificity and differentiation in relation to the practicum also led to further opportunities for learning by comparing. USJ staff felt that the specification of expectations from mentors as much as from tutors could be more clearly articulated in a revised practicum Handbook. So too could the competences that student teachers were expected to develop and master, making these targets transparent to interns and mentors and tutors alike. Indeed, given the diversity in ITE programmes in Lebanon, USJ staff felt that it might be a good idea for such competences to be agreed to across the board, especially if a developmental approach was adopted whereby broadening and deepening of mastery was recorded across the different teaching practice sessions.

- Further strategies that could enhance clarity in relation to expectations, roles and responsibilities that staff considered after their field visit to Malta and elsewhere included the development of a code of ethics for both interns and tutors/mentors, and the setting out of a clear structure for the teaching practice file that interns would be expected to follow. In this way, information about the school, class lists, class profiles, time tables, student profiles, syllabi and schemes of work to be followed, lesson plans, and self-evaluations would all feature in an organised way. This would permit mentors

and tutors to more readily see the work that had been done by each intern, and to have a more comprehensive view that permitted evaluation that was more holistic, fair, and targeted.

- The key question asked by USJ staff, as much as by other project partners, was the extent to which schools could be better prepared to be powerful learning sites for interns—not least because a recurrent concern was the lack of appropriate schools where such learning could take place. USJ staff therefore considered a number of issues and strategies, many of which had already been discussed by FSEdu and ILE mentors, but which, with the impetus of the CDFE project, were taken to a different and more operational level. It was therefore resolved to articulate the mentor's and tutor's roles more clearly in the practicum Handbooks, ensuring that the school-based input was more adequately acknowledged, and to devise a comprehensive training package that helped the partners involved in overseeing the practicum fulfil the roles as described. Such training, which could in fact give a new lease of life to the University diploma for mentors offered by the ILE, would include strategies in making optimal use of the practicum e-portfolio, since this brought together the different aspects of the teaching practice in ways that helped interns reflect critically about their own professional learning and efforts.

- Working more closely together with mentors would not only improve the overall supervisory experience, but would also ensure that the messages given by both university-based and school-based staff were aligned, and that both learned from each other by sharing their respective expertise. This would take the whole USJ model for the field placement closer to the idea of considering schools as 'professional development schools', where the relationship is not just with the mentors, but with the school as a whole. The heads of schools hosting

interns would thus also become more involved in the whole process of the practicum, thus highlighting the notion that interns are not just learning in the classroom, but are members of a school community that is collectively and collegially striving to attain educational ideals. The notion that the practicum requires immersion of interns in the culture of the school was strongly reinforced by the model implemented at the University of Alexandria, among others.

- Building closer partnerships with schools—which, in the case of USJ, is actually already formalised through a 'partnership agreement'—also addressed a related area of concern, and which staff targeted for improvement, namely the link between theory and practice. While this dialectical relationship has been the object of much attention and discussion in the development of programmes for novice teachers and principals, USJ staff was stimulated and challenged to introduce other strategies that project partners had mentioned or experimented with. One of these involved inviting students to select an educational concept or set of related concepts from the theoretical courses that they followed, and to keep these in mind when preparing their lessons. The lesson plans are then discussed with their lecturer, who reviews and gives feedback. Students would then have the opportunity to share together their experience in working with and mobilising theoretical insights at an end-of-semester workshop.

- Another crucial issue that USJ staff considered was the fact that their professional training programmes were not giving enough attention to the induction phase of the beginning teacher. International research on novice teachers suggests that beginners are least effective during their first few years, and that it is precisely during this critical period that they can benefit most from mentoring. Moreover, research also suggests that support during

the induction period is more likely to lead to situations where what had been learnt during the formal training period at the university is more readily integrated in the novices' evolving professional repertoire. When there is inadequate support, beginning teachers fall back on routines absorbed during the long 'apprenticeship by observation', and generally fail to make strong connections between pre-service professional learning and their efforts to survive in the classroom.

Continued Professional Development

While the USJ staff already has a strong and varied set of initiatives in their CPD service portfolio, faculty also identified a number of areas where they felt that their efforts could be improved. As with the previous section, the most salient are highlighted below:

- Staff resolved to articulate a list of competences that teachers are expected to master. This would serve as a transparent reference point that both ITE and INSET programmes could aim at, with initial, induction and in-service provision working closely together in a more integrated manner to both have clear goals, as well as tangible and concrete performance standards to observe, evaluate, and foster. USJ staff also felt that an agreed-to professional competence standard would provide the education system with a relatively objective measure that would help identify outstanding teachers who could then be recruited to act as mentors with interns as well as with beginning teachers. The adoption of such a strategy had implications for the ITE curriculum, which would need to be revised in order to make sure that the targeted competences are properly integrated. This required an in-depth competence-mapping exercise in order to identify gaps in current provision.

School in Scotland

- USJ faculty have become increasingly persuaded that what is likely to work best in teacher development and learning is an approach that respects the practitioners' efforts and situated expertise, and which promotes the idea that teachers can learn from each other. In such an approach, the role of university staff would not be that of providing answers, but rather to help create spaces for co-learning and collegial reflection. In this regard, USJ staff resolved to take a cue from practices in CDFE project partners where structures had been developed to facilitate the sharing of good practice and collaboration between teachers within and across schools.

- Another way of acknowledging teacher expertise would be for Lebanon to adopt a professional scale to mark progress along a continuum of proficiency, from novice to expert teacher, as in Egypt. While the development of such a policy is beyond the power and remit of USJ, the University could influence policy thinking in this direction, so that such a practice, together with required accreditation at regular intervals, would drive teacher development and ensure that there are the required incentives for progression. If salary supplements are linked to teacher participation and performance in CPD, as in Sweden or Egypt, then this could provide additional motivation across the board. The challenge for Lebanon in this regard is the absence of a national policy that regulates and mandates such a strategy, a policy vacuum which is deleterious also because multiple approaches to CPD may lead to confusion.

School in Lebanon

Action Research

At USJ, action research already has its adepts and if anything, the CDFE project served to reinforce the staff commitment to the epistemology, methodology and politics underpinning research projects of this kind. Initial experiences with action research in the Faculty have led to an identification of the benefits for both staff and students alike. In the case of the former, Faculty members feel that such projects enhanced communication between different partners involved, promoted a culture of research within the institutions, broadened and deepened locally produced knowledge, and facilitated a productive exchange of practices between university and schools. From the perspective of student teachers, engagement in action research projects has, in the view of faculty, helped develop a positive attitude towards research which, rather than remaining esoteric or 'academic' in scope, is increasingly seen as an effective way to address real life class and school issues, and to link theory to practice in productive ways. It also helps student teachers hone their skills in analysing situations on the basis of evidence, and to make decisions and to act responsibly, having carefully reflected and thought through the issues at stake.

Given such positive experiences, the path being traced for future development in action research involves the consideration of a number of initiatives, the most of important of which are detailed below.

- Both interviews and improvement plans indicate that the aspiration at USJ is to extend and expand the use of action research throughout as many programmes of study as possible, to embed and give more space to it within research methodology courses at all levels, and to use it as a means to strengthen the links between faculty and schools.

- In addition, there are aspirations to build a collaborative policy of action research on a national level with the Faculty's institutional partners in the private sector, and to develop bespoke protocols with each interested partner, mobilising action research to respond to specific realities and needs.

- The resolve to strengthen the action research element at USJ also shows through in their plan to work with Stockholm University and Norskolan School to jointly set up a project focusing on the use of the BIFROST pedagogical approach, as this is likely to prove attractive to Lebanese teachers given that its likely impact on enhancing meaningful learning ("learning for understanding") while developing life skills.

- USJ staff has identified obstacles that could hamper the deeper implementation of an action research approach within the Faculty. Among these are the shortage of financial resources, the limited number of staff, the difficulties in setting up more long-lasting research teams focusing on a specialised research topic, and the complications to access public schools due to the bureaucratic hurdles that needed to be overcome at every step of the way. There are hopes that, once more Masters and Doctoral students take up action research projects, and once student teachers draw on action research methods in order to reflect on their experience during teaching practice, enough of a critical mass would have been mobilised in order to transform aspirations into reality.

Having outlined the plans and aspirations of faculty at USJ, we now turn to those of staff in the Department of Education (DoE) at the American University of Beirut.

02
LEBANON

CHAPTER (9)

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

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The Institutional Context

The American University of Beirut (AUB) styles itself as a private, secular, not-for-profit and independent institution of higher learning, open to all students irrespective of ethnicity, gender, or faith. It knows its beginnings as the Syrian Protestant College, which launched its first course with an intake of 16 students in 1866, thanks to the enterprising and fund-raising efforts of Dr. Daniel Bliss, who worked on behalf of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. The name of the college was changed to the American University of Beirut in 1920.

From rather humble beginnings with just a School of Medicine, AUB now has seven faculties and schools offering over 120 undergraduate and graduate programmes and a total of 26 degrees subscribed to by close to 8500 students (of whom 6750 are undergraduates), catered for by 538 full-time and 274 part-time academics. Despite being a fee-paying institution, AUB strives to ensure that students from more modest backgrounds can enrol, with 80% being recipients of scholarship aid that totals around $26 million. The social mix, however, is less than optimal, with an increasing tendency for AUB to become a rather more exclusive and elite institution, given high fees, economically difficult times, and decreasing sponsorships.

The student faculty ratio is 11.2 to 1, and gender representation among the student body is equal. In contrast to USJ, AUB uses English as the main language of instruction and, as an institution chartered in New York State, closely follows the American liberal arts model of higher education when it comes to its educational philosophy, standards, and practices. AUB degrees are officially registered with the Lebanese MEHE and with the Board of Education in the State of New York. Over the years, AUB established itself as one of the leading universities in the region, becoming a major hub for international students (including Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia), currently totalling 2000 hailing from 80 different countries. As many as 20% of AUB students were enrolled in secondary schools or universities outside of Lebanon before registering at AUB.

As with the American University in Cairo, AUB plays an important role in the Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship Program of the Middle East Partnership Initiative, which Bertelsen (2012) considers to be an influential instrument in the US diplomatic outreach in the Middle East. Bertelsen (2012, p.297) notes the transnational character of AUB: not only is the institution incorporated and accredited in the USA, but has American presidents and Boards of Trustees based in New York, continues to benefit from American public and private financial support, with much of the faculty being American-educated. Despite close connections with the US, the AUB exemplified for many "the idea of a great, liberal university, while also being respectful of Arab identity, politics and culture" (Bertelsen, 2012, p.299). Most importantly, through its many graduates that made a life for themselves in various sectors of public life in the US, AUB has played a significant role in influencing American attitudes towards, and understanding of the Middle East.

The Lebanese civil war of 1975–1990 led to major challenges for AUB (Bollag, 2005a): attacked by some, protected by others, the university ran into severe security and financial difficulties, with foreign students and academics forced out of the country, leading to a situation so dire that nearly occasioned its closure (Desruisseaux, 1993; Bollag, 2005b). It has however managed to attract public and private funding from the US, from Lebanon and the wider Middle East, recently raising more than $170 million to bring it back on track, both in terms of its infrastructure and its teaching and research programmes.

The Department of Education

The Department of Education (DoE) is one of 22 academic departments, programmes and centres in the humanities, social sciences and basic sciences that make up the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at AUB, and that offer a range of undergraduate and graduate courses. First mooted as a possibility by the incumbent university president S. Penrose in his annual report for 1915, the DoE today employs 14 full-time staff, as well as several part-time instructors. Student enrolment for the academic year 2014-2015 was, for the Fall, 116 undergraduates and 58 registered at graduate level; for the Spring, 118 undergraduates with 56 at graduate level. A total of 519 students in the Fall, and 528 students in the Spring semester took education courses as electives or as general education requirements.

The DoE's undergraduate programme includes a Bachelor of Arts preparing elementary school teachers, a Teaching Diploma that prepares teachers for all the compulsory school levels with a focus on the curricular subjects of science, mathematics, English, Arabic/social studies and art/music. In addition, the Department also offers other diploma and graduate level programmes in such areas as Education Management and Leadership, educational psychology (School Guidance and Counselling, and Tests and Measurement) and special education. Graduates can continue studying at an MA level in the different curriculum subjects and specialisation areas already mentioned.

As will be noted below, DoE staff are very active in promoting continued teacher learning through a range of training workshops organised on a biannual basis, and offer consultancy services to schools and educational entities, both in Lebanon and in the region. Faculty members collaborate with NGOs and educational agencies in order to run projects in schools, and to support educational development at home and in the Arab world.

The AUB's Regional and External Programs Office manages external consultancies and partnerships across the whole University, including those of the DoE. Several staff also contribute to AUB's Centre for Teaching and Learning (established in 2004), sharing their pedagogical knowledge and skills with colleagues from different faculties in order to promote and support high quality teaching and learning in higher education settings. The Centre is responsible for the Teaching Excellence Award, with one DoE staff having won the honour this academic year.

The Center for English Language Research and Teaching (CELRT) cooperates with the Departments of English and Education, sponsoring a programme leading to an MA degree in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language. The Centre maintains a computer-assisted language learning facility and a Materials Center comprising a collection of reference books, textbooks, journals, MA theses, reports, and visual aids. It also offers consultation services and assistance in Lebanon and the region in all aspects of English language teaching, including programme evaluation, curriculum design, materials development, developing and administering assessment tools, and teacher training. It engages in research in theoretical and applied linguistics and in language teaching and language learning. In cooperation with the Department of Education, it conducts TEFL workshops for elementary and secondary schoolteachers.

A Science and Mathematics Education Centre (SMEC) is housed within the DoE, and is responsible for several research projects, and for designing curriculum materials and initial and in-service teacher education programmes in science and math. It also organises an annual conference which, in its seventeenth edition that took place on 28 March 2015, focused on "Meeting the Language Challenge" in teaching science and math.

DoE students are encouraged to commit themselves to serving the needs of the community, mobilising their knowledge and skills in support of worthy ideals. Education students have their own Society on campus, and are engaged in social activities such as, for instance, organising a Reading Day whereby children from orphanages around Lebanon are invited to spend a day on AUB campus and to engage in a variety of reading activities. Together with SMEC, students also organise an annual two-day Science, Math and Technology Fair, where several schools from across the country exhibit their projects, with the best receiving an award. Prior to graduating, all education students take part in an Education Pledge Ceremony, where they pledge before their families, friends, Department faculty and University administrators to be lifelong leaders in the community. In addition, eligible students in the DoE receive two honorary rewards, one being the Educator's Award, the other the Award for Excellence in Practice Teaching.

Changing Mind-sets, Transforming Practices at AUB

The Teaching Practicum

While the practicum model in place at AUB is quite powerful, staff has identified a number of areas for improvement and change on the basis of their own reflections, the feedback received from interns and mentors, as well as thanks to the exposure to different approaches to the practicum adopted in the countries participating in the CDFE project. A number of areas were targeted for improvement relating to the roles of interns, mentors, school principals, and faculty staff:

• Focusing on interns first, members of the DoE who observed other practicum models in the countries and institutions participating in the CDFE project feel that more could be

done to enhance and deepen the learning experience in the field. One way of doing this is for interns to focus their self-evaluation on a limited number of specific areas that are proving to be challenging, and which they therefore need to improve upon. Once these areas are identified, interns would then work closely with the practicum mentor and university instructor in order to draw on their knowledge, experience and expertise in dealing more effectively with the issue in question. Relevant readings could be assigned, while both the self-reflection and feedback elements of the practicum could focus more specifically on the challenging aspect being considered. The latter could also become the object of a mini action research project, which would help the intern develop the skills and habits of mind required to transform the investigation of specific issues into an action plan.

• Faculty at AUB also felt that the learning experience of interns would be more effective if they had a more extended time in schools. AUB staff noted that, in comparison to some other practicum models they saw in CDFE project countries and institutions, their interns did not have enough opportunities to experience everyday school life in a sufficiently broad and thorough manner. The advantage of longer 'block' placements—i.e. full time residence—is that students not only learn from the classroom, but also become part of the school, learning from everyday routines such as assemblies, and absorbing more effectively the institutional culture and values of the school. Their observation of school life would therefore be richer, and deeper, opening up new possibilities of making connections between the classroom and the wider context in which it is nested. Longer placements in schools also enjoy a second advantage, that of giving interns the possibility of observing different grade levels, thus becoming more aware of the diverse developmental needs of different age groups,

in relation to cognitive, affective, and other criteria.

- Another area which AUB staff felt could be developed concerns the use of peer tutoring and mentoring. Mentoring of first year interns by students who are completing their course has several obvious advantages, and can be used to welcome newly registered students in methods courses, and introducing them to the Department of Education and to the way the practicum programme unfolds over the different semesters. Senior students can share their experiences in the field as interns, and can also provide coaching and support in areas in which they are particularly strong.

- While mentors play an important role as partners in supervising and supporting interns, DoE staff feels that they could adopt other practices they saw implemented in the countries and institutions visited as members of the CDFE project. A key concern here was the need to train mentors for their role, given that good teachers do not necessarily make good mentors, and that mentoring requires a specific skill set for which one needs to be trained. While some countries offer accredited courses for mentors, a first step for AUB is to organise a workshop prior to the start of the field placement in order to share the DoE's vision for the practicum and the important role that mentors play, to provide some training in how to give constructive feedback, how to use and develop observation tools to assess interns' efforts, and how to report on interns' progress in ways that helped DoE staff mobilise further support. Such a workshop would also help mentors recognise that the presence of interns in their schools opened up opportunities for their own professional development, and that of the school.

- Faculty at AUB also felt that the relationship between the different parties involved in the training of interns needed to be formalised through partnership agreements, where faculty, student teachers and mentors signed up to the responsibilities stipulated in the agreement, with quality assurance procedures and protocols built in through evaluation. While all the available international literature suggests that mentoring is a very powerful way to promote and support student-teacher learning, feedback from interns also points out to the importance of allocating suitable mentors who have been adequately trained, whose personality matches that of the interns, and who have the ability to create trusting relationships that encourage learners to experiment, move outside their comfort zones, and take risks in trying out different pedagogical strategies without being overly concerned about how they will be assessed.

- Through the life of the CDFE project, AUB staff became more aware of the role of the principal as a partner in the practicum and resolved to involve heads of schools more actively in as many aspects of the field placement as possible. In the first place, principals could be invited to make an input in re-visiting the rules and regulations governing the whole field placement exercise. This would reinforce the notion that schools and university were truly working as partners in setting the parameters for the learning experiences to be offered to prospective teachers, respecting the specificities and needs of the school contexts in which they would be placed. Heads could also be invited to develop more adequate criteria for the selection of mentors, to ensure better alignment with faculty aspirations, once these had been agreed to by the cooperating schools.

- Further to AUB's desire to see interns better integrated within the whole school context rather than just as classroom-based practicing

teachers, the Head's role to induct them into the school environment emerged as an important consideration. By being involved in this manner, heads could initiate the practicum experience by holding a meeting with all assigned mentors and interns to introduce the school's vision, mission, and goals, including it's development plan. The Head would also have the opportunity to help interns develop a deeper knowledge of the place of the school within the community, of the characteristics of the students that attended the school, and of the contextual information that was needed in order to respond better to student needs.

- Such developments in the roles of the different parties involved in the teaching practicum has implications for the way members of the DoE carry out their work. Overall, the direction that staff is keen to take as a result of reflection, feedback, and exposure to international practice, including that provided through the CDFE project, is towards a model that gives even more importance to partnership with schools, by setting out more clearly the inter-dependent responsibilities of the different parties involved, whether they are faculty or interns on the one hand, or principals, coordinators, or mentors on the other. This partnership requires a stronger basis for alignment between the goals and aspirations for initial teacher education and training of interns as expressed by the two institutional contexts in which such learning takes place, i.e. the university and the school. It requires more structured communication between the actors in the two sites, as well as mutual training so that the supervisory, coaching, mentoring and support skills needed are developed by all those involved.

- Part of an improved training programme could include the setting up of a school and mentor network in order to identify, highlight and share good practice. The best mentoring schools which provide a healthy and positive environment

conducive to the professional development of interns would thus be acknowledged and serve as a model to others. Quality would be further enhanced through the adoption of a number of strategies, including a regular review of the practicum component that would critically research its effectiveness from the perspective of the different partners involved.

- Other initiatives that are being contemplated by AUB staff include the development of a comprehensive field experience handbook for interns that supports the self-reflection process of mentors in a more effective manner. This would entail a more detailed and sophisticated description of the knowledge, skills and attitudes at particular points in the intern's development as a teacher. Progression in skills development would be made more transparent, and more amenable to self- and external assessment. Yet another initiative would be the introduction of incentives to not only recognise and honour outstanding interns, but also excellence in providing internship and mentoring experiences.

Continued Professional Development of Teachers

Staff from AUB's Department of Education who participated in the CDFE project identified a number of areas for development in the area of CPD that took them beyond their current engagements in supporting teacher learning.

- It was felt that while the annual professional development workshops that the Department organised were making a valuable contribution to teachers' professional growth, CPD sessions would be appreciated even more if they actually led to formal accreditation—as in Scotland, for instance. Participation would therefore be recorded, with the possibility of accumulating

credit over a specified number of years on the basis of both attendance, and assessment of learning. Scotland's CPD programme offers training that lasts throughout a whole academic year, and if teachers successfully fulfil all the requirements, they are eligible for accreditation through their Professional Teachers' Council.

- Such CPD courses would be even more attractive if better use was made of the new technology through webinars, teleconferencing, and other on-line modes of engaging teachers using distance-learning facilities. As with most countries in the world, the teaching profession is feminized in Lebanon, with mothers often having home-based responsibilities over and above their regular, full-time teaching jobs. Providing in-service learning opportunities by distance would certainly facilitate access, giving many teachers the option to develop their knowledge and skills from the comfort of their homes. Given the situation in some parts of Lebanon, such an approach would also serve to diminish security risks and dangers to personal safety.

- There was also a fair amount of agreement among AUB staff that while pull-out programmes were useful and necessary—not least in a small country where it was relatively easy for teachers from several schools to meet at the same location on the same day— nevertheless a stronger and more effective model that supported teacher learning and that reflected current understanding of the way teachers developed in their profession needed to be adopted. This entailed working more closely with and in schools, with notions of teacher learning dovetailing with contemporary approaches to whole school development. In such approaches, teachers are no longer considered as isolated professionals working independently in their classrooms.

- AUB is therefore considering engaging in staff development programmes were teachers are considered to be members of a collaborative learning community striving to attain objectives and outcomes that they have collectively articulated, and which can best be reached through collegial support. In such approaches, professional growth is not seen as the result of one-off, ad hoc input by external experts, but rather the outcome of efforts invested continuously in a community of inquiry, where experience, research, and different forms of expertise come together in powerful ways to affect teacher thinking and behaviour. This entails a commitment to peer learning, coaching and mentoring, together with the sharing of experience informed by a relevant knowledge base. Members of the DoE had seen such a model at work during the study visits to Stockholm and Scotland, where the emphasis tends to be on peer learning in schools.

- The adoption of school-based CPD models requires changes in the way CPD providers work together with teachers, and the way teachers work together at the school site. Staff at AUB's Department of Education is therefore aware that such a shift in model requires a change in their roles in the process. This entails the carrying out of training needs analysis, participating as critical friends in addressing challenges faced by a school or network of schools, and helping in the setting up of action research projects that engage teachers in a cycle of reflection and action. Staff would then bring in their own knowledge and skills which, together with the situated expertise of school-based educators, leads to a process of learning which is mutually growth-inducing, to the benefit of students.

Action Research

AUB can be considered one of the leaders in the region when it comes to implementing action research approaches in education, particularly through its coordinating role in the TAMAM (Al Tatweer Al-Mustanid ila Al-Madrassa, or 'School-Based Reform') project. The various aspects of the TAMAM journey—including the identification of a problem, the design of an innovative intervention, the implementation of the intervention, the evaluation of impact, and the engagement in action based on this evaluation—all help to articulate an approach to sustainable reform that is most promising. As such, the TAMAM project has served to embed a particularly powerful model of teacher professional development and school-based reform that is perhaps quite unique in the region. While TAMAM predates the CDFE initiative, there is a clear syntony of ideas, approaches and orientations towards the value of action research as a tool, among others, to drive school-based reform.

One could therefore say that at AUB, the mindset favouring action research is already well and truly present and increasingly entrenched. Based on the TAMAM experience, which has been reinforced by staff's participation in the CDFE project, DoE staff is now contemplating the manner in which such a powerful model can inform their initial teacher education programme. Initiatives in this direction include the following:

- Interns are being increasingly encouraged to take part in the same processes that have been promoted within TAMAM schools. In other words, interns are invited to engage with action research, to collaborate between themselves and with teachers in the host schools, to document their practice, to give importance to professional dialogue with peers and mentors, to develop reflective thinking skills, to base decision on evidence,

and to plan and even lead change. One of the resolutions of the AUB team participating in the CDFE project is to institutionalize the commitment to action research, ensuring that it becomes formally embedded in core as well as in teaching methodology courses across the DoE's curriculum. Another resolution is to integrate action research more firmly within the practicum experience and within all practicum courses.

- AUB staff has also been inspired by what was observed during study visits to England, Scotland and Sweden, where they found a strong overlap between TAMAM and some of the action research approaches to teacher professional development there. The way teachers in some English schools formed teams, or Teacher Learning Circles, in order to develop case studies together, which then became the object of action research projects, proved particularly appealing to the AUB participants. It was felt that if such TLCs were set up in Lebanon, AUB staff could then work with teachers to help identify challenges in schools that needed to be addressed and to develop cases studies related to the selected issues. They would then collaboratively analyze the case studies by posing appropriate research questions and reviewing the relevant literature, propose an intervention plan, and jointly come up with strategies for implementation, as well as follow-up evaluation.

School in Egypt

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03

PALESTINE

CHAPTER (10)

PALESTINE'S EDUCATIONAL
CONTEXT

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Palestine: Development Context

Palestine lies in the West of Asia between latitudes 29.30 and 33.15 N, and longitudes 24.1 and 35.40 E. Today, Palestine, comprising the West Bank and Gaza Strip, has an area of 6,200 square kilometres and a population of 2.9 million in the West Bank and 1.5 million in the Gaza Strip. Prior to 1917, the West Bank and Gaza Strip together with what is known today as Israel, constituted historical Palestine. It had an area of 27,009 square kilometres and was bordered by Syria and Lebanon to the north, Egypt to the south, Jordan and Syria to the east, and the Mediterranean Sea to the west. The percentage of the population who are of school age (between 6 and 18 years old) is 38 percent (MOEHE, 2007), indicating that the education sector constitutes a substantial proportion of the Palestinian community.

Education is valued highly in Palestine, as the country's main resource is human skills and knowledge. There are relatively few natural and industrial resources and their exploitation is limited by the Israeli military occupation. Those aspects of the educational context in Palestine relevant to this study and which are reviewed here include its historical development and structure, as well as teacher education curricula.

A Historical Perspective

It is widely accepted within the Arab context that Palestinian education has suffered greatly as a result of the Israeli occupation over the last decades (Al Haq, 2005). Throughout the twentieth century, Palestinians did not control their own education. They were schooled under many different educational systems administered by foreigners: Ottoman rule (1869–1917), the British Mandate (1917–1948), Jordanian and Egyptian Guardianship (1948–1967), and the Israeli occupation authorities (1967–1994)

(Kabaha, 2005). This history is considered by many to have contributed to the development of an irrelevant and out-dated education system in Palestine. The following is a brief overview of the decisive developments and turning points in Palestinian education from the Ottoman period to the present, with special reference to teacher education and its impact on the education sector.

The Ottoman Period (1869–1917)

The advent of Ottoman rule over Palestine in 1869 was considered the beginning of formal public education in Palestine (Tibawi, 1956). The Ottomans established a very limited number of state schools in the northern districts of Palestine and the district of Jerusalem. In addition to the state schools, there existed two other types of schools: al-Kuttab schools were religious in nature and focused on teaching, reading and writing the Qu'ran; and missionary schools were established by European-backed Christian missionaries wishing to set up schools in the Holy Land. In general, education was very weak in this era, largely because the formal language of teaching was Turkish, and teachers had limited formal education and lacked professional training. Nonetheless, teachers enjoyed a privileged status within the community, since they were engaged in the clarification of legal and religious questions through their writing and teaching (Mazawi, 1994).

The British Mandate (1917–1948)

The education system improved during this period (Tibawi, 1956): it was better organised than it had been under Ottoman rule and many state schools were established throughout the country. The education system was divided into four sequential phases: kindergarten, which admitted six-year-old children for a year; lower elementary school for

seven to eleven year olds; upper elementary school for twelve and thirteen year olds; and secondary school for fourteen and fifteen year old children. The educational system was controlled by the British colonial administration, which saw schools primarily as a means for promoting the skills and knowledge required for the effective functioning and control of the government over Palestine. The administration neglected the real needs and skills of local Palestinians and therefore no attempt to educate the masses. Tibawi (1956) maintains that during this phase, Palestinian teachers participated actively in the national movement for Palestinian independence and grew steadily more politicised.

The Jordanian and Egyptian Guardianship (1948–1967)

In 1948 the State of Israel was established on occupied Palestinian territory. What remained of Palestine (the West Bank and Gaza Strip) was subject to two different education systems, with Jordan assuming responsibility for the West Bank and Egypt for the Gaza Strip. The authorities in Jordan and Egypt implemented the curricula and regulations of their own state school systems in the West Bank and Gaza respectively. The education system they imposed was divided into three sequential phases: an elementary phase for six to eleven-year-olds, a preparatory phase for twelve to fourteen-year-olds, and a secondary phase for fifteen to seventeen-year-olds. This period witnessed the establishment of a number of teacher education programmes and the emergence of a new sector of education for Palestinian refugees supported by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). The agency remains a major provider of education in Palestine and offers nine years of free school education to Palestinian children who are registered as refugees.

The Israeli Occupation Period (1967–1994)

During this period Israeli authority extended over the whole of Palestine, and the educational system fell under Israeli control, specifically under the Ministry of Defence. Khaldi and Wahbeh (2002) write that under Israeli occupation, education reached its lowest ebb, particularly due to funding issues in the public schools, which were largely neglected in favour of Israeli security. Teaching conditions were difficult with very limited resources, overcrowded classrooms and irrelevant textbooks. It appeared that the Israeli "hidden curriculum" (Vallance, 1991) aimed to fulfil only the minimum basic educational needs for the Palestinians (Kabaha, 2005). Teachers' salaries were low and in-service training was negligible (Khaldi and Wahbeh, 2002). Teachers were often unqualified and followed out-dated teaching methods (Rigby, 1995). However, teachers in this period were political activists as well as educators and hence contributed to the change that was to follow. From oppression came self efficacy (Affouneh, 2008). This period also witnessed the establishment of the first universities in Palestine and these came under the supervision of national non-profit institutions. This was supported in some cases by Arab countries, and in other instances by international institutions, including NGOs

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) Phase, including reoccupation (1994–the present)

As a result of the Oslo I Accord between the Israeli government and the Palestinian Liberation Organization of 1993, and the subsequent Cairo Agreement signed in 1994, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) took responsibility for education in the West Bank and Gaza strip, establishing the first Ministry of Education (MOE) (IIEP-UNESCO, 2007). In 1996 a new ministry entitled the Ministry

of Education and Higher Education and Scientific Research was established. It took responsibility for higher education in Palestine, while the mother ministry (the Ministry of Education) continued to take responsibility for school education.

In 2002, the two ministries merged to become the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE). The ministry immediately began by recruiting suitable human resource levels, and developing an operational system to take over the funding and administration of public schools, where most of the school education sector came under its responsibility. As of 2011, the ministry was responsible for 1,921 schools compared to 385 run by UNWRA and 331 by the private sector. The total number of students enrolled in basic education (grades 1–10) was 571,603 (UNESCO-IBE, 2011). The MOEHE is also responsible for part of the higher education sector. However, most existing institutions of higher education were established during the Israeli occupation by Palestinian individuals and group initiatives, mostly with the support of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), and with financial contributions from Arab countries. Although school curricula were subject to strict censorship by the Israeli civil administration, Palestinian higher education institutions were able to maintain their independence regarding educational programmes and curricula (UNESCO, 2002).

Statistics indicate that there were general improvements in the Palestinian educational system during the PNA phase of control between 1994 and 2000. The illiteracy rate for individuals 15 years or older in the West Bank and Gaza Strip dropped to 10.8 percent compared with 13.9 percent in 1997. A decline in elementary-level drop-out rates, an increase in female school enrolment, and a decrease in the student/teacher ratio are all indications of improvements in the education sector since 1995 (Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute-MAS, 2002).

A curriculum development institute was created in 1995 to develop the first-ever Palestinian national curriculum for all subjects. This was phased in from September 2000, supported by textbooks, and replaced the Jordanian and Egyptian curricula that had been in place in the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1948 (IIEP-UNESCO, 2007). In fact, Palestinians inherited an education system that had suffered severely from decades of negligence, evident in the absence of any development and a decaying infrastructure (Rihan, 2001). The MOE attempted to reform the educational system and produced a five-year development plan (2001–2005). This was based on the following principles:

- Education is a human right;
- Education is a tool for social, economic and technical development;
- Education is a source and a means for democracy and social values;
- Education is a continuing life long process;
- Education must be available to all Palestinians.

(MOE, 1999).

To improve the quality of education, the development of human resources across both primary and secondary levels was necessary. The development plan's main objectives were to improve the professional quality of teachers through in-service teacher training programmes, to develop staff administrative skills, to support the supervision system, and to strengthen cooperation between the Palestinian education sector and the international community. This clear vision is evidence of the IIEP's findings of an education system that was, for the first time, under a "strong domestic leadership and external attention and support" (IIEP-UNESCO, 2007:21).

However, at the exact time of the implementation of the development plan, the Second Intifada, which erupted in late September 2000, caused an escalation in the conflict with Israel. This had a disastrous effect on education in Palestine (Said, 2001). Many schools were forced to close because of Israeli sieges and incursions. The reoccupation of the Palestinian territories by the Israelis and the ensuing curfews resulted in the near collapse of the education system in Palestine (Giacaman, et al., 2002; UNRWA, 2004). The MOEHE adopted several measures and developed an emergency plan to maintain the educational system. These included assigning teachers to schools in their area of residence, recruiting university students, administrators and volunteers to overcome the sudden shortage of teachers, and relocating students to study in their local schools.

Higher education institutions also suffered severely from the outbreak of the Second Intifada. Many students and teachers were unable to get access to their universities and colleges because of the tight Israeli siege. The MOEHE also took several measures to guarantee the continuity of education in universities and colleges, including allowing students to join courses in other universities closer to their place of residence, extending the term by reducing the summer vacation, moving courses to locations outside university campuses, and using the internet as a communication tool between students and teachers (Wahbeh, 2003).

As a result of this turmoil, the MOEHE could not implement the five-year education development plan. The Palestinian political and educational situation grew more complicated after the elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), the PA legislature, in 2006. The result was a victory for the Hamas movement, which led to most of the MOEHE's foreign donors withdrawing their support from, and cooperation with, the ministry. The donors returned to support the PNA in 2008 when the Fatah movement regained control of the West Bank. In light of this new situation the

MOEHE developed a second comprehensive five-year development plan (2008–2012) with the following four main aims for education in the West Bank:

- To increase access for school-age children and students of all education levels and improve the ability of the education system to retain them (Access);

- To improve the quality of teaching and learning (Quality);

- To develop the capacity for planning and management and to improve the financial and management systems used (Management);

- To realize a gradual conversion of the higher education sector and the technical and vocational education and training sector from supply- oriented to demand-oriented sectors, which, accordingly, guarantees more compatibility between outputs and labour market(s) needs (Relevance).

(MOEHE, 2008:20)

Although the MOEHE is making progress in implementing this ambitious plan, the Palestinian educational system is still characterised by complicated bureaucratic procedures, rigid centralization, over-crowded classrooms, an adversarial supervisory system, and poor educational training programmes (Wahbeh, 2003). In addition there is the ever-present structural violence and oppression caused by the occupation (Affouneh, 2008). These difficulties obviously impinge on the professional relationships inside the schools, and produce a lack of confidence, skill, and creativity among teachers. Furthermore, with the Palestinian economy near collapse, and the low salaries of the teaching profession and the rise in the cost of living, many teachers seek additional income through afternoon jobs. They therefore do not allocate time to attend the afternoon training

programmes offered by the MOEHE. Due to current salary scales, men are leaving the teaching profession, and women are beginning to fill their positions. It seems, as Hashweh (2001) indicates, that as a result of the very high population growth among Palestinians and the tremendous increase in student enrolment at both the primary and secondary levels, the MOEHE has prioritized the building of schools and renovating existing ones over raising the quality of education. However, the increase in number of schools would entail lower pupil numbers in each class and a better quality of teaching in smaller classes.

Educational provision has made great strides in Palestine since 1995, despite the problems associated with the occupation (Affouneh, 2008, Sa'idi, 2010), the ' chronic crisis' as UNESCO puts it (IIEP-UNESCO, 2007). It is seen as both an end in itself and a means for the improvement of individuals and the emergent nation. Getting an education is often cited as the number one priority for Palestinians. To use the words of a refugee "My accomplishments? I educated my children" (IIEP-UNESCO, 2007: 22). The conflict and pressures of occupation are part of the everyday abnormalities of life and education has the dual role of being a service of "instrumental value" and a means of actively supporting young people so that they are not involved in any violence (Sultana, 2006).

The Palestinian Education System

The current pre-university education system under the control of MOEHE consists of three stages:

- The Pre-school Stage (Kindergarten): for children whose ages range from 4 to 5 years. This stage did not exist in the formal educational system before the MOEHE was created in 1994.

- The Basic Compulsory Stage: this stage consists of grades 1 to 10 for children whose ages range from 6 to 15 years;

- The Secondary, Non-compulsory Stage: this stage includes grades 11 and 12 for students aged 16 to 18 and consists of three routes: vocational education, science, and human sciences. This stage ends with a national general secondary certificate examination, the so-called Tawjihi.

(MOEHE, 2008)

There are three principal providers of school education in Palestine. The first is the governmental sector run by the MOEHE. It constitutes the largest part of the school education system in Palestine. The MoEHE is responsible for most of the schools in the West Bank (76 percent). It provides free compulsory and secondary education for all students. The ministry manages the schools through 18 education directorates, 13 in the West Bank and 5 in the Gaza Strip, each run by a director general and two administrative assistants. Each directorate has partial authority over internal educational supervision and relations with the local community. According to the MOEHE strategic plan for 2008–2012, the ministry is heading towards a more decentralized administrative system by giving more authority to these local directorates (MOEHE, 2008), although this does not extend to devolving responsibility for the curriculum.

The second main provider of school education is UNRWA, which provides free basic education to grades 1 to 9 only for the registered refugee community in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This sector constitutes around 13 percent of Palestinian schools, with 253,116 students and 9,279 teachers (in the academic year 2007/2008), and is situated mainly in refugee camps and towns where portions of the refugee population reside. UNRWA manages the schools under its supervision through four directorates of education, three in the West Bank and one in the Gaza Strip.

The third provider is the private sector, which is currently responsible for about 12 percent of schools, providing education at all stages, and enrolling about 78,111 students and 5,404 teachers (MOEHE, 2007). Although they have their own supervisory authorities for schools, UNRWA and the private sector have to follow MOEHE regulations regarding curriculum, the length of the academic year and examinations. Private schools are mainly religious. Some are missionary schools from Europe or America, while others are Islamic schools. Funding comes mainly from tuition fees.

Universities in Palestine

This section describes university provision in Palestine in general terms with the section following considering teacher education, the domain of the CDFE project.

There are 13 universities in Palestine in total in addition to tertiary level colleges. Although this may seem a high number for the size of population it is the result of the restrictions on movement under occupation. All cities have at least one university. The universities are mainly private institutions with their own boards of trustees. There is an open university, based in Ramallah and with campuses across Palestine, which is publicly funded. Universities receive the majority of their funding from their own students, supported by some funding from the ministry. All chancellors are members of the Higher Education committee, thus maintaining a link with the ministry.

All universities are responsible to the Palestinian Authority's quality assurance committee in respect of licensing new courses. All programmes are subject to quality control by the committee at the point of design/inception and any major amendments. This includes all programmes of teacher education. Minor changes to programmes can be made with the authority of a university's academic council. Quality control takes into account subject benchmarks for subject content and academic level. In addition, programmes of pre-service teacher education are benchmarked against the Palestinian National Strategy for Teacher Education of 2008. The development and introduction of this strategy was financed by UNESCO and, hence the teacher education curriculum draws on the aims and objectives of UNESCO. The body that developed this strategy included representatives from universities, including staff who have participated in the TEMPUS-CDFE project.

Admission to universities is open to all students who obtain the requisite grades in the school-leaving certificate (al-Tawjihi). Depending on the percentage mark achieved at al-Tawjihi, students can access one degree or another. For example, to access education, students need to achieve 70 percent, but this is higher for students wishing to study engineering or the sciences. Universities admit students largely from local areas surrounding them, except for Al-Quds Open University, which admits students by distance from across the country.

There are issues of recognition of its awards for people who wish to work in the Al Quds (Jerusalem) area.

School in Lebanon

Teacher Education in Palestine

This section describes the models of pre-service and in-service teacher education in Palestine, which has developed in a somewhat piecemeal fashion (IIEP-UNESCO, 2007).

Although the MOEHE can authorise the appointment of unlicensed teachers, to become qualified, students must meet the specific requirement as laid down by the ministry and codified in the National Strategy for Teacher Education, 2010. This sets out benchmarks for programme content and has specific requirements in terms of the number of hours and credits such courses provide.

From 2014 the ministry requires all teachers to have at least a higher education diploma. This has led to the introduction of Grade 1–4 Diplomas (see below) to complement the existing diplomas for grades 5–10 and 11–12. After graduating from university with a diploma, students need to pass a national examination set by the MOEHE to access a teaching post. The examination includes aspects of pedagogy and subject knowledge, and on passing the examination, the new teacher embarks on a two-year teaching post before becoming a permanent teacher.

There is a well-defined system of pre-service teacher education in place in Palestine. The programmes of in-service teacher education are less firmly established. For the purposes of the TEMPUS-funded CDFE project, therefore, there are different contexts for the building of capacity in teacher education.

In the case of practicum there are established systems into which the lessons learnt through participation in the project can be applied. This provides opportunities both for the implementation of new ideas and the embedding of lessons learnt into existing structures. On the other hand these changes need to be undertaken within the policy structures that are in place nationally – for example the National Strategy for Teacher Education. Universities do not have carte blanche to change things simply because they see them as a 'good idea' in respect of practicums. In addition to this strategy, the MOEHE are introducing a "Teaching as a Profession" Unit. This is designed to look at standards for different levels of teachers including the Readiness to Teach Index (RTTI), a set of indicators for the performance of pre-service teachers that universities use for the purposes of evaluation.

The less formalised and developed university models of teacher continued professional development (CPD) and action research mean that the project's lessons may not have the structures in place necessary to support change. Lack of such structures does, however, allow for innovation and building from the ground up – establishing new models of university-led CPD and introducing action research into the paradigms of university- and teacher-led research.

Pre-service Teacher Education

As noted above, pre-service teacher education in Palestine is undertaken by universities working to the National Strategy for Teacher Education, 2008, and is therefore the responsibility of Palestinian universities. The vast majority of teachers in Palestinian schools are graduates of the Palestinian universities and higher education colleges that provide teacher education programmes.

There are three main teacher education track programmes offered to pre-service teachers by Palestinian universities, and all of them lead to a bachelor's degree. The content of these programmes is benchmarked against the National Strategy for Teacher Education of 2008 and include theoretical and practical elements and pre-service professional development.

The first teacher education track is for the lower basic level (grades 1–4) and leads to a four-year bachelor's degree in education. A teacher in grades 1–4 is a generalist and is often referred to as a 'classroom teacher'. They will teach all subjects, although it is often necessary to supplement their teaching work with specialists in subjects such as English or music. This is a relatively new track in teacher education and grade 1–4 teachers who did not take it (because they entered the teaching profession before the introduction of the BA) can now take a Lower Elementary Diploma, a new programme in grades 1–4 education funded by the World Bank. It is worth noting that women make up the overwhelming majority of classroom teachers, and around 80 percent of teachers as a whole.

The second track is for the upper basic levels (grades 5–10). Students completing this track receive a bachelor's degree in education. In grade 5 and above the subject specialism is crucial and teachers here are referred to as 'subject teachers'. They follow a BA programme in a subject discipline and while doing so, follow a parallel teaching (or education) pathway. The two pathways (subject and education) run for the whole four years of the BA. This model is evolving into a major/minor model so that, in future, graduates will, for example, receive a major degree in mathematics with a minor in education. Those wishing to become subject teachers can also apply to a faculty of education (rather than an arts or science faculty) and take a four-year interdisciplinary bachelor's degree that is approximately 50 percent in education and 50

percent in their subject. In both of these models the education component of the degree includes theoretical and practical elements.

The third track is for the secondary level (grades 11–12). This provides the student with a Teaching Diploma for Secondary Level Teaching, in addition to a bachelor's degree in specific disciplines, such as Physics, Chemistry, and English. The student undertakes the diploma programme in the year following their degree (similar to the UK Postgraduate Certificate of Education PGCE, a one-year higher education course offered to university graduates).

A fourth track, and categorisation of teacher, is provided by the postgraduate diploma model for specialised teachers (for example, special needs, curriculum designers, advisors). Here, a teacher candidate will undertake a diploma programme after they have obtained their first degree. Such a model allows for those who did not choose a career in teaching when they first entered university to switch to teaching later on. It also allows those who cannot find employment in their chosen field to switch career and retrain as teachers. In the Palestinian context, students who follow this BA/PGD route are known as 'special students'. It is perhaps worth noting that a university receives more income from a degree such as this, awarded at postgraduate level, than it would from a bachelor's degree.

The largest provider of teacher education in Palestine is the Islamic University located in Gaza, as opposed to the West Bank, where both the project partner universities (An-Najah and Birzeit) are situated. In Gaza, teaching is seen as prestigious and teaching posts are funded by UNWRA. This has led to the availability of more highly paid jobs in Gaza than in the West Bank. In Gaza, diplomas are frowned upon, as the education student is usually a high-achiever in the al-Tawjihi school-leaving certificate compared to education students in the West Bank, who tend to be lower achievers.

There are also master's degree programmes in education in Palestinian universities, but none of them are aimed at qualifying students for school teaching. They are, however, vehicles for action research and professional development, and such degrees are taken almost exclusively by teachers, whether serving or unemployed. There are also master's degrees aimed at 'para-educational careers', such as educational psychology, counselling and educational technology.

The curricula of the teacher education programmes mentioned above differ from one university to another, but in general they cover the requisite core courses, such as teaching methods, educational psychology, educational measurement and evaluation, and curriculum design. Teachers also receive practical training in surrounding public and private schools, however, according to the Teacher Education Strategy in Palestine (Hashweh et al., 2008) many of these programmes need updating and improvement in order to match contemporary international trends in teacher education.

On graduating from a teacher education programme, teacher candidates are licensed by the MOEHE. After passing a national examination, the candidates are evaluated by inspectors from the MOEHE during the first two years of teaching and then become permanent teachers. The overwhelming majority work in the public sector. Universities do not have control over employment and appointment processes and, indeed, the ministry allows for schools to appoint unqualified teachers where there is a shortage of subject specialists.

In-service Teacher Education

There are currently three main providers of in-service teacher education and training programmes. The first is the MOEHE (through the National Institute for Education and Training, NIET), which, as mentioned above, has held responsibility for the governance and quality assurance of the pre-university education sector since 1994. The NIET planned to reform educational programmes through its first and second five-year development plans. The main objective of the plans was to improve the professional quality of teachers through in-service teacher training programmes.

Prior to the Oslo Agreement, all teachers, including science teachers, were enrolled in compulsory extensive developmental training sessions and workshops during and after school hours and over the summer vacation. These professional development workshops focused mainly on contemporary teaching pedagogies, such as student-centred instruction and inquiry-oriented teaching, improving teachers' content knowledge, and designing lesson plans that address the new Palestinian curriculum (Khaldi and Wahbeh, 2000; Wahbeh, 2009). Universities may be contracted by the MOEHE to run the in-service CPD courses, which take place either in the university or at the NIET. An example of this are the World Bank funded projects, which are administered by the MOEHE and may be delivered by universities.

The second provider of in-service teacher education is UNRWA, which conducts several compulsory in-service intensive training courses and workshops for school-teachers who work in its schools. These courses are also accredited and recognised by the MOEHE. UNRWA also created subject committees for the various fields of specializations. These committees, which consist of school supervisors from the UNRWA Educational Development Centre, and teachers from the UNRWA educational sciences colleges and schools, continue to meet regularly to work on teacher and curriculum development through training sessions (UNRWA, 2004).

The third group of providers are the non-governmental organisations (NGOs). There are around ten NGOs working on teacher education and empowerment, funded by Arab and foreign donors. Most are located in Ramallah and they provide various types of workshops and training courses in different subjects to in-service teachers. Again, the courses are recognised by the MOEHE.

It is important to note that in all cases universities could not directly offer in-service CPD: they must be contracted to do so by one of the providers above. There is some blurring of the lines with master's degrees, however, as these become more practice-focused and hence offer more CPD alongside the traditional grounding in educational theory.

The two case studies in this report focus upon An-Najah National University (ANU) and Birzeit University (BZU). The detailed case studies provide background information about the two institutions and the Palestinian context in terms of both the education system and the political situation that has impacted upon the progress of the project across the three years. Particular attention is given to work conducted in the three areas most relevant to the project – practicum, action research and continued professional development. This summary will cover those specific areas of the case studies that demonstrate developments and transformations in practice across all three areas. It will also highlight some of the issues and challenges ANU and BZU have faced as they strive to enhance the educational experience of teachers and students involved in teacher education and training.

The CDFE project was, for its Palestinian partners, a unique and novel experience. The length of the project and its combination of multiple partners and bilateral study visits meant that they were able to learn from many other different contexts, to have time to reflect on the lessons learnt and to take steps to change their own practice and implement new models of teacher education. This stood in contrast with previous projects where the contexts had been narrower and the time scales shorter. The involvement of two institutions from Palestine as opposed to just one also offered greater opportunities and initiatives at the national level. This is not often the case in international projects.

The benefits to the partners can be characterized, broadly speaking, into five areas: internationalization, empowerment, reflection, development of soft skills and networking. Each of these is considered briefly in turn here, with fuller descriptions and exemplars to be found in the respective institutional case studies.

Internationalization. The Palestinian partners visited universities, schools and policy-makers in the United Kingdom, Malta and Egypt. They also took part in meetings and a conference during which presentations were made on teacher education systems and developments in Scotland, Lebanon and Sweden as well as countries such as Jordan and Finland which were not part of the CDFE project. These visits and events, together with the analytical reporting on global good practices in practicum, continued professional development and action research, awarded an international dimension to the participants' learning, which has informed the transformation of practice at an institutional level, and is feeding into policy changes at a national level. The latter is facilitated by the close working relationship of the two institutions with the Palestine Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE).

Empowerment. The CDFE project required the active participation of a large number of individuals, unlike other projects, where perhaps only two or three staff are usually involved. In doing so it empowered individuals and teams, through their shared experiences, to drive institutional learning and change. Another dimension of this can be seen in the scope of the project's impact, which extends, uniquely, not just to the individuals or institutions that are the project's named partners but to the wider network of schools and universities engaged in teacher education. Through meetings at the local level (with schools) and at the national level (facilitated by the ministry) the project's impact was spread across the country. On the international level, although the TEMPUS programme could be conceived of as a vehicle for knowledge transfer from the EU partners to their MENA counterparts, the full involvement of so many individuals and the exchanges between colleagues from different institutions shifted the programme to a knowledge sharing exercise. EU and other MENA partners have, through the rich schedule of visits and activities, learnt much from the Palestinian participants. This in turn empowers those participants as they are seen, and as they see themselves, as contributors to rather than merely recipients of, or an audience for, knowledge and learning.

Reflection. Reflective thinking lies at the heart of the CDFE project's approach. The long time span of the activities, the numerous opportunities given to discussing the Palestinian and other contexts, and the requirements of the evaluation and monitoring work package all contributed to an atmosphere where ideas that were picked up during the project could be reflected on over time. This took place at both the individual level, as evidenced by the personal reports of changing practice, and the institutional level, where groups that had travelled and worked together shared action and improvement plans and implemented changes in courses, policies and in ways of working with partner schools.

School in Egypt

Soft skills. The project introduced a range of different activities that, together, resulted in the development of soft skills among the Palestinian institutional partners and their respective teams. In terms of communications, the partners had opportunity to work with a large number of new contacts, to present ideas at conferences and workshops, often in a second language (English), and to an audience that was previously unaware of Palestinian educational contexts. Teamwork was supported throughout the visits, where several colleagues spent time working together on development plans, and, subsequently, curriculum and partnership policy changes in their home university. There has been an opportunity to use new technologies, in some instances with equipment provided by the project. Partners have utilised online video conferencing and collaborative writing tools.

Networking. Perhaps the overarching benefit to the partners, one that will leave the most lasting impact, has been the widening of the participants' network. Starting at the institutional level the project has allowed a large number of individuals to work together on a common project, perhaps for the first time. Thus, their day-to-day professional network has been enhanced and widened. At the next, intra-national, level, staff from An-Najah National University and Birzeit University worked together, again, often for the first time. This 'Palestinian CDFE' network has in turn widened through its work with the MOEHE. At a regional level the project has opened up links between Palestine, Egypt and Lebanon (and to a lesser extent, Jordan). Lastly, links have been forged between the Palestinian partners and their EU partners in the UK, Malta and Sweden. All of these expanded networks and links will allow the lessons learnt to be embedded with the continued support of others. They also provide a context for further collaboration, which is already manifest in shared writing and ideas for future conferences and projects.

We now turn to summarise the lessons learnt, benefits and plans in each of the two partner institutions, An-Najah University and Birzeit University. These are intended to illustrate the transformational changes accruing to the universities from the CDFE project.

03

PALESTINE

CHAPTER (11)

AL-NAJAH UNIVERSITY

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The Institutional Context

An-Najah National University (ANU) is the largest university on the West Bank, with the largest faculty of education, and some 2,500 students. It is a public university in the sense that it is supported and supervised by a board of trustees and funded by citizens on a not-for-profit basis. In almost 90 years of teaching, the university, and its predecessor institutions, have played a leading part in the development of modern higher education in Palestine.

Founded in 1918 as a primary school, it subsequently became a school and community college offering two-year diplomas in various fields of study, before evolving into a fully fledged university in 1977. It is worth noting that many current Arab leaders studied there in the 1950s.

The university is home to a full range of faculties, organised as scientific (science, engineering and Information Technology, medicine and health sciences, agriculture and veterinary medicine) and humanities (fine arts, Islamic law, law, economics and social studies, education sciences and Teacher Training). There is also a Faculty of Graduate Studies. In addition there are a number of prestigious science centres, such as the Earth Sciences and Seismic Engineering Centre and the Centre for Urban and Regional Planning. These centres continue to enhance and develop their work through community policy-oriented projects and research to assist in the economic, social, educational, cultural, and human development of the Palestinian community.

The university has four campuses, distributed between the cities of Nablus and Tulkarem. There are three campuses in Nablus: the Old Campus, the New Juneid Campus, and Hisham Hijawi College of Technology Campus. The fourth campus is Khudouri, which is in Tulkarem. The university's campuses are being expanded to meet the growing needs of Palestinian higher education.

The university follows a semester system, with two four-month semesters beginning in fall and spring, and a shorter, two-month, semester in summer. It currently boasts about 20,000 students in attendance along with over 3,000 academic and administrative members of staff.

Faculty of Educational Sciences and Teacher Training

Since its establishment in 1977, ANU has sought to develop the Faculty of Educational Sciences (henceforth, 'the faculty' or 'FOE'), within the humanities, in line with the university's goals of community outreach, establishing close links among all faculties, and creating interactive involvement among students in research and other activities.

The FOE offers a number of academic programmes leading to a BA degree in three majors: Methods of Teaching, Elementary Education and Physical Education. A fourth major is offered by the Faculty of Psychology and Counselling.

For grade 1–4 teachers, the BA programme offers courses in education and pedagogy. For grade 5–10 teachers, the BA programme offers a combined course of study in a subject specialization, and in education and pedagogy. The content knowledge of the subject, and the pedagogical content knowledge required to teach it, are made explicit in the learning outcomes of the courses. Students are required to declare a specialization (for example, mathematics, science, English, social science) at the start of the BA programme and then to take courses appropriate to it.

At master's level, there are some several hundred students following four different degrees:

- Physical education
- Educational administration
- Curriculum instruction
- Teaching methods in a given subject (mathematics, science and English)

There are over 40 staff in the Faculty of Educational Sciences and a further 20 in the Faculty of Psychology and Counselling.

The TEMPUS CDFE Project

ANU staff visited two institutions in the UK, the Institute of Education in London and the University of Leicester, focusing on continued professional development and action research. They were part of the CDFE's project's field visit to Malta to look at practicum and participated in the range of management and strategic meetings and the transformation conference in Cairo.

Practicum at ANU

The ANU baseline report showed that practicum was well established at the university at the project's outset, with the university having been involved in two earlier projects in the area of practicum: the Teacher Education Improvement Project and a project for the upgrading of practicum at ANU, UNRWA and Arab American University for the upper basic elementary level (5–10). As a result of these projects ANU had developed a teacher evaluation system, manuals for teachers and the use of online tools such as e-portfolios and a library. This, together with the practicum courses in the teacher education programmes, provided a background for the CDFE project.

The practicum courses had been enhanced through an UNWRA/Norwegian-sponsored project that saw the placements of student-teachers in schools across the last three years of the four-year BA programme. The management training and evaluation processes necessary for this transition were funded by an MOEHE/World Bank programme. They resulted in a six-stage practicum (six courses), two in each of the second, third and fourth years of the BA, carried out in a range of schools. The CDFE project has provided opportunity to further develop this model in the light of practices elsewhere. Key lessons learnt from the development of the model were:

- Students spent more time in school over a longer period.
- Students gained a deeper knowledge of the school environment.
- Through access to multiple opportunities to enhance their practice, student-teachers can deal better with pupils and classroom management.
- The placement model meant a better and more professional relationship between student-teachers, school staff, principals and even parents as the student-teachers were seen as a more permanent part of the school.
- There was opportunity for student-teachers to gain more subject pedagogical knowledge through longer teaching practice and exposure to in-service teachers.
- Student-teachers developed a greater understanding of the work of peers and deepened their relationships with them.
- Student-teachers who were not going to make good teachers discovered this relatively early in the training process.
- Students and academic supervisors, and to a lesser extent mentors and principals, are able to give feedback to ANU staff, who can then adjust university courses accordingly, resulting in continuous improvement to curricula.

- The Readiness To Teach Index (RTTI) provides a common framework for learning, planning and evaluation matching to the MOEHE requirements through its Strategy for Teacher Education.

Assessment of student-teacher performance includes an examination of the evidence in the portfolios, the evaluation of teaching performance measured against the RTTI by the mentor, academic supervisor, principal and MOEHE district supervisor, and feedback awarded during the courses. As both a quality assurance and professional development mechanism, the university provides training for principals, mentors and supervisors. This forges a common understanding of the expectations and evaluation of practicum, of the interpretation of the standards and criteria, of the use of technology, of methods of teaching and of action research. This model and its practices were used by ANU as a baseline for comparison when visiting and learning about other institutions' approaches to practicum.

A number of lessons were identified through the visit to the UK. ANU saw the importance of an active relationship in the partnership between schools and university, in which primacy was given to the "collaborative work in helping the student" (ANU improvement plan). This led the ANU to empowering its schools to become more active members of the partnership through shared and discursive evaluations of student performance. To facilitate this process even further, a meeting was co-ordinated by ANU with the MOEHE and school principals, as a result of which the university and schools are now in closer, more open communication, and each can initiate work with the other. The process of student-teacher assessment itself has developed to take into account the more graduated scale seen in Egypt.

Further evidence of this more collaborative working style is that the ANU now responds more actively to the development needs of mentors (and their schools) and shares the fruits of action research with them.

While some use of technology had already been embedded at ANU as a result of previous projects, the CDFE project led to an enhancement in the use of technology in teacher education. This was a direct result of the practices the ANU team had observed on their visits. It includes running courses for teachers in the use of technology and the inclusion in practicum courses of elements of pedagogical and technical training in the use of technology for teaching. This has in turn led to newly qualified teachers from ANU becoming technology-enhanced learning experts for other members of staff in their school, providing greater impact and sustainability. The uses of technology and online tools are reported on in a paper by Salha, Affouna and Habayeb (2014). Further, the project has led to project participant Dr. Saida's publication of two papers in conjunction with staff at the IOE. This aspect of the use of technology was highlighted by the head teacher respondent, who said that being a partner to ANU during this project has led to teachers and trainees who know about "tools, methodologies, methods, how to teach, how to solve problems, how they can get tools, and how they can ensure a continuous teaching process, unlike the old-school methodologies based on one-way interaction and lecturing".

As a result of the project, ANU has developed its practicum model to further increase the amount of time student-teachers spend in school. Following discussion with colleagues in London, the ANU faculty staff recorded on their Institutional Improvement Plan IIP the need for "increasing numbers of hours for students enrolled in teaching practice by sending students to schools every semester starting [the] first semester of the second year and joining the Ministry of

Education district principals, mentor teachers and specialized subject academic supervisors from the university in order to evaluate and assess students' progress in teaching or in practicum." ANU has also developed its practicum model to stress the importance of the relationship between mentor and student. This was underlined, for ANU, during the visit to Malta where the mentoring model is largely absent. It is seen as key at ANU. The emphasis placed on the mentoring role is seen in revised documentation, a shared understanding of needs and greater involvement with schools in planning professional development events. On the other hand the Maltese visit has caused ANU to re-consider the relationship between university-based tutor and student, which they saw as very close on the visit. As a result, students at ANU have been asked to name the characteristics they deem desirable in tutors, with 'being human' coming out highly. Malta's focus on behaviour management has also led to a change in emphasis in the practicum courses at ANU.

The IOE was the first place that the team visited on the project and they were struck by the levels of documentation provided to accompany practicum for all stakeholders – schools, mentors, student-teachers. The keys to the usefulness of these documents were a thoroughness matched by practical value. The use of such manuals was seen in other visits as well and led to the stated target of "working to have proper manuals of practicum for each teacher and student for each stage of practicum" (IIP). These manuals have subsequently been developed and serve as an additional means of facilitating the partnership between schools and university by explicitly setting out common understandings of expectations and processes for all involved.

The London experience gave the ANU staff a much greater understanding of the use of portfolios as tools of both learning and assessment and this has led them to update the ways in which e-portfolios can be used as a reflective and assessment tool.

While in London there was a discussion about the use of schools devoted to practicum. This is done in Jordan and is the subject of initial meetings with the MOEHE to see how it may be introduced in Palestine. The discussion in Leicester about creating common frameworks for practicum evaluation has similarly fed into the ANU's discussions with the ministry about the on-going development of such structures.

The ANU Institutional Improvement Plan (IIP) responded to the use of portfolios on the visits, by making "reviewing the portfolio role in enhancing the student-teachers' learning and as a tool of assessment" one of its goals. This aim has largely been realised, although it is still a work in progress; portfolios are now key tools of the practicum at ANU. The use of electronic portfolios is developing with the concomitant need for the training of mentors in technology being addressed.

As a result of seeing how practicum was at the heart of teacher education in Malta, ANU added the need for "integrating practicum courses with other courses" into its IIP. A number of steps have been taken in this direction since the ANU's Malta visit, as detailed in the main case study report. The result is that practicum is not just seen as a small part of the training programme when students are in school but as an integral part of it.

School in Egypt

Action Research at ANU

Action research, as reported in the baseline study was largely non-existent at ANU when the CDFE project was initiated in 2012. Over the course of the project the use of action research has become established as a research approach for staff as well as for students.

A key aspect of ANU's development following the visits has been to reconceptualise the evaluation of practicum as a focus for the definition of a problem in the action research cycle. This is done by making it a requirement for students to identify a problem from their six phases of practicum that could yield to an action research approach and to undertake a small-scale classroom enquiry into that problem in the final year of the practicum.

This not only establishes the action research approach in the minds of students, it also helps them progress from BA to MA level, should they wish to do so. If a student commences a master's programme they will have acquired a grounding in the concept of action research in terms of identifying problems, having explored it as part of their practicum-related courses. Thus ANU have introduced a new "action research in practicum" course, making action research a requirement for BA graduation.

Similarly, for in-service teachers (and in the Grades 1–4 BA courses) ANU have introduced action research as a research approach. This has led to over 100 action research projects and may in future lead to a symposium organised in conjunction with the MOEHE, a growing testament to the establishment of action research as a valid and recognised methodology in the ANU faculty. A parallel development has been the establishment of training workshops for principals and teachers in 'How to conduct action research', the key objectives of which are to explore ways in which action research can be used to improve

oneself and how a teacher can see him/herself as a researcher. In other words, the aim has been to reconceptualise the professional identity of teachers from that of teacher to teacher-researcher or, indeed, scholarly researcher.

All these advances in the use of action research are linked to the development of pedagogical content knowledge through personal reflection on practice and are vehicles for research about one's own teaching. They are contributing to the development of a specific action research course in the master's programme. Action research is now seen as a way of systematically evaluating one's own practice and making changes to it in light of those findings. The international visits highlighted the possibility of the use of peer assessment as a means of data collection and its wider role in education. This was adopted as a piece of research by ANU staff, providing further evidence of the way in which action research is now becoming part of the faculty's day-to-day work. Further research led to the key finding that peer assessment changes the nature of the relationship between staff and students and enables learning to become a more collaborative enterprise. This in turn leads to a change in the way in which the courses are designed and conceived. As a result of the ANU undertaking action research, a number of developments in academic practice relating to the practicum have been implemented.

The focus on action research at Leicester was seen in light of its application to practicum and/or continued professional development. Two CDFE project participants, Dr. Abdalkarim and Dr. Soheil, reported on the development of their understanding of the process through a discussion of a range of models. These include Lewin's model of gaining a deeper understanding of a phenomenon through cycles; Stenhouse's model of understanding, planning, implementing and reflecting to improve learning and teaching through inquiry; and the lesson study approach.

The lesson study approach was seen to consist of five steps:

- Teachers discuss students' learning and identify an area of learning difficulty.
- Having chosen a focus, the group plan a lesson that focuses on tackling the learning challenge.
- The lesson is taught by one of the teachers in the group.
- The team come together to evaluate the learning in the lesson.
- A decision is made to either repeat the process or conclude that a sufficiency of results has been achieved.

All of these models are being used as teaching points and in the process of curriculum development. There are some challenges here in terms of timescale and some lack of flexibility in making changes to programmes. Nevertheless, the project has led to significant developments in teaching and learning at ANU. These include the use of professional reflection and the empowerment of learners in their classrooms – greater interaction and freedom for learners to be active in their learning.

Continued Professional Development at ANU

Continued professional development (CPD) can be conceptualised in two ways: firstly, there is the continued professional development of the participants themselves, and then there is that of the teachers they train. For the ANU team, it is important to note that for CPD to be applied to teachers it must first be recognised for the impact it has on the project participants themselves, in the same way that action research is a process undertaken by both faculty and school teachers.

The impact of CPD enhancements as a result of ANU's participation in the CDFE project can be seen on three levels – personal, institutional and national. At a personal level, each of the eight members of faculty who participated in the project gained significantly from the lessons learnt through study visits and personal reflection. In the field of CPD the impacts are also used to benefit the teachers who are the recipients of the ANU CPD courses, where, again, personal benefits may be seen. At an institutional level, the project's main participants have influence throughout campus by leading the faculty, serving on university committees, directing centres and leading programmes. Concomitantly the teachers who undertake CPD with ANU are able to lead change in their own schools, for example by undertaking action research into teaching and learning or leadership in their own settings. This research and its methodological considerations have been informed by findings from the project. Thus the institutional impact of the project is felt both in the university and in the schools with which it works. Lastly, at a national level, ANU staff who have been part of the CDFE project are represented in the MOEHE on national committees and in working parties. Thus the experience, insights and lessons gained from the project are directly influencing national policy for teacher education.

While CPD is an explicit focus of the CDFE project, participation in the project is also seen as a form of professional development in its own right. By working with a network of partners, ANU saw the importance of a learning community that fosters mutual CPD and develops self-reliance through the establishment of learner networks.

Further key lessons learnt are that the learner must be involved in the design of CPD activities; that teachers and others taking CPD courses must be seen and treated as active learners; and that technology is a tool that can help deliver and enhance CPD.

In so far as attitudes are concerned it is the ANU's belief and understanding that these are formed individually by one's own experience and background. ANU faculty staff hold degrees from a mix of Western, other Arab, and local Palestinian universities. This diversity was multiplied many times over across the CDFE project team, as ANU staff met participants from different cultures and education systems, and with divergent teaching experience. Notwithstanding this meeting of others, ANU staff also met themselves outside their usual context. They worked away from ANU as an ANU team, worked with colleagues from BZU as a Palestinian team, with MENA colleagues as an Arab team, and within the whole project as an international team. These multiple lenses of self were seen as very powerful, if tacit, CPD experiences.

In so far as ANU's ongoing CPD training is concerned, the use of technology-enhanced learning is of strategic institutional and national importance. Without an enhancement of technological understanding and adoption, its use cannot be considered as a prerequisite or baseline for other CPD. For example in a project for Grade 1 to 4 teachers, it is acknowledged that technological enhancement is required, with the result that teachers are now starting to use technology in their own settings.

CDFE Outcomes at ANU - Sustainability

The key challenge for ANU is to ensure that the lessons obtained from the CDFE project are made part of the ANU's mainstream activities. The case study's plans for sustainability are summarised here.

ANU describe the future as being one of transferring lessons from projects to programmes; in other words, to make systematic that which has been learnt.

For TEMPUS-CDFE this means taking lessons from the visits and other activities and embedding them in the faculty's mainstream activities and mission. At the national and institutional level, the senior roles held by ANU participants in the university enable the lessons learnt to be embedded in the country and at ANU. At the personal and institutional level, ANU and its staff will continue to be active in the community developed among project partners through the writing of papers, collaborative research and events to which ANU staff are invited to attend.

Concerning practicum, ANU plans to review the six-stage practicum model currently in place, while maintaining its central role in pre-service teacher education. A database for practicum has been developed and further development of partnerships and a possible further changing of roles is being considered for those playing major parts in the practicum experience. Research undertaken into different models of practicum will continue, and ANU is in discussions with the MOEHE about the formation of schools devoted to practicum and the model of accredited schools.

An essential aspect of sustainability is the development of online courses and the redesign of curricula for online participation with associated training provided for staff, students, mentors and principals. In the domain of action research the main planks for sustainability are to enable teachers to share findings with each other through organised dissemination channels. To this end a conference series has been established. The MOEHE has invited ANU to select successful teacher-researchers to present their findings at a national level.

Having experienced this EU project, ANU feels enabled to approach, and apply for, future EU projects with confidence and expertise, and, at a meta-level, the sustainability of this project lies in the fact that it builds on other projects and can connect to future ones.

03
PALESTINE

CHAPTER (12)

BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY

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The Institutional Context

Birzeit University is based in Ramallah, the de facto administrative capital of Palestine and situated 10 kilometres north of Jerusalem. Birzeit School for Girls was founded in 1924 by Nabiha Nasir, who was the driving spirit behind the school that would eventually become Birzeit University. In 1942, the school was renamed Birzeit College. The name change did not reflect a change in the curriculum or school structure; at the time, it was customary for schools to be called colleges. Years later, this practice was officially discontinued, but by that time Birzeit had become a college in the sense that the label is used today in Palestine, that is, an institute of higher education, and so the name was retained. In 1975 Birzeit became a university

From Bachelor's to Master's Degrees

On July 11, 1976, Birzeit University awarded its first batch of bachelor's degrees in eight disciplines: Arabic literature, English literature, business administration, Middle East studies, sociology, mathematics, physics, and chemistry. A year later, the Department of Education and Psychology had developed a master's degree in education. By 1978, the Faculty of Commerce and Economics was offering programmes through the economics, business administration, and accounting departments, and in 1979, the Faculty of Engineering was offering programmes through the electrical engineering, civil engineering, and mechanical engineering departments.

During the 1980s, further programmes leading to bachelor's degrees in education and psychology, sociology and anthropology, history and archaeology, biology and biochemistry, and architectural engineering were added to the list on offer. By the mid-1990s, history, geography, political science, philosophy and cultural studies departments had been established; so, too, was the Faculty for Graduate Studies, which introduced a master's programme in international relations. In addition, an international summer program was designed for foreign students who wished to study Arabic and to experience how Palestinians cope under occupation. Development of the graduate programmes continued, and by the year 2000, the university was offering 12 master's programmes, including programmes such as community and public health, gender and development, and democracy and human rights.

Birzeit University Today

Birzeit University was the first institution of higher education to be established in Palestine. In addition to its academic programmes, the university has institutes and centres that are designed to develop and support community-oriented programmes that contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in Palestine. Support for the university comes from numerous Palestinian, Arab, and international institutions, foundations, and individuals. Such support has enabled the university to continue to grow to meet the needs of Palestinian society.

The official language of instruction at BZU is Arabic, but many courses are taught in English. The university follows a semester system, with two four-month semesters beginning in the autumn and spring and a shorter two-month semester in the summer.

In the academic year 2014/2015, 11,023 students were registered at Birzeit University (9,764 undergraduate students, 1,168 graduate students, and 91 diploma and special students).

In the academic year 2013/2014, 2,069 students graduated from Birzeit University, compared to 29,554 students during the course of the period between 1976 and 2014. The area of the campus of Birzeit University is nearly 800 dunums (80 hectares or 200 acres). There are 24 main buildings on campus.

Faculties and Faculty Staff

The university offers undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate degrees through its nine faculties: Arts, Business and Economics, Education, Engineering, Science, Law and Public Administration, Information Technology, Nursing, Pharmacy and Health Professions, and Graduate Studies. These offer 74 academic programmes, including programes for 48 bachelor's degrees, 23 graduate studies programmes, two diploma programmes, and one program for foreign students. The university has 617 academic staff members (490 faculty members and 127 researchers and teaching assistants). More than 30 percent of the faculty members are women.

Institutes of the University

In addition to its faculties, and as part of its outreach to society and the academic community, the university has a number of institutes, including the Centre for Continuing Education (1991), the Institute of Law (1993), the Institute of Women's Studies (1994), the Centre for Development Studies (1997), and the Institute of Environmental and Water Studies (2007, replacing the Water Studies Institute, 2001).

Teacher Education at Birzeit University

Birzeit University offers pre-service programmes leading to teacher education. These consist of the bachelor's degrees for classroom and for subject teachers and the diploma programme. While women make up 80 percent of teachers at the national level, this figure rises to 95 percent at BZU. Interestingly the Faculty of Education consists of 12 full-time academic staff, of whom only two are female. There is hope that this will increase as experienced female teachers apply to join the faculty.

A typical diploma programme consists of a mix of ten three-credit courses and lasts three terms. These are made up of general, focused and elective courses. Examples include:

- General: introduction to education, ethics, philosophy of education
- Focused: practicum, teaching methods
- Electives: critical reading, research methods

These courses overlap with those taken by BA Education students and the same staff and resources may be used in both instances. At BA level there are 120 credits to the full degree, of which around one-third to one-half are in education depending on the track being followed and the pattern of electives. Typically a BA student will undertake four practicum courses during their four-year programme.

The university education faculty has experienced some problems in recruitment to science and mathematics education, as the best students tend to choose to take full science or mathematics tracks. On the other hand social science education courses are very successful. Typically a social science student will take 15 or so courses in education, and same number in the college/faculty of arts.

The master's in education is the second largest master's programme in the university. There are around 170 enrolled students, the overwhelming majority (over 90 percent) of whom are serving teachers. Of the individual courses in the programme the most successful are educational administration (for aspirant leaders, policy makers), education supervision, mathematics education, TEFL/English education and science education. The master's degree takes two to three years to complete and consists of 12 three-credit courses split into 'core' and 'concentration' courses. Students may take up to two courses outside of their 'home' faculty and the education programme sees some students from other faculties taking its generic courses. The master's degrees are taught by the education faculty staff but administered by the separate graduate school, which oversees postgraduate provision across the university.

Other projects/developments

The Faculty of Education is engaged in a range of projects and other developments in addition to the CDFE project and the teaching outlined above. These include:

- Quality Improvement Fund – three years directly before TEMPUS.
- Save the Children projects – in 2013/14, a project focusing on marginalised students in rural areas (physical/emotional abuse); in the coming years a project looking at inclusive education.
- Grade 1–4 project (national level) running at the same time as the CDFE project.
- Programme for newly hired higher education staff (teachers and teaching assistants) offered

through the Ibn Rushd Centre at Birzeit University.

In addition, individuals are involved in a national Grade 5–10 project (although the institution as a whole is not). There are also TEMPUS/EU projects in other disciplines. Although these do not connect to the CDFE project directly they provide a means by which the institutional understanding of EU-funded projects is enhanced.

The TEMPUS CDFE Project

As with ANU, staff from Birzeit University (BZU) visited two sites in the UK, the Institute of Education in London and the University of Leicester, focusing on continued professional development and action research. They were part of the CDFE project's field visit to Malta to look at practicum and participated in the range of management and strategic meetings and the transformation conference in Cairo. A steering group of three staff oversaw BZU's participation in the project and, over its lifetime, all 12 full-time faculty members (9 male and 3 female) participated in visits. This 100 percent participation rate was seen as key to allowing the lessons learnt to be embedded in practice and policy. In addition, two administrators and one graduate student took part. The CDFE project is conceived of in terms of its three pillars of practicum, professional development and action research and the project outcomes and future plans of BZU are presented for each of these contexts.

Practicum at BZU

Prior to the CDFE project, practicum was the most highly developed of the three project areas in BZU, meaning that staff could readily absorb new lessons in that context. The lessons centred,

among other things, on the length and procedure of the practicum, and the varying responsibilities of teacher candidates, academic supervisors, school principals and mentor teachers. They were derived from CDFE visits and other activities and from collaborative meetings with principals and school mentors.

From the visits to the UK, BZU staff discovered the power of paired placements of trainee teachers in schools and the use of shared reflections by trainee teachers with their peers. This practice is being implemented by BZU, which places more than one student-teacher in the same school. At the same time BZU participants realized that planning for teaching, and reflection on it, takes up a significant amount of time, and BZU have learnt to account for the preparation and reflection time for teaching as well as the teaching itself in any calculation of practicum hours. At Leicester and elsewhere they saw the use of virtual learning platforms to make e-learning possible for students on practicum, an approach that has been introduced into BZU courses.

The study visits in England and Malta have led to a change in the BZU staff's views about how students on teaching placement should be evaluated. They have moved from a belief that students can be judged a "failure" (according to a Pass/Fail rubric) to one in which students should be given opportunities to be successful and where there is a gradation of success. Equally important for BZU staff was their exposure to consistent and transparent evaluation of students on teaching placement, resulting in amendments to observation and reporting forms along the lines of the Maltese model. This is accompanied by a move to shared observation and training of mentors to aim for greater consistency.

1. Meetings were held with principals after the study visits to discuss the learning and share ideas about the structure and purpose of

practicum and the respective responsibilities of all university and school staff. As a result of the meeting with the school principals a wide range of recommendations emerged. These included the use of paired placements across subject disciplines in the same school; processes for pre- and post-lesson discussions, such as making it a requirement that student teachers confer with the host teacher and take notes before class, and meet with the teacher after class for reflection and discussion; revision of observation documentation, such as giving principals the opportunity to conduct performance appraisals for teacher candidates; extending the intensity of teaching practice so that students are required to spend a couple of weeks at the school as full-time teachers rather than simply attending a class or two; gradually allowing the student to have greater responsibility in the preparation of lessons, so that students first observe, then partially co-teach with the host teacher and then only later are granted the opportunity to teach a full lesson; coordinating with other universities when placing students, since school principals cannot support and follow up on teacher candidates from four universities; and requiring student-teachers to participate in all school activities such as the morning routines before pupils enter the building.

2. A similar meeting was held with school teacher/ mentors from the partner schools to build a shared understanding of roles and to discuss the implementation of changes. A series of recommendations, some overlapping with those above, also arose out of these meetings. These include the suggestions for pre- and post-lesson meetings between host teacher and student teacher's for the provision of feedback to the lesson plan (before) and reflection and discussion on the lesson (after); that student teachers spend 2–4 weeks with host teachers as full-time teachers, attending and participating in all their respected school activities; that

student teachers should observe and practice teaching at the same levels, i.e., if a teacher candidate observes a host teacher teaching at middle-school level the host teacher should ensure that the student teacher practises teaching at middle-school level as well; that teacher candidates be placed with two host teachers wherever possible, providing them with the opportunity to observe a variety of instructional practices and teaching styles; that host teachers be encouraged to allow teacher candidates to observe 60 hours of classes; that the host teacher should not interfere in a lesson while the student teacher is teaching; that host teacher and academic advisor should cooperate and seriously consider providing teacher candidates with the opportunity to observe and teach in the same semester instead of the current situation where the teacher candidate observes in one semester and teaches in another; that host teachers be required to train teacher candidates and share their experience and teaching methodology with them; that the student teacher is not required to help host teachers with their marking or any other duties that might affect their observation and teaching practice; and that the appraisal of student teachers by both host teachers and academic advisors should be done at the end of Practicum 2, since student teachers have not learnt or acquired that much by the end of Practicum 1.

As a result of both meetings the roles of key staff have been revised and documented. These include protocols for university/school partnerships, the way in which students are prepared as they move from one context to another, and the expectations of mentors and principals in working with the university on aspects of practicum and its evaluation.

Action Research at BZU

In reflecting on the lessons learnt in action research (action research) the key point drawn out by BZU faculty members was that, prior to the CDFE project, and in complete contrast to practicum, action research did not exist in the provision for teacher education at the university. As a result of BZU's participation in the project, action research has been introduced into university academic courses and the practicum experience expanded upon; both developments are seen as major successes of BZU's involvement in the project.

In action research particularly the analytical reports produced as part of the project have formed a key resource for institutional and individual change. The analytical report for action research is being used very explicitly by BZU as a source for developing notes and as a theoretical basis for a paper on how student teachers can undertake action research in their practicum. It also set a context for the study visits undertaken by BZU staff and has been complemented by notes from the action research-focused visit to Leicester. These have helped, particularly in the development of the understanding of the breadth of action research approaches, which although they do not amount to a single methodology, nonetheless form the basis for rigorous research.

In light of the CDFE project, BZU have changed their research methods course outline to include action research and a task on evaluation through a case study of their practice teaching in the school, including readings. There has also been significant shift in favour of linking action research with CPD, based on lessons learnt from the American University of Beirut (AUB) at the transformation conference.

To summarise, there are four ways in which the lessons learnt from the project in respect of action research have been, or will be, implemented at BZU:

- Action research has become a core component of most of the courses offered for BA students, such as educational psychology, research methods, practice teaching and seminars.

- A new seminar-based course that links action research and continued professional development is now in progress under the heading of 'action research for professional development'.

- Action research is to become part of the training offered by BZU faculty to the MOEHE for training in-service teachers employed by the Ministry.

- Action research has become a core component of courses directed at training and empowering new faculty members at BZU.

Continued Professional Development at BZU

The overarching aim for BZU in respect of continued professional development (CPD) as a result of the project, overlapping with practicum and action research, was to improve the kind of training on offer to teachers.

A significant lesson learnt from the visit to the IOE was the way in which the IOE/UCL Academy provided intellectual sponsorship to school teachers to help them adopt research-oriented teaching methods. Thus, university academics contributed to teachers' professional development by enhancing their skills as classroom researchers. Previously the view of CPD had been one of 'delivery' of training to teachers. This 'intellectual sponsorship' places CPD in a very different paradigm. As noted above, this was supported at

the IOE by the provision of online courses and materials. Another key, related lesson was that CPD is more effective when it is not undertaken in teachers' own time but is sponsored by the school.

CPD has always been evaluated at BZU and in the Palestinian context but the visit to the IOE showed how this could be criterion- rather than norm-referenced. This change in paradigm for evaluation and rubrics has had a profound effect on faculty staff and they are exploring how this might be implemented for CPD and more generally.

BZU learnt that a key role for faculty staff is to offer teachers time and support for professional development rather than focus on top-down training. In doing so, they support teachers in becoming reflective and open the door for them to action research activities. Incentives have been introduced in the form of awards for school staff undertaking CPD activities, while the concept of criterion-based evaluation of CPD, seen as important, is also being explored by BZU for possible implementation.

BZU staff have reflected on the ways in which CPD might become more sensitive to diversity – socio-economic, gender or ability. Sensitivity to such issues, as demonstrated in Malta, is being considered in the design of CPD activities. In all visits there was a much greater interplay between theory, policy and practice than had perhaps sometimes been the case at BZU. This multidimensional approach and context is changing the CPD as well as the action research courses on offer at BZU.

As a result of the Cairo transformation conference, BZU have developed a core course in mentoring based on the Université Saint-Joseph model. As a core course this will be taken by pre-service teachers but as they become serving teachers it will become a CPD vehicle that will bear fruit over

time. Also from Cairo came the adoption of ANU's peer evaluation methods and an understanding of critical methods and feedback mechanisms in CPD.

Changes to the CPD modules at BZU following participation in CDFE and visits to other partners also include:

- A focus on applying lessons directly in the classroom. This came as a result of formal and informal discussions held by facilitators with the teachers during learning circles held on campus, where every participant shared his/her experiences. At the beginning of a session each facilitator discusses with the teachers the application of the new skills and knowledge acquired as a result of the training at the schools in which they teach.

- Building in opportunities for collaboration.

- A prioritisation, with ministerial approval, of university-led CPD. Teachers are continuing to be exempted from attending other professional development activities held by the Ministry of Education and other school functions, to allow them to focus on the training held at the university and at the schools.

- Integration of on-line training and information technology.

- The facilitators continued to conduct learning circles at the schools and during the learning sessions at the university and met regularly with the teachers. The teachers are encouraged to share their experiences, successes and challenges in applying what they have learnt.

Continued professional development feeds into the appraisal processes for teachers. As a result of the project it has become clear that in Palestine, staff do not all have access to the criteria on the basis of which they are being appraised. In other countries this is not the case – the criteria and indicators are made public.

School in Egypt

BZU – Sustainability and Future Plans

Birzeit University's Faculty of Education plans to continue as many activities from the project as feasible after the EU's financial support has ended. Many changes have already become systemic, for example, the changes to the practicum courses for pre-service teachers and the introduction of action research into all programmes of teacher education. Further, the networks that have developed in BZU, both in Palestine and internationally as a result of the project, will continue to be leveraged to support developments and to share ideas. A Memorandum of Understanding between Birzeit and some institutions, such as the Institute of Education of the University of London, is seriously being considered. To ensure sustainability other measures will be considered, such as collaboration on conducting research on the project's three main strategic areas of concern, and exchange visits for faculty and students.

While changes to the structure of the observation and evaluation of teaching practice in practicum have already been made, a crucial future activity will be to build on the ideas from the project in developing the role of mentors, and much of the development of CPD is centred on this.

In the case of action research many advances have been made in the systematic introduction of action research into theoretical courses and into projects undertaken by students in practicum. The results of this need to lead to further action research-based projects with dissemination of findings and publication of academic papers.

For continued professional development the key point learnt through experience in the CDFE project was that continued professional development should take the form of active learning not lectures. To that end, the university aims to assist school teachers in conducting action research projects to solve some of the challenging situations they encounter in teaching; keep the momentum going and increase motivation by asking the MOEHE to hold a graduation ceremony at the end of the training for each group; continue the dialogue and information sharing among teachers, instructional supervisors and principals pertaining to recent teaching methodologies and instructional techniques; invite principals and instructional supervisors to attend some sessions whenever possible, particularly learning circles, where student-teachers can share their knowledge and application of the new skills in the classrooms; continue to use information technology to facilitate the modules and encourage teachers to use it in their daily teaching and planning activities; and improve learning circles used during the training, where all teachers can share their application of new skills and practices acquired and to demonstrate their effect on student achievement.

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CONCLUSION

There is emerging evidence by researchers that the Eurocentric perspective of the history of internationalization needs to be critiqued. Internationalization is as old as history. It is as old as the most ancient educational institutions in this region: Al-Zaytoonah in Tunisia, al-Qarawiyyin in Morocco and Al-Azhar in Egypt.

For the longest of time, and in Europe in particular, internationalization of higher education was confined to human exchange, that is, among students, teachers and schools, with student exchanges alone reaching today a total of 4 billion international students. It is expected that by 2025 this number will increase to 7.5 billion (Charles and Delpech, 2015).

Until the 1970's the human exchange model was the prevalent form of internationalization. Since the 1980's and 1990's, various other forms have become prominent the most prevalent of which have been cross border institutions and branch campuses. In 2011 there were 200 offshore campuses and they are expected to increase to 280 by 2020 (Wadhwa and Jha 2014). Further forms of internationalization have included, joint programmes, dual degrees, joint curriculum and pedagogical tools, mutual accreditation of programs and degrees, the exchange of faculty and joint and collaborative research.

Today internationalization is a popular indicator for higher education quality. It is also measurable and quantifiable. However many higher education specialists have flagged particular problems with the increased importance awarded internationalization. Altbach points to the dangers of corruption including false documents (Altbach, 2007). Others have cautioned against the growing commercialization of internationalization (Hudzik,2011). Since revenue generation through student mobility has become the main focus of student exchange, the quality of educational provision is often compromised. Yet other authors those coming from the global south have raised other concerns such as the migration of highly qualified persons from their countries, or the so-called brain drain, as an undesirable outcome of internationalization.

Knight and several other specialists writing on higher education and internationalization have distinguished between the latter and globalization (knight, 2012). One important distinguishing feature of internationalization is that it builds on and respects local contexts. It is a process of transformation and change that does not subscribe to a one -size- fits all approach. It is not an end in itself but a means of enhancing intercultural knowledge, skills and values in faculty and students.

Internationalization comes with a range of values related to equity, respect, reciprocity, cooperation, education as a public good and the need to attain quality of learning. It stresses mutual benefits, capacity building, partnerships and the value of cooperation.

While globalization is the reflection of the hegemony and domination of a particular economic order that feeds largely on competition and disparity, internationalization allows for mutual learning based on a two-way exchange of ideas. It acknowledges and builds on national and regional priorities, policies and practices. Needless to say that these are of course ideal types and the boundaries between the two forms of interaction are often blurred.

CDFE intentionally adopted an internationalization approach. It was based on indigenous analyses by Arab scholars of gaps in teacher preparation, the results of which can largely be summarized as:

- ✓ Low admission standards

- ✓ Deficiencies in the cultural capital and education of prospective teachers with very little vision in curriculum formulation

- ✓ Insufficient attention and time given to practicum

- ✓ A technical orientation to teacher preparation with very little bridging between theory and practice

- ✓ Very little research in education

- ✓ Faculty in university often far removed from the realities of school life

- ✓ Brief or non-existing induction programs to mentor beginning teachers

- ✓ Weak professional development

The project's larger objective was designed to build the capacity of selected faculties of education (FOEs) and higher education institutions by sharing international good practices from the EU and MENA region to develop better teaching and more effective schooling. CDFE fosters and creates a large community of learners between institutions in Europe and the MENA region. The more specific objectives of the project or what were regarded as strategic levers of change were to build the capacities of faculties of education in three strategic areas: action research, effective practicum and school-based teacher training, and professional development, through the exchange of expertise. These three areas were also strategic priorities of two emerging centers of excellence (regional hubs): The Jordan's Queen Rania Academy for Teachers (QRTA) and Egypt's Professional Academy of Teachers (PAT) - this link will ensure a ripple effect for the same strengths and achievements within the project partnerships, spreading them across all countries in the MENA region.

This capacity building was meant to make FOEs' teacher education more relevant to school practice and to strengthen the partnership between universities and schools through school-based research, continuing professional development of teachers and school-based reforms. The main questions we need to ask after the completion of the case studies are: What were the main successful transformations on the personal and institutional levels? What were the areas of resistance? What were the factors that allowed for these transformations to occur? Was CDFE able to mitigate the tensions between globalization and an internationalization approach?

To answer these questions we present some of the examples of institutional transformation observed in each of the project's three areas of focus (practicum, action research, and continued professional development) as well as some examples of personal transformation. For the practicum the following table summarizes some of the areas of transformation:

Increased hours devoted to practicum (18-22 weeks)	A data base developed for student teachers, schools and the whole system
Manuals developed	Modules produced
Starting practicum early in a student's life	Block time used as opposed to spaced single days
Incrementally increasing practicum hours each year	Evaluation tools developed
Introducing Action Research to Practicum	Training of mentors
Training of teachers	Assessment of development of mentors
Using private schools for practicum	Developing agreements and MOU's with schools

In the case of mentorship a number of changes were reported in the case studies such as the introduction in FOEs of courses and diplomas in mentoring for schools which included courses for school principals. In some situations mentorship training was offered for faculty.

To improve tutor/student relationship students were invited to do peer assessment. More democratic and equal interactions were observed more frequently between tutors and students, and particularly so on trips. Meanwhile some faculties were in the process of creating protocols for the relationship between tutors and students to ensure mutual respect.

A great deal of attention was paid to reflection during the project time and beyond. In the case of action research, concerted efforts were made to include courses as part of the core curriculum, as well as part of research methods classes. Meanwhile periodicals were launched in some faculties to publish work on action research. A very significant change was the recognition of action research as a legitimate methodology in fulfilling thesis and dissertation requirements. Finally action research was included in professional development initiatives and bachelor's, masters and doctoral degrees as well as in the practicum.

With regard to Continued Professional Development

(CPD), the following were some observable changes and transformations that deserve highlighting. School -university partnerships were strengthened in several instances through memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and agreements between FOEs and the ministry of Education (MOE). Meanwhile professional development schools were established around particular FOEs. Other FOEs chose to expand the CPD opportunities through technology by offering CPD on line. Another interesting development was the enhancement of professional development centers in some FOEs. In some instances the diversification of professional development was accompanied by university certification and departments of quality assurance. Lastly practitioners from schools were invited to participate in university activities, teaching and learning.

At the personal level several competencies and values were acquired. Project participants self-reported competencies they had acquired, while colleagues reported changes they observed in others. Prominent skills mentioned included the capacity to engage in collaborative research and writing, the acquisition of negotiation skills, the ability to work in teams, the development of cultural tolerance, the capacity to take risks in the transformation journey, the ability to face challenges with resilience, the appreciation of qualitative research, and most important of all was the gradual democratization of relationships within the teams.

During the lifetime of the project, two pertinent books were authored by faculty in the partnering institutions. One in Arabic on the use of portfolios for practicum and another in English on school based mentoring in Initial Teacher Education.

Change and transformation are complicated processes and the causality and linearity of those processes are often not easily identifiable. It is not always clear how much of the change is attributable to catalyzing agents, in this case the CDFE project, and how much is merely a contribution to movements and transformations that were entrenched and already ongoing prior to the project. Nonetheless some changes and transformations did occur and were indeed observable and we can therefore make some attempt to explain why they did indeed happen.

The following are some of the factors that can be singled out in an attempt to explain the observed changes. CDFE adopted an empowerment model where the gaps in the system were self-identified at each of the institutional levels and the direction of the improvement or narrowing of gaps had no prescribed model of transfer but was being formulated and discovered during the learning experience. The project offered an important opportunity for south-south exchange and encouraged collaboration amongst peer institutions allowing for a much deeper learning experience with considerable mutual support to enable participants to face the various challenges in the process of change. Ample attention and time was given to dialogue and reflection individually and in groups. This was critical to the depth of learning and was also enhanced by the length of the initiative over a span of 36 months. Cultural immersion in different contexts as a style of learning yielded both explicit and tacit knowledge. The exchange programmes were planned in ways to allow for that kind of immersion and insight in different cultural conditions. Critical appreciation of cultures and open discussion on unequal exchange were made possible. The partners were diverse and had different historical backgrounds and relationships with the institutions in each of the regions. The involvement of policy makers at all levels along with practitioners (deans, mentors, heads of departments, school principals) allowed for serious and rapid decision making towards

improvements. Improvement plans were thus taken very seriously. Moreover the very strong links between the participants in the CDFE project with policy makers at the national levels created enabling environments for bridging the gap between interventions and supportive policies and structures all of which greatly enhanced the likelihood of sustainability of the various reform initiatives. Finally the synergy between ongoing and existing similar programs greatly reinforced CDFE not only on the national scale but also on the regional level.

The area of greatest challenge proved to be largely due to both structural and cultural resistance to the kind of change that CPD demanded. This was compounded by the fact that most educational systems in the MENA region are ill-equipped to understand that knowledge is constructed and not transmitted. Hence the traditional transfer of knowledge and skills was being employed to train teachers. Most systems were unable to allow for school autonomy and teacher efficacy all very necessary for the school based CPD approaches put forward as good practices. There is therefore much work to be done in this area of transformation at both the systemic institutional and the individual cultural levels. This will be the focus for more sustainable efforts and possibly the future direction of the engagement of partners in this very enriching CDFE project.

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The CDFE Partnership: Foundational Principles

The Partnership is about Change and Transformation

The Partnership is a Collaborative and Collegial One

The Partnership Constitutes a Community of Learners

The Partnership is a First Step in Long Lasting Relationships and Friendships

The Partnership Respects Diversity, Multiculturalism and Internationalization

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