

Iraqi Teachers Shaping Education

Teacher Training Program

May 2004

Under the previous regime, the Iraqi education community was isolated from the international community and was not able to participate in educational innovations.

As part of USAID's education program which focused on emergency actions to support the resumption of schools while laying the foundations for critical educational reform, USAID's teacher training program for secondary school teachers and administrators nationwide was implemented between September 2003 and February 2004 through a set of extended programs that worked from master trainers to secondary to tertiary trainers.



Dr. Hind Rassam Senior Education Advisor at the teacher training session in Baghdad in February 2004. USAID Photo

The Purpose

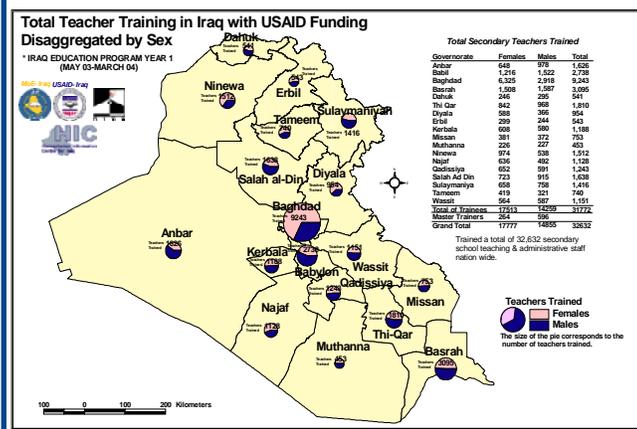
In support of the Ministry of Education's effort to upgrade the quality of teaching in Iraq's classrooms, USAID's teacher training program laid the foundation for changes in teaching philosophies by encouraging teachers to freely express themselves and participate in decision making on training content. A five day training program included concepts like leadership, critical thinking, mutual respect, freedom of expression and team work.

The Program

The teacher training program, which was implemented by USAID's Revitalization of Iraqi Schools and Stabilization of Education (RISE) program, was developed through a consultative process with the Ministry of Education and the education community. The Ministry of Education, coordinating with the RISE team, spent two weeks conducting cross-country surveys and interviews to determine needs and identify a pool of Iraqi trainers for the teacher training initiative.

From September to November 2003, 860 master trainers were trained and in February 2004, 31,772 secondary school teachers and administrators were trained nation-wide. During the training sessions, the teachers discussed lesson plans, learning strategies, classroom management, performance and measurements, punishment and reward, and community-parent-school relationships.

Click here for detailed maps of USAID's teacher training activities in Iraq



Teacher Training Totals

	Females	Males	Total
Trainee Totals	17,513	14,259	31,772
Master Trainers	264	596	860
Grand Total	17,777	14,855	32,632

In close cooperation with Iraqi nationals and the Coalition Provisional Authority, USAID is restoring critical infrastructure, delivering healthcare and education services, expanding economic opportunities, and improving governance in Iraq.

Laying Foundations for future Education Reform: Teacher Training



A teacher at the Baghdad teacher training discusses new education techniques. USAID Photo

Introducing New Education Techniques

In addition to promoting a change in teaching philosophies, the training also had a practical component which introduced new teaching strategies, such as new methods of creating lesson plans. One Iraqi content supervisor said, "I have been a teacher for 30 years and I didn't expect to change my methods of teaching and class management. I came to training to prove that I do not need any extra training, but frankly after three or four days of training, I have found the new ideas and methods helpful. I also benefited from the exchange of ideas and techniques in my group. When I return to my school, I will share with my colleagues what I learned and encourage them to participate in the training."

Promoting Education Based on Mutual Respect

During the teacher training, participants took part in workshops on classroom behavior, discipline and counseling. In response to these workshops, one teacher stated, "This week I can feel a total change not only in our country and myself but within my whole family. Every day when I left the training, I responded to my children's misbehavior in the new ways you taught us rather than shouting and hitting them, I sat down and talked to them calmly. I feel that we are free now not only in the way we teach but the way we parent. We must work together as a team to create a new generation of Iraqis".

Encouraging New Ideas

An underlying theme of the training was the promotion of a tolerant and democratic atmosphere both in the training sessions and in the classrooms. An Islamic teacher was so inspired by these ideas that he stated, "I would like to teach not only the Islamic religion in our high schools but also teach a course that combines all existing religions in the world. This would promote respect and tolerance of all religions and sects". He also added, "that ignorance and having the wrong ideas about other religions leads to prejudiced ideas and stereotypes."



Baghdad Teacher Training Graduation Ceremony

Graduation

In February, graduation ceremonies were conducted for more than 30,000 teachers and administrators. After receiving his certificates, one teacher stated, "Now I feel free for the first time since the Americans liberated Iraq from Saddam. I never knew what freedom was until I participated in the training this week because I was free to express my opinion without being intimidated. Now I also see that listening and respecting others is part of freedom. You taught us in the workshop about values that with freedom comes responsibilities."