



DUHOK INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

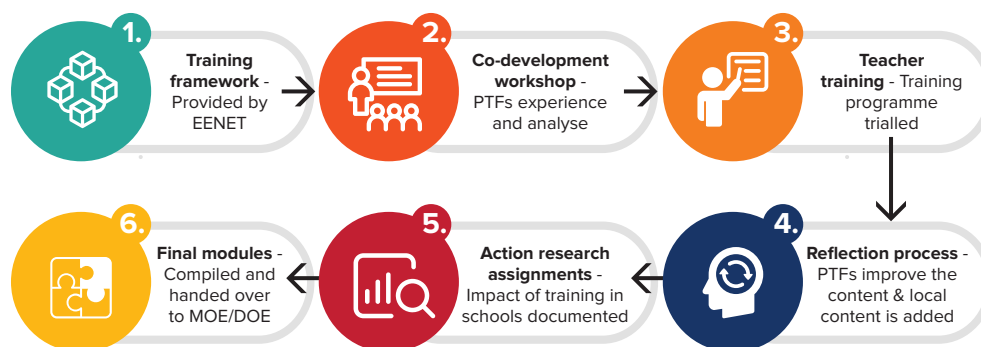
IN THIS NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the third newsletter of the DIEP project. Duhok is piloting a world class inclusive education training programme in the DIEP project.

DIEP is a partnership between SALAR, Duhok Governorate, General Directorate of Education in Duhok (DOE) and General Directorate of Care and Social Development in Duhok (DOLSA), funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) over 12 months. DIEP will co-develop an approach to inclusive education in Duhok in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

In this newsletter we update about the activities of the DIEP project in the third quarter (July – September 2022) including the teacher training, accessible infrastructure and teacher network.

THE SIX STEPS OF THE CO-DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



■ TRAINING COMPLETED

The training programme has now been successfully completed in the pilot schools of Zivreen and Khabat during the teachers' summer break. The first stage was co-development of the training materials, where 19 principle trainer-facilitators (PTFs) experienced the training programme they deliver and actively contribute to the contextualisation of these materials for Duhok. The PTFs then delivered the teacher training to 110 teachers from the pilot schools over three weeks in July and August. The teacher training uses participatory methods and active-learning techniques to build teacher confidence and problem-solving skills.

WHAT IS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION?

An agreed definition of inclusive education is that all children, whatever their differences, can learn and thrive in mainstream schools. It means that instead of expecting the children to adapt or creating new systems to encompass them, we remove barriers to learning and participation.

The main tools for removing the barriers are teachers, which is where our focus lies, as well as supporting structures from school management, physical environments, parents and school communities and civil society.



ACTIVE LEARNING AND SCREENING FOR LEARNING NEEDS

The teacher training that was delivered focused on screening and identification of learning needs and promoting active learning in the classroom. The teachers are actively engaging with the topics they are learning.

They are gaining confidence with the participatory style of learning, engaging more with the specific topics and proudly share relevant examples from their schools.

Active learning in the co development & teacher training Module 4 of the inclusive education programme



“LUCKY TO BE PART OF THIS PROGRAMME”

Sherzad Ahmed Khalid is a trainer (PTF) in the programme and has felt empowered by the process of co-development and training approach.

“I am overwhelmingly impressed by the material we have been exposed to in the DIEP training programme. As PTFs, we have certainly been upskilled. We learned so much about how to identify and remove barriers to the inclusion of students regardless of their physical or mental status. I admit there was a huge gap in our understanding before which was impeding the progress of students.

The most recent training programme was very enriching and focused on how teachers should effect a change in their teaching attitude so that students can be more actively engaged in the classroom, thereby increasing their learning prospects. We also learned how to create resources from very simple items and turn them into teaching and learning aids. The methods introduced were quite new to us and I have been telling my fellow trainers that we are lucky to have been part of this programme. I am fully aware of the sizable challenges along the way. This does not mean that the training would enable us to overcome all challenges, but we do feel empowered to at least mobilise co-ordinated interventions to improve the reality of education in our country. Eventually, I hope a strategy will be developed to roll out this process in all schools.”



Active learning with low-cost teachers aids in training of Module 4 of the inclusive education programme

TAKING THEIR LEARNING TO THE CLASSROOM

Now that teachers have completed their inclusive education training during the summer break, they will go back to their schools and begin putting into practice what they have learned. Every teacher has left the training with a personalised plan for their own professional development and an action plan for the first 3 months of school. Their plan includes improvements in their teacher strategies, changes to the environment and increased use of low-cost teaching aids. Teachers have also been grouped with peers from other schools so they can share their progress with each other, support each other and learn from each other.

PEER-TO-PEER TEACHER NETWORK

An important part of the DIEP project is that Kurdish and Swedish parties work together and exchange knowledge, called “peer-to-peer”. The informal peer-to-peer networking in the teachers’ network is ongoing between Kurdish-speaking Swedish teachers and teachers in Duhok.

In September, a capacity building information session was held on a topic identified by the group, neurodevelopmental conditions and strategies for the classroom. The presentation was provided online by Helene Fägerblad, Advisor at SPSM (Swedish National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools), followed by hybrid small group discussions between Swedish and Duhok teachers.

The Swedish teachers in the DIEP teacher network held an information meeting with capacity building session on inclusive education in the Swedish context and the resource developed by SALAR called “Different is the norm” (*Olika är normen*).

Representatives of SALAR also attended a meeting for the European peers in the UNDP peer-to-peer programme to Iraq on 30th August and presented on the project’s progress.

Small group discussions between teachers in Sweden and Duhok





PTF ACHIEVEMENTS RECOGNISED

A ceremony was held in Duhok to recognise the achievements of the 19 PTFs from the directorates of Education and Social Affairs, who have now successfully co-developed the training programme of four modules of inclusive education. Certificates were awarded in the presence of the Deputy Governor of Duhok, Mr Majid Said Salih, Mr Omer Director General of DOE and Mr Fakhir, Assistant Director of DOLSA.

PTF ceremony to present certificates



"I ONCE RESISTED THE IDEA OF GROUP WORK IN OUR CLASSROOMS"

Berivan is a teacher in Khabat school and has recently participated in the DIEP teacher training on inclusive education.

"I found this training programme very useful especially because many new methods of teaching, teaching aids and other resources were introduced. These resources have always been at our fingertips, but we had never thought of them as teaching aids. I now realise I can bring to my classroom many such teaching aids without having to spend one Dinar.

I was one of those teachers who strongly resisted the idea of group work in our classrooms, given the size of the class. But I learned how possible this was after I took Module 4. Now, I look at the subject from a different angle, believing I can still manage my class whilst students are working in groups. For this new academic year, I stand ready to take to my classroom many new resources. I used to be the only person speaking in the classroom, but this year I will involve students in their share of discussions and talk.

I learned that if I do not have a friendly but professional relationship with students, I can never find out what their learning challenges are. Most importantly, I learned from this training programme the responsibility we have as teachers is to actively welcome students into our school rather than maintaining a negative attitude, scaring students away from schools."

ACCESSIBLE INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE PILOT SCHOOLS

A walk-through assessment of the pilot schools and peer-to-peer process led to a list of identified improvements and renovations to improve accessibility and inclusivity at the schools. Procurement for physical improvements has been completed. Most items were available locally and tactile tiles with warning spots were ordered from Turkey. The focus on the physical improvements has been smaller, cost-effective changes that can make a big difference for the students attending the school. Works on physical improvements began in the last week of August.

Physical improvements are ongoing at Khabat Schools to create a more accessible school environment



PROJECT TIMELINE

