2nd National Workshop
On
Lifelong Learning in the IR of Iran: Challenges, Achievements and Future Prospect

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Introduction

Providing learning opportunities for all throughout life, conformity of learning processes with formal, non-formal and informal processes of learning, the importance of which is clear for all in view of technological advancements, are considered as prerequisites for establishing and achieving knowledge societies. The concept of lifelong learning, which was initially proposed some decades ago, is a call to all countries for a reorientation of their educational structures for a greater involvement and participation of citizens in the learning process. An active learning society is one that creates a culture of learning based on its citizens’ learning needs, while offering opportunities to meet those needs. Promoting a culture of learning is a key principle in the reconstruction of educational and scientific systems, which not only make up a part of the educational system, but are also a major structure of the social system.

In its capacity as the educational, scientific and cultural organization of the United Nations, UNESCO is considered as the lead agency entrusted with the responsibility of setting the grounds for the establishment of learning and knowledge societies and offering equal learning and educational opportunities for all in the Member States. The Iranian National Commission for UNESCO, as the main body for implementing UNESCO's programmes and activities at the country level, has organized the second lifelong learning workshop in Iran, in cooperation with the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Organization (TVETO) of Iran, which is the forerunner for informal and skills education in the Country. This workshop focused on “Lifelong Learning in the IR of Iran: Challenges, Achievements and Future Prospect” and was held at the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Organization of Iran, on 13 October 2013, in the Iranian Capital, Tehran.

The Workshop that was organized and held in the framework of the capacity-building plan of the IR of Iran and as a follow-up to the 1st national lifelong learning workshop (12-15 February 2012), pursued the following objectives:

1. Enhancing capacities of senior policy-makers and researchers of the policy-making arena, at country level, to set and implement innovative strategies and policies for strengthening the lifelong learning system;
2. Documentation of the outcomes of the 1st LLL workshop;
3. Setting mechanisms for establishing a permanent national secretariat for promoting and upgrading lifelong learning in Iran.

To organize this workshop, the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO hosted two sessions of the scientific committee, attended by well-known national experts/specialists in lifelong learning. The outcomes of the two sessions were to have the Workshop organized in an interactive and participatory manner to reach the following expected outcomes through discussion sessions:

1. Strengthening of inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary cooperation in lifelong learning;
2. Identification of future activities of executive bodies in view of the different dimensions of lifelong learning. Also identification of the themes of predictable plans for the future (in view of upper-hand policy instruments, the current situation of the related organization, its' internal capacities and resources);
3. Feasibility study for the establishment of a national lifelong learning network and database;
4. Feasibility study for developing an inclusive strategic instrument on lifelong learning;
5. Preparing a documented report of the policies, strategies and executive plans of related bodies in lifelong learning;
6. Developing a set of guidelines for promoting lifelong learning in Iran, for distribution among executive and policy-making bodies.
The Workshop was host to 35 participants, representing education-related bodies in the Country, including: policymakers, senior managers, researchers and experts from the various ministries of Education; Science, Research and Technology; Health and Medical Education; and Labour and Social Welfare. Other participating organizations included the Centre for Women’ Affairs of the Presidential Office, Scientific Associations of Iran, and journalists.

The Workshop was composed of an opening ceremony, an introduction and key explanations session, as well as two working and expert sessions. In the first part of the working sessions, the participants voiced their views on the situation of lifelong learning in the Country, its challenges, achievements and future prospects. The second part of the working sessions was allocated to reports of national bodies on lifelong learning. This section was divided into five separate sessions as follows:

1. Lifelong learning in National Educational Institutions;
2. Lifelong Learning in National Employment Centres;
3. Lifelong Learning and Information Technology in Iran;
4. Lifelong Learning and the Media;
5. Lifelong Learning in Specialised Scientific Associations and Institutions Involved in Affairs Related to Groups and Issues in Priority.

In this session, the representatives of the various participating organizations voiced the challenges, achievements and the future prospects of their organizations in regard to lifelong learning.

The closing ceremony introduced the Workshop recommendations, by the title of the “Tehran Recommendations”. These recommendations were offered in the eight areas of policy making, budgetary implications, valuation and accreditation, establishing institutional structures, ICT and lifelong learning, awareness raising and mobilizing public participation, lifelong learning and special groups, and inter-sectoral and inter-institutional cooperation. The recommendations were confirmed by the participants and the members of the Workshop’s scientific committee and it was decided to have the set of recommendations considered and integrated into future policies and distributed among related national bodies, including the ministries in charge of formal and informal education and UNESCO.

In conclusion, it is necessary to hereby acknowledge the activities of the Germany-based UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office, the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Organization of Iran (especially the Deputy Directorate for Research and Planning), the Iranian Ministry of Education, the Iranian Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, the Iranian Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and the members to the scientific committee of the Workshop for their valuable and effective contribution to the organization of this Workshop.

We hope that the present report can serve as an effective step in capacity-building for lifelong learning and promoting comprehensive and sustainable policies in lifelong learning in national bodies in charge of education for establishing learning societies.
Opening Ceremony

Recitation of the Holy Quran and the national anthem of the IR of Iran opened the event.

The first speaker of the Opening was Dr Koroush Parand, Deputy Minister for Education and Head of the Iranian Technical and Vocational Education and Training Organisation. Emphasising that LLL has become an inevitable component of today’s world due to the diverse conditions governing our world, the speaker continued by defining the concept of LLL in theory. As such, LLL was defined as, ‘consisting of the three components of formal, non-formal and informal modes of learning. LLL is about helping people out in confronting challenges through the acquisition of necessary life skills, hence enhancing their knowledge.’ Therefore, “non-formal skills education is one of the inevitable types of education in LLL”, explained the Speaker. Professional competencies were defined by the Speaker as being a tool for continual evaluation of personal abilities and skills, referring to it as an important element in the process of LLL.

Dr Parand briefed the session on the activities of the TVETO and the role of this organization in empowering different strata of the society, saying that “the TVETO is capable of promoting objective-oriented lifelong learning in two national and regional levels in cooperation with UNESCO by establishing a permanent secretariat for LLL”, emphasizing the necessity of clarifying the status and share of non-formal education in the preparation and implementation of the National Inclusive Strategic Document on LLL, in this trend.

The second speaker of the Opening was Dr Mohmmad Reza Saeidabadi, Secretary General of the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO. He began by explaining that lifelong learning was formed on the basis of four important elements and their relevant educational systems of learning to know (educational system), learning to do (skills system), learning to be (belief and value system), and learning to live together (system of social relations). To continue, the Secretary General elaborated on the requirements and conditions for establishing a system of lifelong learning, saying that lifelong learning is a need requiring the seven elements of:

1. Reconstruction of the educational system (under the supervision of the Government and national legislative bodies in which regards establishing a secretariat for LLL can be effective); 2. Needs-based planning in view of local and cultural needs and the value and belief systems; 3. Adopting an inter-sectoral approach; 4. Taking account of marginalized groups, especially the children of work; 5. Putting in place an executive mechanism for the recognition, evaluation and accreditation of different forms of lifelong learning;
6. Providing the means for the participation and cooperation of the private sector; and 7. Exchanging information with regional countries and internationally.
Mr Hiranand Purkait, Officer-in-Charge of the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office was the last speaker of the Opening. Expressing his gratitude to the organizers, Mr Purkait said, “Lifelong learning is a UNESCO priority set by its Member States, to promote every individual’s right to education. In this respect the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning provides technical assistance to Member States in formulating their policies and strategies in literacy, non-formal education and adult education and in incorporating lifelong learning perspectives into their educational reforms…at the same time, the UIL works to develop frameworks, guidelines, instruments and (online) tools to improve the quality and relevance of adult learning.” Mr Purkait continued by explaining that “in knowledge-based societies and economies, future prosperity and security as well as peace, social harmony and care for the environment will depend on people’s access to knowledge and their capacity to make informed choices. Increasingly, people will need to adapt to rapid changes and to find sustainable solutions to complex problems. Lifelong learning is aiming at enhancing social inclusion and personal development, but also competitiveness and employability.”
Programme introduction and key explanations

The second part of the Workshop was allocated to introducing the programme and key explanations. Dr (Ms) Mohebhosseini, Head of the Education Department of the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO and Coordinator of the national Capacity-Building Plan for LLL in Iran was the speaker of this session. In her speech that focused on ‘Introducing the Workshop Objectives, Theme and Programme in the Framework of the National Capacity-Building Plan for LLL in Iran-implemented in cooperation with the UIL’, the speaker first spoke about UNESCO’s mission, especially in the areas of quality education and lifelong learning and later explained the education priorities and main lines of action as depicted in UNESCO’s eight-year Medium-Term Strategy (2014-2021) and its four-year Programme and Budget (2014-2017) documents.

The eight-year medium-term strategy is divided into two four-year programmes, comprising UNESCO’s main lines of action in education for 2014-2017. The main functions introduced and considered for the Member States under these main lines of action include:

1. National capacities strengthened to develop and implement policies and plans within a lifelong learning framework;
2. National capacities strengthened to develop and implement teacher policies and strategies to enhance the quality of education and promote gender equality;
3. Capacities of Member States strengthened to design and implement policies aiming at transforming TVET;
4. Member States develop evidence-based higher education policies to address the challenges of equity, quality, expansion and mobility;
5. Capacities of Member States strengthened to integrate ESD into education and learning, and ESD strengthened in the international policy agenda;
6. The implementation of the right to education and progress towards international education goals monitored, and policy dialogue informed by the evidence generated.

Further on Dr Mohebhosseini elaborated on the National Capacity-Building Plan for LLL in Iran explaining that “the project consists of major objectives including:

1. Developing and promoting LLL;
2. Establishing an adhoc group and a national committee for lifelong learning;
3. Developing the national inclusive strategic plan on LLL; and
4. Documenting national knowledge and experiences on LLL.”

The mentioned project consists of five implementation phases including:

1. Preliminary study of the status of LLL in the IR of Iran;
2. Identifying new structures, concepts and systems of LLL;
3. Information raising and dissemination;
4. Documenting LLL-related information in the country and establishing institutional LLL structures.

To conclude, the Head of the Education Department of the NatCom elaborated on the objectives, expected outcomes and themes of the Workshop.
Working Sessions

Part 1: Viewpoints of the members to the scientific committee on the situation of LLL in Iran: Challenges and Achievements

Chair of Session: Dr Mehralizadeh, Professor at Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz and Deputy for Research and Planning of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Organization of Iran.

Position of LLL in the Fundamental Transformation Plan of Education and in National Curricula

Mr (Eng.) Navid, Secretary General of the High Council for Education, was the first to take the floor. His speech focused on the ‘Position of LLL in the Fundamental Transformation Plan of Education and in National Curricula’. He firstly spoke about legal documents in education such as the National Inclusive Scientific Plan, the overall policies for transforming the educational system, the rules applied to the Fifth, Five-year National Development Plan, the Fundamental Transformation Plan of Education and national curricula, saying that, “in all the named instruments LLL is a main concern. There exist two challenging points in the National Inclusive Scientific Plan, which need to be taken into account in developing the National Inclusive LLL Instrument. First thing to take account of is that LLL is a cultural activity in the sense that the need for lifelong learning must become institutionalized in people. This can come about by strengthening the spirit of asking questions and curiosity in individuals. A second challenge concerns the how’s and modalities of accessing resources.” To continue, the speaker enumerated challenges confronted by LLL as follows:

1. Institutionalizing LLL in the educational system;
2. Enhancing opportunities of accessing learning resources;
3. Enhancing quality and justice in education;
4. Ensuring fundamental skills learning and competencies for all;
5. Equal attention to all forms of learning (formal and non-formal);
6. Mobilizing NGOs;
7. Promoting education and spending the major part of the educational budget on educational personnel;
8. Number of lessons taught and the heavy load of curricula (an obstacle to deep and practical learning);
9. Lack of means for the consistent development of teachers and educational personnel’s professional competencies;
10. Weakness in strengthening a culture of research, evaluation, creativity and innovation;
11. Weakness in an intelligent application of modern technologies;
12. Weakness in participation of the media and the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) in promoting educational objectives.
Further, Mr Navid explained the programmes and plans of the High Council for Education as ‘developing the programme of the six sub-systems of the Fundamental Transformation Plan of Education; discussing, adopting and announcing executive policies; creating necessary infrastructures for system development (designing a system of creativity and innovation, designing a system of educational/academic guidance and ….); monitoring the good implementation of strategic programmes; introducing educational objectives based on educational environments and their accreditation; developing a framework for curricular advice in education and learning; authoring the book of research and thought; Putting in place mechanisms for developing an interest in reading among school pupils; unifying current programmes and activities in line with transformational instruments on LLL.’

An Evaluation of the Position of LLL in the Fifth National Development Plan

Dr Yadollah Mehralizadeh, Faculty at Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, was the second speaker of this session who spoke about ‘An Evaluation of the Position of LLL in the Fifth National Development Plan’. According to the Speaker, the Fifth National Development Plan pursues three strategies of the following nature:

1. Major strategies influencing LLL (setting long-term objectives, enhancing overall demands at major learning levels in view of financial and monetary policies, cultural and developmental growth and national and international work environments);

2. Active LLL strategies (in both short- and long-term periods in semi-learning environments: transforming executive bodies and enhancing competencies of managers and personnel of public and private sectors, families and individuals through creating political, economic, social and individual incentives);

3. Adjustable/flexible strategies of the learning environment (setting rules and regulations, structural policies and taking account of issues such as the employment, skill, educational and cultural situation).

Further in his analysis of the various chapters of the Fifth National Development Plan the speaker added that “major discussions on Lifelong Learning are accessible in chapter two of the Instrument where the focus is on university technology and formal learning. In chapter three, under social issues, insurance, health, protection and empowerment are discussed, which are examples of adaptable policies and practical programmes for social training and awareness raising, all of which are considered as constituting parts of lifelong learning. Chapter four focuses on managerial issues and the administrative system, such issues as e-governance, the ICT industry, information literacy, e-commerce and productivity enhancement in economics, the social and cultural sphere and development of the national scientific network are taken into account. We know that e-governance is a driving force that pushes people towards the information and information and communication technologies, which are also considered as constituting parts of lifelong learning. Chapter five, deals with economics. Here, improvement of the work environment is
focused on. The sixth chapter deals with region-by-region development, with special emphasis on environmental conservation and rural development. Here, public awareness raising for sustainable development, which is in a way related to LLL, is focused on”. While, explaining that the Fifth National Development Plan is not an inclusive plan when it comes to adaptable strategies in regard to the learning environment, he concluded that “because of the conditions governing the Fifth National Development Plan and the method adopted for developing the Plan, this Instrument is not an inclusive one since it encompasses programmes that lack a clear paradigm and scope of thought. Additionally, a governmental outlook dominates the Plan, while lifelong learning requires an inclusive view of peoples’ living environments. However, the type of LLL that is dealt with in the Fifth National Development Plan is one that does not take account of the three phases of an individual’s life and the three different objectives dominating these three phases. These phases include:

1. Cultural development: linked to cognition, intellectual property and conceptualization;
2. Social development: linked to citizenship and social participation;
3. Professional development and employment taking account of the various factors of production, job satisfaction, financial welfare and social sustainability”.

The Need for Networking in Lifelong Learning, at Country Level

Dr Ali Akbar Jalali, Faculty at Iran University of Science and Technology, was the third speaker of the session. He spoke about “The Need for Networking in Lifelong Learning, at Country Level”. According to the speaker, “public and private social networks create appropriate opportunities and grounds for the development of lifelong learning in the cyber space. Therefore, in relation to the link between networks and LLL it is important to take account of two important points. The first point is the need to establish private training networks to manage LLL. This is because what makes up two-thirds of knowledge management is awareness and cognition of existing resources. A second important issue to be taken account of is using technical-qualitative communicative networks. These networks assist people to help each other in instant training in any specific subject of interest in a targeted manner throughout their lives. Therefore, it is necessary to raise awareness about the need for networking and building an appropriate culture of networking in Iran. An effective way is to provide for the participation of the private sector in this area. The important point in networking is for the generator of knowledge to be in mutual contact with the audiences and the audience populations to be in mutual contact with each other and with the generator of knowledge and to have this Interrelationship come out of a liner format”.

To continue, the speaker explained about the existence of intelligent tools that in addition to training are able to manage educational and learning environments in accordance to which each sector can instantly access its required educational information, automatically, adding that, “the large volume of data in big organizations has been a reason for placing intelligent tools at the service of scientific environments. These tools enable access to required
documents, databanks, and other applicable instances available in other related organizations, thus providing a platform for instant contributions of individuals”. In conclusion, Dr Jalali introduced the following as national shortcomings obstructing the achievement of networking:

1. Inappropriate software, hardware, communicative, technical, cultural and educational infrastructures;
2. Lack of a strategic programme and roadmap;
3. Lack of national will power and development required for clarifying the situation and position of social networks;
4. Lack of access to and availability of social networks for the private sector in Iran.

Further, he recommended the following to help achieve networking in the Country:

1. Accepting the reality of social networks and providing for their establishment and use through designing an appropriate, strategic plan;
2. Intelligent use of social networks with full care;
3. Developing social networks in line with the theory of developing Iranian e-cities (this must be considered an opportunity);
4. Taking the risk and providing for the presence and participation of the different strata of the society in the economic development and effectiveness of social networks;
5. The need to empower people as well as the economic and trade sectors with public and special lifelong learning trainings in order for them to become content producers in social networks”.

Pathology of Formal Modes of Pre-Higher Education Training with Emphasis on the Orientation of these Methods towards Training Lifelong Learners

Dr Saeidi, Faculty at the Education Research Institute of the Ministry of Education was the fourth speaker. In his speech on “Pathology of Formal Modes of Pre-Higher Education Training with Emphasis on the Orientation of these Methods towards Training Lifelong Learners”, while defining LLL, and reiterating the emphasis placed by Islam on learning throughout life, he said that “in order for learners to be trained in such manner to pursue learning throughout their lives, formal education must move towards the generation of knowledge, attitudes, and skills required to shift learners towards learning that is independent of the need for instructors”. “In this trend, in order to evaluate the education system, it is necessary to assess the system in view of its achievements in accessing the mentioned objectives” said the Speaker. “For this it is necessary to consider the following questions:

1. Is the learning-teaching process an enjoyable one in our educational institutions? (here the issue of enjoying the school environment, encouraging cooperation instead of competition, enhancing motivation and self-confidence in students in learning as well as improving the rate of self-motivated scientific and specialized readings are issues to be taken into account).
2. Do we offer quality early childhood programmes, additionally is the quantity of programmes offered for early childhood learning sufficient? (here, the issue of training children with special needs, setting special quality standards for evaluating the learning process and outcomes, enhancing skills for promoting and improving basic learning skills, designing and applying a system enabling access to educational standards, etc. are discussed).

3. Are the primary and upper secondary educational systems qualitative and do they meet the required quantities? (Here, the issue of educational inclusion, the setting of accurate quality standards for evaluating the process and outcomes of learning, developing a system enabling access to educational standards, improving teachers’ teaching methods, enhancing the use of technological resources and skills, orientation of the learning-teaching process towards self-activation of learners, adapting learning to working and living needs, etc. are considered).

4. Are the methods for human resources recruitment and training applied by the Ministry of Education oriented towards lifelong learning? (here, teachers’ knowledge and skills improvement, setting standards for converting teachers’ self-acquired knowledge to academic degrees, supporting teachers’ education in higher levels, and considering research as a means to enhance teachers’ awareness, are among most important issues of concern).

**Promoting Lifelong Learning in the Work Environment**

Dr Shafiee, Faculty at Amir Kabir University of Technology, was the fifth speaker of this session. In his speech, referring to the philosophy of education in Islam, he said that “A negative aspect of our educational system is the degree-orientedness of individuals. Universities are required to train people for the labour market. Therefore, offering theoretical training to students simply for a degree will prove useless and unless theory is converted into practice problems will not be overcome.” “Today”, said the speaker “in some Iranian universities, upon completion of theoretical courses, the profession is practiced in practical courses”. He then emphasized the need for “appropriate quality education for university students to be considered and attached top priority to by policy-making bodies”, saying that “the Government is required to appropriately invest in this area”. Another issue explained by the speaker was education in the work environment. “In-service training must be undertaken in a manner not to affect working staffs’ routines, while enhancing their professional knowledge. Our society must move in a direction that in addition to peoples’ academic degrees it takes account of their knowledge and expertise, because any institution’s job security is dependent on the knowledge of its staff and on promoting its staffs’ effectiveness”. “Another issue is the impossibility of changing theoretical knowledge into practical knowledge”, said the speaker, “in our country there is a little or no relation between university and industry and this is due to the fact that theoretical knowledge stays at the level of paper presentation only and is rarely converted into practical knowledge”. “Advancements in technical
disciplines and offering appropriate training in technical courses are major requirements for establishing a strong relationship between university and industry”.

Evaluating the Professional Competencies System in View of LLL

Dr Ebrahim Salehi Omran, Faculty at the University of Mazandaran, was the sixth and last speaker to take the floor in this session. He spoke about evaluating the professional competencies system in view of LLL. Here, he primarily explained the fundamentals of educational systems’ formation in Iran, adding that “the main challenges of the educational system include a low quality of preschool trainings and a low transition rate”. In this trend he also introduced the challenges of the higher education system as “irrelevance of trainings in view of market requirements, quantitative rather than qualitative development, degree-orientedness, the low value of academic degrees content-wise, and incapability of transmitting skills to learners”. Further, the speaker spoke about the main challenge of governmental skills training systems to include, “low employment value”. He then moved on to introduce “low social trust, impracticality of trainings, and inappropriateness of supplies and demands” as the main challenges of non-governmental skills training systems. He later continued by introducing the obstacles to the formation of a lifelong learning system in Iran as follows:

1. Irrelevant education in view of market requirements;
2. Lack of new science and knowledge generation;
3. Lack of access to modern technologies and infrastructures;
4. Separation of the two important ministries of Science, Research and Technology and Health and Medical Education;
5. Degree-orientedness;
6. Lack of appropriate skills acquisition by and merits formation in university students and practitioners (learning, learning methods, introduction to modern technologies, problem-solving, team work, etc.);
7. Lack of attention to non-formal and informal education;
8. Lack of a system for the evaluation of professional competencies.

The speaker further defined a professional competencies system as “a group of elements and processes that pave the way for the making of policies and setting of guidelines and standards related to competencies in order to accredit and valuate the professional competency of human resources”. In this trend, he identified the most important characteristics of the professional competencies framework as “converting educational and practical competencies to national assets instead of a mere property of educational institutions; the trainings offered for the acquisition of competencies must be independent of and evaluated independently of the training programmes offered by educational institutions; the value of professional competency lies in its inherent potentials, which enable the
achievement of lifelong learning and the improvement of the quality of education; boosting trust and strengthening mutual cooperation between the different agents of lifelong learning, while reducing the obstacles to the acceptance of learning and empowering of learners by equipping them with the skills required for knowledge acquisition, providing the conditions for the effective movement of learners and workers over the borders”.

“A major problem concerns the valuation of skills acquired in one sector and institution by another sector and institution”, explained the speaker. “Since different institutions do not accredit and valuate skills acquired through another institution, the learning must be repeated. This is most significant when it comes to non-formal learning”.

The speaker then explained that “professional requirements that are in accordance with and required by industry, the service sector, agriculture and culture comprise 10 levels (the primary level, 4 higher levels and 1 special level for the highly experienced, the connoisseurs’ level)”. To conclude, the speaker explained that “we do not have an inclusive system of continuing education (re-learning and improvement) in Iran”, adding that the prevalent scientific proficiency tests are not fully and sufficiently credible for various reasons including the problems of not being standard, irrelevance with the requirements of the labour market, etc.)”.

**Working Sessions**

**Part 2. Reports of Organizations and Institutions on Lifelong Learning**

**Session 1: Lifelong learning in national educational institutions**

**Chair of session:** Dr Abolfazl Saeidi, Member to the Education Research Institute of the Ministry of Education

1. **Ministry of Education**

   **Literacy Movement Organization** (Mr Mohammad Mehdizadeh, Vice Minister for Education)

   To begin, the speaker highlighted the structural, belief, managerial, human resources, financial, and accreditation obstacles to eliminating illiteracy. He then enumerated the challenges of learning as follows:

   1. Lack of motivation;
   2. Uneven distribution of illiterates;
   3. Lack of an inclusive databank;
   4. No national will power.

   The speaker continued by naming achievements in literacy as:

   1. Reduction of absolute illiteracy rates for the 6 and over age group from 14.2 million people in 1976 to 9.7 million people in 2011;
   2. Reduction of absolute illiteracy rates for the 10 to 49 age group from 9.8 million people in 1976 to 3.4 million people in 2011;
   3. Increase of literacy rates for the 10 to 49 age group from 48.8 percents in 1976 to 92.5 percents in 2011;
4. Reduction of the literacy gap between urban and rural areas for the 10 to 49 age group from 39.6 percents in 1976 to 3.5 percents in 2011;
5. Reduction of the literacy gap between men and women for the 10 to 49 age group from 26.2 percents in 1976 to 3.5 percents in 2011;
6. Publishing around 400 volumes of easy-to-read and useful books for the low-literate strata of the society;
7. Obtaining five international awards from UNESCO;

Mr Mehdizadeh continued his speech by introducing the programmes and activities of the Literacy Movement Organization as, “establishing a databank offering information on the conditions of the Iranian population, as a whole. “In this regard”, he said “the educational information of 50 million individuals is so far gathered”. Additionally, he referred to developing an “educational system for adults” as a second activity of the LMO.

To conclude, the speaker added that, “despite the above-mentioned achievements, a number of 9 million and 7 hundred thousand individuals still suffer from absolute illiteracy. 11 million people have completed fifth grade in the primary level and 9 million individuals have completed the third stage of the lower secondary level. This means that 50 percents of over 50, Iranian adults are low literate”. The speaker then added that, “in order to promote and develop lifelong learning and eliminate illiteracy, the Government is recommended to:
1. Act as a facilitator and to provide learning opportunities for all;
2. Orient education. This will be possible through a process of needs assessment; and
3. Organise teachings and document them”.

High Council for Education (Mr Majid Ra’nayee)
The speaker first briefed the session on the activities of the High Council for Education on LLL as follows:
1. Developing the national curricula of the IR of Iran;
2. Preparing an inclusive plan for education staffs/ human resources in the framework of the 1404 national instrument for education;
3. Project on standardizing evaluation criteria of the educational system;
4. Project on allocating a course to reading education in schools;
5. Preparing the framework and fundamentals of the preliminary phase of adult education curricula (literacy movement organization);
6. Preparing the guidelines for implementation of the National Transformation Plan of Education;
7. Preparing the charter of media literacy;
8. Preparing an inclusive merits-based educational progress evaluation system;
9. Charter of creativity and innovation.
He continued by explaining the challenges confronted with in implementing programmes on LLL as follows:

1. Institutionalizing LLL in the educational system;
2. Enhancing opportunities and access to learning resources;
3. Improving education quality and justice;
4. Ensuring the access by all to basic skills and competencies;
5. Balanced respect for the different forms of learning;
6. Mobilizing NGOs;
7. Promoting education and spending the major part of the educational budget on educational staffs;
8. Number of courses taught and the large volume of educational content (an obstacle to deep and practical learning);
9. Lack of a culture for research and evaluation and creativity and innovation;
10. Lack of means for a consistent development and updating of educational staffs skills and competencies;
11. Weakness in an intelligent understanding of modern technologies;

To conclude, the Speaker proposed a set of guidelines for developing LLL:

1. Developing a programme for the six sub-systems in the Fundamental Transformation Plan of Education;
2. Analysing, adopting and announcing executive policies;
3. Developing the infrastructure needed for establishing educational systems (the system of creativity and innovation, the system of educational consultation and advice, ...);
4. Monitoring the good implementation of strategic programmes;
5. Determining the objectives of educational courses based on subject matter and environmental spaces and accreditation of the objectives;
6. Developing a set of guidelines for learning curricula;
7. Compiling and publishing the book of “Thinking and Research”;
8. Developing mechanisms for developing and interest in and promoting reading among school pupils;
9. Mainstreaming current programmes in line with transformational documents on LLL.

Primary Education (Mr Morteza Shokhouhi)

The speaker first briefed the audience on the challenges of LLL in the primary education system:

1. Learning quality;
2. Little attention to the role of students and participation in the learning process;
3. Empowering teachers (by motivating them and setting the grounds for self-empowerment);
4. Students’ system of educational progress evaluation;

He then explained the programmes, plans and activities of the primary education system in lifelong learning:
1. Enhancing school pupils’ knowledge and awareness of the importance of LLL through appropriate policy-making, and suggesting educational programmes and learning opportunities;

2. Motivating learning and enhancing students’ views of learning, the role of learning in life and the need for continuing learning, with emphasis on the teachers as role models;

3. Developing and strengthening skills required by school pupils to enjoy, strive for and promote learning under different conditions and in different places;

4. Motivating students for learning more and continuing learning throughout life by enhancing the mental health of the learning environment.

Further, Mr Shokouhi summarized the programmes and activities of the Primary Education Directorate in LLL as follows:

1. Offering an educational coverage for primary level school pupils up to 2.98 percents;

2. Providing teachers for very low populated school houses in far off regions of the Country;

3. Strengthening and developing preschool centers (Government’s support of deprived regions);

4. Offering make-up classes for girl students in rural and deprived regions;

5. Reforming the system of educational progress evaluation for the primary level, shifting it from a results-based system to both process- and result-orientedness;

6. Promoting creative and dynamic education and learning methods by means of organizing competitions on teaching methods;

7. Improving scientific and experimental capacities of teachers by creating curricular-research groups;

8. Creating teachers’ learning groups in schools to share knowledge and experience;

9. Implementing a project on teachers’ self-improvement for teachers’ empowerment (teachers of 1st, 2nd and 6th grades);

10. Implementing scientific projects for school pupils in 40 percents of schools;

11. Implementing a project on creativity development, with emphasis on reforming the consumption model in 20 percents of schools.

**Upper Secondary Education** (Mr Rahim Asefi Amlashi, Deputy Head)

Mr Asefi was another speaker of this session. He briefed the session on the activities of the Deputy Directorate for Upper Secondary Education:

1. Establishing a research centre for school pupils in the upper secondary level (students’ scientific-research organizations can be linked to these research centres, highlighting students’ innovative activities and introducing these activities to the public);

2. Enhancing the quality of sample-public schools (5 percents of these schools are presently under coverage);
3. Bringing upper secondary school pupils under cover and attracting and motivating out-of-school children
To conclude, the Speaker enumerated challenges of lifelong learning as follows:

1. Today, literacy is something more than just reading, writing and numeracy. This approach must be adopted in education;
2. The need for continuing education must be clarified for teachers, otherwise teachers will not be able to meet the needs and respond to questions of students who learn by means of the ICTs, today;
3. The place of lifelong learning must be clarified for organizations. An increase in financial resources and building a culture of lifelong learning are very important at this stage.

Curricula and Educational Planning and Research Organisation (Ms Tayebeh Hamzeh Baygi, Senior Expert)
In a written report handed to the Secretariat of the Workshop, Ms Hamzeh Baygi announced that in line with developmental plans of education, the Curricula and Educational Planning and Research Organisation has undertaken fundamental changes in school curricula. In this process of change, instances where lifelong learning was taken into account include:

1. Development of new curricula;
2. A change of approach in curricula development (the approaches adopted in relation to curricula are the discovery-based, research-based and solution-finding approaches. Additionally, in the area of content-selection and organization the ‘relevance’ approach is adopted, to ensure the link between real life and scientific learning);
3. Changing the teaching-learning methods (emphasis is placed on adopting active teaching-learning methods, participatory approaches and methods, and taking account of the principle of individual difference and learning styles);
4. Taking account of the equality principle in education (distributing equal knowledge for all by producing educational kits, gender-based text book production, and offering educational content in view of the principle of religious, ethnic and cultural diversity, etc.);
5. Shifting the focus from text book to educational kits (these educational kits will contain text books, pupils’ educational software, teachers’ educational software, e-books, …. This is aimed at offering equal educational opportunities and enriching the teaching-learning environment);
6. Shifting the educational approach from subject-based to joint learning competencies;
7. Integrating technology into school curricula (offering a new course on “work and technology”);
8. Shifting school curricula towards thought- and research-orientedness (offering new courses on “thought and research” and “thought and life skills”);
9. Entrepreneurship in school curricula (offering a new course for the sixth graders on “work and technology”);
10. Integrating life skills learning into school curricula (offering a new course for the first level of the upper secondary stage on “thought and life style”, and integrating life skills learning into school curricula, and …)

Centre for Special Education (Mr Ali Eslambolchi, Educational Expert)
To begin, the Speaker briefed the audience on the Five-year plan of the Centre for Special Education:

1. Creating just educational opportunities;
2. Improving quality of education;
3. Improving students’ physical education;
4. Promoting the use of ICTs in education.

The Speaker then explained the activities of the Special Education Organization in the area of lifelong learning as follows:

1. Improving educational content and methods and empowerment/rehabilitation (by developing text books for teachers and teachers’ teaching guidebooks, observing the relevance of text books, establishing smart schools, offering empowerment/rehabilitation programmes, and offering teaching programmes for pupils’ families);
2. Empowering and educating human resources (by linking with the Farhangiyan University for attracting and educating required human forces, offering short-term, in-service training programmes, specifically designed for special education staffs);
3. Evaluating physical conditions, health and educational competencies of school pupils upon enrolment in the primary level (this has been a current activity since 1994. Preventive and healthcare measures include: compiling data on the physical and health conditions of pupils, attending special education schools, preparing special educational kits for health caretakers, preparing special educational kits for pupils and their families, offering training courses for health caretakers and special education experts, and organizing a biennial meeting on disability prevention);
4. Offering relevant training, cultural, and sports programmes;
5. Information raising by means of publishing a special science-promotion journal on special education (Elmi-Tarviji);
6. Organizing cultural and scientific meetings;
7. Establishing and introducing an information database for the Organization;
8. Preparing special text books for students suffering from mental disabilities;
9. Establishing training and rehabilitation centres for special learning problems;
10. Organizing adult training courses.
Mr. Bidokht first introduced three activities carried out by Shahid Rajayi Teacher Training University on lifelong learning as follows:

1. Organizing an expert meeting on “lifelong learning: the what’s and how’s” (30 April 2013);
2. Discussing criteria for evaluating lifelong learning in formal and non-formal education;
3. Evaluating the Teachers’ Professional Competencies system.

The Speaker then enumerated the future prospect of LLL at Shahid Rajayi Teacher Training University:

1. Organizing training workshops on guidelines for achieving LLL at university and faculty levels;
2. Taking account of non-formal education outcomes;
3. Offering short-term training courses;
4. Mobilizing the public and taking account of the constituents of LLL;
5. Strengthening links with industry;
6. Establishing links with the alumni;
7. Shifting educational approaches to research- and problem-oriented approaches;
8. Taking account of the important constituents of technological knowledge;
9. Linking with social institutions;
10. Supporting projects aimed at resolving the challenges and practical problems of the social, political, cultural and economic sectors;
11. Linking students with relevant social sectors.

Dr. Alireza Moradi, Officer-in Charge of Educational Planning, Education Directorate

Dr. Moradi explained the challenges of higher education in regard to lifelong learning as follows:

1. Lack of binding rules on lifelong learning;
2. Lack of necessary coordination between the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology and its stakeholders, including learners and other higher education institutions;
3. Insufficient development of higher education;
4. Lack of appropriate means for maintaining élites;
5. Impracticality of courses taught and irrelevance to the requirements of the labour market;
6. Imbalance in student intakes in various educational levels (66 percents of university students are currently enrolled in the graduate level, 39 percents are enrolled in the post-graduate and less than 1 percent are enrolled in the doctoral level);
7. Lack of an appropriate structure for LLL in the Ministry and the fact that LLL is not recognized by policy-makers at the Ministry, and the fact that LLL is not integrated into current academic models;
8. Lack of appropriate standards for assessing and accrediting non-formal modes and outcomes of education.

The Speaker then enumerated the activities of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology as follows:

1. Supporting the establishment of science hubs, at country level;
2. Research-orientedness of LLL;
3. Preparing the National Higher Education Instrument in view of the National Spatial Planning instrument in higher education;
4. Development and review of curricula;
5. Developing a system for electronic education (all universities will be entrusted with the responsibility of offering their programmes and course titles online);
6. Offering informal education courses in certain disciplines;
7. Establishing technical and vocational universities;
8. Rethinking programmes and developing strategic instruments for all academic courses;

To conclude, Mr Moradi briefed the audience on the achievements of the Ministry in the area of lifelong learning as follows:

1. Qualitative increase in higher education, especially through establishing inclusive universities;
2. Considerable increase in women and girls’ access to higher education;
3. Advocating lifelong learning by developing frameworks and setting general policies in and by higher education.

**Ministry of Health and Medical Education/UNESCO Chair in Health Education** (Dr Katayoun Bidad, Executive secretary, UNESCO Chair in Health Education, Tehran University of Medical Sciences)

While introducing the UNESCO Chair in Health Education, the Speaker referred to promoting a unified system of training, research, information raising and documentation in health education; improving the culture of health; developing national, regional and international networks on health education; and establishing a network for training and research in health education as the main objectives of the Chair. She then continued by summarizing the activities of the Chair in the areas of physical, social and mental health as follows:

1. Cooperation with health-related governmental and non-governmental research and training organizations in the various areas of physical, social and mental health;
2. Using the mass media and the press to transfer educational information, especially in relation to mental health, asthma, allergy and ethics and the mind;
3. Training media professionals by organizing annual meetings, training workshops, and consultation with the mass media;
4. Evaluating the impacts of TV and radio programmes on health in view of the critiques of specialists, and announcing the outcomes in the papers and media;
5. Training families on diseases and asking for their help by organizing annual meetings, especially for diseases such as asthma and allergy;
6. Preparing and offering online educational kits on mental health, asthma, allergy, ethics and the mind;
7. Celebrating national and international days, including the international days of asthma and AIDS, jointly with related organizations and distributing the outcomes and new findings;
8. Organising specialized meetings on mental health, HIV/AIDS, and ethics and the mind for policy-makers, planners and related officials.

To conclude, Ms Bidad enumerated the challenges confronted with by the UNESCO Chair in Health Education as follows:

1. Budget deficiency;
2. Human resources;
3. Lack of appropriate support by policy-making bodies;
4. Lack of appropriate links between related organizations.

Session 2: Lifelong Learning in National Employment Centres

Chair: Dr Salehi Omran, Lecturer, University of Mazandaran

Technical and Vocational Education and Training Organization (Mr Seyyed Ali Mousavi, Director General for Rural Education)

The Speaker first introduced the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Organization of Iran and briefed the audience on the activities of the TVETO in Lifelong Learning as follows:

“The mission of the TVETO is to offer technical and vocational education to job seekers in urban and rural areas. The Organization also offers such education to employers in the various national sectors, such as economy, civil services, university students and alumni, prisoners, and people suffering from social vulnerabilities, including women with no caretaker, women heads of households, and women with bad caretakers”, explained the Speaker. Mr Mousavi continued to say that, “the TVETO consists of 700 public/governmental educational centres and 18 thousand private educational centres, with over 30 thousand active instructors and has a record of teaching 1.5
million individuals, annually. The results of these teachings are employment and improving human resources productivity in the various industrial, agricultural, cultural and artistic sectors”. The Speaker continued by enumerating the challenges confronted by the technical and vocational education system in regard to lifelong learning as follows:

1. Economic challenge: economy based on competitive and private resources;
2. Social challenge: population increase, especially the young populations, high rate of migrations of specialized human resources and …;
3. Cultural challenge: degree-orientedness (inclination towards theoretical education), inclination towards employment in the governmental sector, …;
4. Information challenge: lack of appropriate information on skilled market forces, skilled employed forces and skilled job seekers;
5. Technological challenge: low capacities of national technologies and technologies practiced by minor sectors and the absence of a centre for technology transfer;
6. Legal challenge: lack of clear links between rules and regulations, shortage of adopted laws, lack of required scientific infrastructures for futuristic studies in the identification of technological changes, new jobs and relevant employment skills, …;
7. Lack of a clear cut national system for policy-making, planning and evaluation of technical and vocational education and training;
8. Formation of technical and vocational education in Iran regardless of national requirements;
9. Lack of a continuum for upgrading the knowledge and skills of target audiences;
10. Shortage of the existing educational system in achieving the goals of the 1404 National Outlook Instrument;
11. Lack of an atlas for skills education in the country. In preparing this Atlas it is necessary to take account of the results of land and spatial planning in different provincial areas.

The Speaker then explained the approaches adopted by the TVETO in regard to lifelong learning as follows:

1. Cooperating with the International Labour Organization (ILO), to use the capacities of ILO in order to improve teachers’ scientific knowledge and to strengthen mutual ties;
2. Designing and developing the inclusive system of skills and technology, which consists of three subsystems: skills education, professional competency, and the system of employment criteria;
3. Planning to send skilled work forces abroad;
4. Designing and implementing the Strategic Skills and Technology Instrument: this instrument consists of 8 strategies and 25 policies, with an overall goal of promoting skills and technology, at societal level.
Session 3: Lifelong Learning and Information Technology in Iran
Chair: Dr Ali Akbar Jalali, Lecturer, Science and Technology University of Iran

Information Technology Organization of Iran (Mr Ali Shokouhi Bidhendi, Head of the Bureau for Harmonizing Operations of Implementation Projects)

The Speaker introduced the establishment of the national electronic learning system on the national information system as a most important activity of the Information Technology Organization of Iran, naming the objectives of establishing a national electronic learning system as:

1. An effective increase in the number of users of the national information system;
2. Improving national practices in information and communication technologies in the framework of international standards for evaluation of ICTs;
3. Improving digital literacy and allocating a larger share to clean content in the internet;

To continue, the Speaker introduced the themes on the basis of which the national electronic learning system was established:

1. Setting standards and developing plans;
2. Paving the way for the establishment of communication infrastructures;
3. Paving the way for the establishment of information infrastructures;
4. Supporting content production;
5. Establishing a national portal for education;
6. Dissemination of information and building a culture of electronic learning.

To conclude, Mr Shokouhi enumerated a number of the activities of the Information Technology Organization of Iran in the above-mentioned areas as follows:

1. Preparing the charter of the national electronic learning network, in cooperation with the University of Tehran;
2. Determining the requirements and frameworks for the development of electronic (educational) content, in cooperation with Sharif University of Technology;
3. Developing an inclusive plan for the networking of the Ministry of Education with the national information network, the Schools’ network (Roshd);
4. Developing the inclusive plan and road map for establishing the national electronic learning network;
5. Developing the plan and architecture for the establishment of the national skills network;
6. Supporting the linking of all schools, at national level, and all educational and administrative bureaus of the Ministry of Education to the national information system, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education;
7. Supporting the linking of all national higher education and research centres to the internet, in cooperation with the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology;
8. Supporting the linking of all head offices, public and private educational centres and institutions of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Organization to the national information network;
9. Advocating the establishment of smart schools and equipping schools with information technology laboratories;
10. Advocating the development and improvement of the Centre for Educational Data of the Ministry of Education in the framework of the national information network;
11. Advocating the establishment of a laboratory for new technologies in electronic learning for content assessment;
12. Advocating the establishment and development of a data centre for the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Organization (skills network);
13. Supporting the development and supply of all educational content related to all educational levels offered by the Ministry of Education in the framework of the standards for content development in the national information network;
14. Supporting the production and dissemination of international content for the Islamic Countries’ Union, in five different languages;
15. 1st phase of the development and operationalisation of the inclusive education and research portal of the Ministry of Education, known as Schools’ Unified Educational Network (Payam);
16. Developing, translating and publishing books on issues related to the national learning network.

Session 4: Lifelong Learning and the Media
Chair: Dr Reza Barati, Director General, International Relations Office, TVETO and Officer-in-Charge, Office of the Head of the TVETO

Press and Information Affairs of the Ministry of Islamic Guidance and Culture (Mr Hassan Mehrabi, Deputy Head, Press and Domestic News Agencies’ Head Office On the activities of the Ministry of Islamic Guidance and Culture in education )

The Speaker said, “the responsibility of this Ministry in the area of education is different from the responsibility of education-related organizations in this area. To promote education, the Ministry of Islamic Guidance and Culture
offers permit to institutions that wish to have an educational function”. He then added that the media and press and information raising have a key role in lifelong learning, saying that “the first step in this relation is to clarify the importance of lifelong learning for media professionals, in order for them to understand the importance of lifelong learning and to promote it”.

Session 5: Lifelong Learning in Specialised Scientific Associations and Institutions Involved in Affairs Related to Groups and Issues in Priority

Chair: Dr M Mohebhosseini (Ms), Head of the Education Department of the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO

Scientific Associations of Iran (Dr Morteza Barari, Secretary, Commission of Scientific Associations of Iran)

In relation to the role of scientific associations in lifelong learning, the Speaker first referred to the number of scientific associations and active scientists working in these associations, adding that “scientific associations are in essence non-governmental organizations that were established initially to help solve national problems and work to promote sciences”. He then enumerated the different roles entrusted upon scientific associations in the comprehensive Scientific Map of the Country:

1. Sources of scientific reference; and
2. Sources of scientific management.

“As such”, added the Speaker, “scientific associations, in their capacity as a big scientific society at country level, play an important and considerable role in enhancing and updating of public knowledge, through their various efforts in organizing national and international meetings, publishing and printing science-research and science-promotion journals and the many sessions of scientific lectures they organize in different scientific disciplines”. “In this view, they have a considerable share in the scientific management of the country, in their capacity as a source for scientific reference”.

Dr Barari then referred to the target audiences of these associations as being university students and alumni, who are in need of extended training and groups of the general public, who were deprived of higher education. “As such”, added the Speaker “these associations organize annual training workshops, aimed at information raising in various disciplines”. “Our country lacks an organization for learning. This is a major challenge confronted with in the trend for promoting lifelong learning”, said the Speaker. “We all know that the growth of industries is not the sole attribute of technology, while this calls for an appropriate information background”, concluded Dr Barari.
Centre for Family and Women’s Affairs of the Presidential Office (Ms Rabe’e Emami Razavi, Officer-in-Charge of Education)

In her report, the Speaker announced “promoting and enhancing women’s level of education and employment, at country level” as a responsibility of the Centre for Women’s Affairs. “In line with article 230 of the 5th National Development Plan”, said Ms Emami Razavi “this Centre has undertaken various activities and has certain activities on the agenda”. The most important activities on the Centre for Family and Women’s Affairs were enumerated by the Speaker as follows:

1. Health clinic project, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education;
2. Cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior to educate women heads of households, enhance social security, and to organize vulnerable women;
3. Support women with no caretakers, or bad caretakers, in cooperation with the State Welfare Organization of Iran;
4. Educating prisoner women , in cooperation with the prisons;
5. Offering consultation services for divorce prevention through the Legislative Power;
6. Creating a centre for monitoring women’s situations/conditions, in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior for policy-making for Women’s cultural affairs;
7. Cooperation with the Literacy Movement Organization to educate illiterate women;
8. Teaching family principles to single and married soldiers (this programme is implemented in cooperation with the Training Head Office of Tehran Province);
9. Training women labourers, in cooperation with the Ministry of Energy.

Natural Disasters Research Institute of Iran (Mr Bahman Ahmadi Tavana, Manager, Short-term Trainings)

To begin, Mr Tavana briefed the audience on the most important responsibilities of the research institute in the area of lifelong learning as follows:

1. Organising training courses and workshops on combating and preventing natural disasters, in cooperation with related organizations and promoting the use of technology and universal scientific achievements for disaster reduction. These courses are aimed at updating the participants on the state-of-the-art in disaster reduction and prevention;
2. Organizing conferences, meetings, seminars and national and international exhibitions in relation to natural disasters, in order to provide for an effective exchange of views and experiences, set the grounds for using the state-of-the-art technologies and methods for disaster reduction and prevention and to link with other related scientific sources of reference.”.
The Speaker then explained that the education activities of the Natural Disasters Research Institute are fulfilled by the following two sections:

1. Natural Disasters Higher Education Centre (this centre offers admissions in undergraduate, graduate and professional graduate levels);
2. Section for short-term training.

The most important courses offered in the area of lifelong learning and organized by the section for short-term training include:

1. Job promotion training courses;
2. General training courses on disaster preparedness and prevention for the general public;
3. Upgrading courses for disaster prevention and disaster combating;
4. Crisis, risk and disaster management training courses for managers and experts of related organizations.

Closing ceremony
In conclusion, Dr (Ms) Mohebhosseini, Head of the Education Department of the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO, prepared and read the workshop recommendations, based on the reports offered by the participants to the Workshop.

Tehran Recommendations: Capacity-Building and Promoting Lifelong Learning in Iran
Creating learning and knowledge societies is the cornerstone of sustainable human development in the 21st century. Achieving this goal calls for a thorough identification of challenges and capacities, and the setting of policies and necessary mechanisms for supervision, assessment and accreditation. In this trend, developing lifelong learning capacities is a must. In this view, the participants to the 2nd lifelong learning workshop on “Lifelong Learning in the IR of Iran: Challenges, Achievements and Future Prospect”, held in Tehran, the Iranian Capital, on 13 October 2013, at the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Organization of Iran:

Aware of the need to transform national systems of education towards achieving quality lifelong learning for all;
Taking account of the significance of lifelong learning as a most important tool for responding to the current challenges of today and tomorrow’s world and for achieving the goals of sustainable human development;
Emphasizing that any policy set in relation to lifelong learning must take account of cultural, social, economic and legal structures;
Emphasizing the Tehran Recommendations on strengthening the role of parliaments in promoting lifelong learning, adopted at the workshop on Legislation for Promoting LLL for Parliamentary Members of the FASPPED Member States in South and West Asia (Tehran, 2012);
Considering the proposals and guidelines of the National Training Workshop on Innovative Concepts and Systems of Lifelong Learning (Tehran, 2012);

Propose the following for capacity-building in lifelong learning, at country level:

A. Policy-making
   - Adopting necessary policies and rules based on sectoral, inter-sectoral and trans-sectoral approaches to promoting lifelong learning, at country level;
   - Continual review of education, cultural, social and economic policies and plans in line with new changes and requirements of the 21st century;
   - Setting necessary executive mechanisms for monitoring progress in the systematic and inclusive achievement of lifelong learning, at country level;
   - Adopting necessary policies required to coordinate the three different systems of skills education, professional competencies and job-employment criteria;
   - Developing an inclusive strategic instrument for lifelong learning.

B. Budgetary Implications
   - Allocating part of the budget for human resources development and educational budget to promoting lifelong learning, at country level;
   - Encouraging, motivating and mobilizing forces for finding new sources of finance such as the private sector, NGOs, the civil society and real persons for promoting and improving lifelong learning.

C. Valuation and Accreditation
   - Implementing educational needs-assessment projects in order for education to be oriented towards lifelong learning;
   - Improving and reforming valuation and accreditation structures and mechanisms for a recognition of all forms of learning (formal and non-formal), and their outcomes;
   - Developing necessary standard-setting criteria in the different dimensions of lifelong learning.

D. Establishing Institutional Structures
   - Establishing a secretariat, national network and information database for lifelong learning, in Iran;
   - Establishing a national committee for Lifelong Learning by the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO;
   - Establishing an ad hoc inter-sectoral and inter-institutional work group on lifelong learning, in cooperation with related organizations;
   - Establishing lifelong learning offices/units in related organizations;
   - Providing necessary facilities and building capacities to facilitate effective learning in the work environment and providing the means for the continual learning of employees in all sectors;
• Capacity-building for developing the means for a constant documentation of the outcomes of peoples’
learning, throughout life.

E. ICT and Lifelong Learning
• Setting the grounds and promoting the means for the application of ICTs;
• Planning for virtual lifelong learning programmes in view of the emerging digital generation;
• Networking in the different dimensions of lifelong learning;
• Creating a section for lifelong learning in information databases of related organizations.

F. Information Raising and Mobilizing Social Participation
• Awareness raising for the public on the importance and necessity of lifelong learning by promoting
dialogue among different social agents, the media and the IRIB (Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting);
• Undertaking necessary actions to clarify the importance and necessity of lifelong learning for managers,
peoples’-in-charge and media and IRIB professionals;
• Creating new agents for lifelong learning in the country such as the municipalities, libraries, NGOs and
scientific associations, unions and the trade and economic sectors;
• Activating municipalities, at country level, in order to set the grounds for the establishment of learning
cities.

G. Lifelong learning and Special Groups and Strata of the Society
• Motivating low-literate groups to continue learning;
• Taking account of the youth and students’ role and interests and integrating them into the learning
process;
• Taking account of the role of teachers and empowering them in the learning process;
• Special Planning for out-of-school groups and peoples’ deprived of education, such as the children of
work, immigrants, refugees and ethnic and religious minorities, as part of developing lifelong learning in
the Country;
• Taking special account of the role and position of women in planning for lifelong learning activities.

H. Inter-Sectoral and Inter-Institutional Cooperation
• Following-up the executive programmes and plans of lifelong learning for convergence and
strengthening of ties between the Government, private sector, individuals and families;
• Undertaking necessary activities for greater convergence and conformity between the different formal
and non-formal sectors to further promote lifelong learning.
Annex 1: Concept Note

Concept Paper

National Workshop on

Lifelong Learning in the IR of Iran: Challenges, Achievements and Future Prospect

13 October 2013, Tehran, TVETO

Introduction

Lifelong learning is the main tool for the achievement of the MDGs and establishment of knowledge societies. In the present century, known and named by some as the "learning century", only societies whose members are in a process of continual learning can achieve personal and social growth and hence success. In this view and in line with Iran's capacity building project in lifelong learning, the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO and the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Organisation of Iran are going to jointly organise the '2nd National Workshop on Lifelong Learning in the IR of Iran: Challenges, Achievements and Future Prospect'. The workshop is supported by UNESCO and the various ministries of Education; Science, Research and Technology; and Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare as well as specialised scientific bodies including the Iranian Higher Education Association. The workshop is envisaged to be held at Karaj Instructor Training Centre, on 13 October 2013.

It is noteworthy that during the 1st National Lifelong Learning Workshop that was held in Tehran, Iran, on 11-14 February 2013, at Hotel Howeyzeh, important issues on lifelong learning were discussed under the following themes:

- The concept of lifelong learning;
- Analysing socio-economic, political and cultural needs required to achieve the prime citizenship capabilities;
- Capacity-building in the national educational systems;
- The major constituents of the lifelong learning educational system from inclusive education and basic learning through to higher education;
- Reviewing learning societies and families;
- Effective learning in the work environment;
- Wider use of information technologies for learning;
- Accreditation of educational certificates and different forms of learning; and
- Principle conditions for strengthening of the lifelong learning system.

Based on the opinions expressed by the participants and keynote speakers, and the free discussions taken place and according to the conclusions and recommendations of the scientific committee, it was decided to have a follow-up committee established and to appoint a person in either of the related national bodies and ministries to follow-up issues related to lifelong learning. Finally, in line with an agreement reached between the committee members and the organising bodies, the 2nd workshop was decided to focus on an evaluation of the current state of lifelong learning in the country, with special attention to the identification of challenges and the development of necessary mechanisms to overcome the mentioned challenges.

**Objectives**

The prime objective of this workshop is to strengthen and promote capacities of senior policy-makers and policy-making researchers at the national level, in order to set and implement innovative policies and strategies to strengthen the lifelong learning system and to help achieve the goal of lifelong learning for all. The present workshop is organised and will be held to achieve the goals of:

1. Continual and incessant capacity-building for policy-makers and experts;
2. Documentation and dissemination of the outcomes of the first LLL workshop;
3. Setting the grounds for establishing a constant national LLL secretariat to promote LLL in Iran;
4. Continual cooperation between UNESCO, related Iranian ministries and governmental officials.

The special objectives of the workshop include:

1. Identification of strategies, policies and practical programmes of relevant bodies developed in line with the objectives of LLL;
2. Analysing the status of LLL and progress achieved in promoting its different components;
3. Conducting a pathology of formal and informal education in LLL;
4. Sharing the experiences of executive bodies and success stories and generating new ideas in order to develop and implement a comprehensive, strategic national instrument on LLL;
5. Awareness of the problems faced by related bodies concerning the operationalisation of new programmes in LLL.
6. Discussing the setting-up of task forces constituted of planners and researchers within executive bodies in order to promote documented and evidence-based policy-making and research in an attempt to promote LLL for all;

7. Exchanging experiences and ideas on a desirable system of LLL in the IR of Iran, in line with the executive functions and structures of related bodies; and

8. Adopting appropriate orientations in related organisations aimed at training lifelong learner citizens.

In order to achieve the above goals and in line with the recommendations of the Workshop's scientific committee, a practical approach based on objective evidence and experiences is thus adopted to plan the Workshop agenda.

**Expected Outcomes**

1. Strengthening of inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary cooperation in LLL at country level;

2. Identifying future programmes of executive bodies in view of the various dimensions of LLL and the main themes of predictable programmes (in view of legal instruments, the current status of the LLL system and internal capacities);

3. Feasibility study for establishing a national network and database on LLL;

4. Feasibility study for developing a national strategic instrument on LLL;

5. Preparing a documented report on the policies, strategies and executive programmes of related bodies on LLL; and


**Participants**

All participants in the 1st LLL workshop, the National Training Workshop on Innovative Concepts and Systems of Lifelong Learning, held in Tehran from 11 to 14 February 2013 will be present in this event. These include representatives of relevant organizations, experts and specialists, as well as:

- Policy-makers from the various ministries of education, higher education, health and medical treatment, and labour as well as other organizations that are directly in charge of human resources training and development;

- The Islamic Parliament of Iran; the Centre for Women’s Affairs of the Presidential Office; Municipalities;

- Researchers and High Ranking Officials in Educational Policy-making;
- Experts of Non-Governmental Training Organizations;
- Experts of Non-Governmental Organizations such as the scientific associations of Iran;
- Education-related journalists from the media and the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB).

**Methodology**

The workshop is organized in an interactive and participatory manner. It calls for a progress report by all participating executive bodies and offers a platform for an interactive exchange of experiences and ideas on the various dimensions of LLL, such as:

- Policies and practical programmes specifically developed for LLL;
- The modality/modalities of integrating the various components of LLL in the plans and programmes of various organizations;
- Frameworks for adapting LLL to the formal and informal education systems;
- Planning for and efficiency of LLL programmes in work environments;
- Application of and integration of ICTs in learning processes in related organizations;
- Accreditation and valuation of all forms of learning in different organizations; and
- The Future prospect of LLL in the IR of Iran.
Annex 2: Agenda

National Workshop on
Lifelong Learning in the IR of Iran: Challenges, Achievements and Future Prospect
13 October 2013, Tehran, TVETO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registration</th>
<th>8:45-9:00</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opening Ceremony</strong></td>
<td>8:45-9:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recitation of the holy Quran and national anthem of the IR of Iran</td>
<td>9:00-9:15</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Speakers</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Koroush Parand, Vice Minister for Education and Head of the TVETTO</td>
<td>9:15-9:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Mohammad Reza Saeidabadi, Secretary General of the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO</td>
<td>9:30-9:45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Hiranand Purkait, Director and Representative of the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office</td>
<td>9:45-10:00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tea/Coffee Break</th>
<th>10:00-10:20</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction and key explanations</strong></td>
<td>10:20-10:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing the workshop goals, themes and agenda in the framework of the capacity-building plan of the IR of Iran in Lifelong Learning, in cooperation with UIL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Mohebhosseini (Ms), Head, Education Department of INC for UNESCO</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Working Sessions**

**Working Session I: Viewpoints of the members of the scientific committee on the situation of lifelong learning in the country: challenges and achievements**

Session chair: Dr Mehralizadeh, Lecturer, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz and Vice President for Planning and Research of the TVETO (Wrap-up session: Concluding on the outcomes and achievements of the 1st Lifelong Learning workshop)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The position of lifelong learning in the national document on the fundamental transformation of education and curricula</td>
<td>10:40-10:50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating the status and position of lifelong learning in the 5th National Development Plan</td>
<td>10:50-11:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The need for networking in lifelong learning at country level</td>
<td>11:00-11:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A pathology of formal pre-higher education studies in the trend towards training lifelong learners</td>
<td>11:10-11:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting lifelong learning in the work environment</td>
<td>11:20-11:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating the lifelong learning professional qualification system in Iran</td>
<td>11:30-11:40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions by the Session chair

**Lunch** 12:00-13:30
**Working Session II: Reports of national organizations on lifelong learning**

**Session 1—Lifelong learning in national educational institutions**

Session chair: Dr Abolfazl Saeidi, Faculty, Education Research Institute of the Ministry of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Time</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ministry of Education</strong></td>
<td>Mohammad Mahdizadeh, Deputy Head for Education</td>
<td>13:30-13:40</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>High Council of Education</strong></td>
<td>Majid Ranee, Head, Evaluating Group</td>
<td>13:40-13:50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basic Education</strong></td>
<td>Morteza Shokouhi, Deputy Head, Primary Education Office</td>
<td>13:50-14:00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary Education</strong></td>
<td>Rahim Asefi Amlashi, Deputy Head, Office of Secondary Education</td>
<td>14:00-14:10</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Research and Planning Organization</strong></td>
<td>Tayebeh Hamzeh Beygi, Senior Expert</td>
<td>14:10-14:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bureau for Human Resources Training</strong></td>
<td>Majid Abedi, Head, Human Power Education Department</td>
<td>14:20-14:30</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Exceptional Talents Development Centre</strong></td>
<td>Tahereh Agha Miri, Director, Physical Training Bureau</td>
<td>14:30-14:40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Children's Training Centre</strong></td>
<td>Ali Eslamboolchi, Expert</td>
<td>14:40-14:50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shahid Rajayi Teacher Training University</strong></td>
<td>Dr Ali Pourkamali Anaraki, Head, Center for Curriculum Planning</td>
<td>14:50-15:00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session i continued:

Session chair: Dr Yadolah Mehralizadeh, Lecturer, Shahid Chamran University

2. **Ministry of Science, Research and Technology**  
   Education Directorate of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology  
   Dr Alireza Moradi, Deputy Directorate for Education

3. **Ministry of Health and Medical Education**  
   **Tehran, University of Medical Sciences, UNESCO Chair on Health Education**  
   Dr Kataioun Bidad, Executive Secretary

Conclusions by the session chairs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session 2: Lifelong learning in employment-related national bodies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15:00-15:10</td>
<td><strong>Session 2: Lifelong learning in employment-related national bodies</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>15:10-15:20</td>
<td><strong>Session 3: Lifelong learning and information technology in Iran</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>15:20-15:40</td>
<td><strong>Session 3: Lifelong learning and information technology in Iran</strong></td>
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**Tea/Coffee Break**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session 3: Lifelong learning and information technology in Iran</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15:40-16:00</td>
<td><strong>Session 3: Lifelong learning and information technology in Iran</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>16:00-16:10</td>
<td><strong>Session 3: Lifelong learning and information technology in Iran</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>16:10-16:20</td>
<td><strong>Session 3: Lifelong learning and information technology in Iran</strong></td>
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<td>16:20-16:30</td>
<td><strong>Session 3: Lifelong learning and information technology in Iran</strong></td>
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<td>16:30-16:40</td>
<td><strong>Session 3: Lifelong learning and information technology in Iran</strong></td>
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<td>Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>16:40-16:50</td>
<td>Conclusion by the session chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>16:50-17:00</td>
<td><strong>Session 4: Lifelong learning and the media</strong></td>
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<td>Session chair: Dr Barati, TVETO</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Bureau for the press and information of the Ministry of Culture and</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Islamic Guidance</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hasan Mehrabi , Deputy Head , General Directorate of Domestic Press and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>New Agencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>17:00-17:10</td>
<td>Conclusion by the session chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>17:10-17:20</td>
<td><strong>Session 5: Lifelong learning in specialized scientific associations</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and organizations related to priority groups and themes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Session chair: Dr Ahanchiyan, Lecturer, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad</td>
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<tr>
<td>17:20-17:30</td>
<td>1. <strong>Iran's Scientific Associations</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dr Morteza Barari, Secretary, Commission of Scientific Associations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of Iran</td>
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<tr>
<td>17:30-17:40</td>
<td>2. <strong>Centre for Women and Families' Affairs of the Presidential Office</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rabea Emami Razavi, Director , Education Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:40-17:50</td>
<td>3. <strong>Natural Disasters Research Centre</strong></td>
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<td>Bahman Ahmadi Tavana , Director of Short-Term Education</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusion by the session chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:50-18:00</td>
<td><strong>Closing Ceremony</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusions, announcing the workshop recommendations and awarding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the participants' certificates</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dr M Mohebhosseini, Head of the Education Department of the Iranian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Commission for UNESCO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 3: List of Members to the Scientific Committee

1. Dr Koroush Parand,
   Vice Minister for Education and Head of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Organization of Iran
2. Dr Jafar Towfighi
   Faculty, Tarbiyat Modarres University
3. Dr Ali Akbar Jalali
   Faculty, Science and Technology University of Iran
4. Dr Mohammad Reza Saeidabadi
   Secretary General, Iranian National Commission for UNESCO
5. Dr Abolfazl Saeidi
   Faculty, Education Studies Research Institute
6. Dr Masoud Shafeei
   Faculty, Amir Kabir University
7. Dr Ebrahim Salehi Omran
   Faculty, University of Mazandaran
8. Dr Mohadesseh Mohebhoseini (Ms)
   Head, Education Department, Iranian National Commission for UNESCO
9. Dr Yadollah Mehralizadeh
   Faculty, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz and Deputy Head for Planning and Research of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Organization of Iran
10. Mr Mehdi Navid
    Secretary General, High Council for Education
Annex 4: List of Participants

Ministry of Education

1. Mr Rahim Asefi Amlashi, Deputy Head, Bureau for Upper Secondary Education
2. Mr Ali Eslambolchi, Special Education Expert
3. Ms Dorriyeh Afkhami, Head of Tehran International and Adaptive Schools Complex
4. Mr Kiyoomars Jahangardi, Association for Parents and Teachers
5. Dr Mohsen Hosseini Bidokht, Rajayi Teachers’ Training University
6. Mr Majid Ra’nace, Head, Evaluation Group, High Council for Education
8. Mr Haydar Sohrabi, Advisor to the Head of the Literacy Movement Organization
9. Ms Fatemeh Sohrabi, Expert, Centre for International Affairs and Schools Abroad, Ministry of Education
10. Mr Majid Ra’nace, Head, Evaluation Group, High Council for Education
11. Ms Bita Mahdi, Head, Education Group, High Council for Education
12. Mr Mohammad Mehdizadeh, Deputy for Education, Literacy Movement Organization
13. Mr Mehdi Namjoo Manesh, Director General for Education, Literacy Movement Organization

Ministry of Science, Research and Technology

1. Ms Maryam Asadi Rad, Expert in Charge of Education
2. Dr Ali Reza Moradi, Expert in Charge of Planning in Higher Education

Ministry of Health and Medical Education, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, UNESCO Chair in Health Education

Dr Katayoun Bidad, Executive Secretary, UNESCO Chair in Health Education

Technical and Vocational Education and Training Organization of Iran

1. Mr Farshid Borhan Azad, Technical and Educational Deputy, Centre for Teacher Education, Karaj
2. Mr Seyyed Ali Mousavi, Director General, Bureau for Educational Affairs

Press and Information Affairs of the Ministry of Islamic Guidance and Culture

Mr Hassan Mehrabi, Deputy Head, Press and Domestic News Agencies’ Head Office
Information Technology Organization of Iran
1. Ms Mehrnoush Ahvazi, Head, Office for Information and Statistics, Bureau for Planning and Programme Control
2. Mr Ali Shokouhi Bidhendi, Head, Bureau for Harmonizing Operations of Implementation Projects

Natural Disasters Research Institute of Iran
Mr Bahman Ahmadi Tavana, Manager, Short-term Trainings

Centre for Family and Women’s Affairs
Ms Rabe’e Emami Razavi, Officer-in-Charge of Education

Scientific Associations of Iran
1. Dr Morteza Barari, Secretary, Commission of Scientific Associations of Iran
2. Mr Mahmoud Sanei Pour, Chair, Committee for Science and Technology, Secretariat of the Expediency Council
3. Ms Fatemeh Sadeghiyan, Head, International Centre, Scientific Associations of Iran

UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office
Ms Fatemeh Zarrabi, Programme Officer for Education

Iranian National Commission for UNESCO
Ms Paymaneh- Zahra Pourhadi, Programme Assistant for Education